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*An Illustrated History*

**March/April 2002**

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

About the Cover
The olive tree endures as a symbol of life and hope for fruitful, more pleasant times. In keeping with the theme of this issue of Israel My Glory, “Comfort Ye My People,” Art Director Tom Williams has created the perfect image. A beautiful, maturing olive tree grows from the withered, aged trunk of another that has borne the rages of time. In spite of all that successive ages have rained down on her, Israel lives. And the presence of the rainbow reflects God’s promise to comfort His Chosen People and see them through until the Messiah comes as their final Great Shepherd to usher them into the Kingdom.

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And don’t forget, you can listen to our broadcast each day, hosted by Elwood McQuaid, on foi.org/radio.

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The theme of this issue of Israel My Glory, “Comfort Ye My People,” voices an important commitment of The Friends of Israel since its inception.

The Christians who so willingly met in 1938 to form The Friends of Israel did so out of a compelling sense of Christian love and a desire to express care and concern for Europe’s beleaguered Jewish community.

Headquartered then in Philadelphia, The Friends of Israel rallied Christians to the challenge of meeting physical and spiritual needs of countless Jewish people trying to flee the Nazis. Aid went to poor refugee families. Funds were used to rescue Jewish people from Germany and other European countries. Orphans were supported. Thus the heartrending cries of Europe’s Jewish communities were being heard thousands of miles away in America. God’s comfort was being spread forth by Christians who themselves were recipients of His blessings.

Recently an interesting article titled “Holy Land—Send These to Me” ran in The International Jerusalem Post. It described a widespread network of evangelical Christians who have been helping thousands of Jewish people move to Israel. Citing prophetic Scriptures about the nation’s return to its land (Isa. 43:5–6; Jer. 23:7–8), Christians have been giving generously for aliyah and related activities, including providing new immigrants with food and other much-needed relief. Christian support was reported to have played a significant role in Israel’s efforts to help bring Jews to Israel, especially from the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Throughout the six-page article, Israeli authorities and Jewish agencies expressed appreciation for all that Christians are doing to help. This appreciation, however, was tempered by feelings that believers might have ulterior motives, such as proselytizing and trying to hasten Christ’s return.

Proselytizing is a strong term to Jewish people. It evokes terrible memories of forced conversions, deceptions, and sometimes even financial incentives to “convert.” Jewish skepticism is not surprising in light of what the Jewish people have experienced over the centuries at the hands of Gentiles who called themselves Christians. Persecutions, crusades, pogroms, and the Holocaust are erroneously perceived by many to have been Christian events. And they loom large indeed in the history of the Jewish people.

We at The Friends of Israel take seriously our Lord’s command to carry the gospel of God’s love in Jesus Christ to all mankind. Making Christ known is our calling. We also are called to “comfort ye my people.” And we do so as a genuine expression of our heart for the Jewish people and not as tools of proselytizing.

Furthermore, we do not believe that helping the Jewish people return to the land will hasten Jesus’ coming.

Certainly, as Bible-believing Christians, we believe the Jewish people’s return to Israel fulfills biblical prophecy. We also believe in and long for Messiah’s return. However, the timing of the Lord’s Second Coming is in God’s hands alone and is not dependent on our efforts.

We believe that God has chosen a people—the Jewish people—and a nation, Israel, for a unique relationship with Him and a unique purpose in bringing blessing to the world.

Our Bibles were penned by the Jewish prophets and apostles as they were led of God. Our Savior chose to be born of Jewish lineage into the tribe of Judah and the house of David. We are recipients of God’s special blessings flowing from a Jewish heritage.

Today, as a vital part of our worldwide ministry, The Friends of Israel is engaged in numerous activities that clearly reflect our desire to comfort Israel. In the republics of the former Soviet Union, Friends of Israel workers distribute Bibles, food, medicines, and medical supplies. In Eastern Europe we provide lunches along with craft materials and supplies for the Jewish communities’ schools. In Poland we sponsor summer camping experiences for hundreds of Jewish children, their parents, and teachers. In Argentina our Friends of Israel medical team cares for more than 15,000 people annually at no charge at our Buenos Aires Medical Clinic, which functions twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year in the Jewish community.

Our love for the Jewish people is not conditional or based on other agendas. And it must always remain so—the same kind of unconditional love we have experienced from our Savior.
The Friends of Israel
Winona Lake P R O P H E C Y
Conference
August 11–17, 2002

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• Insights into radical Islam by Bill Sutter.
• Reports from Dr. Alfredo Espinoza on the medical clinic in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
• “Events in the Middle East” with Jimmy DeYoung.
• “Celebrate Israel Night,” August 13, 6:30 P.M. with Esther Levens of Voices United for Israel.
• Panel discussion with Jimmy DeYoung, Esther Levens, Elwood McQuaid, and Bill Sutter.
• Annual Banquet, August 14, 12:30 P.M., Ramada Plaza Hotel, Warsaw, Indiana.
• Concert with Bob & Becky Brunton, August 16, 6:30 P.M.
• Farewell Continental Breakfast.

For further information about the conference or for conference accommodations, call Lisa Nickerson at The Friends of Israel, Monday through Friday between 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. (Eastern time) at 800-257-7843, or visit our Web site at www.foi.org.
Say It Isn’t So!

A favorite occupation of liberal American politicians over the years has been to vilify the “religious right.” It is, they say, inhabited by politically incorrect, intolerable bigots guilty of impeding the march toward a secular, New Age, cultural utopia. It mattered little to these politicians that after God was banished from our classrooms and national institutions, our culture’s moral decadence increased at breakneck speed. And they touted as “liberation” the “I’m OK, you’re OK” anything-goes society that came into vogue. In truth, however, this repudiation of Judeo-Christian standards and values has spawned a generation that, for lack of absolutes, flounders in a sea of self-obsession. Obviously, America is reaping the whirlwind.

As the facts show, the much-maligned “religious right” does not hold exclusive rights to the bigotry banner. Liberal Democrats reportedly are planning to seize the initiative and surpass all previous political campaigns in rhetorical mudslinging at people of faith. This time the issue is not predictable election-year antics but a monumental breach of integrity and nothing less than a threat to national security.

We refer to an article by Howard Fineman in Newsweek, revealing the liberal battle plan. “Democrats,” Fineman wrote, “are planning a daring assault on

By attacking the people who conscientiously uphold the faith of this nation’s founding fathers, liberal extremists join hands with our killers—genuine religious bigots who conspire to repeal every freedom the Judeo-Christian culture has enshrined.

GOP right with the Taliban.”

In this case, Taliban equals conservative Christian “terrorists” guilty of the intolerable transgression of publicly exercising their constitutional liberties in the political arena.

In an article titled “Christians as Taliban” in the January 19 issue of World magazine, Gene Edward Veith commented, “The Democrats’ ‘daring assault’ on conservative Christians must be framed as religious bigotry. This is genuine religious intolerance. This is secular extremism.” Veith concluded, “Christians will have to make the case that they are nothing like the Taliban and that any attempt to link them—either by ‘interfaith’ theologies or political propaganda—is theological terrorism.”

Of course, should liberal extremists launch such a campaign of “theological terrorism,” it will be an incomparable blunder. The country cannot now afford to tolerate business-as-usual dirty politics. We are embroiled in a war on terrorism that is being led by a president who is acting decisively for all Americans. To align George W. Bush and a large segment of loyal citizens with Taliban terrorists who slaughtered thousands of our people and conspire to murder thousands more is an insufferable insult. Anyone, from whatever end of the political spectrum, who even hints at such allegations should feel the weight of unprecedented national outrage. And elected officials who do so should be drummed out of public office for life.

Furthermore, many more people now identify with some of the most critical turf in politics: the cultural mainstream. . . . The GOP is out of the mainstream, some Democrats will argue next year, because it’s too dependent upon an intolerant ‘religious right.’ This is an incendiary battle plan—essentially comparing the

By attacking the people who conscientiously uphold the faith of this nation’s founding fathers, liberal extremists join hands with our killers—genuine religious bigots who conspire to repeal every freedom the Judeo-Christian culture has enshrined.
Did you know there’s a very special way you can express your condolences, thanks, or respect for someone? For only $10 per tree, you can have trees planted in The Friends of Israel Forest in Jerusalem. You’ll receive a beautiful certificate that you can send as a tangible expression of your gift. Won’t you take this opportunity to provide a living memorial for a family member, friend, or associate? You may even wish to plant one or more trees in someone’s honor or on your own behalf. It is a thoughtful and meaningful way to say “I care,” and you will share in helping to make the desert of Israel bloom.

USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO ORDER.

Endnotes

Small occurrences often reflect larger issues. This thought came to mind when reading an Associated Press report concerning the late Oscar Schindler. Schindler was the German industrialist and member of the Nazi Party who saved 1,200 Jewish people from death in Hitler’s concentration camps during the Holocaust. At his request, he was buried in Jerusalem in a cemetery on Mount Zion.

At a meeting of a regional council in the Czech Republic, Schindler’s birthplace, his name was dropped from consideration for honorable mention in a brochure recognizing important regional personalities and their accomplishments. According to the Associated Press report by Karel Janicek, which ran in the February 4 issue of The Internet Jerusalem Post, certain forces within the committee fought to have Schindler’s name omitted.
Thus Schindler was dubbed a “controversial figure” who had been accused of unspecified activities against the Czech state. Specifics of the accusations were not made known. In view of the fact that the industrialist had left Czechoslovakia in 1939, those who recommended him for recognition were mystified about what wartime, anti-Czechoslovak activities he could have been involved in.

“I don’t know what prompted the decision,” declared the mayor of Schindler’s hometown. He added that Schindler is a controversial figure for some Czechs. Nonetheless, the mayor said, “He saved 1,200 Jews. That’s a fact.”

With that statement, the mayor could well have put his finger on the problem. It was not, in all probability, “unspecified anti-Czech activities” that cost Schindler his place in the brochure, but his international status as a bona fide hero of the Holocaust tragedy—the fact that “he saved 1,200 Jews.”

It is also a fact that anti-Semitism is making a serious comeback in many parts of Europe. And with it has come a recycling of Adolph Hitler’s reputation and his demonic hatred for the Jewish people, both of which are being memorialized in the chronicles of modern history’s darkest chapter: World War II and the Holocaust.

Hitler set forth his creed and philosophy in his book Mein Kampf (My Struggle), which he began writing while in prison in 1923. It was completed in 1927 and became the fountainhead of the philosophy of his National Socialist Third Reich. Hitler’s credo was the basis of his book. “The great masses of the people,” Hitler proclaimed, “... will more easily fall victims to a great lie than to a small one.” Adolph Hitler was correct.

New Twists to an Old Lie

Over the past decade, we have witnessed the rise of neo-Nazi elements in Germany, the militancy of skinheads throughout Europe and the United States, the republishing of Mein Kampf, and scurrilous attacks on Israel and its Jewish people in UN resolutions and at international conferences on racism. Now, with the rise of radical, militant Islam and the war on terrorism, come new twists.

First, America and Israel have been wed as inseparable enemies of the Muslim world—big Satan/little Satan adversaries that must be destroyed at all cost. Elements in the Arab press are congratulating the Fuehrer for a job well begun on the little Satan (Israel) but are lamenting the fact that he didn’t finish it.

In a tract titled “Thanks to Hitler,” produced by Al-Akhbar, one of Egypt’s largest news organizations, Ahmed Ragab wrote, “Thanks to the late Hitler, who took revenge in advance for the Palestinians on the most vile criminals on earth, though we blame Hitler because his revenge was not quite enough.” When questioned about the article, Ragab’s editor offered an explanation: “You mustn’t take it word by word. You must take it by the feeling, the spirit.”

With that statement, the editor said more than he knew. This same spirit or “feeling,” if you will, drives all anti-Semites. And, as the writer implied, their problem is not only with Israel. They hold all world Jewry culpable and see the Jewish people as “the most vile criminals on earth” and thus worthy of annihilation.

Second, America is frequently being linked to the Nazis and Adolph Hitler; and, to say the least, “the feeling, the spirit” behind the analogies are as vehemently anti-American as they are anti-Jewish. In another leading Egyptian newspaper,

Elements in the Arab press are congratulating the Fuehrer for a job well begun on the little Satan (Israel) but are lamenting the fact that he didn’t finish it.

Al-Ahram, columnist Anis Mansour called America’s treatment of al-Qaida prisoners being held in Cuba “worse than what Hitler did to his rivals from among the Jews and Christians.”

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League, called the article outrageous. “Unfortunately,” said Foxman, “there have been far too many instances where Egyptian newspapers print sensationalized
commentary peppered with inappropriate or blatantly false comments about the Holocaust.⁵

Still another twist of history went to press on January 31. An Egyptian government weekly, Akher Sa’a, printed an article titled “The Jews are Bloodsuckers and Will Yet Conquer America.” The writer claimed that a document housed at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia shows Benjamin Franklin disliked Jews. The chief librarian of the Institute has refuted the claim and said the Franklin Institute possesses no such document. It turns out the document in question, quoted as authoritative, was forged by the Nazis in a 1935 anti-Semitic book, A Handbook on the Jewish Question. It alleged that Franklin, one of America’s founding fathers, made comments against Jewish immigration during a recess in the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1789. (The convention was actually held in 1787.) The following lies were put into Benjamin Franklin’s mouth:

If they [Jews] are not excluded from the United States by the Constitution, within at least 100 years, they shall stream into this country in such numbers that they shall rule and destroy us and change our form of government for which we Americans shed our blood and sacrificed our lives, property, and personal freedom. . . . If the Jews are not excluded within 200 years, our children will be working in the fields to feed the Jews while they remain in the counting houses, gleefully rubbing their hands.⁶

Such scathing attacks on Israel and the United States continued after President George W. Bush delivered his January 29 State of the Union address. Arab media aligned the language of the president with that of Osama bin Laden in his videotapes. They also compared Bush to Hitler and William Shakespeare’s notorious Jewish villain, Shylock.

Abd Al-Bari Atwan, editor of the London Arabic-language daily Al-Quds, wrote,

The American president George Bush, whom all agree is reckless and inexperienced, presented himself in his “State of the Union address” . . . as a leader thirsty for bloodshed and for declaring war on half the world to satisfy a sense of vengeance and in submission to the sick Israeli incitement that stems from the interests of the Hebrew state—even if [satisfying] these interests comes at the expense of the destruction of the entire world.⁷

It is both interesting and revealing that in these intemperate diatribes, never a word was mentioned about the fact that Islamic radicals plowed airliners into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., murdering more than 3,000 innocent people, a number of whom were Muslims.

Equally revealing is the fact that such all-out assaults on America and Israel reflect the deep-seated hatred coming from the swelling anti-Semitic/anti-American axis of evil—an axis that reaches far beyond the three perpetrators (Iran, Iraq, North Korea) identified by President Bush.

### Evil Axis or Trinity of Evil?

This recycling of the spirit of Adolph Hitler and the accelerating obsession with the destruction of Israel and now the United States

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**President Bush delivers his first State of the Union address before a joint session of Congress on January 29 at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.**

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10 May/June 2002
reach far beyond the realm of base human depravity. When scanning the dark pages of human iniquity, one can hardly find a more precise example of a satanically driven, demonically inspired figure than Adolph Hitler. That his name would ever be memorialized in print, glorified in political ranting, or admiringly referenced in human conversation is a blot on civilized humanity. That anyone would adopt as inspirational his sinister ability to inundate Europe in the blood of millions is a stunning revelation.

In the prophetic book of the Revelation, chapter 13 exposes a satanic trinity of evil. A beast (v. 1), a dragon (v. 2), and a false prophet (v. 11) come to the fore. The passage describes the end-times Great Tribulation, or “time of Jacob’s trouble,” as prophesied in Jeremiah 30:7. The objects of the animosity of this evil axis are the Jewish people and the Gentile Tribulation saints. This triumvirate establishes a world religion that despises the God of the Old and New Testaments and establishes a religious empire that bows in homage to Satan.

What is concisely presented in Revelation is a continuum of what is taught throughout the Scriptures. It is more than the much-discussed contemporary clash of civilizations. It is the final confrontation of good and evil; the sons of darkness versus the sons of light; the conflagration of a devastated creation; and, yes, the showdown between God and His arch adversary, the Devil.

Adolph Hitler aspired to create a new religion, the German Church; place a new “bible,” Mein Kampf, on every pulpit; wipe out the Jewish people; destroy historic Christianity; and fashion an Aryan empire that would endure for a thousand years. His script unfolded like a photocopy of the last days described in the Bible.

Now, sixty years later, we are witnessing a rerun of the same production. The only change is in the players. The plot is the same.

As always, it revolves around annihilating the Jewish people and driving them from the land given to them by God. It is a fact that the pervasive existence of anti-Semitism throughout history is one of the greatest confirmations of the accuracy of Scripture. Then there is the subplot—the determination to destroy or subjugate the whole of what is popularly understood as the Western Christian entity.

And center stage in this arena are evangelical Christians. These are the people who are dedicated to the authority of Scripture; believe in the sanctity of God’s program for Israel and the Jewish people; and refuse to be assimilated into a global consortium of cults, pseudoreligions, and pagan gods deemed to be equals or superiors to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The issues never change. With time, they only intensify. The fact that conflicts, once limited in scope, now have global implications should open our eyes to where we stand on the stage of human history. When we see the specter of Adolph Hitler inspiring a cadre of tyrants to do their worst toward innocent, peace-loving people, we should awaken to the seriousness of the situation and the lateness of the hour. May it be true for each of us.

Endnotes

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
History is littered with the remnants of nations that have tried to subjugate and eradicate God’s Chosen People. Their attempts to rid the planet of the Jewish nation have ultimately ended in failure because the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has vowed to “bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” (Gen. 12:3). This promise is only one of many the Lord God of Israel made to His Chosen People.

God’s promises to Israel are woven throughout Scripture. Although many Christians believe the old adage that every promise in the Bible belongs to the church of Jesus Christ, the vast majority actually belong to the Jewish people. The Old Testament is God’s Word delivered exclusively by the Jewish people to the Jewish people. It covers the period from creation to approximately 400 years before the birth of Messiah. The creation of Israel began with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob around 2000 B.C.

The church, on the other hand, did not come on the scene until Acts 1, after Jesus’ resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot) in A.D. 32.

Consequently, when God said through the prophet Isaiah (740–680 B.C.), “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (40:1), He was not speaking about the church.

‘I Will Not Forsake You’

The Old Testament is replete with assurances that God loves His people and will never utterly abandon them or the promises He made to their forefathers—despite
all their sin, hard-heartedness, and rejection of Him.

One of Scripture’s most beautiful promises is found in Isaiah:

*Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee* (49:15).

Jehovah has promised Israel that He will never forsake her. The imagery of a mother forgetting a baby is powerful indeed. A loving, nursing mother can never forget her child. Yet God says it is easier for that to happen than for Him to forget Israel.

Today in particular, the tiny State of Israel is overcome with grief from one end of the country to the other. Every day Jewish families bury loved ones whose lives have been prematurely ended by sniper bullets, terrorist bombs, and suicide bomber attacks. As the pressure on Israel intensifies, God’s Word stands like a shelter in the time of storm. He has not forsaken them; He never will forsake them. Jewish commentator Dr. Israel W. Slotki wrote, “God’s mindfulness of Zion is much more steadfast and enduring than the strongest of human ties of kinship.”

In the following verse, the Lord uses even stronger language: “Behold, I have engraved thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me” (Isa. 49:16).

God indicates that He has carved, so to speak, the nation into His being. This “carving” is irrevocable. He cannot just wash His hands of them; they are there forever.

### ‘I Will Strengthen You’

Another assurance of God’s ever-present help is found in Isaiah 41:10:

*Fear thou not; for I am with thee. Be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

In the midst of Israel’s daily struggle to survive, she is promised that her God will strengthen her for the task. He promises His continual help in her time of need and vows to undergird her. The right hand is usually associated with strength. Thus the Lord has promised to sustain Israel with the very strength of His own righteousness.

### ‘I Will Give You the Land’

The prophet Jeremiah (626–580 B.C.) lived after Isaiah and was an eyewitness to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in 586 B.C. Yet despite this terrible judgment on the Jewish people, God still assured them of His steadfast love and promised they will never be obliterated from the earth (Jer. 31:35–36).

Down through history, rulers and their armies have tried to rid the world of God’s Chosen People. Such despots as the pharaohs of Egypt tried; Haman from Persia tried; Antiochus Epiphanes tried; Titus Vespasian tried; Tomás de Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition tried; and, in these last days, Adolph Hitler tried. Today Hitler’s Mein Kampf is a best-seller in the Palestinian Authority, and the Islamic world still refuses to acknowledge Israel’s existence and is determined to blot the Jewish presence from the land. Yet try as it will, it will not succeed. Today’s despots and those yet to come ultimately will fail:

*And they [the Jewish people] shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant,*

*in which your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell in it, even they, and their children, and their children’s children forever* (Ezek. 37:25).

But that is not all the Lord has promised His beloved people. The boundaries of their land have been settled forever in the Scriptures: “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18).

During the reign of King Solomon, Israel came fairly close to possessing the totality of the land as God had delineated it to Abraham. But she still fell short. According to Scripture, one day the nation of Israel will extend from the Mediterranean Sea eastward all the way through Iraq to the Euphrates River. It will include all of Jordan, parts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and possibly parts of Lebanon and Syria.

The current world Jewish population is estimated at 13 million, with 5.9 million living in Israel. And the Israeli population continues to grow. With the current political upheaval in Argentina, which has a large Jewish population, many Argentinean Jews are seeking to make aliyah (“go up”) to Israel. In the past ten years, Russians and Ethiopians have immigrated to Israel by droves. As He promised, God is bringing back His people:

*Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,*

*But, The LORD liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country,*

*and from all countries to which I had driven them* (Jer. 23:7–8).
When Israel finally lost her sovereignty over the land, she went into captivity a divided people. The northern kingdom of Israel had succumbed first to the might of the Assyrians in 722 B.C. The southern kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon in 586 B.C. They had been two separate kingdoms since the ten northern tribes rebelled against King Solomon’s son Rehoboam in approximately 931 B.C. When the captivity ended and the Persian king, Cyrus, allowed them to return to their land under his rule, they went back as one people. However, they had no sovereignty over their affairs. Then in A.D. 70, at the destruction of the Second Temple, the Romans dispersed them to the four corners of the earth.

It was not until 1948, after the United Nations partitioned British-Mandate Palestine, that the prophecy of Ezekiel 37 was fulfilled:

Take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions; And join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thine hand.

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, to which they are gone, and will gather them on every side, . . . And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel (vv. 16–17, 19, 21–22).

Today the nation is neither Judah nor Ephraim. It is one nation called Israel.

‘I Will Give You a Kingdom’

Furthermore, God’s promises of comfort are not only for the here and now. They extend beyond today to a wonderful, blessed future that He has promised to His ancient people. Ezekiel was told to write,

And David, my servant, shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them. ...and my servant, David, shall be their prince forever (37:24–25).

These verses look forward to the yet future day when David’s greater Son shall sit on His Father’s throne and rule over the entire earth. One day Messiah Jesus will return to Earth to fight for the nation of Israel during the terrible time of Jacob’s trouble (Zech. 14:3–4). He will destroy her enemies and set up the long-awaited Messianic Kingdom. In that day, He will sit on the literal, earthly throne of David and rule over Israel and the entire earth for one thousand years.

As Jeremiah promised, “David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel” (33:17).

Israel has had no king since Zedekiah went into captivity in Babylon before the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet this promise of a king is sure. Only Jesus has the Messianic credentials necessary to rule; His lineage alone has been impeccably preserved for us in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; and His “right” it is: “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he comes whose right it is; and I will give it him” (Ezek. 21:27).

God makes yet another startling promise. When Jesus rules the earth, anti-Semitism will be a thing of the past; and Gentiles will no longer dominate the Jewish people or try to obliterate them from existence. In fact, the Jewish people will reap great blessing and, finally, have peace:

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

Gentiles will worship the risen Messiah, King Jesus, with the Jewish remnant that survives the unprecedented horrors of the time of Jacob’s trouble. What exciting promises the Lord has made to His people Israel. No wonder God says, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins (Isa. 40:1–2).

And God always keeps His promises.

Endnotes


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he visiting preacher opened his message with the following statement: “Today I want to tell you how to destroy the Jewish people.” The title of his sermon, in fact, stood out boldly in the church bulletin: “How to Destroy the Jewish People.” It even had appeared in the local newspaper that week in an advertisement for the special meetings the church was conducting with the guest evangelist—and it had generated no little commotion in town. So significant was the brouhaha that the local rabbi was sitting in the church, prepared to hear an anti-Semitic diatribe. Needless to say, the atmosphere was electric.

The preacher continued his opening remarks, announcing the text for the sermon and asking everyone to listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which, my covenant, they broke, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD; But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 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 (31:31–34).*

Nothing thus far was inflammatory. The passage prophesied a new covenant that the Lord
would establish someday with the descendants of Israel. The preacher continued reading:

Thus saith the LORD, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who divideth the sea when its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the LORD, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD (31:35–37).

After reading the text, the preacher called the congregation’s attention to the last three verses, which emphasize the everlasting nature of God’s covenant with Israel. The covenant was permanent. It was immutable, irrevocable, and unchangeable. Israel’s perpetuity was inexorably linked to the perpetuity of the physical ordinances of the sun, moon, stars, and Earth. If these ordinances disappear, then Israel will disappear. But as long as they remain, Israel will remain.

“So, you want to know how to destroy the Jewish people?” the preacher asked with a flourish. “I will tell you. But first, you must be able to pluck the sun, moon, and stars from their celestial positions and make them disappear forever; measure the distance from one end of the heavens to the other [something modern scientists can’t even do]; burrow into the very core of the earth and measure the distance you have bored. And if you can accomplish these three tasks, only then will you be able to eliminate forever the children of Israel from their long existence on planet Earth.”

A collective sigh of relief arose from the congregants, including the rabbi. The key truth was obvious to all: It is impossible to destroy the Jewish people.

Their Suffering

Considering the tragic history of Jacob’s children over the last two thousand years, that simple affirmation stands out boldly amid their sufferings, exiles, and narrow escapes from annihilation. Deuteronomy 28, spoken and written by Moses more than a thousand years before Israel’s first exile, describes the nation’s yet future sufferings in these anguished words:

And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nothing; and ye shall be plucked from off the land to which thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life (vv. 63–66).

Jewish history from the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 through the twentieth century is not a pretty story. Although a small remnant of Jewish people continued to live in the land of their forefathers, the vast majority ended up in the diaspora (literally, the “scattering”), a popular Jewish term to describe everywhere outside the land of Israel. These diaspora Jews lived in foreign countries where the terms aliens and exiles more appropriately described their plight. Their “host” countries usually were far from hospitable. Wherever they wandered in the medieval world, they never were accorded citizenship.

Not only were they hated, they often were caught between warring factions and suffered the consequences. When the European Crusaders launched their expeditions in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries to free the Holy Land from the Moslems, they slaughtered the Jewish people and annihilated dozens of Jewish communities along the way. When the Black Death spread through Europe from 1348 through 1350, many people blamed the Jews, claiming they had poisoned wells. Thousands of Jewish people were burned to death, especially in Germany. Even the pope, not always a friend to the Jewish people, opposed
such baseless accusations. But the mobs, infected with blind hatred, could not be dissuaded.

The infamous Spanish Inquisition, launched by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, finally led to the Jewish people’s complete expulsion from Spain in 1492 and then from neighboring Portugal in 1496. This forced exile of nearly 200,000 people for no other reason than the fact that they were Jewish indelibly marked both the Jewish psyche and Jewish history.

The little-known Chmielnicki Wars in 1648 led to the slaughter of nearly 100,000 Polish Jews by Cossack warriors. The czars of nineteenth-century Russia often blamed the Jewish people for whatever economic ills beset the serfs in their empire.

In 1881 the infamous pogroms broke out and continued sporadically until World War I. Local mobs, often urged on by their Orthodox priests, attacked Jewish communities, murdering thousands of innocent men, women, and children for being so-called Christ-killers. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish people fled to the New World. Those who somehow survived the pogroms and remained in Eastern Europe eventually faced the worst of all Jewish tragedies—the Holocaust. From 1933 to 1945, through a series of repressive laws; labor camps; and, finally, gas chambers, the Nazis obliterated approximately six million Jewish people—simply because they were Jewish.

**Their Survival**

And yet they survived. The Jewish people, of course, are not the only nationality that has endured suffering. However, their anguish has been unique in several ways. No nation in the history of the world ever has been exiled from its land, lost its national existence and language, then returned as a people to that identical homeland and even revived its ancient tongue. No nation, that is, except one—the nation of Israel.

How can we explain this phenomenon? Modern historians and philosophers have tried and failed. The Jewish experience simply does not fit human theories and explanations. One of the greatest historians of all time was Arnold Toynbee, whose classic ten-volume work, *A Study of History*, traces the rise and inevitable fall of twenty-six civilizations.

Despite all his brilliance, Toynbee could not adequately explain the phenomenon of the “Jewish civilization.” According to his philosophy of history, civilizations rise then eventually fall, *never to rise again*. Jewish history, however, did not fit Toynbee’s scheme. Yes, the Jewish nation rose and fell. But it survived after its fall and, amazingly, returned to its ancient land, reconstituted its national existence, and even resurrected its ancient language from the dead. No other nation has ever accomplished this feat.

Toynbee could not comprehend the Jewish peoples’ survival because he was unwilling to consider God’s promises. The Lord God declared through His prophet that Israel will never cease from being a nation (Jer. 31:36), and He has kept that promise by preserving His Chosen People through all their dark nights of suffering. Apart from God, no other explanation exists. Toynbee referred to the Jews as the “fossils of history.” A fossil is an ancient object that really should not be here today but is somehow “frozen in time”—out of place but here nevertheless.

From a human viewpoint, the Jewish people should not be here. With all they have endured, they should have disappeared long ago. More magnificent civilizations, such as the Assyrians, Hittites, and Babylonians, have been consigned to the dustbin of history. But, in the familiar words of an Israeli folk song, “*Am Yisrael Hai*!” (“the people of Israel live!”). Their ancient persecutors and murderers have vanished from the stage of human history, but little Israel keeps playing its role in the divine cosmic drama. And Israel will continue to do so, not because of its cunning, savvy, or wit, but because of the promises of God.

The great Prussian Emperor Frederick often would test his chaplain with theological questions. Frederick, however, said he did not have time for long answers and explanations. He wanted simple answers that he could comprehend quickly. One day he asked his chaplain if he could provide simple and succinct evidence for the truth of the Bible. Frederick asked if the chaplain could provide the evidence in just one word. The wise chaplain responded that he could do just that.

“What is this magical word?” Frederick asked.

The chaplain replied, “*Israel, your majesty. The people of Israel.*”

It would be difficult indeed for anyone to offer better proof for the accuracy and divine authenticity of God’s Word. Israel has survived and will continue to survive because God Almighty has willed it.

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Austria: 50,000, 27 percent; France: 77,230, 22 percent; Germany: 134,500–141,500, 25 percent; Hungary: 550,000–569,000, 68 percent; Netherlands: 100,000, 71 percent; Poland: 2.9 million–3 million, 90 percent; Soviet Union: 1 million–1.1 million, 35 percent.1

These numbers are estimates of the number of Jewish people in these countries who were killed in the Holocaust. When the smoke of World War II cleared, one-third of the world’s Jews—two-thirds of European Jewry—had been killed in what the Nazis described as the “Final Solution,” the last step of a three-pronged program that kicked out, kept in, and killed the Jewish people.

Kicked Out

Hitler had been an anti-Semite long before his rise to power. His intense hatred made it imperative in his mind to define his enemies, so he could kick them out of Germany. He had to be able to answer the question, Who is a Jew? The Nazis had decades’ worth of
anti-Semitic “scientific” material to review to answer such a question. Nazi officials and their lawyers wrote the first supplementary decree on November 14, 1935. This treatise continued to expand throughout the reign of the Third Reich. Doctors and genealogists spent a great deal of time and energy to determine the individual bloodlines of people from mixed marriages. These mischlings were considered Jewish if they possessed one-sixteenth or more of Jewish blood. Said writer David Rausch, “Religious affiliation meant nothing now—a second generation German Christian might be labeled Jewish with a stroke of a pen.”

Once the definition of Jew was established, the defamation began. Hitler’s rise to power consisted of a persistent message that the Jewish people posed a constant danger to the stability of the Fatherland. Through the use of the SS and his “brownshirts,” Hitler removed qualified Jewish leaders in the fields of education, finance, politics, medicine, and religion and replaced them with Nazis. His message of hate was now duplicated in every major area of German life.

The message was constant and relentless. Jews were accused of being idolaters, murderers, and apostates. They were labeled as liars, deceivers, carriers of disease, demonic, venomous, bitter worms, and vermin. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s minister of national enlightenment and propaganda, stated, “The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never again escape from it.”

Hitler said, “Tell big lies; tell them in a simple way, say them over and over again as often as you can, until the people begin to believe what you are saying.”

Defining and defaming Jewish people was ongoing from the time of Hitler’s ascension to power in 1933. The masses believed the lies, resulting in boycotting of Jewish businesses, forcing Jewish doctors out of practice, firing Jewish teachers and government employees, removing Jewish judges from the bench, and refusing Jewish students enrollment in schools. In each case, the Jews were viewed as a danger to the German people.

In 1935 the Nuremberg laws were passed, stripping German Jews of their citizenship, forbidding them to marry German Gentiles or even to fly national colors. Defaming the Jewish people allowed for their physical abuse and the expropriation of their wealth.

Herschel Grynzpan, a 17-year-old German-born Jew of Polish descent, living with relatives in Paris, read reports of Nazi treatment of Jews. Aware of the hardships his family was experiencing back in Germany, Herschel felt helpless. Most distressing was the news that his sister had been forcibly deported to Poland. Taking a gun, Herschel walked into the office of the German ambassador and killed him. As he stood before the magistrate in Paris, he lamented, “To be Jewish is not a crime. We are not animals. The Jewish people have a right to live.”

The Nazis responded to the ambassador’s murder by having the SS dress in street clothes to implement a pogrom. That awful night, November 9, 1938, 815 Jewish businesses were destroyed, 191 synagogues burned, 20,000 Jews arrested, and 36 Jews killed. To add insult to injury, the Nazis blamed the Jewish people and forced them to pay for the damages to their own property, denying legitimate insurance payment. The amount came to one billion marks ($400 million). The American consul general in Stuttgart reported, “The Jews of Southwest Germany have suffered vicissitudes during the last three days which would seem unreal to one living in an enlightened country during the twentieth century.”

Kristallnacht, that infamous night of broken glass, was the last straw for much of German Jewry. Thousands left the country; hundreds committed suicide. From 1933 through 1938, defining, defaming, and disenfranchising Jews in Germany was the rule of the day while Nazis expropriated their wealth. Yet, amazingly, almost half of the German Jews believed it would not get any worse. They were willing to wait it out, in some cases even condemning their fellow Jews who left. That decision proved to bring unspeakable horror for them a short time later.

Kept In

With all the hate and horror present in Germany, the Jewish population was a relatively small 650,000. That number jumped immediately and dramatically when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and World War II began. Millions of Jewish people were now under Nazi jurisdiction in places like Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, White Russia, and Czechoslovakia. Instead of kicking them out, the Nazis began to build walls around them to pen them in. Those walls went up around small sections of cities in the conquered countries, including Warsaw, Lodz, Odessa, Kiev, Krakow, and Lublin. Thousands were confined in small areas. Thousands more, brought from outside those cities, were
placed inside ghettos. Writer Lucy S. Dawidowicz explained: “The ghettos were located in the oldest, most rundown parts of town, sometimes located in outlying areas that lacked the basic facilities of the city proper—paved streets, lighting, adequate sewage, sanitation facilities.”

As the German armies conquered more territory, more Jewish people were sent to the ghettos. Food became an ever-greater problem. The average daily intake of an adult is about two thousand calories. In the ghetto it was between three hundred and five hundred—if at all. Starvation was commonplace. Jews in the ghettos were so weak their bodies could not fight off diseases; and a plague of spotted fever took hold, causing many additional deaths. Conditions were so deplorable that it was a common sight for people to collapse, die, and decay in the streets while the living shuffled by them.

Overseeing the ghettos was a group of twenty-four men called the Judenrat. The Nazis selected these men to do their bidding but gave them no support or help to carry out their wishes. One of their major responsibilities was to select people from the ghettos for deportation. Those Jews were taken by boxcar to concentration camps. There, the Jews who were strongest—usually the men—were immediately put to work. Women were placed separately, many forced into brothels. Others were used as human guinea pigs for diabolical medical experiments. And others would make a journey from which they would never return.

**Hitler said,**

**Tell big lies;**

**tell them in a simple way, say them over and over again as often as you can, until the people begin to believe what you are saying.**

Heydrich, chief of security police. Upon entering a city or village, the SS gathered the leaders, who were instructed to bring out the Jewish people, force them to turn over all their valuables, and strip off all their clothes. They then were made to kneel on the ground, and the SS shot them. In many instances, the people first had to dig their own graves before they were killed.

Later more efficient means were used to murder the Jews. Since bullets were too expensive, the Einsatzgruppen deployed gas vans to kill economically. Jews were rounded up into these vans about fifteen at a time. All the occupants expired as the exhaust system was piped into the van. In all, the Einsatzgruppen exterminated nearly 800,000 Eastern European Jews. About 35,000 Jews were murdered in the Babi Yar ravine near Kiev.

Dawidowicz wrote, “On June 21, 1943 [Heinrich] Himmler ordered the liquidation of the ghettos allowing the survival only of Jewish workers in a few labor concentration camps.” They were sent to places with names like Auschwitz, Belzec, Chelmono, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Of the 5,370,000 people killed in these places, the vast majority were Jews. The others consisted of anyone who was deemed an enemy to the state, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and gypsies.

The purpose of these places was to kill—and to do it efficiently. When the Einsatzgruppen started its mass killing, the average cost was ten cents per capita. By using the death camps, the cost dropped to little more than a penny. This was accomplished through the use of a gas called zyklon B, a crystalline cyanide pesticide. The procedure was simple, surreal, and shocking. Victims from various ghettos were packed into cattle cars and transported for hours. Many died en route. Immediately on arrival, the men were separated from the women and children. Their hair was shorn off; their clothing, taken from them. They were paraded through columns of police to what they were told were showers. “The gassing lasted ten to thirty minutes depending on the . . . techniques used.”

Dawidowicz: “On March 16, 1946, Rudolf Hess [not Hess] made the following statement to two
officers of the War Crimes Investigation Unit of the British Army of the Rhine: ‘I personally arranged on orders received from Himmler in May 1941 the gassing of two million persons between June–July 1941 and the end of 1943 during which time I was commandant of Auschwitz.”

What happened to the Jewish people must be remembered. (See “A Day for Remembering” on page 30.) Their suffering was immeasurable. But we know a yet-future holocaust awaits the Jewish people, far worse than that of Nazi Germany. It will be a time unlike any in the history of humanity. Zechariah 13:8 explains that two-thirds of the Jewish people will be killed during the Tribulation. In many respects, this event is a continuation of Hitler’s “Final Solution.”

Unlike the Holocaust of World War II, however, the Tribulation can be avoided through faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior from sin. We who know Jesus the Messiah have the imperative to warn others, both Jews and Gentiles, about this prophetic truth and explain the way of escape. We can have a part in preventing lives from becoming death statistics like those that mark Hitler’s Holocaust.

Endnotes

1 Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, cited on Yad Vashem’s Web site [www.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/faqs/answers/faq_4.html].
3 Unpublished notes from Holocaust class taught by Byron Sherwin, College of Judaica, Chicago, 1981–82.
5 Ibid., p. 87.
6 Unpublished notes.
7 Rausch, pp. 83-84.
8 Ibid., p. 84.
9 Dawidowicz, p. 280.
11 Ibid., p. 44.
12 Dawidowicz, p. 188.
13 Unpublished notes.
14 Dawidowicz, p. 199.
15 Ibid., p. 200.

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Israel’s ultimate triumph over the nations of the world is the theme not only of the Old Testament but the whole Bible. Unfortunately, many Christians believe that the church, through Christ, has permanently replaced Israel as the recipient of the promised Abrahamic blessings. This prevailing viewpoint is called Replacement or Amillennial Theology, meaning no Millennium, i.e., no future Israeliite Kingdom, the Kingdom is now the church.

As if anticipating this erroneous teaching, Paul, in Romans 11, specifically warned believing Gentiles against becoming arrogant in their place of blessing in contrast to the Jewish people, whom he likened to olive branches that were broken off their own tree because of unbelief (vv. 17–20). Paul taught that Gentile believers should not consider themselves more righteous than Israel or think that Israel has
been cast off permanently from God’s promises (Rom. 11:1–12). Rather, Gentiles are to see their position as one of grace based on God’s promises to Abraham. They now enjoy this position as children of Abraham through faith in Christ, as will Israel when the Lord finally brings the nation back to Himself (Rom. 11:25–32). Consequently, the church should not believe that God has abandoned the Jewish people but that He is using their current situation as a means of bringing them back to genuine faith in Him. As Paul wrote, *I say, then, Have they [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness [salvation]?* (Rom. 11:11–12).

God’s Redemptive Plan for Israel

When God formed Israel, it was to be a “kingdom of priests” to the Lord (Ex. 19:6), declaring Him among the Gentiles (1 Ki. 8:60). Israel’s faith and obedience to the Mosaic Covenant was to bring her so much blessing that she would lead the pagan world to God. But after the reigns of David and Solomon, the Israelites were not faithful to the covenant. Thus God was obligated to discipline them (Dt. 28—29), which resulted in their expulsion from the land via the Assyrian (722 B.C.) and Babylonian (586 B.C.) exiles. The Israelite prophets had already prophesied these events but always added that the nation will be redeemed and restored to her former glory through the coming of the Davidic Messiah (Isa. 1—12).

The prophet Daniel further indicated that a period known as the “times of the Gentiles” would intervene (Dan. 9:20–27). Thus, as part of His discipline of Israel, God placed the nation under Gentile domination until the Messiah comes.

When the Messiah came the first time, many in Israel were looking for this redemption. However, God had determined that the Messiah would be rejected and die (Acts 2:23). Thus the institution of the Israelite Kingdom and its banishment of evildoers was postponed to enable the gospel to go to the Gentiles. In the meantime, Israel would remain under Gentile domination; hence the erroneous view developed that Israel has been cast off forever. At Messiah’s Second Advent, the Israelite Kingdom will be established in Jerusalem and Messiah will rule over the whole world in righteousness.

The Future Battle in Israel

The Bible clearly teaches that the Messianic Kingdom will not
come without a fight, both spiritually and literally. Satan will not relinquish his rule willingly and will fight to destroy and kill as many as possible until his end. He will also try to destroy Israel to prevent the nation from repenting. However, at the end of the Great Tribulation, when the armies of the world surround and invade Jerusalem, the Lord will return to fight for Israel.

Zechariah 12—14 vividly describes this battle. Zechariah wrote, And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the nations of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be like David; and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them (12:3–4, 8).

Combined with the action of the dragon and the Beast in Revelation 11—13 and 19, a picture of this end-times battle emerges: Leading Roman (Western) forces and the Antichrist (the Beast in Revelation) will invade the Middle East and Israel, where Antichrist will capture the Temple and set up his image for the world to worship. Although he intends to exterminate Israel, God will protect a remnant in the wilderness. Also, a remnant will hold out in Jerusalem. So the armies of the whole world will gather in the Valley of Armageddon, the staging area for the battle for Jerusalem.

When the situation seems most desperate, the Israeli leaders will repent and recognize Jesus as their Messiah (Zech. 12:9–14). This action will trigger the Messiah’s return (Zech. 14:4; Rev. 19) to defeat Israel’s enemies and establish His rule over the whole world from Jerusalem.

Paul taught that Gentile believers should not consider themselves more righteous than Israel or think that Israel has been cast off permanently from God’s promises.

Zechariah 12—14 vividly describes this battle. Zechariah wrote,

Almost every Old Testament prophet revealed something about the Messianic Kingdom and the restoration of Israel. The major prophets, especially Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, wrote extensively about the blessings that one day will come to Israel. They include:

- A righteous Israel under the New Covenant (Jer. 31; Ezek. 36).
- A forgiven Israel due to the atonement of the suffering Servant of the Lord (Isa. 42; 49—50; 52—53).
- A regathering of scattered Israel from around the world to the land (Isa. 25—27; Ezek. 37; Zech. 8).
- Resurrection of Old Testament saints to enjoy the Kingdom (Isa. 25—26; Dan. 12; Ezek. 37).
- Uniting of Israel and Judah (Ezek. 37).
- Rule from Jerusalem of a Messianic Davidic descendant (Ezek. 37; Isa. 2; 9; 11; 24; Zech. 14).
- A new Temple in Jerusalem, where the world will come to worship (Ezek. 40—48; Hag. 2).
- Protection from enemies and invaders (Ezek. 38—39).
- Gentiles’ honoring Israelites as God’s people (Isa. 49; 60).
- Rule of the Messiah over the whole world (Ps. 2).
- Defeat of Satan and his demons, so his rule over the people of the earth is broken (Isa. 24; 27).
- A time of joy and feasting (Isa. 25).

As the prophet Micah aptly summarized,

He [God] will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old (7:19–20).

How do these promises of God’s correlate with the New Testament? How do we reconcile (1) that believers are “co-heirs” with Christ (Gal. 4:7), (2) the New Covenant concept of all being equal in Christ (Eph. 2), and (3) the Old Covenant being done away (Heb. 7—10)? Has not Israel’s
rejection of the Messiah and the progress of revelation in the New Testament shown that we should understand the promised blessings of the Old Testament as now being fulfilled figuratively in the church?

As Paul would say, “God forbid” (Rom. 11:1, 11). God’s plan is to bring both together. As Jesus said when He saw a centurion’s faith, “Many shall come from the east and west [Gentile believers], and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 8:11).

Adding New Testament revelation, a fuller picture based on the above twelve points reveals the following facts:

The Gentiles spoken of in the Old Testament who worship at Jerusalem in the Kingdom will be New Covenant saints.

As Jewish people live under the Messianic King in the land of Israel, church saints will inhabit and rule over the rest of the world under their King in Jerusalem.

While all believers are equal in the New Covenant, Israel will have a special place as a fulfillment of God’s promises to it.

The presence of a literal Temple will not be an anachronism. Rather, it will be the physical locality of the Lord’s rule on the earth from Jerusalem, as God promised (Ps. 132).

This Messianic Kingdom is not the end of the story. After Messiah’s thousand-year reign (Rev. 20), God will create new heavens and a new Earth and will build a New Jerusalem, where all the saints, both Jew and Gentile, will live together equally for eternity (Isa. 65—66; Rev. 21—22).

So, are the Jews God’s people or not? Based on the teaching of the Bible, the answer is unequivocally yes.

Does this mean every Jewish person currently has a spiritual relationship with God through Jesus Christ and can be considered a “child of God”? Even Paul would say no because God is calling out only a remnant of Jews into the church (Rom. 11:1–6).

This dual aspect of God’s relationship with His people is what makes a clear understanding of God’s will so crucial. On the one hand, Jewish people need to hear that Jesus is their Messiah so they can join the remnant of Jews into the church. On the other hand, much tribulation is going to come through the Gentiles to drive the nation of Israel to repentance, so that all Jewish people become God’s people in their hearts through the New Covenant relationship with Christ. Therefore, Paul’s warning to us as a church made up predominantly of Gentiles is still apt:

- Boast not against the branches [fallen Israel]. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say, then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee (Rom. 11:18–21).

As our world moves politically toward a final Roman Empire, one can already see how the existence of the State of Israel will be the obstacle to world peace. How long will the West back Israel if it perceives her as the stumbling block of the world? We don’t know.

But we do know that this situation is the Lord’s doing (Zech. 12:2).

Eventually, He will bring Israel back to her land and enable her ultimate triumph. As Ezekiel stated,

- My tabernacle also shall be with them [Israel]; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I, the LORD, do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore (37:27–28).

In the meantime, let’s pray that we will be able not only to stand with the Jewish people in their time of need but also speak to them of their Messiah, who will one day demonstrate to the world His everlasting love for them.

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One of the brightest and yet darkest periods of Judah’s history came in the eighth century B.C. Although the prosperity of Uzziah’s kingdom (790–740 B.C.) was still being felt in the days of his son Jotham (750–731 B.C.), along with it came social, political, and religious corruption. Rich rulers oppressed the poor, perverted justice, and practiced gross iniquity. Judges took bribes, and businessmen cheated the people they dealt with.

Into this defiled setting, “The word of the LORD... came to Micah, the Morasthite, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah” (v. 1). Although Micah wrote to both Israel and Judah, his message was primarily to Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The name Micah means “who is like Jehovah.” He was a country prophet from Moresheth-gath, located on the border of Judah about six miles from Lachish. Nothing is known of his family background or occupation. However, we know he had a deep compassion for the poor; had a courageous spirit; and boldly condemned the moral corruption, hypocritical religious practices, and political suppression of his day.

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. He began prophesying no earlier than 751 B.C. and no later than 735 B.C., and he concluded his ministry no later than 697 B.C.

Ahaz (735–715 B.C.) succeeded Jotham as king of Judah. His reign proved to be among the worst in Judah’s history. Ahaz was one of Judah’s evil kings, and his wickedness brought God’s judgment on the nation. During his reign, an alliance of Israel (King Pekah) and Syria (King
God’s Faithful Witness

All nations were summoned to hear the coming judgment of God:

Hear, all ye peoples; hearken, O earth, and all that is in it; and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be melted under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, like wax before the fire, and like the waters that are poured down a steep place (vv. 2–4).

The one testifying against the nations is none other than the “Lord GOD” who is enthroned in heaven. He alone will bear witness against the nations’ sins. God will step forth from His holy sanctuary and descend to Earth like a mighty, victorious warrior to execute the prophesied judgment. The Lord will tread on the “the high places” where both Israel and Judah practiced idolatry—a prediction of Assyria’s invasion of Samaria in 722 B.C. and the Babylonians’ invasion of Judah in 586 B.C. The picture of mountains melting and valleys splitting portray the awesome power and terror that the Lord’s judgment will produce and foreshadows the Great Tribulation when the Lord will judge the nations.

God’s judicial verdict resulted from Israel’s sin:

For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? (v. 5).

The term Jacob refers to all twelve tribes of Israel, whose father is Jacob. Iniquity filled all the land because both the northern kingdom of Israel and southern kingdom of Judah embraced Canaanite Baal worship. The negatively posed questions expect a positive answer, underscoring why God manifested His wrath and judgment against Israel and Judah.

Because of Israel’s gross idolatry, God destroyed Samaria:

Therefore, I will make Samaria like an heap of the field, and like plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down its stones into the valley, and I will uncover the foundations of it. And all the carved images of it shall be beaten to pieces, and all its hires shall be burned with the fire, and all its idols will I lay desolate; for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot (vv. 6–7).

In plain language that Judah could understand, God promised the destruction of Samaria that took place in 722 B.C. First, Samaria will look like a heap of stones on the side of a field cleared for planting a vineyard. Second, so thorough will be Samaria’s destruction that even her foundation will be torn down. Third, all her idols will be melted; and the gold, silver, and offerings people gave in religious prostitution will be offered to the idols in Assyria. The picture was a vivid warning to Judah, who had become like Israel in her worship.

Micah lamented God’s revelation:

Therefore, I will lament and wail, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches. For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem (vv. 8–9).
The prophet walked throughout the land, clothed only in a loincloth, crying out in mournful tones that sounded similar to the haunting cry of a jackal and fearful screech of an ostrich. Judah’s wound will be incurable, reaching the very gates of Jerusalem. Micah’s lament is presented in a prophetic perfect; that is, it speaks of a future judgment as if it had already happened.

**God’s Fierce Wrath**

What follows is a list of the cities that Assyria will invade on the way to Judah. Micah used the name of each city as a play on words in describing the destruction. He used a word that sounds like the name of the city or comes from the city’s name to describe its demise. First, “Declare [tell] it not at Gath, weep not at all” (v. 10). The name Gath sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “tell.” That is, “In tell town, tell it not.” Micah did not want the people of Gath in Philistia to hear about the Assyrian attack on Judah, so the Philistines would not rejoice on hearing the news. Micah exhorted the Israelites not to show sorrow because it would give comfort to their enemy.

Second, “In the house of Aphrah [Bethle-Aphrah means “house of dust”], roll thyself in the dust” (v. 10). Rolling in the dust symbolizes sorrow, shame, humiliation, and intense mourning.

Third, “Pass away, thou inhabitant of Shaphir [Shaphir means “beautiful”], having thy shame naked” (v. 11). The city would be denuded of her beauty and grace by experiencing shameful treatment during captivity.

Fourth, “The inhabitant of Zaanan [“going forth”] came not forth” (v. 11), or did not stir to come out of the city and fight because of the strength of the Assyrian army.

Fifth, “In the mourning of Beth-ezel [“place nearby”] he shall receive of you his standing” (v. 11). The death wails of Beth-ezel will scare off those who will desire to find shelter or protection from the Assyrian invasion.

Sixth, “For the inhabitant of Maroth [“bitterness”] waited anxiously for good, but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem” (v. 12). Maroth will taste the bitterness of destruction, not deliverance, because the Lord will send calamity all the way to Jerusalem.

Seventh, “O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast; she is the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion; for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee” (v. 13). Micah sarcastically urged the people of Lachish to harness their horses quickly in order to flee the Assyrians; but they will not escape judgment, because they had introduced Baal worship to Judah and Jerusalem.

Eighth, Judah will be required to “give presents to Moresheth-gath” (v. 14). Moresheth sounds like meorasah, meaning “betrothed.” The word presents is used for the dowry given to a daughter when she marries. (See 1 Kings 9:16.) Judah must give up the city once betrothed to her as a present to the Assyrians.

Ninth, “The houses of Achzib [literally, “deception”] shall be a lie to the kings of Israel” (v. 14). Achzib will defect to the attacking Assyrians and be lost as a defensive city for the kings of Judah to flee.

Tenth, “Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah” (v. 15). The Hebrew word Mareshah sounds like the word inheritance. Micah was saying that the Lord will bring an inheritor (King Sargon) who will claim Mareshah as his inheritance.

Eleventh, “He shall come unto Adullam, the glory of Israel” (v. 15). Adullam once provided protection for King David as he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 22:1–2). In like manner, Judah’s royalty will seek to flee to Adullam to escape the Assyrian invasion.

In verse 16, Micah concluded his lament by calling on Judah to make herself bald in the day of her captivity, a pagan practice forbidden by Jewish law (Lev. 19:27–28; Dt. 14:1) but adopted by Judah on the death of a near relative (Amos 8:10). Judah’s great desolation will make her feel like a mother mourning the death of her “delicate children” (literally, “the children of thy delight,” v. 16). They were to “enlarge [their] baldness as the eagle” (v. 16). When the bald eagle molts, it looks more or less bald and appears sickly and aged. The reason for their mourning was that their children “are gone into captivity” (v. 16). The exile mentioned here was most likely the Babylonian Captivity of 586 B.C., when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple, not the Assyrian captivity mentioned in verse 10.

When disaster is imminent, a nation and its leaders need to be like Micah, who lamented before the Lord over his people’s sin and pleaded to God for mercy as well as deliverance. May we heed this admonition as well.

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Late last winter a flurry of peace proposals began floating through the air of the Middle East. The situation in Israel was desperate. Palestinian terrorists were murdering innocent civilians at an alarming rate. In a single 24-hour period, twenty-one Israelis were killed and scores of others wounded. The Israel Defense Forces were deployed throughout the country, Gaza Strip, and Judea-Samaria (West Bank) in a desperate effort to check the violence.

Among the most alarming developments was the induction of young women into the ranks of Palestinian suicide squads. Wafa Idris was the first woman to die while trying to kill as many innocent Jewish people as possible. As insane as this may sound to civilized people in the West, Idris was hailed as a Joan of Arc—a martyr worthy of being followed into death by young Palestinian girls.

With a something-must-be-done sense of desperation and, perhaps, a feeling that vulnerable, war-weary Israelis would seize virtually any plan for peace, first the French then the Saudis pushed forward their conceptions of what is needed to settle the deadly affair. France came up with the idea that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinians be granted a state immediately, no strings attached. Afterward they could worry about such pesky incidentals as stopping the violence; figuring out what to do with all those terrorist organizations; and—oh, yes—determining how much of Israel would actually be left for the Israelis. To state the obvious, the plan didn’t fly.

As for Yasser Arafat and his cadre of killers, they would be asked to do nothing. But then, that’s what Arafat has come to expect whenever negotiations get under way. However, being in a rather accommodating frame of mind, Mr. Arafat generously offered to give the Jewish people access to their own Wailing (Western) Wall and the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. The rest of Jerusalem—all of it—would be his.

Next to be heard from was Syria’s Bashar Assad. Sounding much like his late, unlamented father, Hafez al-Assad, he chimed in saying he would come into the deal if Israel gave him back the entire Golan Heights; and he further demanded that all who claim to be Palestinian refugees (they number in the millions) be allowed to return to Israel proper.

Above the clamor and clapping in the halls of the UN, one could discern the groan of the Israeli delegates. It echoed to Jerusalem and back. But why spoil such a good thing? All the Jewish people were being asked to do was commit national suicide—nothing they hadn’t been asked to do repeatedly during more than fifty years of statehood. Then again, some people are just hard to please.
Some of the most disturbing words in all of Scripture are found in the book of Esther:

There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are different from all people; neither keep they the king’s laws. Therefore, it is not for the king’s profit to tolerate them (Est. 3:8).

These are Haman’s words to Ahasuerus (Xerxes) of Persia around 500 B.C. Haman’s hatred for the Jewish people was not a secret, so it was no surprise that he wanted all of them—men, women, and children—killed. As chief advisor, a position of great trust, he was able to convince Ahasuerus to sign a decree calling for the extermination of every Jew:

The letters were sent by posts into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the property of them for spoil (Est. 3:13).

The Jewish people were presented as a liability (“not for the king’s profit,” v. 8) and an inherent danger (“neither keep they the king’s laws,” v. 8). According to this twisted logic, it was in the best interest of greater Persia to eradicate them and confiscate their assets. By God’s grace and providence, Haman failed to achieve his vile aim. Though God’s name is not mentioned even once in the entire book, we know He was there all the time.

Throughout history there have been many “Hamins” who have reared their ugly, anti-Semitic heads. The Jewish people have been targets of suffering and destruction most of their existence. They endured four hundred years of slavery in Egypt and saw their holy Temple destroyed by Assyria, then again by Babylon, each time resulting in their removal from their land by force. Since the time of the diaspora, when the Jews were scattered from their homeland and dispersed to all corners of the world—without a nation, government, or military—generations of men, women, and children have persecuted, driven out, and murdered the Jewish people. Think of the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Russian pogroms.

Almost immediately upon emerging as an internationally recognized entity in May 1948, the 650,000 Jewish residents of that new nation of Israel were
promised destruction by their 150 million Arab neighbors. In 1991 the shriek of air raid sirens announced the launches of thirty-nine Iraqi Scud missiles. Israelis were forced to huddle in sealed rooms, wearing gas masks and wondering if any of the warheads would bring deadly chemicals attached to them. Today Jewish people are targets for extermination by suicide bombers belonging to organizations with names like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. These bombers perpetrate such attacks while Israelis are waiting for buses, shopping at malls, or eating in restaurants.

However, one event dwarfs all these, standing alone in its ugliness. It was orchestrated by people who were purely evil, possessing the same vision as Haman and the same lust for power. Yet this event produced an unimaginable death toll. It was birthed by satanic hate, nurtured by fear, and sustained by greed. It is called the Holocaust (Hebrew: Shoah, meaning “burning”). It resulted in the annihilation of six million men, women, and children whose only crime was being Jewish. No other event in the twentieth century—or ever in history—put such blight on its citizenry.

Fifty-seven years ago the truth became known to the world as witnesses tried to describe the horror of the Holocaust. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the allied forces during World War II, once said, “The same day I saw my first horror camp, I visited every nook and cranny. I felt it my duty to be in a position from then on to testify about these things in case there ever grew up at home the belief or assumption that the stories of Nazi brutality were just propaganda.”

Much has happened since Eisenhower spoke those words. Voices have arisen with a call to move on. But as one eyewitness to the liberation stated, “I would not believe it had happened in civilized nations. I pray to God that this cannot happen again.”

Since the time of the diaspora… generations of men, women, and children have persecuted, driven out, and murdered the Jewish people.

Actively remembering (Hebrew: zachor) is incredibly important for the Jewish people. They remember their redemption from slavery out of Egypt at Passover, their deliverance from the Persians at Purim, and their deliverance from Antiochus at Hanukkah. Each of these days celebrates the preservation of the Jewish people. There is great joy in celebrating their deliverance.

Yet there is no joy in remembering the Holocaust. Establishing a day of remembrance for the Holocaust was not something Jewish people wanted; it was something they needed. Almost immediately after the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948, a debate began between Israelis as to how and when to remember the Holocaust. They considered several dates. One was the tenth of Tevet (December–January), a day the Jewish people remember the siege of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., confirmed in 2 Kings 25:1. They rejected this suggestion because it had no connection to the Holocaust.

Many wanted the date of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, April 19, 1943, to provide a direct link to the events of the Holocaust; but they rejected this date because it is too close to Passover. A stalemate ensued until 1950 when they selected an alternate date of 27 Nisan. Falling beyond Passover, it is close to the time of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Many Orthodox Jews felt it was wrong to have it anytime in the month of Nisan because of Passover, but they reached a compromise by saying if it fell on the Sabbath it would move to the next Sunday, which would be in the next month.

And so it was that the Knesset (Israel’s parliament) proclaimed April 12, 1951, Yom Hashoah U’Mered HaGetaot, Holocaust and Ghetto Revolt Remembrance Day. It was later changed to Yom Hashoah Ve Hagevurah (Devastation and Heroism Day). Today it is simply called Yom Hashoah. Yom Hashoah is not a day to celebrate but to remember. How? What do people do? The answer to those questions depends on the people or organization remembering the day. Jewish community centers, synagogues, and individuals observe this day in varied ways. For instance, ceremonies are held in which six candles are lit, each candle representing one million Jewish deaths. In conjunction with the candle lighting, prayers and/or poems
are recited. Sometimes people choose to abstain from food to identify with many who were starved.

Holocaust museums also host varied programs. These remembrances usually include a reading of the names of those who died. Heartwarming stories are often told of the little things done during that time to keep hope alive or to celebrate Jewish community.

One such story took place in Auschwitz, the infamous death camp. It was December, the time of cold winter and Hanukkah. The Jews there wanted to celebrate this Festival of Lights but had no candles to do so. The Nazis certainly would not provide them with candles, so the people saved small portions of butter until they had enough to make one candle. They gathered around secretly and had the rabbi recite the blessings.

The third blessing stated, “We thank God for bringing us to this day.” Several asked the rabbi how he could pray such a prayer. The rabbi wondered as well until he looked at all the faces, emaciated, yet glowing, from the light of the candle. “I . . . had to bless Hashem [God], for allowing me to live to see this assembly of martyrs who sanctify the name of G-d in public, who keep their faith amidst the flames,” he answered.5

The need to remember in the midst of such horror is an amazing response indeed. That desire to remember might seem difficult for most Americans, at least until September 11, 2001. Since that awful day, people in America are now discussing various ways to remember the thousands of people killed.

The need for a day like Yom Hashoah becomes clearer in light of such events that took place last fall in Durban, South Africa. At this meeting, attended by members of the United Nations, the world witnessed anti-Semitism in visual form, the likes of which have not been seen since Germany in the 1930s. Cartoon pamphlets depicting Jews as pigs and monkeys were passed out before the conference. Literature accusing Israel of being an apartheid regime that commits racist crimes against humanity, including ethnic cleansing, was distributed. It was vile. The UN High Commissioner Mary Robinson, to her credit, dramatically stood up in one of the meetings to express her outrage. As a Gentile woman she declared, “I am a Jew.”6 So outrageous was this conference, in fact, that the United States and Israel left it under protest.

Remembering the Holocaust is essential.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made this announcement before leaving: In 53 years since the establishment of Israel we were attacked five times with an attempt to overpower us and bring an end to the State of Israel. We stand alone, outnumbered, outgunned, and we defended our lives. We won all the wars; we won a lot of territories. We gave back the territories, the water, the oil to Egypt. We gave back the land, the water to Jordan. We have withdrawn unilaterally from Lebanon in accordance with UN resolution 425. We offered the Syrians an exchange of land for peace; we have offered the Palestinians something that no Arab country did before us because the West Bank and the Gaza strip were under Arab control. We offered them an independent state. They rejected it. Instead there was the Intifada, and even today there were four bombs in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.7

Remembering the Holocaust is essential.

As Christians, should we have anything to do with a day devoted to remembering the Holocaust? To answer that question, I will ask another question. How could we not? As Christians, we should remember an event that so epitomizes the satanic influence held over so many people and countries, especially when we see it fresh today.

Yom Hashoah reminds us of the suffering at the hands of an evil regime, the Nazis; but it also reminds us of the goal of all anti-Semitism. Instigated by Satan himself, it is his attempt to destroy the apple of God’s eye, His people, Israel.

As the Jewish people must remember the Holocaust, we must pray for and remember them before the Lord. We must stand by Israel.

Endnotes

2Ibid.
4Ibid.
5Rabbi Yehuda Prero, “Yom HaShoah—How to Remember the Holocaust,” Torah.org, [www.torah.org/learning/yomtov/holocaust/no1.html].

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Although Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl was Jewish, not Christian, in many ways his execution parallels that of Christian believers in other parts of the world. Not only was it strikingly similar in manner, but it also echoed the global plan of Islamic extremists.

Daniel Pearl’s last words were these: “My father is a Jew, my mother is a Jew, and I am a Jew.” This statement may well have been forced on him by his murderers, who cut his throat while he was speaking. If not, it is understandable that the journalist would have chosen to make these words his last. But if so (they tortured him into making other statements denouncing his country and religion), his killers were using his Jewishness as a twisted justification for his murder.

As Mr. Pearl was dying, his head was sliced from his body and his lifeless torso stabbed repeatedly. His murderers videotaped everything, including his severed head and bloody torso, and released the video for distribution.

Daniel Pearl, a native of Princeton, New Jersey, was kidnapped while in Pakistan. He was killed for two reasons. First, he was an American journalist. It mattered not that he had a reputation for fairness in his reporting. Next, he was Jewish. For those reasons alone, he was deemed unfit to live.

The graphic details of his barbaric death may repulse us. But it’s time we paid attention to the graphic details of what some men are doing in the name of religion.

A few months ago, I saw the grim photographs of a young man in Indonesia who had miraculously survived a near decapitation at the hands of militant Muslims. His body bears horrible scars from the ordeal. Just weeks ago, I received photos of a Pakistani pastor lying shot to death on the floor of his church. In a corner of the room were...
In the previous article, we observed implications for the triunity of God in the Old Testament, noting how that portion of the Scriptures presents both the unity and plurality of God. Now we shall examine implications for the triunity of God in the New Testament.

The Plurality of God. A number of factors in the New Testament indicate that a plurality exists within the one God.

1. The title “God” is assigned to the Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

First, Jesus called the Father “God” (Jn. 6:27). Second, the apostle John, referring to Jesus as “the Word,” stated, “the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1). With this assertion, John signified Jesus’ deity. The absence of the definite article the before “God,” both in the Greek text and English translation of John’s assertion, indicates that he was referring to kind of being—Jesus, the Word, was God-kind of being. In the same way, through the absence of the definite article the before “God” in John 1:18, the apostle indicated that the Father is God-kind of being.

The writer of Hebrews, referring to what God the Father said about Jesus, His Son, wrote, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Heb. 1:8). Thus, God the Father called His Son “God.”

Third, when the apostle Peter confronted Ananias with his sin of lying, he indicated that he lied to God when he lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3–4). Peter thereby called the Holy Spirit “God.”

2. The New Testament indicates that the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, not three manifestations of the same person.

First, in addition to stating that Jesus as the Word “was God,” the apostle John declared that He “was with God” (Jn. 1:1). John thereby indicated that Jesus was a distinct person from God the Father.

Second, the expression “But unto the Son he saith,” in the Hebrews 1:8 record of what the Father said to the Son, signifies that the Father and the Son are distinct persons.

Third, when Jesus came out of the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Him from heaven, and the Father spoke from heaven. Concerning Jesus He said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:16–17). The facts that the Son was on Earth, the Spirit descended from heaven to the Son, and the Father spoke from heaven about the Son indicate that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons.

Fourth, when the angel Gabriel informed Mary that she would give birth to Jesus the Messiah, he told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, the power of the Highest (the Father) would overshadow her, and her holy offspring would be called the Son of the Highest, the Son of God (Lk. 1:31–35). Gabriel’s statements signified that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct from each other.

Fifth, after Jesus informed His apostles that He would return to His...
Father’s house in heaven (Jn. 14:2–3), He told them that He would ask the Father to give them another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to abide with them forever (Jn. 14:16–17). Through these statements, Jesus indicated that He, the Father, and the Spirit are distinct persons.

Sixth, in John 14:26 Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit, whom the Father would send in Jesus’ name. In John 15:26 He declared that He would send the Spirit from the Father, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and the Spirit would testify concerning Him (Jesus). Once again such statements signify three distinct persons.

3. The New Testament associates the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together in such a way as to make inequality inconsistent.

First, Jesus taught that believers are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19). None of the three is to be excluded from the baptismal formula.

Second, all three persons can be blasphemed—God the Father (Rev. 13:6), Jesus the Son (Lk. 22:63–65), and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 12:31).

Third, Jesus asserted that He, the Father, and the Holy Spirit would abide with believers (Jn. 14:16–17, 23).

Fourth, all three are included in the benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

Fifth, all three can give life—God the Father (Jn. 5:21; Acts 17:24–25), Jesus the Son (Jn. 5:21; 6:33; 14:6), and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 6:63; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6).

Sixth, all three are associated with truth. God the Father is true (Jn. 3:33), and His Word is truth (Jn. 17:17); Jesus is the truth (Jn. 14:6); and the Spirit is truth (1 Jn. 5:6) and is called “the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).

Seventh, all three are eternal. God the Father is “the King eternal” (1 Tim. 1:17), and the Holy Spirit is “the eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14). The Son existed with God the Father before everything that had a beginning, and He did the work of creation (Jn. 1:1–3; Col. 1:16–17; Heb. 1:1–2).

Eighth, all three are called “Lord.” God the Father is called Lord by Jesus (Mt. 4:7, 10; 11:25) and others (Acts 2:39). Jesus the Son is called Lord by many people (Mt. 15:22; 16:22), and the Holy Spirit is called Lord by the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 3:17–18).

Ninth, all three are holy. Jesus addressed God as “Holy Father” (Jn. 17:11). The apostle Peter declared that God is holy and quoted God’s personal claim of holiness (1 Pet. 1:15–16), and angels in heaven continually ascribe holiness to God day and night (Rev. 4:8). The angel Gabriel ascribed holiness to Jesus, the Son of God (Lk. 1:35); demons called Jesus “the Holy One of God” (Mk. 1:24); and believers ascribed holiness to Him (Acts 4:27, 30). Holiness is ascribed to the Spirit more than ninety times in the New Testament. For example, both an angel (Mt. 1:20) and Jesus (Lk. 11:13) called Him “the Holy Spirit.”

Tenth, all three are associated with glory. The apostle Paul called God “the Father of glory” (Eph. 1:17), and heavenly creatures give glory to God as He sits on His throne (Rev. 4:9) and declare that He is worthy to receive glory (Rev. 4:10–11). The apostle Paul called Jesus “the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8). Jesus talked about the glory that He had with the Father before the world existed (Jn. 17:5). Peter, James, and John saw the shekinah glory of God shine from Jesus’ flesh and clothing when He was transfigured before them (Mt. 17:1–6; Jn. 1:14). The writer of Hebrews declared that God’s Son was the brightness of God’s glory (Heb. 1:3). The apostle Peter called the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of glory” (1 Pet. 4:14).

Eleventh, all three are associated with miraculous signs. God enabled Paul and Barnabas to perform miraculous signs (Acts 15:12). The Holy Spirit empowered Paul to execute miraculous signs (Rom. 15:19). Jesus, the Son of God, performed many miraculous signs (Jn. 7:31; 20:30–31), and He gave His apostles the power to do the same (Mt. 10:1, 8).

4. The New Testament has no fixed order in presenting these three persons.

The order in Matthew 28:19 is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The order in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and the
Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 4:4–6, the order is Spirit, Lord, and God the Father. The order in 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 is God, the Spirit, and the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jude 20–21, the order is the Holy Spirit, God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that the New Testament has no fixed order in presenting God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit implies that they are equal to each other in personhood and nature.

5. The New Testament indicates that the Son has equal blessing, honor, glory, and power with God the Father.

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

Second, the New Testament portrays all of creation giving the same everlasting blessing, honor, glory, and power to God who sits upon His throne and to the Son, God’s ultimate sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world (Rev. 5:13).

6. The New Testament signifies that Jesus the Son has the same divine essence or nature as the Father.

First, the New Testament teaches that only God is to be worshiped. No creatures are to be worshiped (Rom. 1:25–26; Rev. 22:8–9). Yet God the Father commanded all the angels to worship His Son (Heb. 1:6), and Jesus accepted worship from people (Mt. 9:18; 14:33).

Second, Jesus claimed to have the same divine essence or nature as the Father. He declared, “I and my Father are one” (Jn. 10:30); and He said, “I am the Son of God” (10:36). His enemies recognized these were assertions of equality with God in essence or nature (Jn. 5:18; 10:33, 36). A former enemy came to recognize that He did possess the divine nature in all its fullness (Col. 2:9).

Conclusion

The Old and New Testaments clearly teach that there is only one true God, but they indicate that a triunity—a plurality of three distinct persons in one, all equal in personhood and nature—exists within the one God. The Scriptures reveal that the Son and the Spirit are voluntarily submissive to the Father’s will (Jn. 5:30; 6:38; 7:16; 8:28–29; 14:16, 26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 11:3). This submissiveness does not indicate inequality of personhood or nature. It is purely a functional submissiveness. In any unit of several persons equal in personhood and nature, one person must exercise functional headship; and the other persons must voluntarily submit to that headship if the unit is to function effectively.

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Donald Grey Barnhouse, a great man of God who ministered for many years at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia until his death in 1960, once told the true story of a boy whose mother died when he was only six.

Knowing she was ill and would never live to see her child grow up, this saintly mother diligently poured her life into his. Every day she taught her child Scripture and helped him memorize verses, entrusting his soul to Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. When the Lord took her home, her son was given to her brother, a godless man who vowed that his nephew would not grow up to be a “sissy.”

By the time the boy turned 19, he was in charge of training cadets in Queen Victoria’s navy and was well-known for his profuse profanities and sacrile-
Lois his grandmother came from Lystra, a Roman province in Galatia (modern-day Turkey) and a stop on the apostle Paul’s first missionary journey. All three probably became believers during that time. Although Eunice and Lois were Jewish, Timothy’s father was an unbelieving Greek (Acts 16:1) who likely worshiped at pagan shrines and altars. Timothy was not circumcised when he was eight days old, as Mosaic Law commanded. Perhaps his father had prevented it (Acts 16:3).

No matter. Lois and Eunice poured their lives into Timothy’s, teaching him Scripture from his earliest days. When Paul wrote to Timothy, whom he affectionately called “my own son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2), he reminded him “that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

In the same Epistle, Paul said he remembered the sincere faith of Timothy’s mother and grandmother and believed Timothy’s faith was of the same caliber. He knew what Timothy would have to endure and encouraged him to have the same devotion to God as Lois and Eunice.

Their devotion must have been strong indeed because Paul wrote 2 Timothy around A.D. 67, when it would have been safer, humanly speaking, to renounce Christ than to follow Him. Three years earlier, Rome’s emperor, Nero, a 27-year-old madman, had blamed Christians for a fire that had ravaged Rome for nine days—a blaze many suspected Nero set himself. He viciously persecuted believers, delighting in watching them being torn to death by dogs and impaled on stakes, then set on fire to light his garden parties and chariot races.

Lois and Eunice had remained faithful. They taught young Timothy, diligently sowing the seeds of righteousness. Today God gives many mothers the unequalled privilege of leading their children to Christ. Youngsters are capable of understanding the gospel and often come to faith easier than adults do. The Lord Jesus Himself cautioned believers not to be detriments to “one of these little ones who believe in me” (Mt. 18:6).

Mothers have a truly monumental privilege. They have the unparalleled opportunity to teach their children spiritual truth. It has been roughly forty years since the women’s liberation movement began in earnest, and women excel in all areas of life today. But as this age draws to a close, we may yet discover that God has entrusted the greater power, not to women who run countries and corporations, but

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Christians were linked by faith in Christ. Thus they were devoted to the same principles, values, lifestyles, and freedoms that grow out of being believers in Jesus and that formed the foundation on which America and the Western world were built.

For that element of the Muslim religion given to bigotry, oppression, jihad, and conquest, the liberty that Christ brings to individuals is intolerable. Therefore, Pearls and pastors are marked for extermination. Together, they represent both sides of the equation. Judeo-Christianity undergirds the Western democracies and the lone true democracy in the Middle East—Israel.

Will this struggle continue? Will Christians continue to die? Will Jewish people fall prey to the same religious mania? Without question. The book of martyrs will continue to be filled. The question is, How much are we willing to pray, sacrifice, and do to alleviate their suffering?

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Conversion ruling throws Israel into political tizzy

The Israeli High Court of Justice has ruled that converts to Reform or Conservative Judaism inside Israel must be registered as Jews. The ruling overturns Israel’s long-standing policy that only those who convert under Orthodox procedures can be officially designated as Jewish on their identity cards.

However, the ruling does nothing to obligate the Chief Rabbinate to recognize such converts as Jews in areas of marriage and burial. Only immigrants who were converted abroad under Conservative and Reform procedures are officially considered Jewish.

The ruling, nonetheless, has created a furor in the political arena. Arutz-7 reported that Orthodox MKs (members of the Knesset) “vowed to rectify the situation by proposing legislation to retain their exclusivity on conversion,” while secular factions “hailed the decision as a step toward breaking the Orthodox monopoly on many areas of Israeli Jewish life.”

Arutz-7 reported that “Former Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu called on rabbis in Israel to accept converts as Jews only if they have undergone an Orthodox conversion according to time-honored Halakhic [Jewish legal] tradition. ‘First the Supreme Court prevents the army from demolishing terrorists’ houses, and now it goes and demolishes the Jewish religious home itself,’ he said.”

According to Arutz-7, “Rabbi Yitzchak Levy called upon the religious parties in the government to set an ultimatum: Either a law is passed that will “right the wrong” and recognize only Halakhically-converted persons as true converts, or else ‘go to new elections in the hope that the national honor will be restored.’”

Opponents of the decision claim the court is undermining the Jewishness of the country by promoting what one detractor called “the fatal process of Jewish assimilation,” the news service said.

Court President, Aharon Barak, explained the decision when he wrote, “Israel is not the state of the ‘Jewish community,’ Israel is the state of the Jewish people. In Judaism, there are many streams operating in Israel and abroad. Each stream acts in accordance with its beliefs. Every Jew in Israel enjoys freedom of religion, conscience, and organization. Our fundamental principles grant each individual the freedom to decide to which stream he belongs.”

Adoptive parents are particularly happy about the ruling because it means non-Jewish children they have adopted, who previously could not be registered as Jewish, will be so registered now.

Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Melchior, who opposes the ruling, said the issue of who is a Jew needs to be decided in the synagogue, not in the courts, Arutz-7 reported. Melchior said the ruling will create two types of converts: those recognized by religious law and those recognized only by the courts. “The word Jewish might be stamped on their identity cards,” he said, “but the Jewish nation will treat them as non-Jews.”

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Rabbi Yosef Al-Nekaveh explained, “and when we were involved in evacuating the bodies of the three murdered Israelis [in a recent terror attack], they placed pig fat and pigskin on the body of the dead terrorist.”

He said a “right-wing kibbutznik” had supplied them with the swinish tissues. Arab MKs [members of the Israeli Knesset] responded with outrage. Ahmed Tibi said, “This is a pig-like act of a man who is not worthy of being a rabbi,” while Abdel Malek Dahamshe added, “The ethical inferiority and lowliness that the settlers have reached is intolerable. This is an act of first-degree desecration of God’s name. . . . It is especially shocking to think that a rabbi did this.”

On the other side of the spectrum, MK Tzvi Hendel said, “If these primitive murderers stuff their brains with nonsense about Paradise and who-knows-how-many virgins waiting only for them, then they certainly believe in the other nonsense that being buried with pigskin blocks their way to Paradise.”

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PA violates covenant of children’s rights

The Internet Jerusalem Post—A government report charges the Palestinian Authority (PA) with violating the International Covenant of Children’s Rights because its textbooks and educators allegedly incite children to commit violent acts against Israelis.

The report presents cases in which it alleges the PA sponsors and condones education and other activities promoting
E ach day, we as Christians are given the opportunity to glorify God. Using our time well, exercising the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us, and making wise use of the finances God has entrusted to us are only a few of the many ways in which we can honor Him.

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

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

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

To receive How to Make a Will That Works, simply check the appropriate box on the envelope in this magazine; or write to Tom Geoghan at The Friends of Israel, P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099.
We live in a time when the eyes of all the world are looking on us. The Lord has chosen us, saying, “Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen” (Isa. 44:1; cf. Dt. 7:6; 14:2; Isa. 41:8). Can anything be better than to be chosen by God? Certainly not!

But God said in Isaiah, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass, his master’s crib, but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider (1:2–3).

We live in a time of great trouble in Israel, and we need people who believe in the true and living God. Yet men who consider themselves wise and learned in Torah (the Five Books of Moses, the Law) call us traitors for believing in God according to the Bible. They come against us with great venom, even though we try not to treat them as they treat us.

Recently I was with many of my neighbors when a rabbi accused me of being a traitor and tried to humiliate me.

“Why do you call me a traitor?” I asked. “What have I done against my country? I fought in all our wars from 1948 through 1973, served in the military to protect our country between those wars, and now my children are on active duty. “What have you done for the land of Israel? You have never served in the military, and not one of your children serves. Why should people consider you trustworthy but me a traitor? Where then is justice?”

All the people listening began to agree with me. So the rabbi tried to persuade them. “Do you know in whom he believes?” he asked the crowd. “He believes in This Man who persecutes our people. And because of him [This Man] came the Holocaust.”

They did not know whom he meant. “Because of whom?” one asked.

“This Man! Jesus Christ!”

“I am glad we have come on this subject,” I said. “First of all, I am happy that I do not worship in the rabbinical tradition, with its many superstitions. I believe in what is written in the Bible by the Holy Spirit of God. You, on the other hand, are afraid of the truth. You even try to stop people from reading all that is in the Bible.”

Now the rabbi was becoming more agitated. “How can you tell such a big lie?” he shouted.

I could see it was time to lay everything on the table. “Why do you never read Isaiah chapter 53 in the synagogues? Is it not in the Bible?”

“Now I know in whom he has believed!” he shouted to the crowd. But most of the people standing there did not know what we were talking about because most of them never read the Bible. This was my chance to tell them about Jesus from what was written about Him in the Hebrew Scriptures.

By now the rabbi was seething. “You see how those who believe in This Man have such special power to convince! Be careful of him!” he shouted.

So I continued. “He told you...
the Bible are traitors. Take a good look. Who is a traitor? Many people who call me a traitor do no work and eat the bread of charity because they are lazy. They never serve in the army and teach their children not to serve. They say they are faithful and wise in Torah, but they do not even read the Bible. Instead, they spend their lives studying commentaries and rabbinical traditions; and they learn to hate others who do not believe and act as they do.

“Yet God’s Word is clear. It is written in Proverbs 6:6, ‘Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.’”

Then I said to the rabbi, “You are well known in this neighborhood, and you tell everyone here how much you hate me. But I am ready to receive you as a guest in my home and show you that you are making a big mistake. I told you I have believed in the Lord according to the Bible alone, and I tried to show you only what is written here, in God’s Word, because I want to point people in the right direction. I do not carry a big stack of books with me, only this Bible. Please listen to what is written in Isaiah 53:6: ‘All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.’”

Then, addressing the crowd again, I said, “All of you, think about whom the Bible speaks of here, especially you, Rabbi. I am not afraid. I have put my trust in the Lord.”

To my surprise, all the people gathered around were happy with what I said. Please pray they, too, will believe according to the Bible and put their faith in Yeshua Hamashiach, Israel’s true Savior.