Christmas Cards & Calendars AD by BSC
TIME TO RENEW?
Check the mailing label on the back cover 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.

Subscription Rates:
USA: $12.95 for 1 year, $20.95 for 2 years
CANADA: $14.95 for 1 year, $24.95 for 2 years
OVERSEAS: $25.95 for 2 years (minimum)
U.S. DOLLARS ONLY
All single copies $3 each

ABOUT THE COVER
Promises made, promises broken, promises failed. That is the message Graphics Director Tom Williams has incorporated into Israel My Glory’s current cover. Try as they would, Bill Clinton, Ehud Barak, and Yasser Arafat could not achieve the breakthrough they so sorely wanted. Arafat wanted too much; Israelis felt they were asked to give much more than the nation could afford; and Bill Clinton failed to secure the agreement he hoped would propel his presidency into a positive niche in history. They will try again. In the meantime, all that’s left of the vaunted Camp David Summit is a torn photograph—history holds the verdict..

ALSO FEATURING
Editorial .............................................. 4
Women of the Bible .......................... 21
Culture and Customs ...................... 22
Hosea ............................................... 25
Eye on the Middle East .................. 28
Foundations of Faith ...................... 29
Israel in the News ......................... 32
Zvi .................................................. 34

CREDITS
Cover & Pages 9, 12, 15, 18, 25: Thomas E. Williams
Pages 6, 34: Timothy Jacobson/Liaison Agency, p. 6 and cover;
Lochon-Rey/Liaison Agency, p. 34
Pages 12, 22: Stan Stein

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

ADMINISTRATION
Executive Director: Elwood McQuaid • Executive Vice President: William E. Satter • Director of North American Ministries: Steve Herzig • Director of Foreign Ministries: David M. Levy

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Chairman: James P. MacLean • Vice Chairman: Laurence H. Murray •

Israel My Glory (ISSN 8755-402X) is published monthly for $12.95 per year by The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., 1179 Almonesson Road, Deptford Township, Westville, New Jersey 08093. Periodicals postage paid at Westville, NJ, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Israel My Glory, P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099-9900.

©Copyright 2000 The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc. Printed in the USA by BSC LITHO.
Knowing Who Your Friends Are

When a Jewish senator was interviewed on the subject of anti-Semitism, he frankly acknowledged how anti-Jewish prejudice had affected his life. “I believe,” he said, “that from time to time, every Jew looks around the circle of his friends and asks this question: ‘If an Adolph Hitler comes to America, who among these people will give me a place to hide?’” It was a good question.

Within the Jewish community and the State of Israel in particular, people constantly ask, analyze, and debate the very same thing. For more than fifty years, little Israel has been looking for true friends. It has found precious few in the international community. Slowly, however, an awakening of sorts has taken place. Many Israeli officials and leaders in the Jewish community have concluded that millions of evangelical Christians rank high on their best friends list. The evaluation contradicts a widely held perception by Jewish people worldwide that evangelicals are unprincipled, religious predators whose only goal is to deceive and entrap unwary Jews.

However, if the proof of true friendship is in the proverbial pudding, then the “pudding” is winning taste tests on a daily basis. In a recent Jerusalem Post article by Haim Shapiro, Ariel Mayor Ron Nachman stressed his connection with a group of evangelical Christians that has supported the settlement movement. Ariel is an Israeli town near Palestinian-controlled Nablus in the West Bank. Furthermore, the mayor said he believes that Christian groups, especially those from the United States, could become a factor in promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

“I see tourism as the primary route for peace,” he said. Then he added, “I see the Baptist potential from the US, but also from Europe and the Far East.”

Shapiro summarized: “Meanwhile, Nahman [sic] expressed his confidence in the support of the fundamentalist Christians, those who take the Bible literally and especially those who believe that God’s promise to Abraham is still valid. . . . Nahman [sic] said he is aware that some Christians are antisemites [sic], but added that those Christians who do support Israel are true friends.”

Mayor Nachman hit on the fundamental commitment of Bible-believing Christians when he spoke of “those who believe that God’s promise to Abraham is still valid.” All Christian Zionism is rooted in that fundamental truth. The Jewish people have the right to a secure homeland in the Middle East because God said they do. Divine dictates transcend all other considerations, even the valid issues of historical, moral, and international recognition of the state.

For this reason, evangelical Christians have contributed millions of dollars to assist Jewish organizations in bringing Jewish émigrés to Israel, particularly those from the former Soviet Union. We also have been the foremost proponents for moving the embassy of the United States from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—a move endorsed by the congress and belatedly supported by the president. We have manifested a significant presence in support of Israel on Capitol Hill in Washington and in government offices across Europe.

While continuing to assist new Jewish immigrants with material aid, some evangelicals have even moved quickly to send various types of much-needed help to Israel to assist in settling Arab-Christian refugees who have fled southern Lebanon.

Moreover, Christian broadcasters have conscientiously reported the truth about developments in the Middle East, whereas the secular media have ignored and distorted the facts. As Mayor Nachman noted, many believers have forged strong bonds with Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Their support has never wavered despite changes within the government of Israel. The biblical mandate is clear and irrevocable.

Such Christian acts of kindness are not motivated by some nefarious desire to subvert, deceive, or “buy” souls. Most of us make no apology for our commitment to the gospel and the Great Commission. Nor should we. Jewish columnists and commentators who boldly address the growing, global problem of Christian persecution are not held suspect by evangelicals. Nor is their fidelity to Judaism seen as an underlying instrument of deception. In the main, it is the evangelicals who are becoming martyrs. The Jewish people have seen it all before, and their warnings and timely counsel are received with friendship and appreciation.

To answer your question, senator, if an Adolph Hitler comes to America, who among the people will give you a place to hide? You have it on good authority, we will.
IJS Recruitment
AD by BSC
A few days before the recent Camp David Summit, four members of the Israeli Knesset were in Washington, D.C., to voice concern over how much Israel was being asked to concede to the Palestinians. Although they came from a variety of political parties, they nevertheless represented many Israelis who were alarmed over what negotiators might sacrifice at the summit. They also discussed the general frame of mind of many Israelis regarding the national commitment to Zionism.

Basically, Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people have a right to a secure homeland in the Middle East under the sanction of international law. Half of that vision was realized in principle when the United Nations voted the rebirth of the State of Israel in late 1947. Achieving security for the homeland, however, has been an ongoing struggle.

Although many of the early Zionists were not particularly religious, they based their right to return to the land on God’s promise to give the area as an everlasting possession to Abraham and his posterity through Isaac. In fact, the British-drawn borders for a Jewish homeland under the Balfour Declaration in 1917 were based on the biblical land grant. Prominent members of the British government at the time were Christians who accepted the divine mandate for a Jewish homeland. Consequently, the proposed state was to encompass the territory from the Little River of Egypt in the Sinai to the Euphrates in what is now Iraq.

The fervor of the Jewish people who returned to the land in the late 1800s and first half of the next century mirrored that of the ancient Israelites returning from Egypt under the leadership of Joshua. The Lord’s command was...
clear. They were to move in and possess their possession.

Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses (Josh. 1:2–3).

A further word admonished them to be “strong and of good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them” (Josh. 1:6).

During the days of Joshua, they were indeed “strong and of good courage.” But by the time of the judges, their determination to carry out the divine commands had seriously eroded. Israel entered a post-Moses-and-Joshua era, and its loss of commitment cost the nation dearly.

**Losing the Vision**

We are often reminded that history does indeed repeat itself. Those of us who attended the meeting in our nation’s capital caught a glimpse of the past as expressed by one of the Knesset members. He said that what troubled him most was the fact that so many of his fellow Israelis have lost the Zionist vision. Even men in high office who are negotiating Israel’s future now reject any association between the land of Israel, God, and the Bible. They say the Jewish people have no biblical rights to the land, and therefore they feel free to negotiate away as much territory as needed to placate their “peace partners.” The hazards, they insist, are minimal because Israel maintains a strong military defense. Such thinking reflects the fact that we have entered what is being popularly termed “the post-Zionist” era.

But when the vision perishes, so does the will to make the vision a reality. This was the Israeli speaker’s second point. Perhaps he had in mind the famous statement made in 1897 by the father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, when Herzl said at Basel, Switzerland, “If you will it, it is no dream.” Herzl, of course, referred to 2,000 years of dreams that the Jewish people would one day return to their ancient homeland. He and his Zionist contemporaries realized full well that from a human perspective, only an immense determination of will accompanied by blood and tears would make the dream come true.

The question being raised in many quarters at the moment is, “Why is Israel willing to sacrifice so much to people they know are committed to their eventual demise?” A number of American senators and congressmen posed that question to the visitors from the Knesset. Military experts are asking the same thing. Why, for example, would Israeli leaders be willing to allow Syrians to reoccupy the bunkers on the Golan Heights from which they harassed and attacked Israel repeatedly for decades? The answer usually accompanies a weary shrug of resignation. “Our people are tired of war. We just want peace. We know that we will pay a high price, but we’re hoping for the best.”

Certainly, the people of Israel are tired of terrorism and war. But will the anticipated “high price” prove too much to pay? Terrorist groups and radical Islamic adversaries have made a promise they intend to keep. Despite the commitment of others to establish peace between Israel and the Palestinians, these foes will continue to fight to destroy Israel.

**Islam Has a Vision**

To anyone who is paying attention, it is obvious that in the world of Islam, vision and will still go hand in hand. Travel anywhere in the Islamic world, moderate or radical, and ask if the nation of Israel has a right to exist. Almost universally, the answer will be an emphatic no. The issue goes beyond whether one is an Arab or not. Islam categorically rejects the very existence of the Jewish state. Not just in the Middle East but around the world, *Jihad* (holy war) through terrorist acts and military means is the weapon of choice against Jews and Christians, all of whom are considered infidels. But cleverly disguised word games with convoluted semantics are used as deceptive tactics.
When asked to account for his repeated calls in Arabic for *Jihad* against Israel and Jerusalem, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat contended that when he used the term in the company of fellow Arabs, he was referring to the war of words, ideas, and peaceful means of demilitarized aggression. Thus the Islamic vision and will remained in tact. At issue were the methods to be employed to make the vision a global fact of life. Perhaps this strategy is delivering a better pay-off than armed aggression.

**An Uneven Playing Field**

Today the Western world of Christianity and Judaism is rapidly being invaded by both immigrant and homegrown Islamics. In England, America, France, Canada, and other countries, mosques are going up at an astonishing rate. Even in small communities where there are few or no Muslims, mosques are being constructed. Much of the funding comes from *moderate* Islamic states, such as Saudi Arabia, who send back (in the form of mosques and educational facilities) capital garnered from petroleum sales to gasoline-hungry Westerners. However, Saudi Arabia still has zero tolerance for Judaism or Christianity. Another such example is Afghanistan. No Christian churches exist in Afghanistan. Muslims bulldozed the one church that was there some time ago. Hosts of other examples are available, but the point is that Islam is not a pluralistic religion. Moreover, Christians and Jews who think we are somehow on the same religious wavelength as Muslims are predisposed to a rude awakening.

**The Post-Christian Era**

Perhaps it is ironic that the terms *post-Zionist* and *post-Christian* have come to the fore at relatively the same time. What they express raises serious questions. Do they tell us that Christians and Jews have lost their respective visions and, consequently, are losing the will to survive? Even among large segments of the evangelical community, the idea is afoot that we must accommodate religions with vastly divergent doctrines and heretical or cultic theological systems as the wave of the future. Thus evangelism becomes offensive and defending one’s faith becomes contemptuous, according to the “religiously correct” norms of conduct. Such accommodation is, in reality, a new, more seductive form of ecumenicity than the brand liberal religionists foisted on a number of the major denominations more than a half-century ago. It is not congenial accommodation. It is visionless capitulation.

Israel faces an equally odious problem. In the streets and at the negotiating tables, people are crying out for what can best be described as national capitulation. Theirs is the voice of secular humanism promoting a kind of “brotherhood through surrender” that does not exist on this planet.

**The Prophets Still Speak**

At The Friends of Israel, we publish a book titled *The Prophets Still Speak.* To anyone who cares to listen, they do indeed. With regard to the subject at hand, they provide a particularly pertinent word.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18).

The word *vision* in this verse is not the word usually employed when referring to something seen. It is, rather, a vision that comes by way of revelation from God—His words, His will, His commands. Every time ancient Israel disregarded the vision, they lost their will and their well-being. Captivity, suffering, and chastisement often became daily burdens of life for a people who refused to believe it was better to obey than to sacrifice.

Such suffering was, in the main, physical and national. But for Christians, loss of vision and will covers much broader territory. People who perish in sin suffer the eternal consequences enunciated in the Scriptures. Therefore, choosing to empathize rather than evangelize becomes a fatal decision.

Moses had some choice words for the children of Israel in his final address to them before they entered the land.

*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live* (Dt. 30:19).

May the gravity of those words and the principles they articulate rekindle our passion for the vision He has committed to us and fuel the will to obey our Sovereign.

*Elwood McQuaid is the Executive Director of The Friends of Israel.*
The year 2000 has witnessed a momentous scientific breakthrough. It was ten years in the making, and the consequences will last well into the future. Some have compared it in significance to man’s walk on the moon, and one scientist called it “the outstanding achievement not only of our lifetime, [but] perhaps in the history of mankind.”

The breakthrough occurred with the completion of the first stage of the human genome project. This master blueprint of the human body promises future medical miracles involving gene therapy—all in the name of improving the race.

Two thousand years ago, another “improvement” was proposed, not for the good of the body but of the soul. The monumental implications of this plan would have borne eternal consequences for all mankind. The proposal stated that Gentiles had to submit to the Mosaic Law when they placed their faith in Jesus as Messiah. Was this position true to the original message from God?

Paul answers this question in the book of Galatians. Paul had proclaimed the “good news” (the gospel) to Gentiles living in the Roman province of Galatia (modern south-central Turkey [Acts 13–14]), and many there believed in the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. But after he left Galatia, Jewish teachers visited these new believers and convinced them to submit to the Mosaic Law in the Old Testament, saying if Gentiles wanted to be the people of God, they had to become like Jews. When Paul heard this teaching, he burned with righteous anger. He wrote the Galatian churches and boldly defended his message by stating four truths about the gospel he preached.

The Gospel Is Fixed Forever (Gal. 1:6–10)

Instead of commending the churches, Paul attacked. His
language is stern and his tone severe:

*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel* (v. 6).

The Gentile believers had not merely embraced a new teaching; they had actually deserted the very God of heaven! Using two different Greek words, Paul describes their spiritual defection to “another [heteros, another of a different kind] gospel, Which is not another [allos, another of the same kind]” (vv. 6–7). These two words clarify a fundamental truth: There is only one true gospel. Any other gospel is false—a counterfeit gospel is anathema (v. 8). Anyone teaching a false gospel is to “be accursed” (v. 10). In Judaism, teachers handed down traditions received from others. Paul, the Jewish apostle, stated that Jesus revealed Himself to him and became his teacher. His gospel came directly from Jesus Himself.

First, Paul explains his life before his conversion. He was violently persecuting the new Christian church while, at the same time, surpassing his contemporaries in observing Judaism, “being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (v. 14). He knew the religion well, including the oral law. But something radically changed this zealous young man.

Second, Paul describes his conversion in a way that puts himself in the background. It all began with God who was “pleased... To reveal his Son” in him (vv. 15–16) and who had chosen him before his birth, just as He had the great prophets Isaiah (Isa. 49:1) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5). Paul received this divine call so he might preach the gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:1–15). Both his conversion and his call were the supernatural acts of a sovereign God.

Third, he explains what happened after his conversion. Rather than being trained by others in Jerusalem, Paul spent three years in Arabia and Damascus (v. 17), far from the apostles in Jerusalem and apart from their influence. Paul’s gospel and theology came straight from heaven as the divine Teacher instructed His new apostle. Only after those three years did he finally go to Jerusalem (v. 18; cf. Acts 9:26–30). There he stayed with Peter fifteen days and saw James, the half-brother of Jesus. After that brief visit, he went to Syria with its large city, Antioch, and to his hometown of Tarsus in Cilicia (vv. 19–21). The churches in Judea knew about Paul only by his reputation, and they rejoiced when they heard reports about his conversion and preaching (vv. 22–24). Thus the Jerusalem leadership made no impact on Paul’s formative years as a believer. He had learned from Christ Himself.

### The Gospel Is Revealed by God

**Gal. 1:11–24**

To some people, Paul might seem proud. After all, who was Paul to think that he alone, not these teachers from Jerusalem, had the true gospel? Paul addresses this issue by verifying his authority. He clearly states that the gospel he preached was not of human origin. “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 12). In Judaism, teachers handed down traditions received from others. Paul, the Jewish apostle, stated that Jesus revealed Himself to him and became his teacher. His gospel came directly from Jesus Himself.

First, Paul explains his life before his conversion. He was violently persecuting the new Christian church while, at the same time, surpassing his contemporaries in observing Judaism, “being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (v. 14). He knew the religion well, including the oral law. But something radically changed this zealous young man.

Second, Paul describes his conversion in a way that puts himself in the background. It all began with God who was “pleased... To reveal his Son” in him (vv. 15–16) and who had chosen him before his birth, just as He had the great prophets Isaiah (Isa. 49:1) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5). Paul received this divine call so he might preach the gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:1–15). Both his conversion and his call were the supernatural acts of a sovereign God.

Third, he explains what happened after his conversion. Rather than being trained by others in Jerusalem, Paul spent three years in Arabia and Damascus (v. 17), far from the apostles in Jerusalem and apart from their influence. Paul’s gospel and theology came straight from heaven as the divine Teacher instructed His new apostle. Only after those three years did he finally go to Jerusalem (v. 18; cf. Acts 9:26–30). There he stayed with Peter fifteen days and saw James, the half-brother of Jesus. After that brief visit, he went to Syria with its large city, Antioch, and to his hometown of Tarsus in Cilicia (vv. 19–21). The churches in Judea knew about Paul only by his reputation, and they rejoiced when they heard reports about his conversion and preaching (vv. 22–24). Thus the Jerusalem leadership made no impact on Paul’s formative years as a believer. He had learned from Christ Himself.

### The Gospel Is By Faith Alone

**Gal. 2:1–10**

In the previous verses, Paul distanced himself from the apostles and demonstrated his independence from them. Now, however, he shows his equality with them. He explains a trip he made with Barnabas to Jerusalem fourteen years after his conversion. While some think this section refers to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), it may be better to view it as Paul’s trip to bring financial help to the Jerusalem church during a severe famine (Acts 11).

Paul made this trip “by revelation” from God, perhaps via Agabus’s prophecy (Acts 11:28). Thus he again emphasizes that he was led by God alone rather than by the leaders of the Jerusalem church (v. 2). He had
met privately with these men and explained his mission to the Gentiles. As a test case, Paul had brought along Titus, a Gentile convert. Would the leaders in Jerusalem demand that Titus be circumcised, or would they accept him as a true brother in the faith?

Paul indicates that some argued strongly that Titus must be circumcised. These were “false brethren,” he says, who desired to “bring us into bondage” (v. 4). They claimed that keeping the Mosaic Law, including circumcision, was a necessary part of the faith, even for Gentile converts. These false teachers refused to give up the Mosaic shadows despite their faith in Jesus. Here Paul stood firm and refused to submit to such teaching, “no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (v. 5).

The apostolic leaders in Jerusalem (James, Peter, and John) agreed with Paul and recognized him as an equal by giving him and Barnabas “the right hands of fellowship” (v. 9). The apostle to the Gentiles did not submit to the Jerusalem apostles as an inferior. They recognized that God had called Paul independently of them. The leadership of the body of Christ agreed that salvation came by faith alone.

Faithfulness to the Christian gospel, not flexibility, is what counts.

The Gospel Is Apart From the Law (Gal. 2:11–21)

Paul next relates an episode of inconsistency by an apostle from Jerusalem. Peter had traveled north to visit believers in Antioch and had enjoyed fellowship with Gentile Christians at meals. Since Peter was the first to learn about the new unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Acts 10), it was not surprising to see him live in a way that demonstrated it. What surprised Paul was how Peter suddenly broke fellowship with the Gentiles when some men from Jerusalem, the “circumcision” group, came to Antioch (v. 12). They demanded believers shun the new converts who refused to keep the Mosaic Law. Both Peter and Barnabas succumbed to the pressure from the Judaizers. Such hypocrisy was too much for Paul. He publicly opposed their inconsistent and contradictory behavior. A vital principle was at stake.

Paul’s harsh rebuke, (vv. 14–21) begins with a pointed censure of Peter:

If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (v. 14).

Peter lived like a Gentile, yet pressured Gentiles to live like Jews. What hypocrisy! Paul continues to rebuke Peter and those like-minded in unmistakable language:

. . . a man is not justified by the works of the law, . . . for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (v. 16).

No one can ever be declared righteous (“justified”) by works. Only faith in Jesus Christ brings God’s favor. This teaching did not originate with Paul, as he later explains to Roman believers; Abraham, too, was justified by faith (Rom. 4:1–3; Gen. 15:6).

Not only does the Law not save, but the Law no longer binds those who experience salvation (vv. 17–18). The old era has passed away now that Messiah has come. Paul is now “dead to the law” (v. 19). This death for Paul, and for every believer, comes because of Jesus’ death and our union with Him. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (v. 20). In a mysterious way, our Messiah now lives within His people, giving them new life and power to “live unto God” in obeying His will (v. 19). This new life does not bow to the domination of the Mosaic Law but walks “by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (v. 20).

Paul concludes his rebuke by stating that his gospel does “not make void the grace of God” (v. 21). The Judaizers contradicted God’s grace by adding human merit to faith. In fact, the death of Christ would be useless if we could achieve God’s favor by works, “for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (v. 21). When it comes to justification, works and faith are mutually exclusive.

Paul’s point is clear. The gospel came from the Lord Jesus, and we can never change it. Those who proclaim it must be continually faithful. Those who pervert it will be eternally condemned. Those who believe it

---

William L. Krewson is a Professor at The Friends of Israel Institute of Jewish Studies.
More than fourteen hundred years earlier, the apostle Paul had made the same determination. His epistle to the churches of Galatia reveals his passion for keeping the gospel pure. Someone had influenced the Galatian believers to mix law with grace. Beginning at chapter 3, Paul faced the Galatians squarely, seeking to reestablish them in the foundational doctrine of justification by faith alone.

The Principle of Faith

Paul began with a peppering of six questions (3:1–5). First he asked, “who hath bewitched you . . . ?” The Galatians had so quickly left the gospel’s truth concerning Christ that Paul sarcastically assumed someone must have put a spell on them.

Paul’s most penetrating question came next. He compelled the Galatians to settle the issue concerning the source and means of their regeneration. “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (3:2). Paul focuses here on the principle of law, which requires doing, and the...
principle of faith, which requires hearing. The Galatians had to decide whether they had received the Holy Spirit because of their good deeds or because they simply had believed what they had heard about Christ.

Paul’s next two questions combined incredulity with simple logic. “Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (3:3). Using a modern-day analogy, it was as though the Galatians had begun a wheelbarrow race called the Christian life. The Holy Spirit had lifted them into the wheelbarrow and was pushing them along when, part way through, someone persuaded them to dismiss the Holy Spirit and attempt to complete the race through their own efforts (cf. Gal. 5:7). Did this make sense? It did not to Paul.

The fifth question required the Galatians to examine the validity of faith in light of their experience. “Have ye suffered so many things for nothing?—if it be yet in vain” (3:4). Those who tried to impress others with outward observances avoided persecution (Gal. 6:12). But the Galatians had experienced persecution. Did that not indicate their earlier expression of faith was concordant with the message of the cross?

Paul’s final question explored the basis for God’s continuing, spiritual benevolence:

*He, therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (3:5).*

Was God responding to the Galatians’ deeds or to their faith?

Citing Genesis 15:6, Paul substantiated that Abraham was not made inherently righteous. He had righteousness accounted, or imputed, to him as a direct result of his faith in God’s promise, not as a result of his good deeds (3:6–9). Therefore, anyone who approaches God on the basis of faith is a son of Abraham—that is, of the same nature as Abraham. This truth applies to Gentiles as well as Jews. When God promised Abraham that in him “all the nations [Gentiles] of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 18:18), He foretold how He would justify (declare righteous) the Gentiles the same way He justified Abraham—by faith. Therefore, true believers, regardless of lineage, receive with Abraham an unceasing spiritual blessing and an ongoing spiritual heritage.

In contrast, the Law bestows a curse (3:10). Deuteronomy 27:26 demands that an individual exhibit continual, complete, and flawless obedience to the Law of Moses or be cursed. Accordingly, an imperfect man seeking to earn a blessing through an abundance of good deeds will find himself cursed instead.

The Law renders no blessing because no one can keep it. Nor does it justify (3:11). It may impress the neighbors, but it does nothing to impress God. God’s principle for enabling the righteous to live is faith (Hab. 2:4). The Law’s principle is works (3:12; Lev. 18:5). The Law is based on what a person does, not on what a person believes. Consequently, it is powerless to give life or justify a sinner since no one is capable of perfect obedience.

The only exception was Jesus Christ. Jesus never fell under the curse of the Law because He kept it fully and lived a sinless life. Yet, by His substitutionary death, He became a curse on our behalf (Dt. 21:22–23), thus purchasing our release from the curse of the Law (3:13). This remarkable transaction opened the well-spring of Abrahamic blessing to all believing Gentiles by virtue of their position in Christ (3:14). Also, they could now receive the promised Holy Spirit “through faith.” In Greek, the definite article before the word faith indicates the specific body of truth pertaining to Jesus Christ (see Gal. 1:23). Answering his own chief question (3:2) then, Paul confirmed we indeed receive the Holy Spirit simply by believing the gospel—no more, no less.

### The Purpose of the Law

Some of the Galatians may have become puzzled. If God had ordained the principle of faith, then what was the purpose of the Law?

To explain, Paul used the analogy of a common covenant (3:15). The word *covenant* had a twofold usage: (1) a binding, legal contract that no one could arbitrarily annul or modify; and (2) a last will and testament. Paul drew on both meanings here to prove his point.

In the Abrahamic Covenant, God Himself made a contract with Abraham and his seed (Gen. 17:7–8). Because seed in the contract is singular, Paul attributed the word to a particular person. Although the word can be used collectively to refer to a plurality of Abrahamic descendants (2 Cor. 11:22), Paul used it to refer to the ultimate descendant of Abraham—the Messiah (3:16), as in Genesis 3:15.

Paul stated his premise: The Law of Moses did not nullify the unconditional promises God made to Abraham and to the Messiah (3:17). These were his reasons:

Once ratified, a contract cannot be changed. Chronologically, the Abrahamic Covenant was ratified prior to the giving of the Law. Therefore, the Law could not change it.
God Himself ratified the covenant (Gen. 15:17–18).

A last will and testament bequeaths an inheritance through a promise, not through the meritorious efforts of the beneficiary (3:18). God freely gave Abraham an inheritance through the promise contained in the Abrahamic Covenant. Since the verb gave is in the perfect tense, the inheritance was promised at a point in time, and the results continue to the present. Hence the Law’s arrival did not alter the basis for bestowing the inheritance.

The Law did not invalidate the Abrahamic Covenant; that was not its purpose. The Law’s purpose was to expose man’s transgressions in light of the character of God (3:19).

The Law was an inferior contract. It was conditional, mediatorial, and temporary. Conversely, the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional, made directly and solely by God while Abraham slept (Gen. 15:9–21), and its promises were eternally fulfilled in the Messiah (3:19–20).

Does this mean the Law opposes God’s promises? “God forbid” cried Paul (3:21). The Law merely has a different function. It was never meant to impart life, or God would have arranged for righteousness to be earned. The Scripture merely did its duty. “But the scripture hath concluded [enclosed, as a fish in a net, i.e., Luke 5:6] all under sin” (3:22). The only way out of that condition is to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ (3:14, 22).

In the past, the Law watched over us, guarded and immured us until the faith—the good news of the Messiah—was inevitably and historically revealed (3:23; 4:4). Such was the Law’s role. It was our “schoolmaster” (3:24). A schoolmaster was a trusted slave appointed to escort a young, immature boy to and from school and to control the boy’s behavior until he was mature enough to control it himself. Like a schoolmaster, the Law was temporarily appointed to watch over us, pointing out the error of our ways until the arrival of the Messiah.

However, what the Law could not do for us Christ can now do—justify us (declare us righteous) by faith alone.

The Pitfall of Syncretism

On October 31, 1999, representatives from the Lutheran World Federation, representing 58 million Lutherans worldwide, together with representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification1 in Augsburg, Germany. Thirty years in the making, the intent of this twelve-page document is to articulate “a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification” between subscribing Lutheran churches and the Vatican. Although it briefly refers to “justification by faith alone,”2 the document asserts that “faith has salvific power only on condition of keeping the commandments.”3 Elsewhere it claims salvation is granted and preserved through “Baptism” and other “Sacraments.”4

As this document demonstrates, five hundred years after Martin Luther and two thousand years after the apostle Paul, the doctrine of justification by faith alone is still under attack. As always, our sin nature assails the notion that we are powerless to earn righteousness. It whispers in our ears that faith alone is not enough; something must be added.

In their search for justification, many people unwittingly fall into this trap and add to what God has completed in Christ. The same can be said of some true Christians regarding their quest for sanctification. However, those additions negate the very sufficiency of Christ and the promise of the Scriptures. Were Jesus’ substitutionary death and resurrection adequate? Are we really complete in Him? Is faith alone in Christ alone all that is necessary?

If we answer no to any of these questions, we need to return to Galatians 3:1 and begin again with the words, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you . . . ?” There, we will be reminded:

Jesus Christ is all we need,
Trust Him is all to do.
Faith in Abram’s holy Seed “Righteous,” declares God, “are you!”

Bruce Scott is a Field Representative for The Friends of Israel in New Hope, MN.
My eighteen-year-old son graduated from high school last spring. The ceremony was a great celebration for both the graduates and their parents, symbolizing the passage from childhood and dependency to greater freedom on the journey to becoming an independent, responsible adult.

How ludicrous it would have been for the kindergarten teacher of these students to reappear, proclaiming that in order to keep their diplomas, all graduates must now report to her in September to review their ABCs. You do not take young people who have matured and are ready to accept adult responsibility and treat them like children. Even the graduates would have said, “We are not going back!”

Yet this scenario parallels what was happening theologically in the Galatian churches. The Galatians had believed the gospel of Christ under Paul’s preaching. They had truly been saved, received the Holy Spirit, and entered into a relationship with God under the terms of the New Covenant. In that sense, they were all “graduates.” They had the status of full adult sons of God with the freedom and responsibility that goes along with it. But after Paul left the region of Galatia, others arrived, teaching that to maintain their adult status, they must continue in “kindergarten” by keeping the external obligations of the Law. What amazes Paul is not the teaching but the fact that the Galatians themselves agreed to it! They went back to kindergarten!

In Galatians 3:25–5:1, Paul argues that the Galatians are adults in Christ; and it is not proper that they go back to the Law. Moreover, God does not want them to do so but wants them to act as free, mature adults. Thus Paul exhorts the Galatians to recognize who they are in Christ as mature sons (and daughters), to shun the bondage of the elemental aspects of the Law, and to rejoice in the freedom they have in Christ.

Believers Are Adult Sons of God
(Gal. 3:25–4:7)

Paul’s teaching focuses on the believer’s change of status. He illustrates this truth with the Roman custom of a son moving from the status of child to full adult son. The key, in 4:2, is that this change
occurred at “the time appointed of the father” (usually age 16). Paul teaches that this important time has passed on God’s progressive calendar because, as he writes in 3:25, “after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gk. paidayoyos, meaning “child-custodian”). In other words, the faith that Paul speaks about refers to the whole New Covenant relationship believers now have in Christ, which the Lord instituted at the Last Supper, sealed by His death, and poured out at Pentecost. Because believers now live in a time when the Law is “written in their hearts” (Rom. 2:15) through the indwelling of the Spirit, to regress and try to keep the Law externally would not only be foolish but would deny what God has done in Christ.

In 3:26–29, Paul makes three applications concerning how this change of status affects believers. First, Paul says that all believers are “sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 26). The key word here is sons, which in Greek means “adult sons” as opposed to children. Paul makes the point that the adults no longer need the supervision that children do. Upper-class children in his day had custodians to mind them. However, when they came of age, they no longer needed the custodian. They had matured and were considered responsible adults. Thus believers no longer need the trappings of the Law because they, too, are considered full adults.

Second, in Christ, God considers all believers equal. He does not regard people according to their racial, social, or gender distinctions. Some sons may be more faithful and obedient, but all are equally treated as sons.

Third, as God’s sons, believers are heirs to the Abrahamic promise. This is the “good news” for Gentiles—that in Christ, they can participate with believing Israel as recipients of the blessings of the Abrahamic promises of salvation. All believers, then, are coheirs with Christ of the Abrahamic promise.

Paul further explains his illustration of sonship in 4:1–7. Just as a Roman boy progressed in status from child to adult, so, too, believers are adult sons, free from their guardian—the external rituals of the Law. This change occurred at the “fullness of the time,” when Christ came (v. 4). Believers now can relate to the Father as full sons and not as children because the Spirit now indwells all believers, enabling them to relate to the Father on a more intimate level.

Paul concludes, “Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (4:7). The point here is that adults have freedom they are to use responsibly. Thus they should no longer be treated as children.

Nor should they regress to the ways of childhood.

**Paul’s Plea: Don’t Turn Back**
*(Gal. 4:8–31)*

In this lengthy section, Paul pleads with the Galatians to consider what they are doing. He does this in three ways: (1) with the illustration of slavery versus freedom (4:8–11); (2) with a personal plea based on his relationship with them as their spiritual mentor (4:12–20); and (3) with a biblical example to illustrate their situation, through which he exhorts them to choose freedom (4:21–31).

First, in verses 8–11, Paul again contrasts the Galatians’ past and present status before God. As pagans, the Galatians were slaves to pagan beliefs and false gods. But then they came to know the true God. Instead of going on in grace, Paul says they returned to the “weak and beggarly elements” (v. 9) of bondage that they knew previously. Of significance here is that Paul equates Judaizing legalism with pagan elemental teaching. Both systems are based on human achievement and neither lead to a true relationship with God. So Paul’s question is, “How can you go back?”

Second, in verses 12–20, Paul issues a personal plea. He recalls the relationship he thought he had with the Galatians, one based on mutual respect and love. In Acts 13:13—14:28, Luke records the events of Paul’s ministry among the people of Galatia, where he nearly died from his stoning in Lystra. He was also physically ill there (4:13–14). Because of Paul’s personal sacrifice on the Galatians’ behalf, they responded to him in kind, regarding him as one who spoke the
truth of God. How, then, could they be so easily led astray not only from Paul’s teaching but also from their confidence in him as their spiritual father? As Paul says in 3:1, it is as if they were under a spell.

Thirdly, in verses 21–31, Paul takes an illustration from Genesis concerning Hagar and Sarah, through which he exhorts the Galatians toward freedom. Paul states in 4:24 that he is speaking allegorically, which means he understands that the Genesis passage is not literally speaking about New Covenant believers but that, in a typological way, it can be applied to their situation. That is why he asks rhetorically in 4:21, “do ye not hear the law?” (meaning the Torah, which included Genesis).

In Paul’s analogy (from Genesis 16 and 21), Hagar and earthly Jerusalem represent Judaism, typological of slavery to the Law under the Old Covenant. Sarah represents the believers’ freedom in Christ under the New Covenant, which seeks the heavenly Jerusalem. Based on this comparison, Paul quotes from Isaiah 55:6 that those of the new Jerusalem should rejoice because they now occupy the position of blessing as heirs of the promise of Abraham (v. 27). Second, based on the exhortation to Abraham in Genesis 21:10, Paul exhorts the Galatians to “Cast out the bondwoman and her son (v. 30),” meaning they should reject Judaizing teaching and teachers and choose instead to be free.

**Stand Firm in Freedom**

(Gal. 5:1)

Paul concludes this section by saying that Christ set us free so we could live in freedom. To return to the slavery that Christ died to redeem us from would be an insult and a tragedy. We would be like slaves who remained in servitude even after someone had paid one million dollars to purchase their freedom.

**Obedience then comes from a heart that wishes to please God, rather than from a desire to attain righteousness or a certain standing before God.**

Bondage is not what God wants for his sons. God wants his children to act like adults and serve Him with willing hearts because they freely choose to be faithful and obedient sons. Freedom in Christ does not mean doing whatever one wants and falling into a life of licentiousness. Paul says in Romans 6:16 that everyone is a slave of either righteousness (God) or unrighteousness (Satan). But Satan’s slaves are in chains, and God’s servants are not.

The Judaizers’ offer was, in Paul’s words, to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” meaning the Law (5:1). Why does Paul see the Law as bondage here but as something good in Romans 7:12? The answer is not in the Law itself, for the Law itself is good, teaching us about the righteousness of God. The problem is our approach to it. If we see the Law as commandments to be kept in order to achieve or maintain a righteous standing before God, then it becomes a yoke of bondage. If, by contrast, we see our righteousness as coming only from Christ based on faith, then it becomes something internal through the regeneration of our hearts by the work and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Obedience then comes from a heart that wishes to please God, rather than from a desire to attain righteousness or a certain standing before God. That is what it means to be an adult son or daughter before Him.

Paul exhorts the Galatians to live like the free grownups in Christ that they are and not to let someone talk them into reverting to childish disciplines. Unfortunately, many still teach like the Judaizers in Paul’s day, propagating the same error that believers must do something to maintain their status before God. Such doctrine thwarts grace and belittles the sufficient work of Christ on our behalf. Believers, of course, should do good works (Eph. 2:8–10). But the difference is the relationship between the believer and his or her actions. God does not intend Christian living to be a yoke of bondage but a joyful and abundant life because of the supernatural ability from the Spirit to live righteously and please God from one’s heart.

**ISRAEL MY GLORY**

---

Herb Hirt is the Director of The Friends of Israel Institute of Jewish Studies.
With a simple “I do,” a man and woman unite in matrimony. This everyday occurrence brings new family responsibilities by joining both husband and wife to a larger unit—the extended family of in-laws. By the same token, professing faith in Jesus as Savior links believers to each other as part of the Body of Christ and provides brothers and sisters in the Lord.

These new family relationships also contain specific obligations and responsibilities. In Galatians 6, the apostle Paul completes his letter to the believers in Galatia by providing instruction on how to minister to the extended family of God.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (6:1).

Unfortunately, some Christians add misery to affliction rather than minister comfort and healing to a fallen member of the family. Paul, however, instructs believers to seek like a roaring lion, looking for believers to seduce, tempt, and trap (1 Pet. 5:8). Christians should seek to “restore such an one” who has been caught in Satan’s clutches. In fact, Paul uses a medical term that refers to the practice of setting a broken bone, a procedure that necessitates a firm, yet gentle, loving touch.

Restoration also requires direct confrontation. No one can set a bone from fifty miles away. Jesus Himself clearly taught that believers should confront a sinning brother or sister face to face (Mt. 18:15). If the situation is not resolved, “then take with thee one or two more” (Mt. 18:16), so the one sinning may become convicted of his transgression by the testimony of additional witnesses. Then godly sorrow can lead him to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10) and restoration.

Such was the procedure believers used in Corinth when a church member had fallen into sexual immorality. The man was eventually restored to fellowship as a useful member of the family. It was also how Paul dealt with Peter earlier regarding Peter’s abrupt refusal to eat with Gentile believers. “I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11). He did not discuss Peter’s problem with anyone else.
but confronted Peter directly. Moreover, there is no indication in
the Bible that this behavior was ever a problem for Peter again.

Of course, direct confrontation and loving discipline require
courage and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Both pave the road
to maturity in the faith and encourage the true repentance
necessary to effect a loving restoration and ultimate healing
of the body. Such is the biblical pattern to follow.

**HELPING WITH BURDENS**

Next Paul describes how believers are to minister to those
enduring difficult times and circumstances.

*Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ* (6:2).

The Greek word for “burden” refers to a crushing load, some-
thing far too much for someone to bear alone.2 Helping an indi-
vidual bear that burden, Paul says, fulfills the law of Christ.

When Christ was on earth, He
told which of God’s command-
ments was the greatest: “Thou
shalt love the Lord, thy God,
with all thy heart, and with all
thy soul, and with all thy mind”
(Mt. 22:37). He then added,
“And the second is like it, Thou
shalt love thy neighbor as thy-
self” (Mt. 22:39).

The second command hinges
on the first. If we love the Lord
properly, we love those whom
He loves. Scripture abounds
with verses showing how earnestly the Lord Himself
desires to lift our burdens (Josh.
1:9; Ps. 3:3–4; Isa. 41:10; Hab.
3:19; 1 Pet. 5:7). Since He loves
us so much that He wants to help
us through our trials and deep
waters, we should endeavor to
do the same for other members
of the household of faith.

Some Christians, however, are
reluctant to minister to those who
are heavy laden. Paul explains
that one reason may be conceit.

> For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let
every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in
another. For every man shall bear his own burden (6:3–5).

When people think more high-
ly of themselves than they do of
others, they lack the heart for
those whom they consider inferi-
or. The Scriptures, however,
teach that we should esteem oth-
ers better than we esteem our-
selves. In Philippians, Paul
devotes almost an entire chapter
to humility and admonishes
believers to have the same mind
as Christ Jesus, who regarded
others as more important than
Himself (Phil. 2:3).

The biblical cure for conceit is
found in Galatians 6:4. Everyone
should “prove his own work.”
Rather than compare our work to
that of others, we should evalu-
ate it in relation to the greatness,
grandeur, and glory of God.

With that perspective, we
become like the prophet Isaiah
when he saw the Lord and imme-
diately cried out, “Woe is me!”
(Isa. 6:5). How can anyone be
conceited when he compares
himself to the Lord? Thus we
humble ourselves under the
hand of God and rejoice in His
grace and mercy as we bear our
own burden (v. 5). The word *bur-
den* here differs from that in
verse 2. It refers to a weight or
load that all are assigned to
carry.3 The Lord expects us to
bear a burden, but not one so
heavy it can crush us. Those
burdens are meant to be shared.

**CAREING FOR TEACHERS**

Believers also should minister to
those who teach the Word of God.

> Let him that is taught in the word share with him that teacheth in all good things (6:6).

We are to share physically with
those who share spiritually, many
of whom suffer deprivation even
today. Pastors, for example, work
long and hard, studying and min-
istering to their flocks. They fre-
quently forsake quality time with
their own families to spend count-
less hours helping others; and they
are on call twenty-four hours a
day, seven days a week. Yet some
go without regular remuneration
and even endure disrespect and
criticism. Paul says it is the
responsibility of the Body of Christ
to care for its pastors, Bible teach-
ers, and missionaries.

**COUNSEL FOR EVERYONE**

Be not deceived, God is not
mocked, for whatever a man
soweth, that shall he also reap.
For he that soweth to his flesh
shall of the flesh reap corrup-
tion; but he that soweth to the
Spirit shall of the Spirit reap
life everlasting. And let us not
be weary in well doing; for in
due season we shall reap, if we
faint not. As we have, there-
fore, opportunity, let us do good
unto all men, especially unto
them who are of the household
of faith (6:7–10).

Paul now provides practical
Rather than compare our work to that of others, we should evaluate it in relation to the greatness, grandeur, and glory of God.

As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (6:12–15).

Judaizers were telling the Galatian believers that they had to be circumcised before they could embrace Jesus as Messiah. Their stand was selfish and not designed to give glory to God. Circumcision contributed nothing toward making them “a new creature.” That transformation came from faith in Jesus and in his death and resurrection. So Paul emphatically denounces the Judaizers’ message as a perversion that leads to bondage, and he revisits his primary theme by telling believers that those who encourage circumcision are only interested in outward show. The Law was not to be an outward show but an inward reality. Those pressing for Gentile circumcision did not observe the Law themselves. And unless one obeys the entire Law, he is guilty of breaking it all (Jas. 2:10).

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (6:16).

Finally, Paul indicates “this rule” (to glory in God alone) contains a promise of peace and mercy. Believers sometimes attempt to place constraints on other Christians, telling them how to live out their faith. But placing people under the Law never produces peace. It produces pride and bondage instead. The Bible says that Christ is the completion, or end, of the Law “to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). Rather than living under Law, believers should live under the control of the Holy Spirit. Then they will have the peace of God.

The phrase and upon the Israel of God has been misused for centuries by well-intentioned Christians who erroneously claim that the church has replaced Israel. God never substituted the church for Israel. The text here clearly indicates two distinct groups: “as many as walk according to this rule,” meaning Gentile believers, and “the Israel of God,” meaning Jewish believers. The Israel of God clearly refers to the remnant of Jewish people coming to faith in the Jewish Messiah.

Paul’s final words express his position as the possession of the Lord: Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen (6:17–18).

He uses the then-familiar image of a slave who was physically branded by his master. Paul considered his body, which was marred in service to Christ, as branded by the Lord Himself. Thus the marks authenticated his apostleship.

The theme of the letter is Law and grace. Paul concludes with his
I was a relatively new believer when I heard an older, wiser woman tell a story I will never forget. She looked somewhat disheartened and bedraggled—the symptomatic side effects of having many mouths to feed and little income with which to do it. Her husband drew little from his job as a laborer.

Many years ago, she said, he had been offered a pastorate in an area she did not like. He believed he should accept the call; she did not. “My husband,” she said, “listened to me. And our lives have been miserable ever since.” It was the distressing story of Mother Eve all over again.

Eve’s early influence over her husband changed the course of human history. After Adam and Eve fell headlong into sin, God cursed the serpent, the man, and the woman. To the woman he meted out pain in childbirth and placed her under the headship of the man: “and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). That one curse may have created more havoc between the sexes than all the others combined. It established a biblical principle that militant feminists strive to destroy and one that God-fearing women strive with difficulty to obey. And no one knows the magnitude of that struggle better or exploits it more effectively than Satan.

Of all the women who have ever lived, Eve was unique. She was not born but fashioned by God from one of Adam’s ribs on the sixth day of creation (Gen. 2:18–25). She had no childhood, no adolescence, no parents, and no friends. Eve had Adam.

She had no name, in fact, until he named her. First he bestowed on her the generic term woman, declaring, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23). Later Adam gave her the name Eve (meaning “lifegiver”) “because she was the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20).

Created especially for Adam, the human ruler of God’s theocratic Kingdom, Eve was designed to be her husband’s greatest asset—his helper, his lifelong companion, and his source of comfort. He, in turn, held the scepter over all the earth, given to him by God. According to theologian Dr. Renald Showers in his book What on Earth Is God Doing? (Loizeaux Brothers), “God created man, placed him as governor over the earth, and held him responsible to administer the earth well on behalf of God.”1

But Adam failed in his responsibility. Amid this idyllic circumstance lurked a snake in the grass. Satan wanted God’s Kingdom for himself. Since he lacks the power to create, the only way he could get the Kingdom was to usurp it. To do that, he had to get to Adam. And he got to Adam by getting to Eve.

Scripture reveals that Satan spoke exclusively to her: “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman...” (Gen. 3:1).

continued on page 33
infusion of God’s strength. The heart-wrenching lament the prophet-priest heard made him realize that his people had lost all hope.

As Ezekiel prophesied to his captive people, an unnamed com-patriot and psalmist poetically described the emotions of the Jewish exiles in Babylon:

*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept,*

when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

*... How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land? (Ps. 137:1–2, 4).*

In his commentary on this psalm, the late Bible expositor J. Vernon McGee captured the plight of the Jewish people. Dr. McGee wrote,
as an everlasting possession to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. With an almost spiritual fervor, they provided the energy needed to bring the bones together.

One such champion wrote a poem that Jewish people around the world would memorize and even sing. Originally titled Tkvatenu (Our Hope), it later was renamed Ha-tikvah (The Hope). It was written around 1878 by Romanian Naphtali Hetrz Imber, published in 1886, and eventually set to music. Somehow, the singing of Ha-tikvah infused an energy and enthusiasm into the dry, parched, and scattered bones of Ezekiel’s 2,500-year-old vision, gathering them into a great and standing army. Ha-tikvah became a rallying song and, eventually, the national anthem of the resurrected, modern State of Israel.

Born in 1856, Naphtali Hetrz Imber was considered a child prodigy, excelling in Hebraic and Talmudic studies. He began writing poetry at age ten. His great abilities in Jewish studies provided opportunities for him to travel to such places as Paris, Berlin, London, Bombay, Palestine, and even New York. His visits to these faraway cities of the world inspired him to write many of his essays, prose, and poems.

From 1882 to 1886, Imber served as secretary and adviser on Jewish affairs in Palestine under Christian-Zionist Laurence Oliphant. He immediately fell in love with the place, rock-strewn and barren though it was at that time. The experience so changed him that he devoted the rest of his life to enabling his people to return to Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel). At the same time, this same yearning seized thousands of Jews around the world. Many left countries they were living in to make the difficult and dangerous journey home. As Imber traveled the countryside visiting the various Jewish colonies and communities, he often stopped to read his poem to these pioneers and settlers. The words of Ha-tikvah moved them immensely, encouraging them to continue their struggle to secure their homeland.

McGee continued: “With a sob in their soul they said, ‘We’ve lost our song.’” This condition, as debilitating and frightening as lost breath, hovered like a cloud over the Jewish people well beyond the rivers of Babylon. Jewish history abounds with accounts of persecution, torture, and expulsion from lands the Jewish people had tried in vain to call home. For more than two thousand years, they wandered the earth—the unfortunate, often unwelcome guests in various Gentile lands. Could their lost hope ever be regained?

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, things were taking place that indicated the dead bones in Ezekiel’s ancient vision were beginning to shake, just as he had been told they would (37:2–7). Those noisy, moving, yet lifeless bones were the various gifted Jewish people—still separated by space, age, and time—who were following an almost mysterious call to unite the people without a land to the land without a people.

Men like Theodor Herzl, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, David Ben-Gurion, and Chaim Weitzman were among the many who championed the remedy for lost Jewish hope—Zionism, the movement for a national Jewish homeland in Eretz Yisrael, the land God had promised eventually to music. Somehow, the singing of Ha-tikvah brought an energy and enthusiasm into the dry, parched, and scattered bones of Ezekiel’s 2,500-year-old vision, gathering them into a great and standing army. Ha-tikvah became a rallying song and, eventually, the national anthem of the resurrected, modern State of Israel.

In 1898, Herzl visited the Jewish community of Rehovot (Israel) and heard the singing of Ha-tikvah. He was so impressed with the song that he had it performed at the 1901 Zionist Congress in Romania.
can be heard throughout the work. Others say it is based on the Sephardic melody for Psalm 117 in the Hallel service. Or perhaps the composer was Samuel Cohen, a Moldavian immigrant and resident of Rehovot who used a Romanian tune. No one seems to know for sure.

In 1897 the first Zionist Congress met in Basel, Switzerland. There delegates determined that a national anthem would be needed for the future Zionist state. Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau decided to hold a competition to find a suitable one. The entries reportedly were so bad that Herzl ordered the contest canceled and the entries destroyed.

The next year, in 1898, Herzl visited the Jewish community of Rehovot and heard the singing of Ha-tikvah. He was so impressed with the song that he had it performed at the 1901 Zionist Congress in Romania. Informally adopted as the official song of the Congress in 1905, it caught on quickly and soon became a song of the people throughout the land of Palestine. In 1933 the Zionist Congress met and confirmed Ha-tikvah as the official anthem of the Zionist movement.

Soon the song’s melodious strains could be heard throughout the land, stirring so much emotion and passion among the Palestinian Jews that the British who controlled the land banned it. As a result of that action, the forbidden song became a rallying call for an underground movement throughout the country. When Israel declared its statehood in 1948, it was sung as the national anthem. Except for a bill tabled by the Knesset in 1967 that would have made the song “Jerusalem of Gold” the anthem, Ha-tikvah has never been challenged and remains the national anthem of Israel today. It is an interesting reflection on Israel’s history and population in that it was written, not by a Hebrew-speaking Sabra (native born Israeli), but by a Romanian-speaking member of the Diaspora (scattered Jews) who, himself, possessed that great hope for a homeland.

There are those who believe that Ha-tikvah should not be the anthem because, like America’s “Star Spangled Banner,” it is difficult to play and sing. Yet world-renowned musician Zubin Mehta, former conductor of the Israel Symphony, has called it the most beautiful anthem on earth.

The poem says, “The hope of two thousand years, to be free, A free people in our land, Our hope is not lost.” Ha-tikva is an anthem able to unite the Jewish political and/or religious right with the Jewish political and/or religious left. For more than one hundred years, Ha-tikvah has been reclaiming hope for the Jewish people.

Imber, who died in 1908, had written Ha-tikvah when there was no Israel and there were no Israelis. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish population had been dispossessed for almost two thousand years. The only Hebrew spoken was in synagogues on the Sabbath or some other feast day. Today every Jewish person in the world is entitled to citizenship in this land given to their father Abraham—a land where Hebrew is spoken in homes, on streets, and in the seat of government as well as in synagogues.

What power could accomplish that monumental feat? The answer is found in the heart of the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, verse 12:

I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

As wonderful as it may be that Jewish people today can stand proudly before the flag of Israel and sing Ha-tikvah, a future day will bring something far more glorious. In Ezekiel 37:14 God says, And [I] shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I, the LORD, have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

Steve Herzig is the Director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Yet in this chapter of Hosea, the prophet uses a number of similes and metaphors to paint a vivid picture of Israel’s pursuit of immorality as she set aside God’s law, degenerated, and slid toward anarchy and national disaster. Worse, however, than the nation’s moral decline was the blindness of her leaders, who lacked any conscious awareness of their sin. These factors produced a spirit of anarchy and chaos within the northern kingdom of Israel during the final days before the Assyrian invasion. Little did Israel know that her days were numbered. The mighty Assyrians would soon appear and decimate the nation.

Civil Rebellion

God eagerly looked forward to bringing spiritual healing to Israel, but her recalcitrant involvement in gross immorality made such renewal impossible. The LORD said,

When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria; for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without (v. 1).

Degeneracy existed everywhere; the country was filled with lying, home invasions, and street crime. Forsaking God’s law had robbed the nation of her faith, honesty, integrity, and material possessions. Israel had lost sight of the fact that God kept a record of every evil act. “And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face” (v. 2). Israel was so consumed with wickedness and entangled in sin that she had become callous and indifferent to God’s law, making her impervious to any sense of accountability before God.

In every society, the leadership sets the standards for morality and justice. But Israel’s leaders had succumbed to deeds of wickedness. Their moral corruption and depravity were like leaven, permeating the whole nation from top to bottom. In fact, the king and “princes” (military leaders) rejoiced over the wickedness and lies of their people (v. 3). Israel’s leaders listened with amusement to the vileness of their people’s escapades.

Hosea compares the lust and immoral lack of restraint to the heating of an oven used to bake leavened bread. He said, “They
conspirators waited through the night in anger. In the morning, they ignited their plot and slew him. Then they took over his throne and established their own rule.

Nineteen kings ruled over Israel. Some died natural deaths, but the majority were dethroned or murdered by their successors. Zechariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah were all murdered in office. Menahem became a vassal to the Assyrians. The Assyrians imprisoned Hoshea, the last king in Israel. Ironically, through this whole scenario, the LORD said, “there is none among them that calleth unto me” (v. 7). No one called on God to bring stability in Israel as she slid into anarchy.

Chastisement Revealed

God had instructed Israel to remain separate from the surrounding nations (Num. 23:9; Dt. 33:28). However, the ten tribes assimilated themselves and their religion with heathen nations that dwelt nearby. Hosea described this amalgamation as a half-baked cake: “Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned” (v. 8). In biblical times people baked bread on hot rocks. If they did not turn the bread continually, it would burn to a crisp on one side but remain uncooked dough on the other side. Israel’s intermingling with the Gentile nations left her burned politically and religiously; but in her commitment to the Lord, she remained “uncooked.” A half-baked cake is good for nothing and must be discarded—so it was with Israel.

This sorry state left Israel like an old man who is weak and susceptible to abuse but who proudly refuses to acknowledge it. Hosea put it well when he wrote, “Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not” (v. 9). Like an old man, Israel bore all the marks of impending death. Her spiritual strength had been diminished by idolatry and her wealth depleted by paying tribute to Assyria. And like an old man unaware of his condition, Israel was blind to her decaying state.

What’s more, “the pride of Israel testified to his face, and they do not return to the LORD, their God, nor seek him for all this” (v. 10). God got right in Israel’s face and testified against her immorality, idolatry, and insensitivity toward Him and His Word. Sadly, this rebuke still did not bring the backsliding nation to repent or reverse her position.

In her deteriorating state, Israel pursued protective alliances with...
Egypt and Assyria. These alliances were described as a “silly dove without heart” (v. 11). When being attacked, a harmless dove will flitter back and forth, confused about what to do to ward off danger. The dove is “without heart,” meaning she lacks the ability to make a rational choice regarding the correct action to take. Like the dove, Israel lacked the ability to make a rational choice. Instead of calling on God for assistance, she irrationally called on heathen nations for help.

While Israel flittered back and forth, making alliances with Assyria and Egypt, God intervened in judgment. The Lord said, 

When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down like the fowls of the heavens; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard (v. 12).

Metaphorically, God would come with a fowler’s net, waiting to catch the silly dove of Israel as she flew back and forth in confusion. Israel would not escape judgment. At the right time, God would use the Assyrians to net the nation and carry her into captivity. Israel had received ample warning that her captivity was imminent if repentance was not forthcoming.

The threat of judgment was followed by the Lord’s announcement of destruction:

Woe unto them! For they have fled from me. Destruction unto them! Because they have transgressed against me. Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me (v. 13).

In the past, God had delivered Israel from Egypt and other oppressors bent on her destruction. He was still ready to deliver Israel if the nation would only call on Him for help. Instead, Israel looked to other nations to deliver her from danger. Even worse, Israelites had lied about God’s ability, power, and willingness to protect them. Thus God says, “Destruction unto them!”

During the reign of King Menahem (752-42 B.C.), the Assyrians, led by Tiglath-pileser III, began moving west to enlarge their holdings. In the process, they threatened the northern kingdom of Israel. Menahem knuckled under to the demands of Tiglath-pileser and paid enormous tribute to the Assyrian leader. Later, Israel’s King Pekah joined Syria with plans to plunder Judah. At Judah’s request, Assyria intervened on her behalf and Tiglath-pileser seized the northern kingdom of Israel in 733 B.C.

When the Assyrians invaded Israel, they destroyed the crops used for food and drink. In the midst of their calamity, God said of Israel, “they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they wailed upon their beds; they assemble themselves for grain and wine, and they rebel against me” (v. 14).

The Israelites approached the living God in the same manner as they approached Baal. They howled over the loss of their crops and tried to persuade God to help them by cutting themselves as did the worshippers of Baal (1 Ki. 18:28)—something strictly prohibited by the Mosaic Law (Dt. 14:1).

In His goodness, God had “bound and strengthened their arms” (v. 15) during their time of need; but He received no gratitude for His kindness. In fact, He said “they imagine mischief against me” (v. 15). In disloyalty, Israel treated God as the enemy and plotted the worst kind of evil against Him. Israel’s extreme hostility is all the more horrifying when compared to God’s loving grace and mercy expressed in verse 15.

Finally, Israel’s backsliding and unbelief is compared to a defective bow:

They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful bow; their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue; this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt (v. 16).

Israel took confidence in her ability to defeat her enemies and therefore did not seek God’s help. But her confidence was like a defective bow; when used in battle, it either broke or could not shoot an arrow with power and accuracy. As a result of the nation’s insolence, Israel’s princes would fall by the sword. Even the Egyptians, whom Israel had called on for help, would scorn the nation when they heard of her defeat.

When Tiglath-pileser finally took Israel, he set up Hoshea as king in Samaria. Hoshea acknowledged Assyrian rule for a time but eventually stopped paying tribute and sought an alliance with Egypt in an attempt to overthrow Assyria’s control. This act of rebellion led to a three-year siege by the Assyrians, ending with the captivity of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. (2 Ki. 17:3–4).

As it was with the Israelites, the moral compass of many Christians today is off course. We, too, need to reexamine our commitment to the Lord and make the needed adjustments while there is still time.

David M. Levy is the Director of Foreign Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Every now and then, God touches a few special men with an extra measure of His gift of evangelism. Rev. Abram Cornelius Edewards, fondly called Ace by all who knew him, was such a man. Not a day went by that Ace didn’t pull a tract from his pocket and find a way to tell people about the peace and salvation they could enjoy through faith in Jesus Christ.

In grocery stores, doctors’ offices, on street corners, anywhere he went, in fact, Ace talked about the Lord. Many years ago, after his first wife, Fran, died and Ace wanted to sell his home, he spent so much time talking to prospective buyers about the Lord that he never got around to showing the house.

But Ace did more than win souls; he taught others how to become soul winners. He lavishly and unselfishly gave of himself, discipling new believers in the Word of God and training them in evangelism. Today his “preacher boys,” as he called them, are faithfully leading others to new life in Christ.

For Ace, serving the Lord was pure joy. “What we call work,” he used to say, “other people call vacation.” Ace joined The Friends of Israel as a field evangelist in 1963, three years after he moved to California from his native Michigan where he had pastored several churches. After Fran went home to be with the Lord, he married Zelpha “Zip” Russell, who also served with The Friends of Israel. Zelpha later died of cancer.

We extend our sincerest condolences to Ace’s wife, Elaine, in Seal Beach, California, and to his three sons, one daughter, and their families. We also thank God for the many people who came to Christ through the faithful witness of Ace Edewards and the “preacher boys” he trained. And as the Lord tarries, hundreds more will come because of the devotion of one man who not only understood the Bible’s admonition to teach others, but who obeyed it.

Russian submarine torpedoed the ship. The rickety craft quickly sank with all 770 Jewish refugees on board. They had been cruelly refused their one chance to survive.

Now, fifty-eight years later, search teams believe they have located the wreckage of the ill-fated craft. Perhaps the timing is providential. Although remembering the unbri- dled hatred that officially and coldly executed these people may be odious, it is essential. For this reason, if no other, all parties negotiating for secure and recognized borders for the Jewish homeland should be wary of being duped into “taking a chance on peace.” Taking chances is not an option when negotiating with “peace partners” whose oft-stated final objective is to tow the Jewish ship of state out to sea. Every Jewish body entombed in the Struma is a memorial to this macabre fact of life.
Jesus Christ and the Future Kingdom of God

(Part 10)

In the previous article, we saw that Christ offered the future theocratic Kingdom to Israel and told the nation what it must do for the Kingdom to be established. He offered the Kingdom through the preaching of the gospel and the performance of miracles verifying that message. This article examines Israel’s response to Jesus Christ and His offer of the Kingdom.

Israel’s Response Foretold

Old Testament Prophecies. Through Israel’s Old Testament Scriptures, God foretold that the nation would reject the Messiah and His message. More than seven hundred years before Christ preached the gospel of the Kingdom to Israel and demonstrated the truthfulness of that message through His powerful miracles, God had moved Israel’s prophet Isaiah to write, “Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” (Is. 53:1). This prophecy foretold that the people of Israel would not believe the report that the Messiah was present or the subsequent truth that the theocratic Kingdom of God was at hand in the sense of its potential for establishment.

In the Bible, “the arm of the Lord” refers to God’s mighty power (Ps. 89:10, 13; Is. 62:8; Jer. 32:17). In Isaiah 53:1, that expression refers specifically to God’s revelation to Israel of His mighty power through the miracles that Jesus Christ performed in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom. Thus, through the prophet Isaiah, God foretold that in spite of the display of God’s mighty power through the miracles that Christ would perform, the people of Israel would believe neither the report that He was the Messiah nor the fact that the theocratic Kingdom of God was at hand. Several years after Israel rejected Jesus Christ and His offer of the Kingdom, the apostle John confirmed this understanding of Isaiah 53:1. John wrote,

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; That the saying of Isaiah, the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? (Jn. 12:37–38).

Through the Isaiah 53 prophecy, God foretold that Israel would not desire or esteem the Messiah when He would come. He would be rejected (vv. 2–3).

God indicated further that He would use this rejection as His means of effecting the death of the Messiah as an offering for the sins, transgressions, and iniquities of the people (vv. 5–6, 8, 10–12). One reason why His death would be necessary was that, just as sheep wander from their shepherd, so the people of Israel had strayed from God by turning to their own way instead of following Him. Thus their iniquity had to be laid on the Messiah (v. 6).

More than five hundred years before Christ offered the theocratic Kingdom to Israel, God delivered a significant prophecy to Israel’s prophet Daniel through the angel Gabriel. Gabriel indicated that this prophecy related specifically to Daniel’s people and their holy city, Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24). Through
this prophecy, God revealed the exact time the Messiah would officially present Himself to Israel as its prince (the one who could establish the theocratic Kingdom and rule over it as king [Dan. 9:25]). Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy through His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey (Mt. 21:1–5). Centuries earlier, God had revealed that this was precisely how Israel’s future King would present Himself to the nation (Zech. 9:9).

Then God indicated that after Messiah’s official presentation, He would be “cut off” with a violent death (Dan. 9:26). Christ was crucified several days after His triumphal entry (Mt. 27:33–50). This portion of Daniel’s prophecy implied that Israel would reject the Messiah and His offer of the theocratic Kingdom.

The prophecy also revealed that after the Messiah was cut off, Jerusalem and the second Temple would be destroyed by a particular people (Dan. 9:26). Christ also foretold this future destruction, indicating it would occur because the nation did not recognize the significance of the day of His triumphal entry and the peace that was available through His offer of the theocratic Kingdom (Mt. 24:1–2; Lk. 19:41–44). The Romans were the people who fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel 9 and the prophecies Christ uttered. They destroyed Jerusalem and the second Temple in A.D. 70.

Jesus Christ’s Prophecies. While Christ was present on earth, He Himself foretold His future rejection and death. After His twelve disciples had preached the gospel of the Kingdom to Israel for a significant time, Jesus began to tell them “how he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Mt. 16:21). Later Jesus told the disciples, “The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again” (Mt. 17:22–23). On His last journey to Jerusalem before His death, Christ spoke these words to the twelve:

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him. And the third day he shall rise again (Mt. 20:18–19).

Christ clearly asserted that His rejection, death, and resurrection had all been foretold in the Old Testament writings of Israel’s prophets (Lk. 18:31).

In Matthew 21:33–40, Jesus taught a parable about vineyard husbandmen who killed the vineyard owner’s son when he was sent to the vineyard by his father to collect its fruit. In this parable, the owner of the vineyard represented God the Father; the owner’s son represented God’s Son, Jesus Christ; and the husbandmen represented Israel’s religious leaders. Through this parable, Christ foretold that the religious leaders would reject Him and His offer of the theocratic Kingdom and would have Him killed (v. 42). He also foretold the tragic consequence of that rejection: The theocratic Kingdom of God would not be given to the nation of Israel that existed at that time. Instead, it would be given to a future nation of Israel that would produce what God wants (v. 43).

Satan’s Role in Israel’s Response

In the parable of the sower, Christ revealed that Satan played a key role in Israel’s rejection of Him and His offer of the theocratic Kingdom. At the beginning of the parable, Jesus stated, “Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some of the seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them” (Mt. 13:3–4). In His interpretation of that part of the parable, Christ indicated that the seeds represented the message concerning the theocratic Kingdom, and the birds represented Satan. He said,

Hear, therefore, the parable of the sower. When any one heareth...
the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside (vv. 18–19).

Christ thereby revealed that as He and others were preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to the people of Israel, Satan followed behind them and snatched that message away from many of the hearers, so they would not believe it and repent.

Satan did so because of the following biblical truth: Christ will crush Satan and his kingdom, remove them totally from the earth, and establish God’s theocratic Kingdom when Israel believes the gospel of the Kingdom and repents (Zech. 12—14; Rev. 19:11—20:6; Acts 3:19–21). In light of that truth, the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom to Israel and the performance of the miracles that supported the truthfulness of that message posed a serious threat to Satan and his domain. Thus, to prevent Christ from crushing and removing him and his kingdom when He was here, Satan worked to prevent the people of Israel from believing the gospel of the Kingdom and repenting.

Israel’s Response Fulfilled

The religious leaders of the nation played the key role in the rejection of Jesus Christ and His offer of the theocratic Kingdom. They were very displeased with His miracles, His cleansing of the Temple, and the people’s response to His ministry (Mt. 21:15; Mk. 11:18). They challenged His authority and planned how they could take and kill Him (Mt. 21:23; 26:3–5). They paid money for His betrayal, sent a large multitude to take Him, sought false witness against Him, and pronounced Him guilty of death (Mt. 26:14–15, 47, 59, 66). After more deliberation, they sent Him to Pilate, accused Him before Pilate and Herod, and persuaded a multitude to press Pilate to execute Him (Mt. 27:1–2, 12, 20).

Even if Israel had believed the gospel of the Kingdom and repented, Christ would have died for the sins of the world.

The “What If” Question

Some people ask the question, “What if Israel had believed the gospel of the Kingdom and repented when Jesus Christ was here? Would that have jeopardized the necessity of Christ dying for the sins of the world and, therefore, the salvation of human beings?” The answers lie in the fact that both the Old Testament and Christ Himself foretold Israel’s rejection of Him and His offer of the theocratic Kingdom. His death indicates that these rejections were certainties. Second, even if Israel had believed the gospel of the Kingdom and repented, Christ would have died for the sins of the world.

If Israel had believed and repented, the nation would have acclaimed Christ as its king. The Roman government would have regarded this action as the beginning of a revolt and undoubtedly would have crucified Him. Then Christ would have risen from the dead, crushed and removed Satan and his kingdom (including the Roman Empire), and established God’s theocratic Kingdom on the earth.

Conclusion

The Israel of Moses’ day did not enter the Promised Land of Canaan because of unbelief. Thus its entrance was postponed for forty years until the nation of Joshua’s day believed God’s promise. Similarly, the nation of Israel at Christ’s First Coming did not receive the promised theocratic Kingdom because of unbelief. It did not believe His message and the witness of His miracles. Thus God has postponed the establishment of that Kingdom until Christ’s Second Coming when the nation of Israel of that day will believe.

The next article will examine biblical evidences of that postponement.

Renald Showers is a National Ministries Representative for The Friends of Israel.
PA electricity consumption ‘threatens Israel’s reserves’

_Ha’aretz_ (Internet Edition)—Palestinian electricity consumption is climbing by 15–20 percent a year and could become a future time bomb threatening Israel’s limited reserves, a senior industry source said.

The source said Israel keeps reserves of some 8 percent of its production capabilities—the standard in Europe is 20–25 percent. He said Israel now supplies 600 megawatts to the Palestinian Authority, but within 5 to 7 years Palestinian consumption will double. “Israel will have a difficult time supplying all their electricity needs—it’s having enough difficulty supplying its own needs,” he said.

Israel must make sure the Palestinians develop independent electricity production, he said. A 140-megawatt plant is soon to go online in Gaza, “but it won’t be able to make the Palestinians self-sufficient.”

The Oslo agreement does not include any separation of the Israeli and Palestinian electricity grids. Israel supplies electricity to the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

Mufti bans Jerusalem Arabs from becoming Israeli citizens

_The Jerusalem Post_—Seeking to stem the increase in the number of Jerusalem Arabs applying for Israeli citizenship, Mufti of Jerusalem Ikrima Sabri renewed a religious decree banning Palestinians in Jerusalem from becoming Israeli citizens.

The edict states that holding Israeli citizenship is prohibited by Islam, as it constitutes recognition of Israeli law and is tantamount to recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem.

In response, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert called on Prime Minister Ehud Barak to immediately announce that Israel will automatically grant citizenship to any Arab living in East Jerusalem who applies.

Figures released by the Israeli Interior Ministry show that citizenship applications by East Jerusalem Arabs have nearly doubled over the last year. In the first half of 2000, the ministry received 183 applications, compared to 98 for the same period in 1999. However, only 13 of this year’s applications have been approved so far, Ministry spokeswoman Tova Ellinson told _The Jerusalem Post_.

While all 200,000 Jerusalem Arabs may apply for Israeli citizenship, only a small minority—about 10,000—do so. The rest retain their Jordanian passports but carry Israeli permanent-resident identity cards and receive social benefits such as national insurance and health coverage.

Since the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993, the number of Jerusalem Arabs who have become Israeli citizens has increased from 2,000 to five times that number, due to uncertainty prompted by the peace process.

During recent Camp David talks, many Jerusalem Arabs began to feel uneasy about a possible peace deal in which their villages would come under Palestinian sovereignty.

Fadil Tahbub, East Jerusalem resident and member of the Palestinian National Council, has estimated that nearly 70 percent of Jerusalem’s 200,000 Arabs would prefer to remain under Israeli sovereignty because of the economic benefits Israel offers.

Water to farmers to be cut by 50 percent

_Ha’aretz_—The government wants to cut the water quota for agricultural use by 50 percent in 2001, following an already steep cut of 40 percent this year, according to an agreement reached by the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture and the Water Commission in the National Infrastructure Ministry. The proposal will be put forward for cabinet approval soon.

The water cut will be implemented even if the coming winter season (2000–2001) yields average or above-average rainfall. In the event of a dry winter, the cut could reach 75 percent of the normal quota.

Yossi Yishai, the Agriculture Ministry’s director-general, said the ministry will prepare an estimate of the losses and damage that will accrue to agriculture and the food-processing industry by the cut. Yishai predicted that loss of income and direct losses from dried up orchards, hothouses, and fields would total NIS 2 billion (U.S. $500 million). Farmers are still to receive NIS 160 million (U.S. $40 million) for the damage they sustained as a result of the water cut in 2000.

Some 10,000 agricultural sector workers, both self-employed and salaried, will lose their jobs under a 50 percent water cut, says the ministry. Industries that are directly and indirectly connected to agriculture will also be badly hit, in contrast to the situation in previous water cuts.
continued from page 21

Evidently, Satan calculated that Eve was the easier prey, and he manipulated the wife to get to the husband. Eve ate and handed the forbidden fruit to Adam who was “with her” (Gen. 3:6). Adam ate, and mankind has been experiencing the bitter aftertaste ever since: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

Yet if Adam was with her, why did he not stop her? Not only did he fail to exercise his God-given responsibility by obeying the Lord and, thus, protecting his wife, but he ate the fruit as well. Sin immediately took hold and pitted Adam against Eve. When God asked Adam if he had “eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat” (3:11), Adam blamed Eve. Whereas earlier he had called her “bone of my bones,” now he said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (3:12). So Satan wrested control of the Kingdom from Adam and succeeded in dividing the man from the woman. Eve apparently was trusting and naive and believed Satan’s lie. Adam, however, lacked the strength of character to stand for what he knew was right (1 Tim. 2:14).

How many times is this same scenario played out in homes today? Because Eve was formed second and was deceived, God ordained the man to occupy the spiritual position of leadership within the home and the church (1 Tim. 2:11–14).

Yet Satan still slithers like a snake in the grass, trying to create chaos by assailing the God-given order. And his tactics have not changed over the millennia. He is the master of divide and conquer by appealing to either self-indulgence (lust of the flesh), self-fulfillment (lust of the eyes), or self-esteem (pride of life). Eve was the first person he hooked. But mankind has been taking the bait ever since.

If both sexes vie for supremacy, Satan succeeds in creating strife by assailing the God-given order. And as the world continues to degenerate spiritually, godly men and women need more than ever to function within the biblical parameters God has established for them. Wives should submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22); and husbands should assume their responsibility as leaders, heed the Word of God, and stand with integrity for what is right. Then it will be much more difficult for Satan to slither under the door.

Lorna Simcox is Senior Editor for The Friends of Israel.

D id you know it’s possible to give a one-time gift to The Friends of Israel—a gift annuity—that will reap spiritual fruit among God’s Chosen People?

In addition, that same gift can increase your personal income and reduce your future tax payments.

If your heart’s desire is to invest in the Lord’s work, yet at the same time, you need to make the most of your current financial resources, then you may want to consider purchasing a gift annuity from The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

If you decide to give appreciated property, such as stock or real estate, rather than sending a check, you will pay capital gains tax on only part of the appreciation. In addition, the capital gains tax will be spread over many years rather than all be due in the year of your gift.

Indeed, a gift annuity is a gift with benefits both lifelong and eternal, allowing you to maximize the impact of your financial stewardship. For specific details about how a gift annuity can work for you, complete the form and mail it in the return envelope in this magazine. There is absolutely no obligation on your part.

Name _____________________________________________
Address ___________________________________________
City/State/Zip ______________________________________
Date of Birth (month/day/year) _______________________________
(Suggested minimum age of 60)
Name of Joint Annuitant ____________________________
Date of Birth (month/day/year) _________________________
(Suggested minimum age of 60)
Relationship to First Annuitant ______________________
Phone ( ) ______________________________________
Possible Amount of Annuity $ _______________________
(Minimum annuity amount is $5,000)
Income to be paid:
○ Quarterly     ○ Semiannually
○ Annually
○ I would like a Friends of Israel representative to contact me.
any people come here to Jerusalem every year. As it is written in Isaiah 2:3, “for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” Recently the whole world watched as the pope came here from Rome. Many Catholic priests also came. One day I heard seven priests who had come, talking among themselves in Polish.

Of course, I know Polish very well since I came to Israel from Poland after the Holocaust. So I began to speak to them, and we quickly became friendly. I listened as they spoke of the pope as “the holy father.” Finally I asked them, “To whom do you pray every day? Is it to this ‘holy father’ that you see now before your eyes, or to the living God who is in heaven?”

Because I am Jewish, they looked down on me at first and asked, “How can we speak with you about such things? You belong to this stiff-necked people!”

I replied, “You see, I am not like you. I believe in God according to the holy Bible, not like you or the ultra-Orthodox Jews who believe what is contained in their many commentaries. Because of their many books, they have lost the right direction and worship man instead of God. It is clearly written in Psalm 118, ‘It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man’” (v. 8).

Now the priests became curious and asked me how I know the psalms. I told them, “Because I believe in the living God and not in man.”

“You know what the Jews have done to our God?” they asked. “They have killed Him. They have crucified Him.”

I replied, “You have made a very big mistake. It was written in the prophets that this would be done but not by the Jews only. He died for us all. It was written that God would lay on Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53). And now He is alive in heaven.”

This time they were very surprised to hear me say that Christ is alive. “How can you say this?” they asked.

“If you believe Christ is alive,” I said, “why do you always show Him on a cross? But for those of us who believe in Him as our living Savior who was crucified for all of us, He is no more on the cross.”

This teaching was very difficult for them to accept. They did not understand how they could come here to Jerusalem and hear about Jesus from a Jew. So I opened my New Testament and read for them 1 Corinthians 12:12–13 and explained that Paul said if we believe, we are all baptized into one Spirit, one Body, whether Jew or Gentile.

It was as though they were in shock. Again they asked, “How can this be, that a Jew believes in Christ?”

“How can you ask me such a question?” I replied. “You are supposed to be the examples for your pupils and teach them to follow the right path, and you ask me this question?”

So I read to them Deuteronomy 18:15: “‘The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me [Moses]; unto him ye shall hearken.’ Who was this One?” I asked.
“So you know something about our catechism,” they said.

“They are Catholic commentaries,” I said. “I am living among people who also have many different commentaries, and they have lost the right direction. Like you, they are at a crossroads, waiting for someone to come and show them what is written in the Word of God.”

They asked if everyone in Israel knows the Bible. “Many know,” I said, “but for most of them, it is like a nice story. It is important not only to know but also to believe what is written.”

“Please tell us,” they asked politely, “how you came to know the Lord.”

“Because of the holy Bible,” I replied, “not because of those many books. In the Bible it is clearly written that we are to serve the Lord only. And this is written not only to Jews but also to the entire world. And whoever will believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

“We have heard those words before,” they said. So the Lord gave me a good opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ to those who are so sure that they worship the Lord in the best way. But here in Jerusalem they have heard of a better way.