ETERNAL TRUTH
in an Exquisite Little Package

“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of
all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and
the glory of thy people, Israel.”
Luke 2: 30-32

INSIDE MESSAGE
They took the infant Jesus
“To present Him to the Lord.”
Up to old Jerusalem,
Obeying Moses’ word.

Turtledoves and pigeons,
The poorest of the poor.
It was the best the couple had,
What could they offer more?

Him and themselves they offered,
Which was a better thing
Than any oxen, lamb, or bird
A worshiper can bring

May the blessings of the season be yours.

INSIDE MESSAGE
“The Lord shall be unto thee an
everlasting light, and thy God, thy glory.”
Isaiah 60:19

Hanukkah

Christmas

“Christmas and Hanukkah cards
designed especially for The Friends
of Israel by artist Kathy Teal Morris.”

“May the lights of Hanukkah warm
your season of celebration and
illuminate the divine promise of security
and true peace.”

INSIDE MESSAGE

2001 CHRISTMAS CARDS 20 Cards and Envelopes plus 20 Gift Subscriptions to Israel My Glory, KO1, $8.50
2001 HANUKKAH CARDS 5 Cards & Envelopes, KO1A, $3

2002 Israel in Focus Calendar
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This calendar features lovable characters illustrated by artist Ruth Wick.
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ABOUT THE COVER
The ruined city of Kuneitra on the Syrian Golan Heights stands as a monument to perpetuate a memory Syria would do well to forget. Forgetting, however, seems impossible since the international media refuse to convey the facts about why the city remains a ruin more than 25 years after the 1973 war. Syria spins a fanciful tale of an Israeli aggression that forced innocent Syrians from their homes. In reality, Kuneitra symbolizes Syria’s failure to wipe Israel off the face of the globe. The gutted buildings and rubble shown on our cover should be a grim reminder to us all that tyrants never seem to learn from disasters of their own making.
U.S. Embassy—Closing the Door Once More

Early in June the current administration opted to follow the lead of former President Clinton, at least temporarily, by closing the door on moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Citing security interests, the president chose to push back construction plans for an additional six months with the promise to implement them “soon.”

To say the least, many were disappointed. As did Clinton, President Bush reneged on a firm campaign promise to move the embassy immediately after his inauguration. It didn’t take long before opposing voices questioned the delay.

In 1995 both houses of Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act. As a “statement of the Policy of the United States,” it declared, “Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel” and mandated moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by May 31, 1999. However, a clause allowed the president to invoke a security waiver to delay construction in six-month increments.

Congressman Tom Lantos (D-California), the only Holocaust survivor in Congress, said he is “deeply disappointed.” The American Jewish Committee also was quick to respond. A spokesman commented, “The sad fact is that while this decision is premised on the notion that this is a bad time to break ground for an embassy—and I accept that’s the case—there will never be a good time to break ground for the embassy in the minds of the Palestinians and their supporters.”

Israel has every right to name the location of its capital. And there can be no serious doubt in anyone’s mind that Jerusalem was in ancient times and is today the capital of the nation of Israel.

Millions of evangelical Christians and Jewish organizations share the frustration of Congressman Lantos and others who are still waiting for the will of the American people and their representatives to be implemented. The primary reason is emphatically clear: It is the right thing to do. The code of international conduct, moral obligation, and respect for the sovereign rights of a trusted and loyal ally combine to mandate that the United States and Western world treat Israel with the same dignity and deference they afford every other nation on the face of the earth.

Israel has every right to name the location of its capital. And there can be no serious doubt in anyone’s mind that Jerusalem was in ancient times and is today the capital of the nation of Israel. Furthermore, you can be certain that when a Palestinian state officially is declared, whatever form it may take, the West will respect the Palestinians’ choice of a capital city and immediately move to establish national embassies there.

Given the level of terrorist activity sweeping the world and the Middle East in particular, it is understandable that the administration might waver in its determination to fulfill the will of the American people and their elected representatives. However, a serious problem arises with the recurrent delays. Palestinians and their terrorist bedfellows are threatening the United States with murder and mayhem should Bush relocate the embassy. That the world’s foremost superpower appears intimidated by pressure from international terrorist thugs is not a comforting revelation.

For more than 60 years, Israel has survived through strength. Its enemies always knew Israel would respond to aggression quickly and
decisively. Such knowledge acted as a deterrent and, humanly speaking, meant survival for the Jewish nation. Now this doctrine is being severely tested. Undoubtedly, one of the strongest statements the United States can make is to keep its promises to its allies. Equivocation only encourages more overt threats and acts of terror.

When it was in vogue for extremists to commandeer international airflights, Israel made it clear it will not negotiate with terrorists—and the attacks stopped.

Perhaps we all would do well to remember a 25-year-old event seldom brought to mind these days. When Israeli citizens were held hostage by Palestinian militants in Entebbe, Uganda, after being victimized by an airline hijacking, little Israel taught the world a lesson. It acted swiftly, decisively, and effectively by executing a brilliant commando raid that rescued its 105 nationals and destroyed Uganda’s entire fleet of fighter planes. I wonder what Western world leaders would say today under similar circumstances.

In a day when murderers of Israelis and Americans walk the streets of the West Bank and Gaza with little fear of being apprehended and are touted as heroes by their national leaders, it may be time to take stock.

We must not equate the perpetrators of wanton acts of terrorism with responsible societies acting lawfully in defense of their citizens. Assigning such “moral equivalency” goes far beyond anything remotely associated with rational policy. It sets a dangerous precedent that puts innocent, civilized people in the line of fire. Meanwhile their killers claim to be aggrieved victims, distressed to the point of uncontrollable fits of rage, which they contend justify their lust for blood and conquest.

Therefore, as in the case of the embassy move, it is important that orderly, democratic societies never appear intimidated by threats and make it resoundingly clear that such tactics hold no promise of success.

But there is another indispensable consideration where Jerusalem is concerned. Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people. Their right to the Holy City is biblically, legally, morally, and historically verifiable beyond question. And no nation, great or small, should ever hesitate to acknowledge it.

The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

Statement of Activities
Year Ended December 31, 2000

Changes in unrestricted net assets:
Public support and revenue:
  Public support:
    Contributions:
      General .......................................................... $3,618,696
      Missionary support........................................... 1,784,096
      Institute of Jewish Studies ................................. 27,325
      Legacies and bequests ....................................... 463,042
    Total public support ....................................... 5,893,159
  Revenue:
    Ministry publications, audio, and video............... 1,075,390
    Conference registrations and fees ........................ 87,319
    Investment income ........................................... 91,718
    Other income .................................................. 120,317
    Total revenue ............................................... 1,374,744
  Total public support and revenue ....................... 7,267,903

Net assets released from restrictions:
  Satisfaction of program restrictions .................. 170,236
  Operating expenses:
    Program services:
      Outreach ministries ...................................... 3,241,207
      North American ministries ................................. 1,512,259
      Foreign ministries .......................................... 831,457
      Institute of Jewish Studies ................................. 84,139
    Total program services ................................... 5,669,062
    Supporting services:
      Management and general .................................. 1,490,062
      Stewardship and fund-raising ........................... 275,042
    Total supporting services ................................ 1,765,104
    Total program and supporting services ................ 7,434,166
  Increase in unrestricted net assets before other changes ........................................... 3,973
  Other changes: Grant ......................................... (100,000)
  Increase (decrease) in unrestricted net assets ........ (96,027)

Changes in temporarily restricted net assets:
  Contributions .................................................... 11,221
  Legacies and bequests ....................................... 40,301
  Actuarial gain on annuity obligations .................... 364,868
  Net assets released from restrictions .................... (170,236)
  Increase (decrease) in temporarily restricted net assets ........................................... 246,154

Increase in net assets ......................................... 150,127
Net assets at beginning of year ............................ 3,430,356
Net assets at end of year ...................................... $3,580,483

Our financial statements were audited by the accounting firm of Lambrides, Lamos, & Moultrop Co., Certified Public Accountants. Their report on the audit for the year ended December 31, 2000, was rendered on April 6, 2001, with an unqualified opinion. The above figures are taken from that report.
Pope John Paul II stood with Muslim clerics inside a mosque in Kuneitra, a Syrian town on the Golan Heights. The recent visit was part of the pope's historic journey to Syria, the first ever taken by a Roman Catholic pontiff. He made the journey to Syria to retrace the steps of the apostle Paul and call for “new understanding and respect” among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. His visit to the mosque in the ruins of Kuneitra was to include a joint Muslim-Catholic prayer, which would demonstrate the announced spirit of the pope’s visit.

It was not to be, however. His Syrian hosts decided to scrap the plan because of Islamic “sensitivities.” At the root of those sensitivities...
emerged something more concrete than just silencing a prayer. It so happens that the mosque stands on the site where a church was located 12 centuries ago. Some of the Syrians were afraid the pope would attempt to reclaim the property for the church. Thus they quashed the prayer, and that silence speaks volumes.

For Muslims, the issue of Christian or Jewish property rights is a one-way street: once in Muslim hands, always in Muslim hands. To concede any Christian prior claim to the mosque property would be tantamount to doing exactly what they are demanding Israel do with all the land Muslims will refer to only as Palestine, namely, relinquish their rights to it. And for Islam, that isn’t the way it works. The pope found that out during his visit to Kuneitra. The pity is that the rest of the civilized world doesn’t seem to be listening to the silence.

**Bashar Assad—Not Ready for Prime Time**

When the pope and his party arrived in Syria, they were met at the airport by Syria’s fledgling president, Bashar Assad. Rather than greet his guests with the usual diplomatic amenities, Assad launched into a tirade against Israel and made a clumsy attempt to link the interests of Christians and Muslims against those of the Jewish people.

Israelis, he charged, “tried to kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality in which they betrayed Jesus Christ and the same way they tried to kill the Prophet Muhammad.” He went on to instruct the pope on how he should direct future prayers: “We feel that in your prayers in which you recall the suffering of Jesus Christ, you will remember that there is a people in Lebanon, the Golan [Heights], and Palestine that is suffering from subjugation and persecution. We expect you to stand by them against the oppressors so that they could regain what was unjustly taken from them.

“We say that we adhere to a just and comprehensive peace that returns the land to its original owners, and the return of refugees and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.”

This was the same Bashar Assad who last March said Israelis are more racist than Nazis and that Arab suffering under Israeli occupation is similar to the biblical suffering of Jesus Christ at the hands of first-century Jews.

Assad’s intemperate public remarks indicate that he is far from being the quality leader needed to represent capably his downtrodden people on the world stage. As his father before him, he is obsessed, not with obtaining a just and lasting peace, but with insuring the total conquest and eventual annihilation of his Jewish neighbors to the south.

### A Message From Kuneitra

Above the silence in the mosque rises a message we must not overlook. It emanates from the ruins of that ravished town. In anticipation of the presence of news media from around the world, the Syrians bused in thousands of former Kuneitra residents for the day and strung a large banner in English and Arabic over the rubble of the city. It read, “Our house was in this place. The Israelis demolished the house and the garden with all its flowers and trees. [They are] still thirsty.”

As is overwhelmingly the case, the press fell head over heels for the propaganda and dutifully told the Syrians’ story to people during the nightly news. Excerpts from the Associated Press report on the pope’s visit read as follows:

“Thousands of Syrians gathered in the rubble of a town they say was destroyed by Israel, turning the papal visit this morning into an opportunity to tell the world about their bitterness.

“Syria refuses to rebuild Kuneitra or let most of its residents return, saying it should stand as a monument to Israeli ‘crimes’ until the entire Golan, seized by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, is back in Syrian hands.”

### The Real Story

The true story of Kuneitra is found in the annals of the 1973 October War. On the morning of October 6, 1973, while Israelis were in their synagogues observing their holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, Syria and Egypt launched coordinated assaults bent on the destruction of the Jewish state. The thin line of Israeli troops and UN observers on the Golan Heights were startled to see an
falling prey to the constant bombardment of misinformation that comes via secular news and pro-Islamic sources. There is no rational basis for an alliance between Islam and Christianity. None whatsoever. Militant Muslims are killing Christians all over the world. Tragically, all too few voices in the Islamic community speak out to condemn these atrocities.

You might remember, as I do, that every time you walk through a security check at a local airport, you do so because Islamic radicals are committing heinous acts of terrorism all over the world. How long will Christians continue to allow themselves to be duped into sympathizing with individuals who are nothing more than terrorists bent on killing innocent people and subjugating Jews and Christians to Islam?

What’s in it for us? First, we must realize we live in a world where killers are on the loose. Unfortunately, this fact has escaped many of us. We live in a culture saturated by affluence. And let’s face it; we like it that way. We don’t want to hear unpleasant news. Consequently, when Muslim fanatics in Indonesia parade the heads of Christian believers on spikes through towns, there is little or no cry of outrage. When black Christian children are emasculated and sold as slaves to Muslims in Africa, few people seem to lose sleep at night. Perhaps we are too busy with our personal relationships or too preoccupied learning how to manage our stock portfolios to care. If so, God help us.

The tide is coming our way. We have been amply warned; but, as in the days of ancient Israel, prophetic voices are seldom heard until it is too late. The status quo is hard to combat.

One thing is certain. Men like Bashar Assad and Yasser Arafat may change their rhetoric; but they will never change their objective. Militant elements in Islam have long since made their intentions clear: First subjugate the Saturday people (the Jews); then, the Sunday people (the Christians). Islam, they are convinced, will triumph.

Christians are asleep at the switch. Furthermore, many Jewish people are slumbering under the delusion of Islamic sincerity and good intentions. But Muslim fanatics are still at war—Islamic Jihad.

Columnist William Safire said it well in a recent column in The New York Times. Aggressors, he said, will only be willing to talk when they are convinced they cannot win. Those who fight only to settle will always lose. Islam is sure it can win. The Western world hopes, through more talk, to settle. Let’s pray that the handwriting is not on the wall.

**The Lessons for Us**

The saddest part of this story is that mainline churches and, I’m sorry to say, many evangelicals are...
The Feast of Tabernacles in Ancient Times

Rejoice in the Lord always,” the apostle Paul enjoined us (Phil. 4:4). Yet it is not easy to rejoice, let alone always. The key, however, lies in the phrase in the Lord. It reminds us that He is the source and object of our joy.

The Feast of Tabernacles was designed to accomplish the same end. This marvelous, God-ordained holiday of Israel calls upon its celebrants to rejoice in His faithfulness—and helps them in the task.

“Ye shall dwell in booths” (Lev. 23:42)

The first mention of the Feast of Tabernacles is at Mount Sinai (Ex. 23:16). There God refers to the holiday as the “feast of ingathering,” attesting to its agricultural setting. The holiday was to occur at the “year’s end” (Ex. 34:22) in the seventh month (Lev. 23:34). In Exodus 12, God designates the month of Abib, or Nisan (the month when Passover is observed), as the first month of the year (Ex. 12:2; 13:4). Yet the Feast of Tabernacles took place just six months later, in Tishri. How then could Tishri be considered the end of the year?

This apparent conflict is resolved by the fact that Israel had more than one calendar. The religious calendar began with Abib, the month for Passover. Using that calendar, the Feast of Tabernacles rightly fell in the seventh month. At the same time, Tishri was also the first month of Israel’s civil calendar. Therefore, Tabernacles took place at harvest time, just as the new year was beginning and the old was ushered out. The Israelites celebrated the Feast of Ingathering after they had collected the fruits of their labors from the fields and had finished processing them (Ex. 23:16; Dt. 16:13).
The Feast of Tabernacles was one of three annual feast days that all Jewish adult males were required to attend. At Sinai, God did not specify where the men were to “appear before the Lord GOD” (Ex. 23:17). Later, however, He said it would be at a place of His choosing (Dt. 16:15). That place became the city of Jerusalem and, more specifically, the Temple (2 Chr. 7:12, 16).

Leviticus 23:33–43 describe the Feast of Tabernacles in detail. The word tabernacle comes from the Hebrew word sukkah, which speaks of a temporary structure. The feast is called Tabernacles because God required the children of Israel to dwell in temporary booths as they celebrated the holiday.

The festival began on the fifteenth day of the month and lasted seven days. God also added another, but separate, holy convocation day—an eighth day—to the end of the holiday week. Both the first and the eighth days were Sabbath days, so no work was permitted.

However, this prohibition did not include divinely prescribed activities. According to Numbers 29:12–35, the burnt offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs were made to the Lord every day of the feast. Interestingly, the number of bulls offered decreased by one each day. On the first day, 13 bulls were sacrificed; on the second day, 12 bulls; so on and so forth until, by the seventh and final day, only seven bulls were offered, for a total of 70 for the week. It is not clear why this was done. Jewish tradition, however, teaches that these 70 bulls were sacrificed for the sins of the 70 nations descended from the three sons of Noah (Gen. 10, Midrash, Numbers Rabbah 21.24).

Using foliage from four species of trees was another requirement for the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40). The text does not specify the purpose of these branches. But it is apparent from Nehemiah 8:15–16 that Jewish interpreters understood the branches were for making the booths.

The men of Israel also celebrated the festival by giving a love offering to the Lord (Dt. 16:16–17). They were not to appear before the Lord empty-handed. To do so would have implied they were ungrateful and proud or that God had not provided for them as He had promised—the latter impugning God’s character.

Every seven years another activity also occurred at the Feast of Tabernacles. The priests and elders of the people read the Law of Moses to the crowd of men, women, children, and foreign visitors who had assembled (Dt. 31:9–13). Everyone was to hear the Word of God.

The final aspect of the Feast had little to do with activity. Rather, it focused on attitude. Everyone, from the head of the house to the most needy and vulnerable, rejoiced on this day (Lev. 23:40; Dt. 16:14). The celebration surrounding the Feast of Tabernacles was to transpire annually without interruption (Lev. 23:41). Sadly, this turned out not to be the case in Israel’s ancient history.

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This marvelous, God-ordained holiday of Israel calls upon its celebrants to rejoice in His faithfulness—and helps them in the task.

“Ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD” (Lev. 23:41)

Relatively few recorded instances exist of Israel celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. We know indirectly the holiday was kept in the days of Joshua (Neh. 8:17).

The first recorded observance coincided with the dedication of Solomon’s Temple (1 Ki. 8; 2 Chr. 5—7). Because of the festival, all the men of Israel had assembled at Jerusalem. The celebration lasted two weeks: seven days for the dedication of the altar, followed by the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (1 Ki. 8:65). The additional holy convocation (the eighth day of Tabernacles) also was observed. And on the 23rd of the month, King Solomon dismissed the Israelites to their homes (2 Chr. 7:10). Counting backwards, this means the two-week celebration must have started on the eighth day of the month, which begs an interesting question: Did the people of Israel observe the Day of Atonement on the tenth of the month as required by the Law of Moses? Possibly, but Scripture is silent on the matter. The ancient rabbis believed the people of Israel forgot to observe the Day of Atonement; yet, despite their negligence, God accepted them anyway (Midrash, Numbers Rabbah 17.2). Whatever the case, they went away “joyful and glad of heart” (1 Ki. 8:66). In the years that followed, Solomon dutifully continued to offer the required sacrifices for the festival (2 Chr. 8:13).

After Solomon, came his son Rehoboam. He reigned briefly over the united kingdom; then Israel split in two. In the northern kingdom, wicked King Jeroboam instituted a counterfeit holiday (1 Ki. 12:32–33). In the southern kingdom, the seesaw spirituality of Judah’s kings
The feast is called Tabernacles because God required the children of Israel to dwell in temporary booths as they celebrated the holiday.

First, He wanted His people to know of His faithfulness. In every generation, children grow up who “have not known anything” about God and His faithfulness (Dt. 31:13). Thus God required the Law of Moses to be read every seven years at the festival, so everyone could hear it. He wanted every man, woman, and child to hear—and learn to fear and revere Him and observe all His Word (Dt. 31:12).

This is also why God required the Israelites to build booths. As they lived in these temporary structures for seven days, curious children were bound to ask why they had such a custom. The answer gave the parents an opportunity to recount God’s faithfulness, telling especially how God protected and provided for His people during their wilderness journey (Lev. 23:43). It was important to look back in history and reflect on all that God had done. Otherwise, it would become easy to forget the past and, subsequently, to forsake Jehovah to serve other gods. “Remember the LORD thy God,” Moses told the people (Dt. 8:18). The Feast of Tabernacles was meant to help them do just that.

God also wanted His people to worship Him. Thus 199 animals were sacrificed during the eight days of the festival season. Most of those were burnt offerings, symbolizing an individual’s complete dedication to God. The Israelites were to give something back to God when they attended the festival. Giving is an act of worship that acknowledges that all one has comes from God and that God is worthy to receive it back again if He so chooses.

God also wanted the people to rejoice. Biblical rejoicing is not merely for personal gratification but is an act of worship. Rejoicing “before the LORD” (Lev. 23:40) acknowledges God’s provision for His people (Dt. 16:15) and His goodness (2 Chr. 7:10).

God wanted His people to worship Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was designed to aid them in doing just that.

Finally, God intended for the Feast of Tabernacles to direct His people toward the Messiah. As with all the God-ordained festivals of Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, finding its ultimate fulfillment in Him (Mt. 5:17). When we hear and learn of Him, God’s faithfulness becomes evident. Our proper response then is worship through our dedication, our giving, and our rejoicing.

By pointing us to Jesus, the Feast of Tabernacles gives us good reason to say, along with the apostle Paul, “And again I say, Rejoice.”

"That your generations may know" (Lev. 23:43)

As with all Jewish festivals, God had specific purposes for establishing the Feast of Tabernacles.

 Bruce Scott is a field representative with The Friends of Israel in New Hope, Minnesota.
The Feast of Tabernacles during the time of Jesus was full of pageantry fueled with great expectation. It was the “season of our rejoicing” because Jewish people believed the promise of the Messianic Kingdom actually could be fulfilled during this time. The Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot, marked the end of the religious calendar year that started in the spring with Passover. God’s grand work, which began with Passover and its redemption story, culminated with Sukkot and its theme of restoration. It was the seventh and final God-ordained observance as recorded in Leviticus 23. It was also the third and final annual feast that required Jewish men to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Dt. 16:16).

In Bible times, Sukkot was fascinating. God commanded the people to build sukkoth (plural of sukkah), which were temporary booths. Then they were to gather at the sanctuary for a jubilant, seven-day celebration. The first day and the eighth, which was added at the end of the week, were considered Sabbaths. At the Temple, priests scurried around the Great Altar, offering special sacrifices (Lev. 23:33–43; Num. 29:12–38).

It was at His final Tabernacle celebration while on Earth that Jesus offered to fulfill the anticipated yearnings of many hearts on the Feast day: He offered refreshment (Jn. 7:37), rejoicing (Jn. 8:12), and rest (Jn. 9:14).

Refreshment

Caravans of pilgrims from far-away lands made aliya (went up) to Jerusalem. Filled with thanksgiving, gladness, and expectancy, these pilgrims cheerfully shouted praises to God as they sang the songs of aliya: Psalms 120–134.

Arriving at the City of God, some went to the homes of friends and relatives while others gratefully accepted the hospitality of strangers. The rest pitched camp all around the city. First they erected their sukkoth, similar to the type farmers lived in during the annual grape and olive harvests. They constructed them from willow and olive branches and decorated them with grapevines and fruit. They could find these items in the Kidron Valley just east of the city. The sukkoth were built to be sturdy and shady. Choice locations were rooftops, courtyards, and streets. Inside, comfortable cushions for reclining were placed around a triclinium—a low, three-sided table.
Only elegant bowls and cups were used during mealtime. Oil lamps provided the necessary light.

Each **lulav** was then assembled by tying together a palm, myrtle, and willow branch. A local Jerusalem custom was to tie them using a golden thread. Pilgrims carried their fragrant **lulavs** in their right hands and a lemon-like citrus fruit in their left. At the appropriate time, they waved these before the Lord in a spirit of thankfulness.

A water-drawing ritual began the festivities every morning. Standing at the top southwest corner of the Temple Mount, a priest blew the **shofar** (ram’s horn) with all his might, announcing the start of the festival. Suddenly a priest exited from the Water Gate on the south side of the main Temple building. Carrying a golden pitcher, he led a joyous musical procession to the Pool of Siloam in the old City of David. At the pool, he plunged the pitcher into the water and recited, “Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3). Accompanying the chant was the sweet sound of an instrument called the reed flute of Moses. Moses means “to draw out.” (Pharaoh’s daughter named him that because she drew him out of the water [Ex. 2:10].)

Jerusalem’s sole water supply was from this pool and the Gihon Spring that feeds it. Therefore, the water was precious. It was a source of life and refreshment. When people asked why the ritual was called “the drawing out of water,” they were told, “because of the pouring out of the Ruach Ha-Kodesh [Holy Spirit].” The water symbolized the Holy Spirit, the only true source of life. After the Temple was destroyed, the rabbis reflected on this celebration and said, “He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life” (Talmud Sukkah 51b).

The priest returned to the Temple with the golden pitcher of water and joined another priest who was carrying the drink offering of wine. The **shofar** was blown three times. Together the two priests ascended the ramp to the Great Altar and poured their libations into silver funnels. During this ritual, the people gathered at the Temple’s Court of the Women and sang praises called the **Hallel**: Psalms 113—118. The Levites, standing on the 15 semicircular stairs in the court, also sang and played musical instruments. The mixture of the water and wine at the altar symbolized the life and joy associated with the Holy Spirit.

About now, several priests holding willow branches marched once around the Great Altar, reciting for all to hear, “Save now (hoshanah), I beseech thee, O LORD! O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity!” (Ps. 118:25).

Following the singing and chanting, a great silence descended on the sanctuary. The people felt and listened to the wind, reflecting on the spiritual significance of the water ritual. They were expressing a desire for personal, spiritual refreshment. Only God’s Spirit, symbolized by the water, could satisfy their thirsty souls. Finally, a benediction closed the celebration and all went home to gather under their *sukkot*.

The water ritual took place every day for all seven days. On the seventh day, it took on an intensity filled with excitement and anticipation. This last day of the Feast was *Hoshanah Rabbah* (the Great Praise Day). And it was then that an extraordinary incident took place.

Perhaps Jesus was seated near the Water Gate or somewhere in the Court of the Women, watching the final drama of the water ritual. And, at the very moment when the customary hush came over the crowd, perhaps it was then He “stood and cried out, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn. 7:37). He was inviting the multitude to receive the Holy Spirit. They could find their anticipated refreshment by accepting Him as the true Living Water (Jn. 4:10). Even today, His invitation is still genuine: “Come unto me.”
**Rejoicing**

A second fascinating ceremony associated with the Feast of Tabernacles involved lights. Each afternoon of the seven days, priests and pilgrims gathered at the Court of the Women. Four large oil lamps illuminated the court. It was said that the light from these lamps was so bright it penetrated every courtyard in Jerusalem.

As the women watched from the upper terraces, the “men of piety and good works used to dance before the oil lamps with burning torches in their hands, singing songs and praises.” Meanwhile, “countless levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and instruments of music” (Mishnah Sukkot 5:4). The light festivities continued all night until dawn.

The illumination from these imposing Temple lamps symbolized two realities. The first was the reality of the “Light of all Lights”—the Shekinah Glory—the visible presence of God that filled the first Temple, which Solomon built (1 Ki. 8:10–11). The second was Ha’or Gadol (the Great Light) who would soon come and bring light to those who were spiritually dead and dwelling in darkness (Isa. 9:2).

Jesus was at the Temple. Perhaps it was during the light celebration or when the lights were extinguished on the eighth day that He said for all to hear, “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12). He proclaimed two truths with this statement: (1) He is the “Great Light” who the prophet Isaiah said would come, and (2) He is God in the flesh and the Glory of the Temple (cf. Jn. 1:14).

The response was threefold. Some religious people rejected Him (Jn. 8:13), others were inquisitive enough to ask Him for more information (Jn. 8:25), and still others believed and received Him (Jn. 8:30). The joy associated with the lights and water rituals of the Feast of Tabernacles anticipated Jesus’ coming and bringing light and life to a dark, sinful world.

**Rest**

In ancient times, the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles was called the “Last Good Day.” Viewed as a Sabbath, it was designed as a time to rest and reflect on the spiritual significance of the seven-day jubilation. Special activities took place at the Temple. The priests offered the daily and special Sabbath sacrifices (Num. 28:9–10), while others recited Psalm 92, the Sabbath song anticipating the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. Linger in the minds and hearts of everyone during the entire weeklong celebration was, no doubt, the expectation that, at any moment, God could establish the great Sukkah Shalom (Tabernacle of Peace).

Jesus performed this miracle to validate everything He had said and done during the Feast of Tabernacles. By doing the impossible, He proved His words could be trusted and that He was God in the flesh, the Messiah of Israel, the true dispenser of the Holy Spirit, and the only source of light and life. Mankind no longer has to fumble blindly in this world. True rest for the wanderer is available in Jesus Christ.

The hopes of the “Last Good Day” culminated with an event that happened six months later. It was Passover, when Jesus died as the Lamb of God. His shed blood, death, and resurrection make the expectation of personal refreshment (Jn. 7:37), rejoicing (Jn. 8:12), and rest (Jn. 9:14), as anticipated at the Feast of Tabernacles, a reality for all who accept

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Peter Colón is the southeastern states director for The Friends of Israel.
don’t do camping!” This is a well-worn cliché in my family. I love and appreciate the great outdoors as much as anyone, but sleeping under the stars is not high on my recreational list. For me, “roughing it” constitutes a stay at the Holiday Inn.

I have wondered if my aversion to sleeping under the stars is a consequence of God’s command to my people in Leviticus 23:42–43: “Ye shall dwell in booths [sukkot] seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths.” During the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles), the Jewish people are supposed to “camp” under the stars for seven days. To properly understand the modern celebration, we must look at four elements: (1) the temporary dwelling, (2) the traditional species of plants, (3) the types of foods served, and (4) the thoughts of the people.

The Temporary Dwelling

The words tabernacle and booth are used to translate the Hebrew word sukkah. Tabernacle comes from the Latin word tabernaculum, meaning “hut, temporary dwelling.” For the Jewish people, a sukkah can be considered a temporary monument to the faithfulness of God who fed and led His peo-

Camping Out Under the Stars
people throughout their 40-year journey from Egypt into the Promised Land. He made sure that even their sandals did not wear out during that time. For this reason, the rabbis have called this feast Z’man Simchateinu—a time of great joy.

A particular irony accompanies a holiday that requires taking genuine pleasure in leaving bigger, better, and nicer homes to eat and sleep outside in smaller, simpler structures. Thus some call Tabernacles the Jewish Thanksgiving. And an attitude of thanksgiving is expected to fill every Jewish person who observes this feast.

The actual labor of building a sukkah is a mitzvah (good deed), but the timing of its assembly is just as important. Modern Judaism teaches that personal sins begin to accumulate immediately after Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); so sukkah construction begins the next day. Any material can be used, but plywood and canvas seem to be the materials of choice. The sukkah must be sturdy enough not to blow down from an ordinary wind but, at the same time, never lose its temporary appearance. Each sukkah must have at least three walls, and each wall must be a minimum of 38 inches high but not exceed 30 feet high. One wall may be the permanent wall of a home or synagogue.

The roof of a sukkah is referred to as s’chach, from the Hebrew verb root sachoch, meaning to “protect” or “cover.” The roof’s materials vary; but they must be grown from the ground, such as tree branches, shrubs, or straw. The covering must be able to provide more shade than sunlight inside the sukkah. To liven up the interior, such items as fruit, gourds, and even paper chains are hung from the roof. Pictures of the Holy Land are also common.

Most Jewish people in Israel live in flats, which are equivalent to condominiums in the United States. Attached to each flat is a railed porch, located outdoors off the kitchen. These porches make ideal sites for building sukkot.

If you strolled along these residential areas during the feast in Israel today, you would see hundreds of temporary dwellings climbing like vines up the sides of buildings, all the way to the top. In the United States, most Jewish people prefer to travel to their local synagogues or community centers to enjoy meals and fellowship in community sukkot. However, some people still build their own in their backyards. Today many companies even advertise and sell sukkah kits for just such a purpose.

When a family enters its sukkah for the first time, it extends an invitation for the ushpizim, the “guests,” to come in. Although family and friends certainly are welcome, they do not receive the invitation. The ushpizim are special; they are biblical guests—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David. It is believed this invitation to our forefathers to enter the sukkah helps to fulfill all the potential of this last of
the seven feasts. Although it is true that sleeping under the stars is a God-given command, most people prefer just to eat their meals inside the structure. In the event of rain, the blessing over the wine and bread are recited before the meal; then everyone moves into a dryer, warmer, permanent place to eat. When the Sabbath arrives on Friday evening, the Sabbath candles are lit inside the sukkah. A special blessing is chanted on entering: “Praised be thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to dwell in a tabernacle.”

Traditional Species (Arb’ah Minim)

Tradition teaches that a person receives “incredible spiritual blessings when he takes the four species.” Leviticus 23:40 identifies these species of plants for us:

And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD.

The first of these special items is called an etrog, a yellow fruit that grows on a citron tree. It is believed to be the lemon-like fruit from the “boughs of goodly trees.” A unique little nub called a pittom protrudes from the end of the most desirable variety of etrogim (plural of etrog). As the etrog grows, the pittom faces downward. It is the distinguishing feature of the etrog, and an etrog with a broken pittom usually is considered defective and unusable. Jewish tradition has taught that an etrog with a pittom symbolizes fertility because, among other reasons, the fruit is produced throughout the year.

The second of the four species is the lulav. The lulav is a branch from a date palm tree. According to the Apocrypha (extrabiblical books written during the second Temple period), it symbolizes victory. The book of Maccabees states, “they came to the fort in Jerusalem with praise and with date fronds and with lyres and with harps.”

The third species is the hadas (myrtle branch). (The name Hadassah comes from hadas.) It is a leafy branch that covers the trunk of the myrtle tree. Because it can withstand severe drought, it is regarded as a symbol of immortality and success.

The fourth is an aravah. It is a branch from a willow tree. Willow trees depend completely on water in order to flourish. Their branches wither within a day of cutting. In the days of Temple worship, people would pick tall willow tree branches and stand them upright around the altar, exclaiming, “Please God, save us; please give us great success.”

On Sukkot, lulav bouquets, each consisting of one date palm, three myrtle (hadasim) and two willow branches (aravot), are assembled. Rabbinic tradition compares these four species to four kinds of Jewish people.

Just as Jewish families leave the comfort of their homes to dwell in temporary shelters under the stars, so, too, believers in Jesus Christ are reminded that this earth is not our home.
Types of Foods

Sukkot falls in the middle of Tishri (September-October), the time of the harvest. During this month, evenings in Israel can become a little chilly. So the types of foods served during the feast are chosen carefully. Hearty, hot dishes make welcome treats inside the sukkah. A popular dish is stuffed cabbage, made with cabbage, onions, garlic, celery, green and red peppers, and fresh dill—recently harvested. Borscht, a dark red soup made from beets, also is very popular. Besides beets, ingredients can include lemon, eggs, scallions, cucumbers, and sour cream—again from the harvest. Pumpkin pie is another favorite. Fresh fruits and nuts also are staples during this time. Many sukkot are decorated with apples, grapes, corn, and other recently harvested produce.

Thoughts of the People

The feast of Sukkot lasts seven days in Israel and eight days everywhere else. Two special days that immediately follow are usually regarded as a part of the feast. One is called Shiminei Atzeret (the eighth day of assembly) and the other, Simchat Torah (rejoicing in Torah). Simchat Torah marks and proclaims the completion of the regular, public Torah-reading cycle (conclusion of Deuteronomy) and the start of a new cycle in the book of Genesis. (The Torah is the Pentateuch only.)

Years ago I participated in this great celebration in our shul (synagogue). The Torah scrolls were taken from the ark and placed into the hands of congregants who joyously marched around the auditorium. Everyone sang and danced Hebrew folk dances as part of the festivities. Jewish people exhibit the same joy for the “harvest” of God’s Word as they do for the crop harvest. Both harvests provide sustenance; both come from above; both give satisfaction; and both are received with great joy.

What lessons can a believer in Yeshua Hamashiach glean from this Jewish feast? Several, I believe. First, just as Jewish families leave the comfort of their homes to dwell in temporary shelters under the stars, so, too, believers in Jesus Christ are reminded that this earth is not our home. It is but a temporary residence. We are ambassadors for Him while we dwell here. Sukkot should remind us not to grow comfortable in this world. Even now, He is preparing a permanent home for us with Him.

Second, as our Jewish friends shake the lulav bouquet in every direction to remind them that God is everywhere, we should ponder the same truth. It is good to remember that nothing is hidden from His sight.

Third, when Jewish people eat hearty foods from the harvest, we should be mindful that the spiritual fields are white unto harvest. So many souls need to know the truth about God, so they can come to Him and be saved. Indeed, the harvest is plentiful; but the laborers are few.

As the Jewish people end their cycle of Torah reading only to begin again, we should remem-
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After Messiah returns to Earth as King and establishes His Messianic Kingdom, with its center at the gloriously rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem (Zech. 6:12–15; 8:3; Ezek. 40—48; Mt. 19:28; 25:31–32; Rev. 20:4), Israel’s festival calendar will resume as predicted by the prophet Ezekiel: “They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths” (Ezek. 44:24; cf. Zeph. 3:18). Of the seven feasts of the Lord, only the Feast of Tabernacles has its typical fulfillment in the Millennium, when Israel finally will enjoy safe territorial boundaries and will be a
blessing and witness to the Gentile nations (Gen. 12:2–3; 15:18; Isa. 2:2–4; 60:3; Jer. 32:37–41; 33:16; Ezek. 37:25–28).

The term tabernacles (Hebrew, sukkot; Greek, skene) involves God’s promise to return to Earth and “tabernacle,” or dwell, with Israel in a way never before experienced in history:

Thus saith the LORD: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem (Zech. 8:3).

I . . . will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them (Ezek. 37:26–27).

The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (Isa. 24:23).

Although this “tabernacling” means God’s presence again will inhabit the Temple, the prophet Isaiah indicated it will do so in a greater way than ever before:

And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defense [canopy] (Isa. 4:5).

The word defense, or canopy (Hebrew, huppah), of God’s glory in this verse is stated in the next verse to be a “tabernacle” (Hebrew, sukkah) from the heat by day and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain. This wording connects Israel’s past deliverance (from Pharaoh in Egypt) and temporary, man-made shelters (Lev. 23:42–43) with Israel’s future deliverance (from Antichrist in the Tribulation) and permanent, God-given sanctuary. Ezekiel depicts the method of this future “tabernacling” with the return of God’s Shekinah Glory to the Temple (Ezek. 43:1–7); and Jeremiah reveals its result as Jerusalem becomes “the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it” (Jer. 3:17).

Indeed, later Jewish interpretation saw in “tabernacles” not only the Israelites’ temporary shelters in the wilderness but also the divine sukkah (the Shekinah), which had “brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Lev. 23:43). Thus they joined the Feast of Sukkot also celebrates God’s provision of refuge in the wilderness and recalls His promise to rescue Israel at the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Tribulation period, Jer. 30:7) and restore the nation in the future Kingdom of Messiah. At a special ceremony called the water-drawing festival, water from the Pool of Siloam was carried to the Temple and poured over the corner of the altar, a ritual based on an oral tradition dating to the time of Moses (Ta`anit 3a, Succot 44b, 44a). The ritual’s significance was both symbolic and prophetic. Its symbolic purpose was a prayer for rain since the summer was about to end and the rainy season begin. This prayer demonstrated Israel’s dependence on the Lord, an act of faith that will be required of all nations in the Millennial Age (Zech. 14:16–19). Its prophetic purpose was Messianic: It looked forward to the outpouring of the Ruach Ha-Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) on Israel and the nations under the New Covenant in the Kingdom Age (Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28). Then Israel’s return to blessing will include the spiritual instruction and blessing of the nations, who will join Israel in the ongoing celebration of Sukkot (Zech. 14:16–19). In fact, the Scripture read in the synagogue on the Sabbath during the Feast of Tabernacles is Ezekiel 38, which deals with the future battle of Gog and Magog, in which the Lord miraculously preserves Israel in an end-times war.

The word tabernacle also recalls the famous prophecy of the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom (“the tabernacle of David”) given in Amos 9:11–12:
In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches of it; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the nations, which are called by my name, saith the LORD who doeth this.

The fulfillment of this prophecy, as explained in Acts 15:14–18, will occur after the full complement of Gentiles has been grafted into the “olive tree,” through faith, at the completion of the Church Age and in keeping with the blessing of the Gentiles in the Abrahamic Covenant (Rom. 11:25). Gentiles who come to faith in the Jewish Messiah during the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (see Mt. 25:34–40) will join redeemed Jewish people in the true worship of God.

The apostle John specifically used the imagery of the Feast of Tabernacles to describe Gentile Tribulation martyrs. He depicted them with palm branches, serving in His Temple while God dwells among them and Jesus guides them to “living fountains of waters” (Rev. 7:9–17). Such Gentile inclusion was anticipated by the alternate name for the feast, “the Feast of Ingathering” (Ex. 23:15–16), and was demonstrated during the feast in second Temple times when Jewish men participated in a Temple ritual where 70 sacrifices were offered for the sins of the nations that had come from the sons of Noah. These Gentile nations oppressed Israel, but the prophets included them in the future worshiping community—evidence of the changed conditions under Messiah’s New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34).

For example: “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people” (Zech. 2:11). Isaiah described the Millennial Temple as “an house of prayer for all peoples” (Isa. 56:7; cf. Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46) to which all nations of the earth will come to learn the ways of the Lord (Isa. 2:2–3; 60:3; 62:2), to behold God’s glory (Isa. 60:3; 62:2; 66:18), to offer sacrifices (Isa. 56:6–7; 66:20), and to pay material tribute (Isa. 60:5; 66:18–19; cf. Hag. 2:7–8; Rev. 21:24).

This last reference to Gentile payment of tribute also is the only explicit mention of the Feast of Tabernacles in a Millennial context: And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (Zech. 14:16).

The conclusion of Zechariah 12—14 details the Gentile invasion of Jerusalem during the campaigns of Armageddon. In the immediate context, chapter 14 summarizes events that reveal prophetic aspects predicted by the feast: the advent of Messiah (vv. 3–4), the rescue and restoration of the Jewish remnant (v. 5; cf. Lk. 21:27–28), the experience of heaven-sent light and living water (vv. 7–8), the recognition of Messiah as universal King (v. 9), the transformation of Jerusalem (v. 10), and the gathering of the wealth of the Gentile nations (v. 14).

Those obligated to observe the Feast of Tabernacles in verse 14 are the remnants of the Gentile nations that previously were allied with the Antichrist in his war against the Holy City (Zech. 12:3, 9; 14:2, 12; cf. Rev. 19:19; Ps. 2:1–3). Although a deadly plague will destroy those armies (vv. 12–13), others will remain in these countries to appear before Messiah’s judgment seat at the conclusion of the conflict (Mt. 25:31–32). Individuals who sincerely embraced Messiah and His rule (Rev. 15:3–4)—as evidenced by their costly compassion toward the Jewish people during Antichrist’s vicious, anti-Semitic reign (Mt. 25:35–40)—will continue into the Millennial Kingdom. Nevertheless, under the rod-of-iron rule of Messiah (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15), these nations will be required to demonstrate their allegiance to King Messiah by appearing annually at His Throne-City with tribute and material offerings (as tokens of appreciation for His divine provision). This act is in accordance with an ancient association of the Feast of Tabernacles, recognizing the king as God’s son, as alluded to in Psalm 2:10–12:

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss [do homage to] the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.

The ancient observance of the feast was also followed by a
Levitically led ceremony of covenant renewal (Neh. 9:1–38) that reaffirmed national allegiance to the Lord (Neh. 10:29). Therefore, Zechariah 14:17–19 warns these nations that failing to observe the Feast of Tabernacles will be tantamount to spiritual and national rebellion. Because part of the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles involves asking for rain (specifically the former rains), a punishment for nations that fail to appear annually in Jerusalem will be a withholding of rain—the very gift that made possible their gifts. Another punishment will be a plague. The warning specifically includes Egypt, whose natural productivity depends more on the gift of the Nile than the gift of rain and whose punishment to secure acknowledgment of Jehovah’s sovereignty at the time of the Exodus had been plagues.

The Feast of Tabernacles will unite these nations in a universal allegiance to Jesus as King Messiah, Sovereign Lord, and Judge (Zech. 14:9, 17; Isa. 2:4) and will provide an occasion for the Jewish people to fulfill their destiny as a light to the Gentiles in spiritual instruction to these nations (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 8:22–23; cf. Hab. 2:14).

Because the nations will become vassals of the Lord, they also will have the right to be called “His people,” just as He, as their suzerain, can be called “their God.” Isaiah elevates the nations of Egypt and Syria to covenantal status (Isa. 19:24–25), making them coparticipants in both the obligations and benefits of the Temple (Isa. 19:21; 56:6–8; 60:3; 66:20). The wealth of the conquered nations will accrue to Messiah’s Millennial Temple, filling it with abundance (a fitting contrast to Israel’s past, post-exilic poverty), increasing its splendor and value (Zeph. 3:20; Hag. 2:6–7, 22).

All that God has purposed and planned through His provision as Lord of His people finally will be fulfilled and celebrated in the Millennial Feast of Tabernacles. This realization should prompt us to acknowledge gratefully God’s gift of Messiah for us today and His constant “tabernacling” with us through His indwelling Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:20; Eph. 2:22). The future feast will demonstrate openly the unity of Jewish and Gentile people as they alike bow to Jesus as their Messiah and Lord. Today it encourages the Body of Messiah to foster greater unity among all its members before a watching world (Jn. 17:20–21; Eph. 2:14–18). As we do so in the present age, we honor the Lord of the feast who one day will tabernacle with us forever: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them” (Rev. 21:3).

Randall Price is president of World of the Bible Ministries, Inc., Marcos, Texas, an organization that explores and explains the ancient, modern, and prophetic Middle East.
A Look at the **Fall Festivals**

Rosh Hashanah marks both the beginning of the Jewish high holidays and the civil year on the Jewish calendar. It’s a good time to wish your Jewish friends leshana tova (happy New Year), to send greeting cards, and perhaps plant trees in Israel in their honor.

Although the high holidays lack the merriment of Purim, the gift giving of Hanukkah, and the joyous seders of Passover, they are still special and welcome holidays in the lives of Jewish people around the world.

They are a time of reflection and contemplation, when Jewish people confess their sins, hoping and praying that God Almighty will forgive them and inscribe their names in the book of life for yet another year. Religious Jewish people work diligently to perform mitzvot (good deeds) to find favor with God during the 10 days of repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

According to Jewish teaching, God sits in judgment of the world on Rosh Hashanah, inscribing the fates of individuals and nations for the coming year and sealing His decisions on Yom Kippur. He is thought to judge behavior only as it relates to the here and now—not to the hereafter.

Tradition teaches that God opens three books: one listing the righteous, one listing the wicked, and one listing those somewhere in between. Those in the first book are immediately inscribed for life; those in the second book, for death; and those in the third book are given 10 days to repent and perform enough good deeds to outweigh their bad deeds.

Tradition also teaches that God finished creating the world on Rosh Hashanah, 5,762 years ago. Hence, Tishri 1 (Sept. 18, 2001) initiates the Jewish year 5762. In Israel, Rosh Hashanah is celebrated for one day; Sukkot for seven; and Hoshanah Rabbah, Shiminei Atzeret, and Simchat Torah on the final day of Sukkot. But everywhere else, the following chart applies.

### FALL 2001 JEWISH HOLIDAY CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Name</th>
<th>Modern Holiday</th>
<th>Hebrew Date</th>
<th>English Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23–25; Num. 29:1–6)</td>
<td><strong>Rosh Hashanah</strong> (head of the year)</td>
<td>Tishri 1–2</td>
<td>Begins sundown Sept. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Days of Repentance (Ten Days of Teshuvah, or Awe)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tishri 1–10</td>
<td>Sundown Sept. 17 through Sept. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day of Atonement (Lev. 16; 23: 26–32)</td>
<td><strong>Yom Kippur</strong></td>
<td>Tishri 10</td>
<td>Begins sundown Sept. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–43)</td>
<td><strong>Sukkot</strong></td>
<td>Tishri 15–22</td>
<td>Sundown Oct. 1 through Oct. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In the last day, that great day of the feast” (Jn. 7:37)</td>
<td><strong>Hoshanah Rabbah</strong> (the day of the great Hosanna)</td>
<td>Tishri 21 (seventh day of Sukkot; biblical conclusion of the holiday)</td>
<td>Oct. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A holy convocation (Lev. 23:36)</td>
<td><strong>Shiminei Atzeret</strong></td>
<td>Tishri 22   (eighth and final day of Sukkot)</td>
<td>Begins sundown Oct. 8 (last night to eat in the sukkah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feast of the Dedication (Jn. 10:22)</td>
<td><strong>Simchat Torah</strong> (rejoicing over the law)</td>
<td>Tishri 23   (the day after Sukkot)</td>
<td>Begins sundown Oct. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feast of the Dedication (Jn. 10:22)</td>
<td><strong>Hanukkah</strong></td>
<td>Kislev 25—Tevet 2</td>
<td>Sundown Dec. 9 through Dec. 17</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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Meeting new people is a regular part of my job. Usually it takes just a short time before I find myself asking the inevitable question, “What do you do?” Sometimes (not often, I hope), the answer leaves me with a rather glazed look. Oh, I hear it all right. But my clueless stare into space is a dead giveaway; I don’t have the faintest idea what that particular occupation really is. Then I ask sheepishly, “So, what exactly is that?”

For many people outside the Jewish experience, such words as kohayn, chazzan, rabbi, rebbe, rav, tzaddik, shammas, and gabbai can produce a similar stare into
have a common paternal ancestor estimated to have lived some 3000 years ago."\(^1\)

Although this research is still in the early stages, it is conceivable that, in the future, people will attempt to identify kohanim with a simple blood test. For those Jewish people awaiting the building of a third Temple, this research would be most welcome.

Today, individuals thought to be kohanim carry the honor and responsibility of being the first to be summoned to read from the Torah in synagogue worship.

### What Is a Chazzan?

A chazzan (plural of chazan) is a cantor. "What is a cantor?" you may ask. A cantor is the person who leads Jewish worshipers in prayer by chanting and singing the Jewish liturgy.

Jewish worship involves many prayers that are chanted and sung from old, traditional melodies. Larger congregations employ full-time cantors who also spend a good portion of their time training young people in Hebrew education classes, as well as helping them prepare the singing portion of their bat/bar mitzvahs.

### What Is the Rabbinate?

The title used for Jewish leaders has varied over the centuries. One title, rabban (our master), was used to refer to three presidents of the ancient Sanhedrin (Gamaliel, Simeon Ben-Gamaliel, and Yohanan Ben-Zakkai).\(^2\) Those who followed the teaching of the popular Yohanan Ben-Zakkai and lived outside Israel were called rav (master). Rabbi, meaning "my master," was bestowed on a person who received his semikha (ordination) inside Israel. The word semikha literally means to "lean on."\(^3\)

In Numbers 27:18, Moses, as commanded by God, laid his hands on Joshua to appoint him as the next leader. This practice of laying on of hands has been traced from the time of Moses until A.D. 425 when it ended.\(^4\) Jewish ordination today does not include the laying on of hands.

Whichever title one used in those days (rabban, rav, or rabbi), it signified a talented, scholarly

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interpreter and expounder of the Scriptures and the oral Law. Later, during the Middle Ages, the meaning and function of a rabbi changed. Prior to the last 100 years or so, the rabbi in a Jewish community often held a full-time, secular job. He usually received certain privileges, or perks, such as exemption from taxation or preferential treatment in his business. It has never been required that a rabbi be present for a congregation to worship. What is necessary, however, is a quorum of 10 men, called a minyan.

Today the term rabbi simply means “teacher.” Although the title can be bestowed on anyone in the Jewish community possessing knowledge and ability in Judaica, today’s rabbis usually have received formal seminary training in such subjects as the Jewish Scriptures, Hebrew, Jewish and secular history, and Talmud.

As the Jewish people assimilated into Western culture, the position of rabbi changed. Today rabbis have moved further away from scholarly pursuits and have become more practically oriented for their congregations. Those rabbis who lean toward academia tend to teach in seminaries.

Rabbis have much the same responsibilities as Protestant ministers or pastors. They visit the sick, conduct marriage ceremonies, help families with funeral arrangements, conduct funeral services, help children in the congregation prepare for their bar and bat mitzvahs, and deliver weekly sermons on the Sabbath.

As in other religions, Judaism has not been immune to the considerable debate and controversy concerning the role of women in the rabbinate. Orthodox Jews have never permitted women rabbis. Some Conservative and all Reform congregations permit women rabbis, and a number have them.

What Is a Rebbe?

The small but visible groups of Jewish people called Hassidim use the title rebbe for their leader. (This title should not be confused with the word reb, which is Yiddish for “mister.”) Rebbe is a weightier word, sometimes translated as “grand rabbi.” Literally, it means “my rabbi.” In a Hassidic community, the rebbe is the final authority over every decision in a Hassidic Jew’s life.

A number of years ago, many Hassidim thought Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. Marvelous deeds and even miracles were attributed to him. In Israel and in Hassidic communities here in America, signs with his picture were posted, proclaiming, “Prepare for the coming of Messiah.” Rebbe Schneerson died in 1994, but many of his followers believe he will rise from the dead.

What Is a Tzaddik?

Tzaddik means “righteous one.” The rebbe in a Hassidic community is considered a tzaddik. But a tzaddik does not have to be a rebbe. To receive such a designation, one must evidence a spiritual or mystical power.

What Is a Shammas, or Sexton?

Every local congregation always has someone who truly knows the ropes. That someone is the shammas. He makes sure everything runs as it should with regard to the physical synagogue building and the scheduling of services. He is the servant of the congregation.

What Is a Gabbai?

A gabbai is a volunteer who is knowledgeable in Torah and has the responsibility of coordinating the readers who ascend the platform (aliyah) to read from the Torah during a service. It is his responsibility to help them pronounce the Hebrew words or, if need be, to read them himself.

I’m sure my days of asking, “So, what exactly is that?” are far from over. But perhaps now, if you ever hear any of these words in conversation, you won’t have to ask the same question. In fact, you may even be able to provide an explanation.

Individuals thought to be kohanim carry the honor and responsibility of being the first to be summoned to read from the Torah in synagogue worship.

Steve Herzig is the director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Two young boys were fighting in the park. A man took one of the boys aside and began to spank him for his inappropriate behavior. An observant bystander indignantly asked the man, “Why are you spanking one boy and not the other?” The man replied, “The one I am spanking is my son, the other is not.” As this story implies, wrong actions demand reprimands. Like the father who disciplined his son for inappropriate behavior, so God chastened Israel.

Ignoring God’s many warnings and past discipline, Israel continued to be a disobedient son. The nation indulged in deceit and lies and expressed its unfaithfulness to Jehovah through social injustice and reliance on political treaties with foreign nations. Such inappropriate behavior required God to discipline Israel further. But before doing so, He graciously extended one more opportunity to turn to Him in repentance.

In chapter 12, Hosea used Jacob to illustrate the type of commitment God desired from Israel. When God chastened Jacob for trickery and deceit, Jacob repented with renewed commitment to the Lord; God wanted Israel to do the same.

**Israel’s Diplomacy**

Israel’s unfaithfulness and deceptive foreign policy are depicted as the wind. “Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind; he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt” (v. 1). The east wind is called a sirocco. It is an extremely hot wind that blows from the eastern desert, scorching man, animals, and vegetation. No rational person would want to be near such a storm; but Israel “feedeth” (grazed) on the sirocco. Israel was feeding on such practices as idolatry, immorality, and social injustice that did not nourish the nation but “daily” eroded its strength and eventually would destroy it.
Israel was on a dangerous and destructive course. Rather than putting faith in God for help, the northern kingdom of Israel made a political treaty with Assyria, then turned to Egypt for assistance in breaking it (2 Ki. 17:3–4). Israel’s integrity was empty like the wind and brought the scorching blast of Assyria’s anger on the nation. King Hoshea sent a gift of “oil” (olive oil) to Egypt in hope of securing the nation as an ally against Assyria (2 Ki. 17:4).

God widened the charge against Israel to include Judah. “The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him” (v. 2). The Lord presents Himself as both plaintiff and judge against all 12 tribes. The reference to Jacob includes the 10 tribes of Israel in the north and the two tribes of Judah in the south. God will chasten both kingdoms for their sin.

**Israel’s Discipline**

Using illustrations from the life of the patriarch Jacob, the Lord tried to arouse Israel to forsake her sin. First, Jacob “took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God” (v. 3). Before Jacob was born, his hand grasped Esau’s heel (Jacob means “heel-gripper”). This action was prophetic, displaying Jacob’s zeal and appreciation for spiritual matters. Years later, through trickery, Jacob gained the birthright and blessing of the firstborn from Esau, who afterward called him a supplanter (Gen. 27:36). Israel was supposed to exhibit a zeal for spiritual things, as did her forefather Jacob.

Second, on his return to Canaan after 20 years in Paddan-aram, Jacob wrestled with an angel (the preincarnate Christ) at Peniel until the break of day. Hosea said, “And by his strength he had power with God. Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him” (vv. 3–4). The angel was trying to make Jacob submit to God’s will. When the angel could not prevail, he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh, putting it out of joint. However, Jacob would not release his grip until the Lord blessed him. Through this crisis experience, Jacob learned to cling to God, not to his own cunning devices, wisdom, experience, trickery, or strength.

Hosea also mentioned Jacob’s experience with God at Bethel: “He found him in Bethel, and there he spoke with us” (v. 4). This is the second time God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel. (The first time was when Jacob fled home in fear of Esau [Gen. 28:10–22].) At this appearance (Gen. 35:9–15), God blessed Jacob with a new name and power. He named him Israel, meaning, “God strives,” or “he who strives with God” (cf. Gen. 32:24–31). Thereafter, spiritual victories came to Israel through God’s divine power and blessing; and God fought the nation’s battles. The Lord also confirmed the promises He made to Jacob’s grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac. Years later these promises were confirmed to the sons of Jacob.

Hosea made it clear that the one who spoke to Jacob was none other than “the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial” (v. 5). He is Jehovah, the covenant-keeping, unchangeable, self-existent one who commands the armies of heaven, both visible and invisible, and rules with unrestricted omnipotence on Earth as in heaven. This is the name God gave Himself when He called Moses to serve Him (Ex. 3:13–15). God was able to deliver the Israelites of Hosea’s day as He did their forefathers if only they turned to Him in repentance.

Genuine repentance required changing their conduct toward man and God. First, they needed to “keep mercy (meaning love) and justice” (v. 6) to their neighbors. Second, they needed to “wait on . . . God continually” (v. 6), that meant, allowing God to act in their behalf rather than making decisions laced with deceit and lying schemes. What God required of Israel was obedience to the whole Law. He wanted the Israelites to show mercy and justice to their fellowmen as dictated in the last five of the Ten Commandments. Such action would have displayed visible and sincere repentance before the Lord. Israel needed to abandon her deception and lying, as did Jacob, and come to God in repentance.
Israel's Deception

Israel had assimilated the practices of the Canaanites, her pagan neighbors:

_He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress. And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found substance; in all my labors they shall find no iniquity in me that is sin_ (vv. 7–8).

The Canaanites originally were Phoenician traders whose reputation for fraudulent transactions was well known. Israel, like the Canaanites, became wealthy by cheating people with deceptive scales—a practice prohibited by law (Dt. 25:13). The Israelites took great pride in their craftiness and boasted of their wealth. They were self-deceived and believed God would not hold them accountable for their thievery; it was simply business as usual.

God was not ignorant of Israel’s fraudulent transactions and did not plan to allow the nation to go unjudged. He said, “And I that am the LORD, thy God, from the land of Egypt, will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast” (v. 9). The Lord reminded Israel that He was her God since the day He delivered the nation from bondage in Egypt. He had delivered, protected, prospered, and settled the Israelites in a land they had not labored to acquire. But God would humble them by destroying their cities. He would drive them from their comfortable homes, luxurious dwellings, profitable businesses, and cultivated fields to become a nomadic people. Furthermore, they would live in tents, as they did during their wilderness wanderings and the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34–43).

God had warned Israel by direct instruction through prophets, visions, and parables (v. 10); yet Israel turned a deaf ear to the prophets’ messages.

Mockingly, God asked, “Is there iniquity in Gilead? Surely they are vanity; they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are like heaps in the furrows of the fields” (v. 11). Gilead and Gilgal are mentioned to show how widespread Israel’s iniquity had become, reinforcing the theme of the nation’s lying and deceit in both religion and politics. Gilgal was on the east side of the Jordan River, an area totally given to idolatry, sexual immorality, and wickedness of every sort. It was a rendezvous for bands of marauders who waited in ambush to rob, rape, and murder those who traveled through the mountainous area (cf. Hos. 6:8–9).

Gilgal was on the west side of the Jordan where Israel “sacrificed bullocks” to calf worship and Baal. Here altars were as numerous and worthless as a heap of stones that a farmer stacks up at the side of his furrowed field. What took place in Gilead and Gilgal was true of the whole nation of Israel. There is a play on words here: Gilead and Gilgal would become gallim—Hebrew for “a heap of stones.” God answered His own question: “Surely they are vanity [worthless]” (v. 11).

Hosea returned to Jacob’s humble beginning to remind the proud nation of how God cared for it:

_And Jacob fled into the field of Aram [Paddan-aram], and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved (vv. 12–13).

After Jacob fled to Paddan-aram, he tended Laban’s flock for 14 years to compensate Laban for marrying his daughter Rachel (Gen. 29:20, 27). Like a shepherd, the Lord loved and cared for Israel.

Many years later, Jacob and his family went down to Egypt, where the Israelites grew into a multitude and became slaves to Pharaoh. God cared for them then too. He raised up the prophet Moses to deliver them from slavery and cared for them as they wandered 40 years in the wilderness. The word _preserved_ (v. 13) means to “keep sheep.” Jacob kept sheep; and, in like manner, God kept Israel like a fold of sheep. As God had brought Jacob back from Paddan-aram, so, too, He brought Israel back into the Promised Land.

The chapter closes with these words: “Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly; therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him” (v. 14). Although God loved and cared for Israel, the nation’s gross immorality, idolatry, and indifference to God’s goodness angered Him bitterly. Israel required chastening for her sin. God did not remove the nation’s guilt or penalty for shedding innocent blood, especially regarding her practice of sacrificing her children to the heathen god Molech (2 Ki. 17:17–18). This vile ritual insulted God, Israel’s true Lord (Master), and intensified Israel’s guilt and penalty. This explains the severity and length of Israel’s chastisement, which has yet to come to an end.

God’s love for Israel has not changed. As He loved Jacob, so He will love Israel when her greatest hour of trial arrives in the future. Then Israel will embrace the Lord as Savior, and He will bestow Kingdom blessings on the nation.

David M. Levy is the director of Foreign Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Indonesia is a nation splashed across thousands of miles of the Indian Ocean and Java Sea in Southeast Asia. The nation is comprised of a mind-boggling 13,660 islands and ranks as the world’s fourth largest nation in population. A statistic that may surprise you is that Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the world. Of the total population of some 200 million, 173 million are Muslims.

The Indonesian government requires its citizens to carry cards identifying their religious status. Over the past several years, its claims to respect religious freedom have become a mockery characterized by the blatant, barbaric, and deadly persecution of Christians. Although Indonesian citizens officially are allowed to opt for Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism, Muslims consistently receive preferential treatment, thus reducing Christian influence in public life.

Marginalized Christian influence, however, is the least of what believers there endure. Rampaging mobs of radical Muslims have launched a jihad (holy war) of staggering proportions and are guilty of horrendous atrocities.

The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), an organization dedicated to helping the persecuted church, has released detailed accounts of militant Muslim violence against Christians. Since 1995, VOM reports, 500 churches
have been burned and destroyed.

On May 30, 2000, the Lasker Jihad (Holy War Army) slaughtered some 50 Christian villagers on the island of Halmahera in a predawn raid. Fourteen boats carrying militant Muslims landed on Buru Island where they destroyed 105 houses, three churches, and two schools. Ninety percent of the island was placed under Islamic domination.

An extremist radio station broadcast encouraged its listeners to kill all Muslims participating in reconciliation efforts or doing business with Christians. “If a Muslim,” the broadcast declared, “is caught doing business with a Christian, kill him, for it is better to slay one Muslim than that the whole Muslim community be wiped out.” According to VOM, militants already have victimized a number of moderate Muslims, accusing them of favoring reconciliation.

International Christian Concern has reported that, on Kasiui Island, teachers David Balubun and E. Rumatera were beheaded for refusing to convert to Islam. Yet forced conversions to Islam are common. When Lasker Jihad attacked four Christian villages on Kasiui, approximately 500 people fled to a nearby island. At least 760 people were not so fortunate, however. A survivor of the attack reported that most of the Christians were forced to convert to Islam, while as many as 100 died for refusing to recant their faith in Christ.

But these numbers are low compared to the number of Christians being persecuted in the Moluccas. Christian Solidarity Worldwide has commented,

**Conflict in the Moluccas is set to enter a third year with no end to the violence in sight. Disturbing new reports suggest Christian communities are facing forcible conversion and circumcision, adding a new dimension to a conflict that has already caused untold suffering. By conservative estimates at least 5000 have been killed and a further 500,000 displaced.**

**Whilst the majority of Moluccans wish to see the conflict resolved, Islamic extremists and elements in the government and armed forces are widely believed to be behind the continuing violence.**

In a disturbing new development, hundreds of Christian families are being forced to convert to Islam or face death. Entire Christian villages are currently held captive by militants. Christian villagers receive an ultimatum to convert to Islam or face being killed. Men are often separated from their families and kept under guard, whilst women and children are taken in by local Muslims. On a number of occasions, they have been taken to the local mosque, given ‘religious training’, and forced to adopt a Muslim name. Muslim militants have also targeted survivors of previous attacks who were hiding in the jungle.

When Lasker Jihad attacked four Christian villages on Kasiui, . . . most of the Christians were forced to convert to Islam, while as many as 100 died for refusing to recant their faith in Christ.

These few illustrations document the fact that what is happening to believers in Indonesia is part of a calculated campaign to wipe out the Christian community. Starving Christian children are forced to witness their religious leaders being beheaded or hacked to death in the streets. Christian women and girls are being sexually mutilated and forced to convert to Islam or die. Hundreds of houses of worship and homes are gutted by fire. Entire villages are swept clean of Christian families. These victims are more than statistics. They are our families in Christ Jesus.

What can we do? First, we can become informed. The Internet has many sites that expose the truth about the persecuted church worldwide. Three excellent ones are The Voice of the Martyrs, at www.persecution.com; Christian Solidarity Worldwide, at www.csw.org.uk; and International Christian Concern, www.persecution.org.

Next, we can pray, petitioning the Lord for the welfare of believers in specific areas. Third, as constituents, we can contact our political representatives and tell them we care about such persecution and we expect them to try to do something about it.

The larger question is, Do we care enough to make the effort?

**Editor’s Note:** In June, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 422 to 2 condemning the Sudanese government for slaughtering Christians in the south. The bill makes $10 million in assistance available for relief and bars companies that do business in Sudan from raising capital.

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
Desperate, Rachel gave Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah. Legally, Bilhah’s children belonged to Rachel. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naphtali. So Leah did the same. She gave Jacob her handmaid, Zilpah, who bore Gad and Asher. Finally, at the end of Rachel’s seventh year of marriage (Jacob’s fourteenth year with Laban), Rachel gave birth to Joseph (30:25). Jacob was 91 (Gen. 47:9; 41:46, 53; 45:6).

By now Jacob wanted to return home. But Laban persuaded him to remain, “for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake” (30:27). So Jacob remained six more years and amassed a fortune in cattle. When he learned that Laban and his sons felt he had become rich at their expense, he took his wives and possessions and left Paddan-aram to return to his father, Isaac.

It was a long, difficult journey. Rachel died along the way, giving birth to Benjamin. Jacob, now 97, buried her outside Ephrath (Bethlehem). She is buried alone, in exile, apart from her family. It doubtlessly died young and never lived to see her children grow up, whereas Jacob lived to see his grandchildren and probably great-grandchildren before dying at 147 (47:28).

Leah, no doubt, raised Joseph and Benjamin. The Bible never says if Jacob ever truly grew to love her, but she finally had him all to herself. When Joseph was 17 and told his father he had dreamed that “the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me” (37:9), Jacob asked, “What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother . . . bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” (37:10). Clearly, Jacob was referring to Leah.

And it is Leah who rests with Jacob in the cave in the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought from Ephron, the Hittite (49:30–31). The Tomb of the Patriarchs is thought to be on this site.

Jacob lived in the land about 33 years before moving to Egypt at age 130 to be with Joseph (47:9). Sometime before he left, Leah died. She is not listed among the 66 souls who went to Egypt (46:8–26). Joseph buried her in the family plot; and before he died, he requested that he be buried there too (49:29–31).

To this day, wherever Rachel’s body truly rests, it rests alone. She spent her 13 years of married life striving for children, then died in childbirth, and was buried in exile. Perhaps that’s why the prophet Jeremiah used her to typify Israel’s mothers, weeping over their children who were being carried into captivity:

A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not (Jer. 31:15).

Ramah, five miles north of Jerusalem, was where Nebuchadnezzar gathered the Israelites for deportation to Babylon beginning in 605 B.C. Later Matthew referred to Jeremiah 31:15 in connection with the infant Jesus being taken to Egypt to spare him from being murdered when Herod slaughtered the children of Bethlehem in his attempt to kill every child who might be the Messiah (2:16–18).

Throughout the centuries, Rachel has become a symbol of motherhood,
If you ever telephoned our home office between 1 and 2 P.M., you were treated to the cheerful, friendly voice of Beverley J. Rayburn, a woman whose godly spirit, sincerity, and kindness made her a joy to all who knew her and a precious asset to the ministry of The Friends of Israel. Beverley worked full-time in our Data Entry Department, filling your orders for books and materials and posting your contributions.

She also served as president of the Women’s Fellowship of Calvary Bible Church in Deptford, New Jersey, and was extremely active in the Boy Scouts of America.

This spring the Lord called Beverley home at age 46. We ask your prayers for her husband, Bob (Shipping Department); sons Randy, 20, and Ryan, 17, all of Blackwood, New Jersey; her mother, Lois Lewis; three sisters, Janet Sands, Valerie Davidson, and Barbara Marchetti; and two brothers, George and Brian Lewis.

The Bible says, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies” (Prov. 31:10). We found one in our Beverley. We will miss her greatly and look forward to that glorious day when we shall be with her again.

Lorna Simcox is senior editor for The Friends of Israel.
As if the world were not in enough trouble already, we now learn that Iraq has all of the basic components necessary to assemble a nuclear bomb. The Jerusalem Post reports that Dr. Khidhir Hamza, who defected from Iraq in 1994, described Saddam Hussein’s nuclear arsenal as “more or less complete.” The basic bomb components are there in Iraq. The casting is there. One of the casting furnaces was taken out but another one was built. . . . Fuse components are there. Explosives are there. And the initiator for the nuclear reaction is there. So bomb-wise, Iraq is finished.”

According to Dr. Hamza, the only element hindering completion of the doomsday device is fissile material. Perhaps the country already has it. “If not, it will have within a short time a nuclear weapon. I expect, another year,” he said.

Dr. Hamza commented further by saying the Iraqi nuclear program is so well disguised that even if United Nations inspectors return, they will be unable to detect it.

This chilling bit of information comes at a time when Saddam Hussein is spoiling to get into the fight against Israel. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Operations Directorate expects Iraq to become involved on Israel’s northern border. Any Israeli reaction to escalated terrorist attacks from Hezbollah or the Syrians will be an open invitation for Iraq to make its move. Israel is making preparations to deal with such an eventuality by laying a fiber optic cable along its entire northern border to enhance communications and intelligence gathering.

Iraq’s entry into the conflict would be welcomed by Yasser Arafat, who has longed for fighting to break out on the northern border to give him the two-front war he desires.

The more ominous problem for the nations in the region will be the creation of a feared military alliance. Syria, Iraq, and Iran will constitute a direct threat, not only to Israel and the West, but also to Jordan, Egypt, and other Arab nations.

These developments and the prospect of Iraq’s nuclear capacity make the creation of missile shields more than an issue to be debated from philosophical or budgetary points of view. Israel wisely has installed the Arrow missile defense system. It is a functional defense against incoming ballistic missiles. Western nations, particularly the United States, will do well to follow Israel’s lead.

That men still relish the ability to kill one another and develop weaponry capable of wiping out entire societies again confirms what the Bible has long since declared. Man is not a creature ascending to higher planes of civility, love for his neighbors, and endeavor for the betterment of the people on Earth. Depravity of the lowest sort still prowls the planet. And those who do not recognize this fact and prepare accordingly are doomed to be disappointed, disillusioned, and perhaps destroyed.
Part 2

Previously we examined the biblical claim that God has demonstrated the reality of His existence and uncovered other knowledge about Himself by giving revelation to human beings during the course of history. We noted that God has used several means to reveal these truths to mankind.

One means is nature—the heavens of the universe—as seen in Psalm 19:1–4, which make the following claims: (1) The heavens testify concerning the existence and incredible wisdom and power of their Creator God. (2) Since the beginning of time, the heavens have been gushing forth a flood of knowledge about God that cannot be restrained. Thus people in every generation have been exposed to this revelation. (3) No language barriers hinder the effective communication of this revelation. People of all languages can understand it. (4) This revelation of knowledge concerning God is worldwide in scope. It comes to people in every geographical area. (5) This knowledge revealed from the heavens is the foundation for a world-life view. That foundation is the standard for evaluating the foundations of all other world-life views. Any foundations that disagree with this standard are contrary to reality. Consequently, all world-life views based on those foundations also are contrary to reality.

This article continues to examine the revelation of knowledge concerning God through nature.

Acts 14:8–17

As a result of the apostle Paul’s miraculous healing of a lame man, the pagan people of the city of Lystra concluded that Paul and Barnabas were gods and prepared to worship them (vv. 8–13). Paul and Barnabas prevented such worship by asserting that they were only human. They exhorted the people to reject their idolatry, which is contrary to reality, and to turn to the God who actually exists, the God who created the universe and everything in it (vv. 14–15).

Paul and Barnabas informed these people that, in time past, the true God did not force the Gentiles to walk in His ways. He did not put them under the restraint of the Mosaic Law as He did the nation of Israel (Dt. 4:6–8; Rom. 2:14). Instead, He let them live according to their own customs (v. 16).

Paul and Barnabas hastened to add that, although God dealt that way with the Gentiles in the past, He did not leave them without a witness concerning Himself. God provided evidence of His benevolent existence by doing good things for all mankind, including pagan Gentiles, through nature. For example, He gave them rain for their crops, fruitful seasons, and abundant food and gladness (v. 17). The word translated “gladness” sometimes referred to “the joy of the festive meal” and “can be gratefully understood as the gift of God by which even the heathen may discern His providential rule.”

Romans 1:18–20

This passage concerns God’s revelation of knowledge about Himself through nature. Paul declared that God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven “against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (v. 18). The word translated “ungodliness” refers to the religious condition of individuals involved in false worship. Paul equated this ungodliness with the “despising of God,” which prompted the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians to develop
idolatrous religions (Rom. 1:21–23, 25). He also equated the word translated “unrighteousness” with the “sexual and social perversion” of unlawful conduct toward others, described in Romans 1:24, 26–32. Scholar A. T. Robertson pointed out that lack of belief in or reverence for God is the ultimate cause of man’s unlawful conduct: “The basis of ethical conduct rests on the nature of God and our attitude toward him, otherwise the law of the jungle.”

The apostle Paul indicated that bias against the true God constituted the underlying cause of false worship and perverted conduct. People guilty of these actions possessed knowledge concerning God, but “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (v. 28), nor did they glorify Him as God or feel grateful to Him for His blessings to them (v. 21). The verb translated “did like” (v. 28) means “approve” and is comparable to “intend, wish.” Thus Paul said these people did not approve of having God in their knowledge; therefore, they willfully intended to exclude His existence from their perception of reality. They did so, not because intellectually they could not believe in His existence but because volitionally they did not want to believe in His existence. Their problem was their will, not their intellect. Despite this fact, they tried to make it appear that they had to reject God’s existence for intellectual reasons. They asserted that they were wise to do so (v. 22) and thereby used the issue of intellect as a smoke screen to hide the real motive behind their action.

Their willful rejection of God’s existence prompted them to “hold the truth in unrighteousness” (v. 18). The word translated “hold” means “suppress” or “holding in prison.” In this passage, the word “truth” refers to “the ‘revealed reality’ of God.” Thus they suppressed, or held in prison, the reality of God that had been revealed to them. Just as a criminal is put in prison so he cannot affect society and society does not have to be concerned about him, so these people imprisoned the revealed reality of God. They locked it out of their perception of reality so it could not affect them and they would not have to be concerned about it. Robertson described this action as follows: “Truth is out in the open, but the wicked men, so to speak, put it in a box and sit on the lid and ‘hold it down in unrighteousness.’”

The word translated “in” in the expression in unrighteousness (v. 18) means “with, by means of.” These people used unrighteousness as their instrument, or means, to imprison the revealed reality of God. This fact indicates that the basis of their bias against God was their unrighteous world-life view, lifestyle, and values. It was not that the reality of God’s existence was intellectually unacceptable. They willfully rejected His existence, however, because it had serious implications concerning those areas of their lives; and they did not want to change those areas. R. C. H. Lenski wrote,

> Whenever the truth starts to exert itself and makes them feel uneasy in their moral nature, they hold it down, suppress it. Some drown its voice by rushing into their immoralities; others strangle the disturbing voice by argument and by denial.

The word translated “because” at the beginning of verse 19 implies strong, “causal force.” Paul used it to introduce the major reason God’s wrath is revealed against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the rejecters of His existence: They had no legitimate excuse for rejecting His existence because He had clearly revealed it to them. Paul wrote, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them.”

The word translated “known” in the phrase that which may be known of God refers to what is “capable of being known, intelligible” or “recognizable.” It is singular. Therefore, it refers to a body of knowledge concerning God that is intelligible to humans and capable of being known or recognized by them.

Paul declared that this body of knowledge “is manifest in them.”

God revealed knowledge concerning His invisible self through nature—the visible universe that He created. Paul made it clear that this revelation has been taking place since the beginning of time.
addition, nature reveals God’s eternal power. He had to have incredible power before the creation of the universe in order to bring it into existence.

Johannes Behm wrote the following comments concerning the apostle Paul’s statement in Romans 1:20:

In R. 1:20 Paul explains the fact of a revelation of God accessible to all men... God’s invisible being, his eternal power and divine majesty, may be apprehended from the beginning of the world in His works. The rule of the Creator God in nature and history reflects His eternal being, His almightiness and transcendence. The invisible God is seen... as contemplation of His works directs the mind to their author. From that which is before him, the meaningful order of the universe and its course, man can and should work back to Him who gives it meaning and recognize not only His existence but also His nature.

Paul ended verse 20 with the following assertion concerning individuals who reject the knowledge concerning God, which nature reveals: “They are without excuse.” The root of the word translated “without excuse” means “defense.” All who reject the truth of God’s existence and eternal power, which are revealed so clearly through nature, will have no defense when they stand before Him for judgment.

Next we will explore other means of revelation of truth concerning God to mankind.

All who reject the truth of God’s existence and eternal power, which are revealed so clearly through nature, will have no defense when they stand before Him for judgment.

Renald E. Showers is an author, professor, and international conference speaker for The Friends of Israel.
Three out of four Palestinians support suicide bombings

A poll conducted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reveals that three out of every four Palestinians support suicide-bomb attacks against Israel.

According to an Internet report on Yahoo! News, the poll was conducted by the Palestine Center for Public Opinion from May 24 through 26 and showed 76 percent of respondents favored “operations like the May 18 suicide blast in the northern Israeli coastal town of Netanya, which killed five Israelis and the bomber.”

“Only 12.5 percent opposed such tactics and 11.5 percent had no opinion,” Yahoo! reported.

Asked if they would resist halting the intifada should Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat request them to do so, 49 percent said they would resist; 34.4 percent said they would not; 16.5 percent did not respond.

Yahoo! said 38 percent supported a ceasefire by both sides; 43.6 percent opposed one; and 18.4 percent were undecided.

End of kibbutzim?

The famed kibbutzim that were the backbone of Israel in its early days may be breathing their last breath.

According to a report in Ha'aretz, senior kibbutz leaders and Agriculture Minister Shalom Simhon “have been discussing the prospect of making fundamental changes to the structure of kibbutzim—possibly turning them into small farming communities (moshavim) or some other form of less-communal agricultural entities. This would spell the end of the kibbutz as we know it today, closing a chapter of Zionist history represented by the unique collective farming communities.”

The changes include giving members the right to buy and sell their housing units. But the farm-land, cowsheds, chicken coops, and factories would continue as collectives, owned by kibbutzniks who all have shares in these productive assets, Ha'aretz said.

Only about two percent of Israel’s 5.2 million Jewish residents live on the nation’s 260 or so kibbutzim. But they have produced several great leaders, most notably the late David Ben-Gurion, an architect of the modern nation and its first prime minister.

Ha'aretz reported that kibbutz leaders strenuously object to the Agriculture Ministry’s proposal. Natan Tal, secretary general of the Takam kibbutz movement, said kibbutzniks have not formally discussed such far-reaching changes. Simhon said the kibbutzim themselves appealed to the Agriculture Ministry about considering a major reform, but added that the idea was still in its early conceptual stages, the newspaper said.

Israel still supplies Jordan with water despite dire shortage

Although Israelis are suffering through what has been called the worst water crisis in the nation’s history, the government continues to provide 50 million cubic meters of water a year to neighboring Jordan.

“We decided to continue the supply of water, in light of our relationship with Jordan,” said Avigdor Lieberman, national infrastructure minister.

Israel was obligated to provide Jordan with water through May 1999 under the 1997 Akaba Agreement. But that agreement expired, and severe drought threatens the country’s fresh water supply.

The Jerusalem Post reports that local authorities have been told to cut water consumption by 15 percent or face the consequences. Israel is running 400 million cubic meters of water short. Lieberman and Water Commissioner Shimon Tal have told all municipalities, councils, moshavim, and community villages to curtail consumption. All authorities must give Tal’s office detailed plans showing how they plan to save water.

“As a result of this emergency situation, everything has to be done to save water to prevent a reduction in drawing water which would lead to cutbacks and disruptions in supplies,” Tal said.
Riyad Za’anoun, who also was in Geneva. “There is nobody there [among the Palestinians] to talk to,” Dahan added.

He also made the proposal to the U.S. secretary of health and human services and again indirectly in a meeting with Russian Ambassador Mikhail Bogdanov.

Dahan said the idea of treating at Israel’s expense all the Palestinian wounded was approved by the government “on the first day of its tenure” and was based on the humanitarian principles set down by the Geneva Convention and the International Red Cross. Although Israel is not responsible for the violence, Dahan noted, Palestinian medical facilities are unable to treat many of their wounded adequately.

Dahan said he believes the Palestinian leadership has not responded and means to reject the idea “because of the number of their wounded,” which is lower than figures they publicize.

**Negev Beduins get free eyeglasses**

The Jerusalem Post—Free eyeglasses—for some, their first pair ever—have been distributed to 70 elderly Beduin residents of the Negev town of Rahat. The spectacles, each suited to the recipient’s eyes, were distributed by Ben-Gurion University after a team from its social work department discovered that many needed, but could not afford, glasses.

The team, headed by researcher Dr. Esther Iecovich, examined the eyes of 88 Rahat residents over the age of 65, with the help of a local Beduin optometrist. To their surprise, they found that 70 of them had never had eyeglasses, but suffered from nearsightedness or other visual problems that prevented them from functioning normally.

The BGU social worker said it was likely that some of the recipients were getting nursing care because their vision problems prevented them from being independent.

**Israeli surgeons save life of PA policeman’s son**

The Jerusalem Post—Israeli surgeons in Haifa’s Rambam Hospital have saved the life of the newborn son of a Palestinian policeman from Gaza.

The surgeons performed complicated heart surgery, saving the 2½-month-old infant, Hussein Raslan. Raslan, who lives with his parents at the Jabaliya refugee camp, is in serious but stable condition. The infant was born through normal delivery, but three weeks later he suffered from shortness of breath and doctors at a Gaza hospital said he had a serious congenital deformation of the heart.

The voluntary organization Or Lagoyim (A Light Unto the Nations) contacted Dr. Abraham Lorber of the pediatric cardiology unit at Rambam Hospital. Lorber arranged for the baby’s transfer to the hospital. There, the infant was diagnosed and underwent surgery. Or Lagoyim financed the treatment costs, which were reduced to a nominal fee by the hospital.

“I’m happy my child was treated by them,” the infant’s mother, Manel Raslan, said. “I wasn’t afraid to come here. We are being treated very well and I hope that one day there will be peace between our two peoples. When I came here, I didn’t think about the intifada. I knew that in Israel, they would help my son. I found wonderful people, and the Jewish nurses take care of us round the clock.”

**Jerusalem youths help their neighbors**

The Jerusalem Post—The floor of the Jerusalem schoolroom just after 1 P.M. on Friday is flooded with piles upon piles of food neatly being packed away into 100 large cartons. An energetic team of youngsters in their 20s is divvying up the tuna, bread, eggs, potatoes, cakes, yogurt, and bottled drinks strewn all around.

It happens every week at this time. Aptly called “Good Neighbor,” this organization of several dozen young volunteers gathers to collect and deliver packages of foods to needy Jerusalem families.

Work begins early in the week, when the youngsters drop off baskets at several neighborhood kiosks, a sign asking people to pitch in a package of sugar, an extra loaf of bread, an additional carton of eggs.

Friday morning the baskets are collected—and together with 200 loaves donated by Angel’s bakery and chicken and milk products bought with donations, the weekly baskets are prepared and delivered to the needy.

The lists of recipients are prepared by social workers, and include the elderly, one-parent households and large families.

The volunteers stress that while they appreciate donations from businesses and larger organizations, theirs is a small, person-to-person operation. One of its goals is to get families in more affluent neighborhoods personally involved in helping the needy in their area.

One of the nicest things, explains 23-year-old volunteer Efrat Degani, a student at Hebrew University, is that the organization is a vibrant mix of secular and religious youth working together as one.

“It’s a question of people taking responsibility for their neighbors,” she said.

In the crowd of enthused youth at work last Friday, several off-duty soldiers were busy at work, donating their one day a week off for the cause.

“It’s really a lot of fun, and I do not feel it’s difficult work” said Michael Gilad, an officer in the Golani Brigade. “In the army, as part of the military setup, you don’t always strongly feel that you are directly contributing, while here you really feel it,” he said.

The group does not stop at passing out food for the needy. With its meager funds, but seemingly endless desire to do good, it hopes to expand, to aid needy children with education and to open computer classes.

Asked how long the group plans to keep up the “meals on wheels” project, 22-year-old Eran Ben-Ari replies, “so long as there are poor people, we will continue.”
Almost every Jewish home here has a mezuzah nailed to the right doorpost of the front door. A mezuzah is a small receptacle that contains a piece of parchment on which is written Deuteronomy 6:4–9. These verses begin with the Hebrew words, Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad, meaning, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Dt. 6:4, Masoretic Text).

This custom of affixing mezuzot (plural of mezuzah) dates back to ancient times and is the Jewish way of obeying God’s commandment to write His Word “upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Dt. 6:9). According to rabbinic tradition, these 22 lines must be handwritten on special parchment, using a special feather quill and special ink. Today you can see mezuzot on most public buildings here. Some people even believe they ward off evil spirits.

Recently I returned home to find three ultra-Orthodox young men standing near my door, waiting for me. So I asked them, “What do you want?”

“You must pay us,” one said.

When I asked why, he answered, “We tested the parchment scroll in your mezuzah to see if it was kosher (ritually acceptable). It is our holy duty to do so. And we discovered that it was not kosher. Your mezuzah, therefore, was not acceptable. So we put a new parchment scroll inside, and now you have to pay us.”

“And what if I do not pay you?” I asked.

He replied, “We will take down this mezuzah.”

As I looked at them, they seemed to me like three, lost little lambs. “Why did you not ask me if I wanted you to do this?” I asked.

Of course, they were not happy with my reply. They told me that everyone must have a mezuzah.

Without one, they said, they will not bless the house.

“I am not waiting for blessing from you but only from God Himself. No one is saved by these mezuzot,” I said. Still they waited for me to pay them. “Do you want to take money from me by force? If you do, you have come to the wrong address. But if you are in need and want something to eat, please come into my home and be my guest.”

“You have become very interesting to us,” one man said. “Tell us, in whom do you believe?”

I replied, “There is only one God to believe in! Certainly you know this, because many times each day you say, ‘Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad—the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’”

When they came into my home, one man asked me why I do not cover my head as they do. I told them God is not interested in what is on our heads but in what is in our hearts. I told them it is written in the Bible, “Thy word have I hidden in mine heart, that I might not sin
against thee” (Ps. 119:11) and “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13).

I told them they must read the book of Psalms with their hearts, not just as a nice history of King David.

“We have spoken with many people,” one said, “and almost all of them have received what we told them except you. You are so obstinate.”

“That is because I am strong in my faith,” I said.

“Who is your rabbi?”

“I take refuge in the Lord, not in man.”

“Do you mean to say you are more important than our rabbis? They are holy men!”

“Yes,” I said, “you think they are holy. But that is only because you are so far away from the truth.”

As we continued to speak, we developed a nice friendship. We began discussing many of the Jewish traditions, their origins, and whether these traditions truly help us. I tried to show them that these traditions do not help people but carry them away from true faith in God.

“You want to know who my rabbi is?” I asked. “I read the Bible and believe what is written in it. And the Lord has filled me with His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is my teacher; and I, in turn, try to teach people who are walking in darkness that the Light is Yeshua Hamashiach, Jesus Christ, our Savior.”

Then they became angry and wanted to know how I could believe in “that man.”

I replied, “Because it is clearly written about Him in the holy Bible. Here you can read what Yeshua has done for us. We must put our faith in Him—not in mezuzot.”

Please pray that these young men will read the Bible and come to know the true Light of the world.