

THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL GOSPEL MINISTRY, INC.

MARCH/APRIL 2022

# ISRAEL MY GLORY

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WHEN PEACE FILLS THE EARTH

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HOW I LEARNED I WAS WRONG

**THE  
JEWISH  
NEW  
COVENANT**  
WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT EXISTS





# See the World Through Jewish Eyes!

The world of Judaism is rich in detail with a storied history. And who better to lead you through the Jewish experience than Steve Herzig, born and raised in an observant Jewish home and a believer in Jesus. Discover the meaningful traditions, faithful practices, and unforgettable events that connect Jewish people across the globe. Among the book's entertaining anecdotes and extensive catalog of Jewish knowledge, you'll find your faith deepened through the unmistakable links between Judaism and Jesus the Messiah.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Steve Herzig** is the North American Ministries director for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry. He is a Bible teacher, conference speaker, author, and a contributing editor for *Israel My Glory* magazine. He and his wife, Alice, have four children and six grandchildren and live in the Philadelphia area.

**See enclosed envelope for ordering details.**







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## FROM THE EDITOR

If you've been a Christian for many years, you have probably taken communion hundreds of times. In fact, you probably know Jesus' words in Matthew 26:28 by heart: "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

But do you know to whom God gave the New Covenant? It seems fair to say many people do not, including synagogue-attending Jews and churchgoing Christians. I graduated from Hebrew school and attended synagogue every Sabbath for 18 years; and the first time I took communion as a new believer in Jesus, I was sure I had waded into the deep, deep waters of all things Gentile.

Recently, I did an Internet search on the New Covenant and got millions of hits. The first post, written by the editorial staff of a reputable Christian website, called the New Covenant "a promise that God makes with mankind that He will forgive sin and restore communion with those whose hearts believe in His Son, Jesus Christ."

The second hit appeared to borrow from the first—and so it went until I reached this post: "The New Covenant With Israel" on bible.org. The author? The late president of Dallas Theological Seminary, John Walvoord. Bingo! God did not make the New Covenant with mankind or with the church. He made it with His people Israel.

The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34) promises the Jewish people a personal relationship with God based on an inward change of heart. Jesus ratified this covenant with His blood, instituting it when He willingly went to the cross as the final sacrifice for our sin. Gentiles who place their faith in Israel's Messiah are grafted into the Jewish promise (Rom. 11:17). It turns out the New Covenant is not Gentile at all.

This issue of *Israel My Glory* explains the New Covenant—how it often is misunderstood, how it affects us today, and how it will affect all Israel someday. The cover depicts the nation of Israel grounded in God's promise of land, with the new heart of faith God promised (Ezek. 36:26–28), and the Gentiles grafted in through Messiah Jesus.

This Easter season, we encourage you to give God an extra measure of thanks for the nation of Israel when you thank Him for Jesus, who arose from the dead and provides forgiveness of sin to all who place their faith exclusively in Him.

*Waiting for His Appearing,*  
Lorna Simcox  
Editor-in-Chief



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### OFFICES

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\*  
At the signing  
of the Abraham Accords

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People often ask me if the Abraham Accords are related to end-times prophecy. The Accords have been called peace agreements, which begs the question, “Is this the beginning of the covenant mentioned in Daniel 9:27 between Israel and the prince of the people who ‘shall destroy the city and the sanctuary’?” (v. 26).

The announcement of the Abraham Accords came as a surprise in August 2020, when Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) agreed to normalize relations between the two countries. What followed was a formal agreement they both signed in September 2020.

The announcement sent shock waves throughout the Middle East and the world. Suddenly, an Arab nation that had opposed the modern State of Israel’s existence from its inception in 1948 was willing to recognize that Israel is here to stay and it would be beneficial to work with the Jewish state, rather than oppose it.

The Trump administration persuaded both countries not to wait for the Palestinian-Arab issue to be settled before embarking on this new path. The Accords were named for the biblical patriarch Abraham, who is viewed as the father of the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

In the following months, other Muslim-Arab nations made similar agreements with Israel, namely, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco, and Oman. Certainly, the growing threat of a nuclear Iran bent on ruling a united Middle East gave them the incentive.

The Accords with the UAE are officially titled the *Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization Between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel*. However, it is best to understand them not as a peace treaty but as forward-looking agreements of normalization and cooperation. Both countries agreed to formally recognize each other, thereby opening the door to cooperation regarding the economy, environment, and

national security.

Such agreements naturally grab the attention of many students of God’s Word. However, these Accords do not constitute the covenant God revealed to the prophet Daniel. None of these nations destroyed the Temple in AD 70, and none are pledging to protect Israel from its enemies. Daniel foresaw a Gentile leader who would be related to the Romans who destroyed the Temple and who would promise Israel peace and security.

There are, however, lessons to be learned from the Accords as they relate to things to come. First and foremost is the speed at which unforeseen changes can erupt on the geopolitical scene. Based on what we know today, we sometimes wonder how God will bring about certain end-times events. And then an event like the Abraham Accords reminds us God can do in a moment what we perceive to be years away.

The Abraham Accords also show us Israel’s desire to live harmoniously with its neighbors. The Israelis are not alone in wanting security; all of us want it. But when one lives in a dangerous neighborhood like the Middle East and has a history of being hated by the nations, peace and security become priorities. Israelis are tired of constantly sending their sons and daughters to war in order to defend their country. They pay a high price in terms of young lives. When I visit Israel, I often hear them say, “All we want is to live in peace with our neighbors!”

The Abraham Accords show us the strong Israeli desire to preserve life and security through dialogue and agreement. It is this drive that one day will lead Israel into a covenant of false peace and security with the prince of Daniel 9:27.



by **Jim Showers**,  
executive director of The Friends of Israel  
Gospel Ministry



# THE HEALING SUBSTANCE OF SERVING

**T**he evangelical church today is divided. Some parishioners contend the church isn't "woke" enough—not alert enough to racial and social injustice. Others argue it isn't political enough, while still others maintain the church should not be political at all.

Meanwhile, Satan celebrates the division. And the discord and conflict create barriers to fulfilling our number one task: making Christ known to a lost and broken world.

Bonnie Kristian, in her article "Is Evangelicalism Due for a Hundred-Year Schism?" in *Christianity Today*, argues the divisions are deep and reminiscent of the past. The past for Kristian is the early 20th century, but disagreements and divisions go back to the earliest days of the church.

Dissension among believers appeared soon after the church was born. Greek-speaking Jewish Christians complained that Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians skipped over their widows when distributing food. The apostles sensed the growing animosity and knew every widow should be served. They handled the dispute with wisdom by putting certain leaders in charge, like Stephen, who were commissioned to serve all the widows (Acts 6:1–6).

The apostles' methods still apply and give us clarity on how to heal the fractured body of Christ. The remedy is simple. It doesn't require a four-week Sunday school study or a trip to a conference to hear a special speaker or an intimate knowledge of a deep theological concept. The spiritual balm to heal division is service. Though our differences may remain, serving Christ together helps us replace animosity with love for one another and turns anger into kindness, enabling us "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Phil Moser, pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Gloucester County, New Jersey, saw the unifying power of the Holy Spirit at work in his church after an EF-3 tornado touched down in his area

last year, leveling homes, uprooting trees, and destroying property.

Fellowship Bible wasted no time. Despite their differences, parishioners joined hands to serve their community in the name of Jesus Christ. Pastor Moser even shortened his sermon about the Good Samaritan so that 150 men and women with chainsaws and wheelbarrows could wind their way through the community to help their neighbors.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, a local newspaper, wrote a glowing piece about the Bible-believing church, commending it for stepping up in a time of crisis. It reported that volunteers saved one family tens of thousands of dollars in tree-removal fees.

Moser said, "Like many churches during the cultural and political upheaval of 2020, our people were not immune from different opinions and sometimes strong and passionate expressions of those opinions. The tornado changed all of that. Neighbors on our street needed help, and they needed it now. We found agreement in our mission even though we still maintained differences on the way to fix the world we live in. The crisis in our neighborhood put our differences in the proper perspective: While important, they were not the most important. Showing the love of Jesus became the higher priority."

Fellowship Bible's unity in serving during one of South Jersey's most difficult times enticed others—who previously never set foot in the church—to visit on a Sunday morning.

Christ Himself modeled the substance of serving when He said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45). As His disciples, we should follow His example and work together to serve others. Who knows what great things God may do as a result!

by Chris Katulka



# UN REWRITES TEMPLE-MOUNT HISTORY

The UN General Assembly recently passed a resolution that calls Jerusalem's Temple Mount by its Muslim name only. The so-called Jerusalem Resolution is part of Islam's effort to erase Jewish history and rebrand the site as exclusively Islamic.

Adopted by a vote of 129 to 11, with 31 abstentions, the resolution refers to the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism, solely as Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary). The compound, which includes the Dome of the Rock (AD 691) and the al-Aqsa mosque (AD 705), occupies the site of the ancient Jewish Temple King Solomon completed in 957 BC. The Jewish presence there dates back some 3,000 years, predating the Islamic presence by 1,700 years.

An Islamic guidebook to the Temple Mount, published in 1924 by the Supreme Muslim Council, recognized the site's Jewish nature: "Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to the universal belief, on which 'David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings [2 Samuel 24:25].'"

The Palestinian position is part of a larger struggle for control over Jerusalem. "In Jerusalem, theological and historical claims matter; they are the functional equivalent to the deed to the city and have direct operational consequences," said Middle East scholar Daniel Pipes. "Jewish and Muslim connections to the city therefore require evaluation."

Scripture would be a good place to begin. Jerusalem appears 806 times in

the Bible: 660 times in the Old Testament and 146 times in the New Testament, according to Baker's Bible Dictionary. By contrast, Islam's Qur'an never mentions Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was founded in 3000 BC, predating Islam by 3,600 years; and Muslim interest in the city has waxed and waned. Early on, Jerusalem was "an outlying city of diminished importance." By the 10th century, renowned scholar F. E. Peters described Muslim rule over it as having "no particular political significance."

During Ottoman rule (1516–1917), Süleyman the Magnificent rebuilt the city's walls, but then the city suffered centuries of neglect. As the Turkish Empire was collapsing near the end of World War I, Jamal Pasha, the Ottoman commander-in-chief, instructed his Austrian allies to "blow Jerusalem to hell" should British forces enter the city.

Muslim passion for Jerusalem increased during British rule (1917–1948). Israeli scholar Hava Lazarus-Yafeh noted Jerusalem "became the focus of religious and political Arab activity only at the beginning of the twentieth century," ascribing the change mainly to "the renewed Jewish activity in the city and Judaism's claims on the Western Wailing Wall."

During Jordanian rule (1948–67), Muslims again lost interest. Not until 1967, when the Old City came under Israeli control after the Six-Day War, did the Arabs turn Jerusalem into the centerpiece of their political program to establish an

independent Palestinian state.

Since then, Palestinian officials have been rewriting history. In 1997, Ikrima Sabri, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, declared, "Jerusalem is a symbol for every Muslim in the world." He added, "The claim of the Jews to the right over it is false, and we recognized nothing but an entirely Islamic Jerusalem under Islamic supervision." In 2009, Islamic judge Sheikh Tayseer Rajab Tamimi said there was no evidence Jews had ever lived in Jerusalem or that the Temple ever existed: "Jerusalem is an Arab and Islamic city, and it always has been so."

The UN resolution "calls for respect for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem, in word and in practice." Yet it is doing the very thing it claims it wants to prevent. "The hypocrisy of these resolutions is truly outrageous," said Israel's permanent representative to the UN Gilad Erdan. "A resolution about Jerusalem that does not refer to its ancient Jewish roots is not an ignorant mistake, but an attempt to distort and rewrite history!"



\*  
Gilad Erdan



by **Soeren Kern**,  
a senior fellow at the  
Gatestone Institute, a  
nonpartisan foreign-  
policy think tank based  
in New York City



## KIDNAPPED PASTOR SLAIN DESPITE RANSOM PAYMENT

**M**uslims who kidnapped a Christian pastor in northern Nigeria killed him in December after receiving ransom payments from the church that were delivered by his wife, reported Morning Star News.

The Rev. Dauda Pautre of the First Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) was kidnapped by armed Fulani herdsmen in November while working on his farm. Church leaders learned of his death December 9 when the killers called “and informed them that they had killed the pastor since they could not bring more money,” the Rev. Joseph Hayab, chairman of the Kaduna state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria, told Morning Star News in a text message.

Pastor Pautre’s wife, who was kidnapped and released, told church leaders her husband preached Christ to his captors and prayed for their repentance, infuriating them and likely contributing to their decision to kill him, according to Pastor Hayab. “The death of Rev. Pautre came as a rude shock to us,” said an ECWA member.

Nigeria led the world in the number of kidnapped Christians in 2020 (990), according to Open Doors’ 2021 World Watch List. It was also the country with the most Christians killed for their faith between November 2019 and October 2020 (3,530). In overall violence, Nigeria was second only to Pakistan and trailed only China in the number of churches attacked or closed (270). In 2021, Nigeria jumped from Number 12 to Number 9 on Open Doors’ list of countries persecuting Christians.

## KILLED IN THEIR BEDS

**T**hree children were among 10 Christians slaughtered in Nigeria as they slept in their beds late last year. At least 690 others were wounded as Muslim Fulani herdsmen

attacked a village en masse in a predominantly Christian area between midnight and 2 a.m.

Six of the 10 Christians killed were from one family, while the other four were killed in four homes. Sen. Istifanus Gyang, who represents Plateau state in Nigeria’s



parliament, expressed concern that armed herdsmen have been allowed to attack Christians continuously.

“These terrorists have been emboldened to undertake repeated attacks due to the inability of the government to give clear and definite orders to the military to decisively engage the terrorists to end the cycle of attacks on peace-loving Christians and their communities in Plateau state,” Gyang said in a press statement.

Although thousands of Christians in Nigeria have been murdered, the U.S. State Department in November removed Nigeria from its list of Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) that engage in or tolerate violations of religious freedom. Christian Solidarity International President John Eibner criticized the move. “Removing this largely symbolic sign of concern is a brazen denial of reality and indicates that the U.S. intends to pursue its interests in western Africa through an alliance with Nigeria’s security elite, at the expense of Christians and other victims of widespread sectarian violence, especially in the country’s predominantly Christian Middle Belt region,” Eibner said. “If the U.S. CPC list means anything at all—an open question at this point—Nigeria belongs on it.”

“The goal of these attacks,” Eibner said, “is to weaken and eliminate indigenous non-Muslim populations from the region and entrench Muslim supremacy in this historically contested space, for the political benefit of Nigeria’s current rulers.”

A sharp rise in attacks led to a Genocide Warning for Christians in Nigeria in 2020, and the situation has only deteriorated since then.

*To read these reports and many more in full,  
go to [morningstarnews.org](http://morningstarnews.org).*



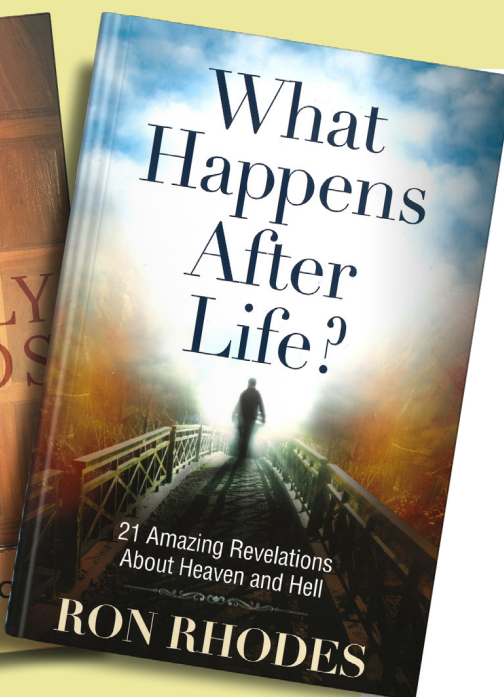
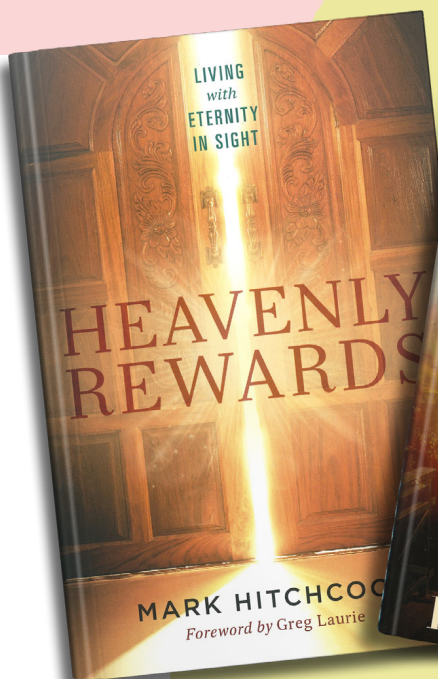


### Heavenly Rewards

Are you living with an eternal perspective? How you live today affects how you live in eternity. Don't worry: If you're a Christian, your salvation is secure. But your works today will determine your rewards in eternity. This study expertly teaches this biblical truth and more about eternal life to assure you of the goodness in store for believers in life after death. Reading this book will help you focus on how to live a life pleasing to God today with an eye on tomorrow.

**US \$14.99**

**Outside US \$18.00**



### What Happens After Life?

The unknown of life after death doesn't have to be scary if you know where to look for answers! If you need closure about what comes next, there's no better study than this one. Whether you're searching for truth on what we'll do in heaven, what happens to young people when they die, or what our experiences will be like the moment we pass from this life, Ron Rhodes' excellent book faithfully addresses a full slate of afterlife inquiries using God's Word.

**US \$13.99**

**Outside US \$17.00**

# REAP THE REWARDS of Christ's Resurrection!



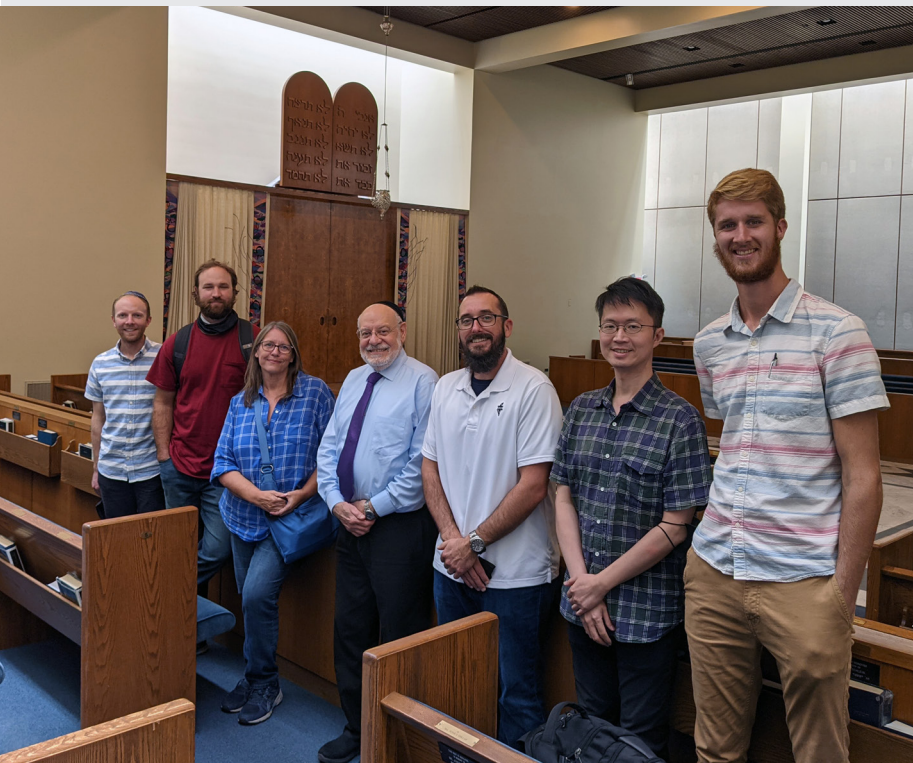
### Easter Is Coming!

It's story time! Settle in with your children and grandchildren for a lesson about God's eternal love for us. More than bunnies and candy, Easter is our greatest reason for joy. Each spring we rejoice that Easter is coming soon, but it's important to realize that it's been coming since the beginning of humanity. This sweet picture book will delight children and the adults who read to them with cute illustrations, thoughtful storytelling, and the greatest message of all!

**US \$9.99; Outside US \$12.00**

See enclosed envelope for ordering details.





\*  
Rabbi Gabbai (center) and the Encounter team

## FOI Launches New Ministry

The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI) has launched an exciting new work called Encounter to expose Christians to the Jewish culture and community of the northeastern United States.

Bruce Scott, director of Program Ministries, organized the first trip last fall for seven Christians eager to learn more about the Jewish people. In four days, the Encounter team interacted with one of the largest Jewish communities in the world as members traveled between Philadelphia, New Jersey, and New York City.

They visited Crown Heights in Brooklyn, New York, and saw where modern scribes handwrite Torah scrolls. They toured the famous synagogue of the late Chabad-Lubavitch Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, whom some Orthodox Jewish people believe to be the messiah; and they went to the Lower East Side of Manhattan, which was the center of Jewish immigration from 1880 to 1924.

And, of course, no tour of the Lower East Side is

complete without eating at the famous Katz's Delicatessen, a staple in New York Jewish cuisine. Team members were immersed in everything Jewish to enhance their love and understanding of God's Chosen People.

In Philadelphia, Rabbi Albert Gabbai welcomed them for a Shabbat meal with his congregation in the fellowship hall of his synagogue, Congregation Mikveh Israel. Founded in 1740, it is known as the Synagogue of the American Revolution because it is the oldest continuously functioning Jewish assembly in the United States.

After the meal, Bruce briefly shared about FOI's love and support for Israel and the Jewish people and how the Bible tells us that, as Christians, we are spiritually indebted to them (Rom. 15:27). A young Jewish couple told him, "We've never heard of Christian support for Israel and the Jewish people before. Thank you so much!" Others also told Bruce how much he had encouraged them.

Encounter, of course, involves more than taking in the sights, sounds, and tastes of Jewish life. The program is designed to fulfill The Friends of Israel's mission "to bring physical and spiritual comfort to the Jewish people." Before departing for home, team members assembled more than 100 gift bags of food for Holocaust survivors.

"The Encounter program," one member told us, "helped me develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of Jewish culture and of the pain and struggle of the Jewish people and Israel. A greater sadness for me is knowing where their lack of eternal salvation will lead. As a believer in Jesus Christ, I cannot ignore service to the Jewish people and Israel."

If you would like to support Encounter and other ministries in North American outreach with The Friends of Israel, visit [foi.org/NAMoutreach](http://foi.org/NAMoutreach). You can also call our toll-free ministry-support line at 800-257-7843. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.



## Reaching Belarus

Often God allows our teams around the world to see new generations of believers in Messiah grow and minister for Him. Although The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI) has no workers yet in Belarus, our Polish and Ukrainian teams have had many opportunities to minister there over the years. Some Belarusians have attended FOI events in Poland, come to faith, and taken the gospel message home with them.

This is the remarkable story of Andrew, a Jewish Belarusian who was saved at one of our Holidays With the Bible in southern Poland. Andrew quickly began sharing the Good News in his home village of Bobruisk, where he helped our partner churches distribute gift baskets to low-income Jewish families, hosted Shabbat dinners, and began speaking of his faith to his Jewish family and neighbors.

Andrew continued to stay in touch with some of our field representatives in Poland, including Timothy Rabinek, who recently updated us on how God is using Andrew in the currently closed country of Belarus.

In 2021, Andrew began teaching a regular Bible study. Attendance was small at first. But as the weather warmed up, the group began to grow beyond Andrew's expectations. Before he knew it, his little Bible study had almost 50 people! He needed a bigger place to meet.

So Andrew approached the local rabbi about using an outdoor gathering place owned by the Jewish community. He told the rabbi his group includes both Christians and Jews and that he will share his faith in Messiah, just as our FOI Poland team shared with him. And the rabbi agreed! Today the name of the space is also the name of Andrew's ministry: The Jewish Courtyard.

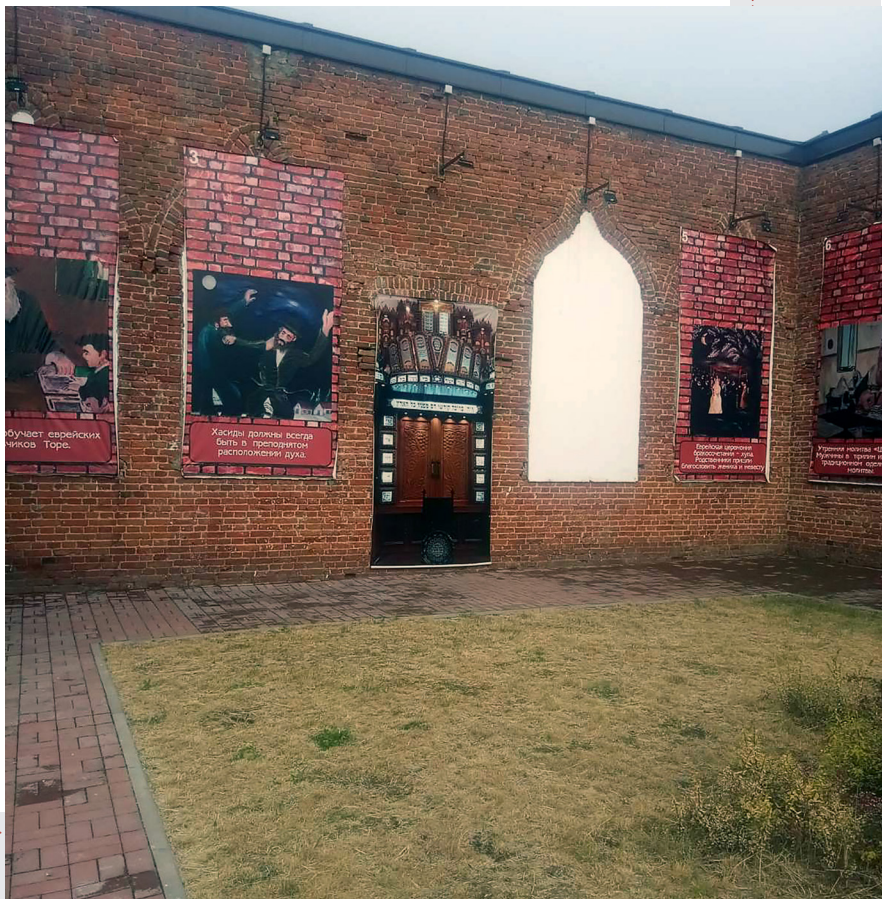
"We read the Bible," Andrew said, "and comment, pray, and praise Yeshua and the Father. Our prayer is for the Holy Spirit to have those who are being saved join the church. The keys to the Courtyard were given to us by the rabbi of Bobruisk. He knows everything and

approves of our meetings. This is wonderful, and we pray for his family and the Jewish people."

What an amazing heritage God is giving our field workers in Eastern Europe. Since the inception of our ministry there more than 70 years ago, the Lord continues to bless our efforts to bless His people in that beautiful region. Please pray the seeds our Polish and Ukrainian teams sow today will continue to produce generations of individuals who love and bless the children of Israel.

If you would like to support our Polish or Ukrainian team and other FOI ministries like this around the world, visit [foi.org/INToutreach](https://foi.org/INToutreach). You can also call our toll-free ministry-support line at 800-257-7843. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.

### \* The Jewish Courtyard





# THE GIANT:

## A PREVIEW OF REVELATION 13?

by Steve Herzig



**G**iants have always fascinated me. That's probably why I reacted so quickly when Laura, my administrative assistant, asked me to go online and look up "The Giant."

"Did you say 'Giant'?"

"Yes," she answered. "Go to the website [thegiantcompany.ie](http://thegiantcompany.ie). You've got to see this."

"Awaken the Giant in You," the website declares. The promotional material from the Ireland-based Giant Company calls its creation "the world's tallest moving statue"—an ambitious cultural and commercial project that combines art, amusement, virtual-reality robotics, and artificial intelligence. Each Giant will stand more than 10 stories high. But there's more.

These giants are programmable and capable of speaking, singing, and moving their heads and arms. They also shape-shift, assuming the forms of people. For example, in an instant, a Giant can look like Abraham Lincoln, Michael Jordan, or Superman. It can even produce a Giant version of you! The ultimate selfie. Can you say, "Revelation 13:14–15"? The technology has arrived.

### **An Expression of Humanism**

The Giant Company hopes to install 21 of these statues (or "billboards," as the company claims they can be used), at a cost of \$18 million to \$24 million each, in 21 cities around





the globe. It estimates they will attract 500,000 visitors a year and generate millions of dollars.

Not only will they be huge and able to speak and move, but these Giants also will be able to communicate with one another: “While every Giant is bespoke for its city and country, each is also a member of a family that can digitally communicate with other Giants around the world,” says the website.

This behemoth is the brainchild of entrepreneur Paddy Dunning, who envisions his Giants leading the charge “on promoting sustainable living and climate action,” as well as “other philanthropic endeavors.”

Dunning’s vision for The Giant will undoubtedly thrill many; but frankly, it gives me the creeps. His hope The Giant will become “part of a movement for change” and “save the planet” stems from the belief that man is innately capable of doing so. This is humanism. It attaches prime importance to human beings and sees technology as mankind’s salvation.

Today’s unregenerate masses are no different than they were thousands of years ago, when they tried to construct a tower called Babel (Gen. 11). In defiance of God, they worked to build the biggest, tallest ziggurat in an attempt to reach the heavens. Inherent in that build was humanism. It elevates people and denigrates God.

To those of us who know Scripture, The Giant probably conjures up visions of a future “giant,” one the Antichrist will authorize when he rules the world during the seven-year Tribulation:

*And he [the False Prophet] deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast [Antichrist], telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast. . . . He [the False Prophet] was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed (Rev. 13:14–15).*

We also know that—no matter how noble and altruistic Paddy Dunning may be—almighty God, the Creator of this planet, is the only one capable of saving it.

## Not a Force for Good

Interestingly, Scripture mentions giants; and in each case, they present a problem for God’s people. In ancient days, the giants on Earth “were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown” (Gen. 6:4). Many Bible scholars believe they resulted from fallen angels cohabiting with women: Satan’s attempt to pollute

the promised “Seed” of the woman (3:15) to prevent Jesus from being born into a fully human, Jewish family—which was necessary for Him to become our Redeemer. Jesus is the one poised to save the planet when He returns at His Second Coming to rescue Israel from the Antichrist and set up His Messianic Kingdom.

In Numbers 13, the sight of “giants” frightened 10 of the 12 spies Moses sent to check out the land God promised the Israelites (v. 33). Intimidated by such “men of great stature” (v. 32), all but Caleb and Joshua failed to trust the Lord, resulting in that generation wandering 40 years in the desert and dying as punishment for its disobedience.

And who can forget the famous Philistine, “Goliath, from Gath” (1 Sam. 17:4)? He was slightly under 10 feet tall and terrified everyone who saw him with the exception of a ruddy young man named David, who was destined to become Israel’s king. Goliath cursed the living God, prompting David to declare, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied” (v. 45). David then killed Goliath with a stone from his slingshot.

Great stature can be extremely intimidating. Perhaps that was why Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar erected a 90-foot-tall gold image and demanded everyone worship it or be killed (Dan. 3:1–7). He could have built a small image, but he wanted a giant one. When three Jewish boys (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego) refused to bow to it, the king had them thrown into a furnace. But God rescued them.

The Giant Company does not want people to worship The Giant. Rather, it wants people to pay money to see it. Dunning’s venture is commercial. He is not in business to lose money. He’s in business to make it.

Yet it remains to be seen what others will do with the technology The Giant Company has harnessed. Will they use it to sell products? Will they use it for entertainment, turning themselves into giant selfies? Will they use it to help the planet? Who knows? Two things we do know: (1) What once seemed far-fetched stands at our doorstep today, and (2) the Bible is never wrong.

I’ll be watching with interest the progress of Dunning’s ambition. You probably should too. ★



### Steve Herzig

is the director of North American Ministries and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.



A LOOK AT THE FUTURE NEW COVENANT KINGDOM, WHEN GOD FULFILLS ALL THE P



# Red FILLS THE



E PROMISES HE MADE TO ISRAEL

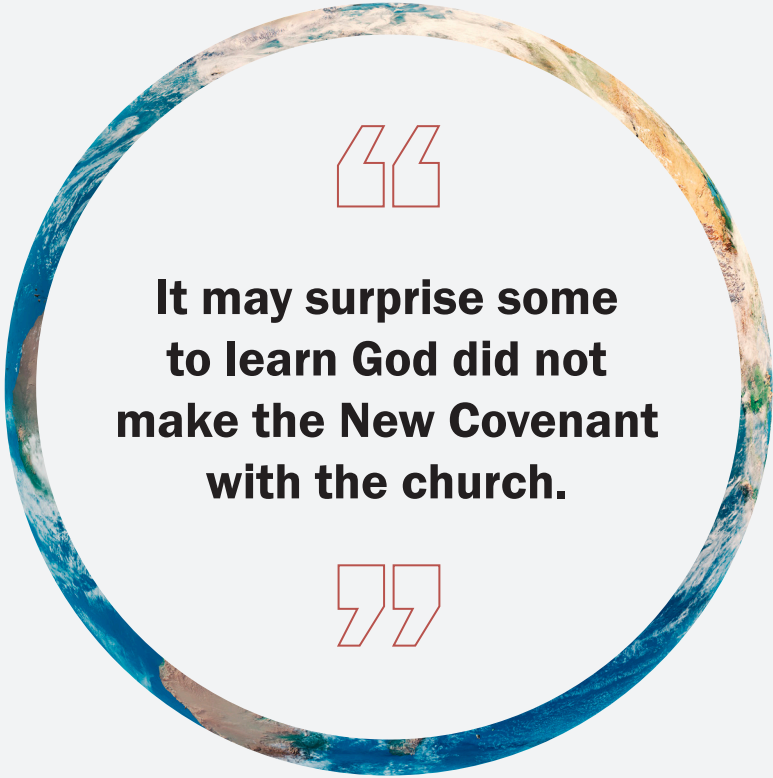
# WHEN *ace* THE EARTH

BY DAVID M. LEVY


PHOTO: ISTOCK

MARCH/APRIL 2022 15





**It may surprise some  
to learn God did not  
make the New Covenant  
with the church.**



**P**eople often ask, “Will there ever be peace on Earth?” Yes, there will be when Jesus the Messiah returns and establishes a social and political order of worldwide peace. His reign will be a time of prosperity and plenty, known in Scripture as the Millennial Kingdom.

The word *millennial* denotes a period of 1,000 years and refers to Jesus’ Messianic rule from King David’s throne in Jerusalem over the entire world (Lk. 1:31–33). His reign will begin at the Kingdom’s inception and continue throughout eternity, merging into God’s eternal Kingdom (Dan. 7:13–14; Rev. 11:15).

During Jesus’ Messianic reign, God will fulfill all the unconditional promises He made to Israel in the Abrahamic, Davidic, Land, and New Covenants. He

also will fulfill other promises pertaining to Jesus and all nations worldwide. Earth’s curse will be removed, and creation itself will be delivered from its bondage to corruption and pain and be restored to its original state of peace and splendor (Rom. 8:20–22).

It may surprise some to learn God did not make the New Covenant with the church. He made it “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Heb. 8:8) and declared it “an everlasting covenant” (Jer. 32:40) that will never be abrogated, abolished, or annulled.

When Jesus returns to Earth, Israel will be redeemed, reunited into one nation, and regathered into its Promised Land—never to be uprooted again. The New Covenant promises will be fulfilled at the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom on Earth.

## **ISRAEL’S REDEMPTION**

God told Israel, “I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live” (Ezek. 37:14). This event will take place at Jesus’ Second Coming, when He pours out His Spirit of grace and supplication on Israel.

For centuries, a veil of unbelief has hindered Jewish people from understanding the truth about Jesus (2 Cor. 3:14–15). But when Jesus returns, the veil will be lifted from their hearts. As the prophet Zechariah

wrote, “Then they will look on Me [Jesus] whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zech. 12:10).

The apostle Paul explained, “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant [New Covenant] with them, when I take away their sins’” (Rom. 11:26–27).

God will cleanse Israel’s redeemed remnant, give them a new heart, and put a new spirit within them; and all will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He also will put His Law in their minds and write it on their hearts, forgiving their sin and remembering it no more (Jer. 31:33–34). At that time, Israel will observe all God’s statutes.

## ISRAEL’S REUNIFICATION

Today Jewish people are scattered around the world. But when the Messiah returns, they will be reunited and restored to the land God promised them as an everlasting possession through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 15:18; 17:7, 13, 19; 35:12; 48:3–4).

To illustrate this reunion visually, God commanded Ezekiel to take two sticks—one named Judah, representing the southern tribes of Israel, and one named Ephraim, representing the 10 northern tribes—and join them together. It has been 3,000 years since Israel has been one kingdom in the land. This reunification will take place at the Second Coming, and Israel will never be divided again (Ezek. 37:15–22, 25). Jerusalem will become the world’s capital, where Messiah will reign and rule forever (Jer. 3:17).

Israel will possess all the land promised to Jacob (Gen. 28:12–16) in the Abrahamic Covenant: “Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell

# An Outline of the New Covenant

BY DAVID M. LEVY

## I. THE COVENANT PROCLAIMED

- A. It is made with the Jewish people (Jer. 31:31).
- B. It is different from the Mosaic Covenant (v. 32).
- C. It will put God’s Law in their minds and hearts (v. 33).
- D. It guarantees God is their God and they are His people (v. 33).
- E. It guarantees they all will know God (v. 34).
- F. It delivers them (through faith) from sin and provides forgiveness (v. 34).

## II. THE COVENANT’S PROVISIONS

- A. It is unconditional. God says, “I will” (Ezek. 16:60–62).
- B. It is everlasting (Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 37:26).
- C. It guarantees Israel’s salvation (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:26–27).
- D. It is controlled by the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:27).
- E. It cleanses Israel (36:25–26).
- F. It is committed to righteousness (Isa. 62:2–3).
- G. It provides complete peace and security (65:21–23; Ezek. 34:25–28; 37:26).
- H. It promises Israel’s cities will be rebuilt and inhabited (Ezek. 36:10).
- I. It promises the Jewish people will exist as one nation and be multiplied (vv. 10–12; 37:15–22).
- J. It promises great agricultural productivity (34:27, 29; 36:8, 29–30, 34–35).
- K. It lifts the curse from creation (Isa. 65:25; Rom. 8:19–22).
- L. It promises construction of the Millennial Temple (Ezek. 37:26–28).

## III. THE CHURCH’S PARTICIPATION

- A. It provides salvation for Gentiles through faith in the Jewish Messiah’s blood sacrifice (Mt. 26:28; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 11:25–26).
- B. It connects all believers to one another spiritually (1 Cor. 11:25–26).
- C. It gives the church the glorious message of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:1–18).
- D. It gives the church the communion cup as a symbol of the New Covenant (1 Cor. 11:25–26).



there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever" (Ezek. 37:25).

God even set the boundaries of the Promised Land in Genesis 15:18–21. The southern border is the "river of Egypt [Wadi el-Arish]"; the northern boundary is the Euphrates River; the western boundary is the Mediterranean Sea; and to the east, the areas of Moab and Edom. There also is a sacred district allocated to the priests, Levites, and prince.

(See Ezekiel 48.)

The Millennial city is Jerusalem, which lies south of the sacred district. Although similarities exist between this city and the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21, they are entirely different cities with no connection. The Millennial city is prepared only for the Millennium, whereas the New Jerusalem is an eternal city prepared for the eternal state in the new heavens and earth (vv. 1–2).

# 7 Features

## OF THE COMING JEWISH KINGDOM

BY DAVID M. LEVY

The prophet Isaiah provided a wonderful glimpse of the future Davidic, Millennial Kingdom in his prophecy to Israel (Isa. 65:18–25). Here are seven of the coming Kingdom's characteristics. Remember, Church Age saints will be ruling with Christ in their resurrected, sinless state, maintaining a righteous and incorruptible government.

### 1. PEACE

Peace will prevail throughout the world, flowing like a river from Jerusalem. Nations will no longer go to war to solve their problems: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (2:4).

### 2. JUSTICE

Political and personal justice will prevail worldwide. The Messiah will apply supernatural principles to judge from David's throne in

Jerusalem (9:6–7; 11:2–4; Lk. 1:31–33) and rule all nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 12:5). Everyone's rights will be protected; and no enemy or court of law will be able to deprive people of their property, crops, or children: "They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them" (Isa. 65:21, 23).

### 3. JOY

For centuries, Jewish people have endured torment and persecution. During the Millennium, joy and rejoicing will carry the day. Weeping and crying will not be heard. This spirit will fill the world: "For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (vv. 18–19).

### 4. MIRACLES

There will be miracles of healing in both body and soul, and people will no longer become physically ill (33:24; 35:5–6).

### 5. LONG LIFE

Most people will live through the entire thousand years, and someone who dies at 100 will be considered a mere youth who suffered a premature death due to his or her sin (65:20).

### 6. ANSWERED PRAYER

God promises, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear" (v. 24). The Lord will answer prayers immediately for those praying in the will of God.

### 7. EDEN AGAIN

At the fall of humanity, God cursed the earth, which then produced thorns and thistles and forced people to labor hard working the land. In the Millennium, the curse is lifted. Only the serpent will remain cursed (v. 25). God will restore Earth to its prefall state, and even the animal kingdom will be at peace: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain" (v. 25; cf. 11:6–9; Rom. 8:19–22).

Though the Millennial city is Jerusalem (cf. Zech. 14:17), its name will be changed to “THE LORD IS THERE” (Hebrew, *Jehovah Shammah*; Ezek. 48:35). The city also will be called “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 33:16). Thus, the city’s complete name will reflect the character of the Millennium. It will be a place where peace reigns, God dwells and rules, and God’s righteousness prevails and flows to all nations throughout the world (Isa. 66:12).

## ISRAEL’S RULERS

When the Messiah rules, the legal system will be different from the Mosaic Law and radically different from today’s system (Ezek. 40–46).

First, Ezekiel makes it clear a resurrected King David will play the major role of king, shepherd, and prince appointed by God over Israel; he will serve under the Messiah (Isa. 55:3–4; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23–24; 37:24–25).

Second, an appointed prince (Ezek. 44:3) will oversee worship and services in the Temple. His identity today is unknown. He is not Jesus Christ, as some might believe, because he must sacrifice a sin offering for himself (45:22).

Many scholars speculate that David is the prince because he is so designated in other Millennial Kingdom passages. However, this seems unlikely because the prince appears to be a human being; David will be a sinless, resurrected believer in that day. The prince’s duties are spelled out in Ezekiel 45:9–46:18.

Third, only Levites from among the sons of Zadok will be priests because they alone obeyed the Lord when other priests and the children of Israel went astray (44:15).

## ISRAEL’S REBUILT TEMPLE

The Temple Ezekiel refers to appears to be a Temple that will be built in the Millennial Kingdom. Such a Temple is consistent with Ezekiel’s earlier prophecy that God will place His sanctuary and Tabernacle in Israel’s midst (37:26).

The Temple will be built in Jerusalem after God consummates His New Covenant (based on Christ’s completed work on the cross) with Israel (Jer. 31:31–34; Mt. 26:28).

The Temple’s purpose will be to (1) exhibit God’s holiness

(Zech. 14:20); (2) manifest God’s glory (Ezek. 43:1–5; 44:4); (3) be the Messiah’s dwelling place (43:7); (4) be the location from which the Messiah will govern Earth from David’s throne (Lk. 1:32–33); (5) provide a place where people will offer blood sacrifices to God in worship (Ezek. 45:15–25); and (6) house a river flowing from under the threshold of God’s throne into the Dead Sea, providing life-giving water to the Negev (47:1–12).

## ISRAEL’S RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION

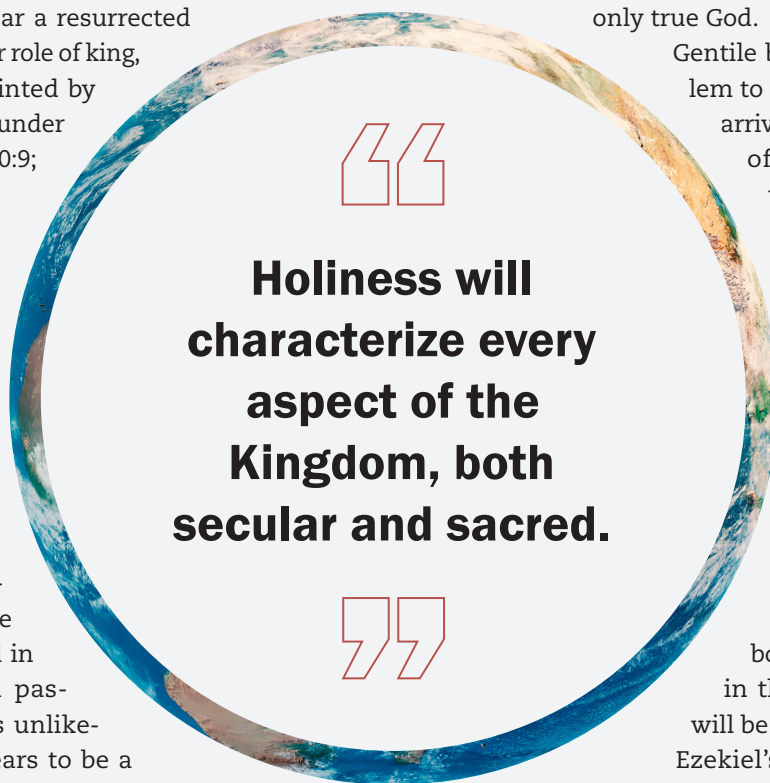
Redeemed Gentiles will make annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem to pray and worship the King, the Lord of hosts (Zech. 14:9, 16). He will be loved and adored as the one and only true God.

Gentile believers will go up to Jerusalem to pray and seek the Lord. Upon arriving, they will grasp the corner of a Jewish man’s garment, wanting him to teach them God’s Word (8:22–23) because the Jews will be God’s ministers (Isa. 61:6).

Holiness will characterize every aspect of the Kingdom, both secular and sacred. The phrase *HOLINESS TO THE LORD* will be engraved or stamped on the most mundane objects, such as the bells on horses and the Temple’s pots and bowls (Zech. 14:20). Everything in the Kingdom administration will be considered holy to the Lord.

Ezekiel’s prophecy began with God announcing He had not forgotten His New Covenant promises to Israel—promises of redemption, reunification, and restoration in a Kingdom ruled in righteousness by Jesus the Messiah.

The prophet Isaiah beautifully phrased God’s everlasting love and commitment to His ancient people when he wrote, “See, I have inscribed you [Israel] on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me” (Isa. 49:16). May we never forget Israel either! And we all can be assured God will fulfill His New Covenant promises to everyone whose faith is anchored in Jesus the Messiah. ★



**David M. Levy**

is the media resource specialist and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.



# **'WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL'**

Moses foresaw his people's rebellion and the eventual consequences. But he also foresaw that God would someday circumcise their hearts.

**by Harold Summers**









# What started as a family moving from Canaan to Egypt to escape the ravages of a seven-year famine grew over time into the nation of Israel—the people to whom God revealed Himself and with whom He made a covenant at Mount Sinai.

This covenant was no trifling matter. It positioned Israel above all the nations on Earth, guaranteeing the Israelites God's blessing and a special place in His economy if they accepted its requirements and obeyed its terms:

*And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'" (Ex. 19:3–6).*

Today we refer to this contract as the Mosaic or Old Covenant. It revealed the demands of a holy, righteous, omnipotent God; taught people they were sinners; and impressed on them the fact that "it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). But the Old Covenant had a shortcoming: It could not make anyone righteous. Nor could the Israelites keep it.

## THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT

As we look back over the millennia, we see that no nation on Earth has had the experiences with God that Israel had. The Israelites heard God's voice and saw His presence at Mount Sinai:

*Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that*

*there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him **by voice** (Ex. 19:16, 18–19, emphasis added).*

This was one of the greatest displays of God's power and majesty in the history of creation. God spoke; and everyone heard Him declare, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (20:2).

God spoke the Ten Commandments, the first part of the tripartite Mosaic Covenant and the nucleus of all of Israel's laws: civil, ceremonial, and moral:

1. Civil law told the Israelites how to govern themselves as a nation under God.
2. Ceremonial law told them how to worship God as a people.
3. Moral law told them God's holy requirements for them nationally and as individuals.

## FORTY YEARS LATER

Sadly, as punishment for a lack of faith, the generation that stood at Mount Sinai wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and died. As their descendants prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses restated the requirement that they be loyal to God alone:

*Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God (Dt. 28:1-2).*

Moses enumerated all the covenant blessings the Israelites would enjoy if they obeyed God (vv. 1-14) and all the curses they would experience if they did not (vv. 15-68). He warned them, “You shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see” (vv. 33-34). No nation in history has suffered more over a longer period of time than the Jewish people. Disobedience brought dispersion, persecution, and death. Moses foresaw his people’s rebelliousness and the eventual consequences; but he also foresaw that God would bring them back:

*If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live (30:4-6).*

A circumcised heart refers to the New Covenant. The prophet Jeremiah first used the words *new covenant* about 800 years later. While Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem, God used the prophet Ezekiel to tell the Jewish exiles in Babylon, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you” (Ezek. 36:26). Centuries later, Jesus declared, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many” (Mk. 14:24).

## GOD HAD A PLAN

God established the sacrificial system to make His people aware of their sin and the fact that only blood could cleanse them. Unless an Israelite kept every point of the Law, he was cursed: “Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them,” Moses said (Dt. 27:26). The Law could only condemn because no one could keep it perfectly.

The Mosaic Law “made nothing perfect” (Heb. 7:19). It couldn’t make sinners righteous or cleanse them permanently

from sin, which is why animal sacrifices were never-ending. They covered sin temporarily and had to be offered over and over again.

However, God is always searching for those whose hearts are loyal to Him (2 Chr. 16:9). Israelites who acknowledged their sin, genuinely loved God, and brought their sacrifices with repentant hearts received His acceptance: “On this one will I look,” God said. “On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isa. 66:2). “The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34:18).

Today, when people understand what Jesus accomplished for them and repent and place their faith in Him, God removes their sin and gives them His righteousness (Phil. 3:9)—something the Old Covenant could not do. He writes His law on their hearts, “not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” (2 Cor. 3:3).

Approximately 40 years ago, someone brought a young Orthodox Jewish man named Michael to church. Michael knew he was a sinner. He had tried earnestly to keep the Mosaic Law but couldn’t. Wretched in his sin, he listened as the pastor explained how Jesus became the final sacrifice for sin.

No longer did Michael have to torment himself trying to keep the Law. Jesus had kept it for him, then willingly gave Himself as Michael’s final sacrifice. He then arose from the dead because He is God. All Michael had to do was believe.

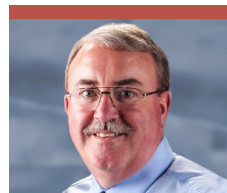
Michael said when the pastor gave the altar call, he jumped up from his seat and bolted down the aisle to receive Christ as his Savior. He was set free, and he has been walking with the Lord ever since.

God’s plan has always been to deal with sin by sending His Son, the divine Messiah of Israel, to become the final sacrifice. Through Him, God initiated the New Covenant. He promised His people Israel, making Jesus “the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4).

The Old Covenant served its purpose. The New Covenant is better, and God makes it available not to Jews only, but to all who place their faith in the Jewish Messiah. ★



## A circumcised heart refers to the New Covenant.



### Harold Summers

is a Church Ministries representative and Bible teacher with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in Florida.









# ISRAEL'S NEW COVENANT

by Mike Stallard

While God was punishing Israel, He was still carrying out His eternal purpose to give the nation “a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11).





**W**hen the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the people of the United States were devastated. Official inquiries were opened to determine what had happened. Special defenses were positioned on the West Coast in case the Japanese attacked the homeland; and the American people wanted affirmation that victory and better days lay ahead.

The same sentiment, but stronger, probably clenched the heart of every Jewish person after the Babylonians attacked Judah in 586 BC. The Babylonians struck the Jewish homeland, destroyed the Jewish capital of Jerusalem, and demolished the cherished Temple that was the very center of Jewish life and worship.

Worse still, they subdued the Jewish people and took them captive to Babylon. As the Jews made that long, arduous trek to a foreign land, they no doubt wondered what had happened to God's promises to their fathers about possessing the land as a home for His Chosen People. Had God abandoned them?

Jeremiah the prophet warned the people their disobedience would bring God's wrath on them. Through the prophet, God called the backsliding nation to return to Him (Jer. 3:12, 14, 22). But the Israelites continued to rebel and break the Mosaic Covenant God gave the nation at Mount Sinai (11:1–10). As a result, God said, "I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath" (21:5). Jerusalem was destroyed; and Judah's king was delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (v. 7; 2 Ki. 25:1–7).

Outwardly, it seemed as if God indeed had abandoned His Chosen People. But in reality, while He was punishing them, He was still carrying out His eternal purpose for the nation, to give it "a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

## JEWISH THROUGH AND THROUGH

Through Jeremiah, God gave His people an astounding prophecy to help them understand the permanence of His love and plan for them.

God promised that one day He would make a New Covenant with them (Jer. 31:31–34). Although this truth should be obvious, it must be said that this promise is for Israel and Judah (v. 31). The passage does not reveal any information about a future church; and the promise's character is Jewish through and through.

The New Covenant differs markedly from the prior covenant (Old or Mosaic Covenant), which the Jewish people broke (v. 32). That covenant depended on their obedience to the Law God gave them at Mount Sinai (Ex. 20).

The New Covenant involves God placing His Law in their minds and writing it on their hearts, instead of on tablets of stone (Jer. 31:33). God also guarantees to Israel and Judah, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (v. 33). The implication is that no one will have to encourage others to know the Lord. All will know God. "I will forgive their iniquity," He says, "and their sin I will remember no more" (v. 34).

This covenant means a day is coming when Israel will be restored spiritually. Other passages include a similar promise that involves putting the Spirit within the people (Ezek. 36:26–27).

The context of this wonderful prophecy also promises that the people of Israel will exist forever and always be a nation (Jer. 31:35–37). Ultimately, despite the Babylonian Captivity begun in







Jeremiah's day, there is coming a future time when the city of Jerusalem shall be built, never to be plucked up or thrown down again (vv. 38–40). Ezekiel confirmed that the New Covenant promise involves Israel being restored to its land (Ezek. 36:28–37:28). Thus, the New Covenant is God's promise of ultimate spiritual restoration for Israel, which takes place when Messiah Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom on Earth.

## WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH?

A major question that emerges concerning the New Covenant is this one: What, if any, application is there for the church in light of the many New Testament passages (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:7–13; 10:16–18) that mention this covenant?

Dispensationalists (people who believe in a literal, 1,000-year reign of Christ on Earth) have differing views:

1. Some have held to two New Covenants, one for Israel and one for the church.<sup>1</sup> The spiritual content of forgiveness and the presence of the Spirit are similar in both, yet the covenants are distinct. Few hold this view today because the evidence for it is slim.
2. Others believe the New Covenant is never applied to the church. Israel alone receives the covenant in all of the aforementioned passages.<sup>2</sup>
3. A majority of dispensationalists appear to hold that God has decided to apply the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant (the Spirit, forgiveness of sin) to church saints.<sup>3</sup>

## The New Covenant differs markedly from the prior covenant, which the Jewish people broke.

All of the dispensational views hold similar opinions about the nature of the Christian life today. In addition, all of them affirm that the Jeremiah 31 prophecy of the New Covenant was given to Israel and that the covenant will be made with Israel when Christ returns. They all fully reject any hint of Replacement Theology, where the church takes Israel's place in God's overall plan for history.

The view of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry is that the New Covenant's spiritual blessings (Spirit and forgiveness) are applied to church saints today through our union with Christ, Israel's Messiah.

We are not legal parties to the New Covenant for Israel, which will be implemented when Jesus returns. However, the basis for the blessings, whether for Israel's future or for the church's spiritual life today, is the death of Christ on the cross.<sup>4</sup> When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, He told His future apostles, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28).

Just as Jeremiah's prophecy comforted those in Judah who had gone into captivity in the sixth century BC, so, too, should it comfort Christians today who are covered by the blood of the Lamb. ★

### ENDNOTES

- 1 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:96–99.
- 2 Christopher Cone, gen. ed., *An Introduction to the New Covenant* (Hurst, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2013); Roy E. Beacham, "The Church Has No Legal Relationship to or Participation in the New Covenant" in *Dispensational Understanding of the New Covenant*, ed. Mike Stallard (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2012), 107–144.
- 3 Rodney Decker, "New Covenant, Dispensational Views of the" in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, ed. Mal Couch (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996), 280–283.
- 4 J. N. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* (reprint, Addison, IL: Bible Truth Publishers, 1980), 5:284–286.



#### Mike Stallard

is the director of International Ministries and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.





# HOW I LEARNED I WAS WRONG



What do you do when you're  
teaching one thing  
and the Bible teaches another?

BY LINDA CRAFT



**“Now,** the New Covenant, that’s ours. That’s for us as Christians.” I can still hear myself speaking those words to my Bible study ladies several years ago as I finished teaching a class on the Old Testament Covenants God had made with the nation of Israel.

As I read Jeremiah 31:31–34 (the promise of the New Covenant), I could almost hear my voice waver when I came to verse 31. The words burned on the page in front of me: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

Even as I continued reading and claiming the New Covenant for the church, I knew something was extremely wrong. The Bible wasn’t saying what I was teaching. I hurriedly finished without further comment. But later that evening, my thoughts returned to Jeremiah, and questions filled my mind: *Who in the world is the New Covenant for? Israel? If so, what is the covenant God made with the church? Do we even have a covenant?*

Later I told my ladies the New Covenant was for Israel; and when they balked, I read Jeremiah 31:31 to them again, this time with conviction. Thankfully, no one asked me to explain because I couldn’t have done so. I told them what the Bible said, but I was mystified by it.

Like most churchgoers, I had heard for years that the New Covenant is Christian. It’s for the church. But there it was in black and white on the pages of Scripture, telling me I was wrong; and I didn’t know how to handle it.

## SPIRITUAL, NOT PHYSICAL

I avoided further discussion on the subject because I had no answers. No answers, that is, until I took a Friends of Israel online class and learned some surprising information.

The New Covenant is the foundation for the personal relationship we as believers have with Jesus Christ, but it also is a guarantee of future regeneration and blessing for Israel. All spiritual blessings are mine, and many of my blessings are the same as those promised to Israel under the Jeremiah 31 description of the New Covenant.

However, as a Gentile believer, I am not promised physical land, physical descendants, or physical blessings. Those blessings are unique to Israel.

Even after I realized the New Covenant was given to Israel, I still didn’t understand the covenant is way less about me than I thought. What is about me is the Mediator (negotiator, intercessor) of that Covenant, who is Jesus the Messiah—the one who redeemed me with His blood. National Israel does not yet have that relationship, which the church enjoys through faith in Christ.

One of the New Covenant’s main points for national Israel is that the Law, formerly written on tablets of stone, will one day be written on Jewish hearts. As believers in Jesus, we are covered by the blood of the New Covenant through our relationship with the Mediator and have been baptized and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who does a convicting work in our hearts. So, in a very real sense, the Law is “written” on our hearts.

As believers, we also have the assurance of forgiveness of sin (1 Jn. 1:9). The apostle Paul said Christ replaced the Old Covenant with Himself (Col. 2:16–17). We are “in Christ,” meaning we experience this much-better replacement. Clothed in His righteousness, we can boldly approach God personally, without fear and with unveiled faces—a privilege Israel never had under the Old Covenant (Heb. 12:22–24).

When the New Covenant comes into full effect during the Millennial Kingdom, God will pour out on a then-saved and regenerated Israel an abundance of blessings physically, spiritually, emotionally, and materially (Jer. 31). As the bride of Christ, the church will already be there, watching God bless

His beloved Chosen People.

I still am not sure I fully grasp all the implications of the New Covenant for me as a Gentile believer. But this I know: When I sit in

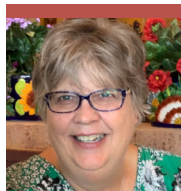
my church pew on the first Sunday of the month and prepare my heart to take communion, I not only remember Christ’s death, but I also wander back in time to an ancient people, a people chosen by God, the recipients of the New Covenant in which I have been made a partaker.

My heart almost bursts with anticipation as I think of the day when the New Covenant will be fully implemented and enjoyed—not only by the church, but also by the Jewish people, to whom it was given.

*So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isa. 51:11).*

Now I can’t wait to teach my Bible study ladies all about the New Covenant! ★

**Even as I continued reading and claiming  
the New Covenant for the church,  
I knew something was extremely wrong.**



**Linda Craft,**

with her husband, Jonathan, serves with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in Nevada. Linda teaches in-depth Bible studies for women.





**‘IT IS  
FINISHED!’**



**IN A SINGLE WORD, JESUS  
PROCLAIMED THAT HIS WORK TO SECURE  
OUR REDEMPTION WAS DONE.**

**BY PETER COLÓN**

**I**t was 12 o'clock noon in Jerusalem, the time for the Passover sacrifices to begin. An unusual darkness covered the land (Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33). Yet the priests still stood ready to sound the threefold blast from silver trumpets to signal the slaying of the Passover lambs.

Earlier, around 9 a.m., Roman soldiers drove large iron stakes through the wrists and feet of Jesus of Nazareth, nailing Him to a wooden cross (Mk. 15:25). As He hung crucified in agony, He probably heard the Levites singing the Passover hymns, Psalms 113 through 118. In torment, He uttered seven brief statements. The sixth was a powerful shout of victory on the greatest day of all eternity: “It is finished!” (Jn. 19:30).

### **TETELESTAI**

In Greek, the extraordinary proclamation is but a single word: *tetelestai*. An accounting term, it means “paid in full, to bring to a close, to complete and to fulfill.” In Latin, *tetelestai* translates into *consummatum est* (it is consummated).

This was Jesus’ divine declaration that His work to secure humanity’s redemption and salvation was fully, finally, and forever finished. As He told His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (Jn. 4:34; cf. 6:38, 51; 12:24–27, 46; 17:1–5).

Jesus used the Greek perfect tense for a reason. It combines the present and aorist tenses. The aorist tense refers to something happening at a specific point in time, whereas the present tense implies a continuance. The combination produced the exactness of what Jesus said: “I have come to fulfill; and all that has been fulfilled will continue to be finished.



Nothing more needs to be or can be added to it” (paraphrase). Tetelestai declared a finality. As Bible commentator Matthew Henry (1662–1714) wrote,

*It is finished; that is, the counsels of the Father concerning his sufferings were now fulfilled. It is finished; all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah, were accomplished. It is finished; the ceremonial law is abolished; the substance is now come, and all the shadows are done away. . . . His sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul, and those of his body. It is finished; the work of man’s redemption and salvation is now completed. His life was not taken from him by force, but freely given up.*<sup>1</sup>

## THE PERFECT LAMB OF GOD

After His resurrection, Jesus walked with two travelers on the Emmaus road, explaining how He fulfilled all the Messianic types and prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, including those in the writings of Moses and the prophets (Lk. 24:26–27).

Because the crucifixion occurred on the Jewish Passover, it’s probable Messiah Jesus shared how His death fulfilled various features of the Passover celebration. Perhaps He even selected verses from Psalms 113 through 118. While on the cross at noon, Jesus would have heard the opening verse of Psalm 113, chanted at the slaying of the first lamb: “Praise the LORD [Hebrew, *Hallelujah*]! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD!” (v. 1). The primary Hebrew meaning of the opening word (*Hallelujah*) means to praise and celebrate.

At 3 p.m., as the last Passover lamb was slain, the Lord may have heard the closing verse of Psalm 118: “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (v. 29). This was a popular Messianic expression of expectation and thanksgiving for God’s love and mercy, which never fail.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus would have known the most important feature of the original Passover, which was held as the children of Israel prepared to flee from Egypt. Moses instructed the Israelites to apply the blood of a slain lamb to the lintel and doorposts of their homes to save their firstborn males from the plague of death that would afflict all of Egypt (Ex. 12:3, 21–23). Only the blood, properly applied, would save them.

Gradually, the disciples would have understood the deeper reason for celebrating God’s gracious love and mercy as sung in the Messianic Passover hymn: Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God, whose pierced body and shed blood secured everlasting redemption from eternal judgment for all who believe.

Only Jesus’ blood, applied to our lives, can save us. His blood alone removes sin: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and

without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18–19).

Jesus’ declaration “It is finished!” signaled that the Messiah completed what He had been sent to do (Jn. 5:36; 17:4).

## HE DID ALL AND PAID ALL

Three days later, He arose from the grave and lives today to save all who call on Him; for “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

Salvation is a gift to be received—not a goal to be achieved. We cannot work for it, nor can we earn it: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9).

Jesus did everything for us. It is finished. Tetelestai. Never again will one word mean so much.

English preacher John Charles Ryle (1816–1900) offered this encouraging significance of Jesus’ statement for the believer in Christ:

*We need not fear that either sin or Satan or law shall condemn us at the last day. We may lean back on the thought that we have a Savior Who has done all, paid all, accomplished all, performed all that is necessary for our salvation. We may take up the challenge of the Apostle, “Who is the one who condemns? . . . Christ Jesus is He Who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God; Who also (continually) intercedes for us.” . . . When we look at our own works, we may well feel ashamed of their imperfections. But when we look at the FINISHED WORK of Christ, we may feel peace.*<sup>2</sup>

But perhaps it was American composer Philip P. Bliss (1838–1876) who best captured the emotion of tetelestai when he wrote the hymn “Hallelujah! What a Savior.” The fourth stanza goes like this:

*Lifted up was He to die;  
“It is finished!” was His cry;  
Now in heaven exalted high.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! ★*

---

### ENDNOTES

- 1 Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, John 19:19, biblehub.com <tinyurl.com/MH-jnn-19>.
- 2 J. C. Ryle, cited in “TETELESTAI—Paid in Full,” preceptaustin.org, May 28, 2018 <tinyurl.com/TTT-Paid>.



#### Peter Colón

is the creative resource coordinator and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.





# THE TRUTH ABOUT EUTYCHUS

BY MENO KALISHER

**It** is common to hear people mention the Eutychus incident in Acts 20:6–12 to hint that some men preach too long. “Don’t preach us to death,” they say with a smile.

Eutychus, of course, was the young man who went to sleep while the apostle Paul was preaching, fell out a third-story window, and died. Though pastors should use wisdom concerning the length of their sermons, sermon length was not why the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to include this event when writing to Theophilus in The Acts of the Apostles. The story of Eutychus teaches a higher truth.

## THE MIRACLE

Acts 19 ends with a description of a commotion that broke out in Ephesus following opposition to the gospel. After the uproar, Paul encouraged the disciples, said goodbye to them, and went to Macedonia and then Greece, where he stayed for three months (20:1–3). When he was about to sail to Syria, local Jews harassed him. So he returned to Troas through Macedonia, where seven brothers in the Lord met him (vv. 3–5).

On Sunday, the believers gathered and held the Lord’s Supper. Paul was to leave Troas the next day, but he continued to teach until midnight because people were so hungry to hear the truth. Imagine how vivid the Bible became to them as he told them about the Messiah.

Eutychus was perched on a windowsill. He went to sleep, fell from the third floor, “and was taken up dead” (v. 9). Paul went to him; stretched himself out over the young man, embracing him; and told everyone, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him” (v. 10). Verse 12 says, “And they brought the young man in alive.” Paul continued to teach, and the next day he continued on to Miletus (v. 15).

So what was Luke’s purpose in telling Theophilus about Eutychus? How was Eutychus’s story intended to help Theophilus understand Paul was a true prophet, carrying the true message of God? How would it help Theophilus to accept the apostles’ epistles as the Word of God? Here is the truth about Eutychus:

## THE ANALOGY

Eutychus’s story is analogous to events in the lives of two of Israel’s greatest prophets: Elijah and Elisha. Paul’s resurrection of Eutychus was a miracle designed to identify and authenticate Paul as a messenger of God’s Word.

A valid analogy requires two main components: similar words and similar circumstances. Eutychus’s story has both.

**Similar Words.** Elijah and Elisha each raised a young boy from the dead during their ministries, and they did so in exactly the same way as the apostle Paul: by stretching themselves out over the dead child (1 Ki. 17:21; 2 Ki. 4:34). Luke described the way Paul raised Eutychus using the same words.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Elijah, the Hebrew word *va-itmoded* is used (1 Ki. 17:21). In the case of Elisha, the Hebrew word *ga-har* is used (2 Ki. 4:34), which is a synonym for *va-itmoded* and means “to stretch oneself out over” something.

Elijah raised the young son of a widow in Zarephath, who concluded, “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth” (1 Ki. 17:24). In 2 Kings, Elisha raised the son of a Shunammite woman who earlier had recognized him as a man of God and trusted he had power from God to do miracles.

**Similar Circumstances.** When Elijah prophesied, Israel was ruled by King Ahab, an Israelite who had no regard for God, and his evil pagan wife, Jezebel, an idol worshiper who wanted to kill Elijah. Only a minority of 7,000 followed the true prophets of God and did not kneel to the pagan idol Baal (1 Ki. 19:18).

In Acts 19, Gentile idolators rejected the gospel and forced Paul to leave Ephesus. Then rabbinical Jews persecuted and harassed Paul, and a mere seven brothers in the Lord waited for Paul in Troas. Only a minority followed the true God.



## THE REQUIREMENT

Luke wanted to show Theophilus that everyone is required to think of Paul the same way the widow of Zarephath and the Shunammite woman thought of the prophets Elijah and Elisha: that “the word of the LORD in [their] mouth[s] is the truth” (1 Ki. 17:24).

The Holy Spirit worked in Paul the same way He worked in the ancient Jewish prophets. Thus, Paul was as much God’s messenger as were Elijah and Elisha; and Paul’s message about Jesus is just as true and authoritative as the words of the Old Testament prophets.

Therefore, we must accept Paul’s writings as an integral part of Scripture; and those who reject Paul’s writings place themselves in the camp of Jezebel and Ahab, who rebelled

against God and tried to kill the prophets of Jehovah.<sup>2</sup>

This is the true message of the story of Eutychus. ★

### ENDNOTES

- 1 John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13–28* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 204.
- 2 Dr. Seth Postell, WhatsApp discussion on Acts 20 (November 23, 2020).



#### Meno Kalisher

is the pastor of the Jerusalem Assembly  
House of Redemption in Jerusalem, Israel.



## THE BEREAN BOX



# WHAT IS GOD’S COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL?

God made eight binding covenants that are recorded in the Bible. Five of them He made with Israel. Four are unconditional: the Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1–7), Land (13:14–17; Dt. 29:1–30:20), Davidic (2 Sam. 7:1–17), and New Covenants (Jer. 31:31–34). The fifth, commonly called the Mosaic or Old Covenant (Ex. 19:5ff), was conditional.

In the four unconditional covenants, Israel was not obligated to do anything. God did everything. For example, when God made the Abrahamic Covenant, Abraham was an inactive party. God said, “*I will show you . . . I will make you . . . I will bless you . . . I will bless those who bless you . . . I will curse him who curses you*” (Gen. 12:1–3, emphasis added).

God told Abraham how to prepare for confirming the covenant in a formal ritual, but Abraham did not participate in the ritual. In fact, God put Abraham into a deep sleep and did not involve him at all (15:12).

Thus, God bound Himself to the covenant without Abraham’s participation. Therefore, God and God alone—not Abraham or any of his future descendants—can be held responsible for breaking the covenant.

What is said about the Abrahamic Covenant also can be said about the other three unconditional covenants. All depend exclusively on God’s integrity for their fulfillment. They were not

dependent on Abraham, David, or any ancient Israelites; and they are not dependent on the Jewish people today.

The Bible teaches five facts about the unconditional covenants:

1. They depend on God’s faithfulness, not Israel’s.
2. They are to be interpreted literally.
3. They were made with Israel, not the church (Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:8).
4. They were never repealed or replaced because of Israel’s sinfulness.
5. They will be Israel’s possession for eternity (Rom. 9:4).

However, the Mosaic Covenant that God made at Mount Sinai is different. It is the only conditional covenant God made with the Jewish nation (Ex. 19–24). God said, “if,” stating a condition Israel had to meet in order to receive blessing (19:5). That is, Israel had to keep the Law. We know from history Israel broke the Law and did not uphold its end of the covenant.

Notice, the apostle Paul called Gentiles “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12). Israel is the only nation in history with which God has a covenant relationship.

by David M. Levy





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# FROM SNAKE TO SAVIOR



➔ One of the most dramatic events in the Israelites' wilderness wandering involved the fiery serpents in Numbers 21. The difficult journey bypassing Edomite territory prompted the people to complain, so the Lord sent fiery serpents that bit and killed many of them (v. 6).

The term *fiery* (Hebrew, *seraph*) may refer to the serpents' appearance (reddish-copper color) or to the burning inflammation their venom produced. Israel today has snakes called *seraphs* whose deadly bites burn like fire—supporting the latter, traditional interpretation of *fiery*. When people confessed their sin, the Lord did not remove the serpents but, rather, provided a remedy against the fatality of their poisonous bites. He told Moses, “Make [an image of] a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live” (v. 8).

The bronze image focused the Israelites' faith on God, who pledged that everyone bitten would look to His promise and live. The copper for the image came from the hoard of items the Israelites took as plunder from Egypt (Ex. 3:22).

The Egyptians' source of copper was the Timna valley, about 18 miles north of the Gulf of Eilat. Egyptian miners had cultic installations there, including a temple to Hathor, a goddess often depicted as a cow. Undoubtedly, it was this deity's image the Israelites made in the golden calf incident (Ex. 32:1; cf. Acts 7:39) when they rejected God's promises (Ex. 32:4, 8, 31; cf. 1 Ki. 12:28).

The Midianites, with whom Moses lived for 40 years, apparently also worshiped at this site. Among the archaeological finds in a Midianite shrine were votive gifts, including a copper snake with a gilded head. It resembles the serpent in Numbers and may have a historical connection to the Israelites in the wilderness because Jethro, a high priest of Midian, was Moses'

father-in-law and advisor (Ex. 18:1–24).

The image of the bronze serpent, later called *Nehushtan* (brazen thing), was preserved for centuries. By the time of King Hezekiah (715–687 BC), it had lost its significance of memorializing God's promise to save sinners and was a cult object thought to have magical healing properties. Author and theologian Lowell Handy suggested the *Nehushtan* was the symbol of a minor god of snakebite-cure within the temple.<sup>1</sup>

Snake cults existed in Canaan during the Bronze Age prior to the Israelites' arrival. Excavations have uncovered snake-cult objects at the pre-Israelite cities of Megiddo, Gezer, Shechem, Ekron, and Hazor. Because the bronze serpent became like an idol, Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Ki. 18:4).

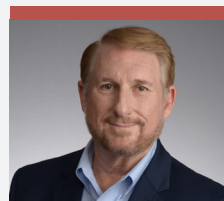
Jesus used the fiery-serpent incident to explain how He interceded for us. We were fatally bitten by that old serpent the Devil through the fall (Rev. 12:9; 20:2) and were dying from the poison of sin:

*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:14–16).*

Though the source of sinful suffering cannot be removed, we have a remedy from its fatal effects. Once we realize we are doomed to die for our sin (Rom. 5:12) and look to the object God has raised up (Christ on the cross) to heal us, we will live (eternally). One day, God will remove the serpent forever (Rev. 20:10).

## ENDNOTE

- 1 Lowell K. Handy, “The Appearance of Pantheon in Judah” in *The Triumph of Elohim*, ed. Diana Vikander Edelman (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 41.



### Randall Price

is a university professor, author, and world-renowned archaeologist. He is also the founder and president of World of the Bible Ministries ([worldofthebible.com](http://worldofthebible.com)).



# PREACH GOD'S WORD!

## 2 TIMOTHY 4:1–5

Knowing his life would soon end, the apostle Paul fixed his attention on completing his letter to young Timothy, his protégé and son in the faith. In 2 Timothy 4:1–5, Paul focused on several urgent concerns: that the gospel be proclaimed throughout the world and that Timothy take care of himself and do the work of an evangelist.

It is no wonder this text is often used at the ordinations of men into the ministry. Yet, it applies to all Christians. In these five verses, Paul gave a direct charge to Timothy, followed by five specific commands: preach, be ready, convince, rebuke, exhort.

### THE COMMAND

Paul wrote, “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (vv. 1–2).

The word *charge* is a command that refers to a forceful order before God. Timothy was to take this edict seriously because it was given in the presence of “God and the Lord Jesus Christ,” who will judge every man’s work.

All people called to minister must remember they are under the ever-watchful eye of Jesus Christ and will one day give an account for their ministries before the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:12–15; 2 Cor. 5:10). Paul anticipated his works would be judged after Christ’s imminent coming to Rapture the church (1 Th. 4:13–18).

The phrase *who will judge* (2 Tim. 4:1) should be translated “who is about to judge.” The word *judge* is in the present tense and encompasses two other judgments Christ will implement when He comes to Earth at His “appearing” (Greek, *epiphaneia*) or shining forth (Second Coming):

First, He will judge the individuals who survive the Great

Tribulation, determining who will enter the Millennial Kingdom (Mt. 25:31–32). Second, at the Great White Throne, He will judge all unsaved people who will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11–15) at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

Because Christ’s coming and judgments are certain, all believers, especially preachers like Timothy, must proclaim the gospel to the world without delay.

### THE COMMISSION

Timothy’s commission (2 Tim. 4:1) included five curt, military-like imperatives to be acted on immediately:

**1. Preach the word** (v. 2)! That is, preach the whole counsel of God, especially the gospels and plan of salvation. This imperative was not meant solely for pastors, missionaries, and evangelists. Paul had all believers in mind. Everyone should proclaim the gospel message.

The word *preach* (Greek, *kerusso*) originally was used in connection with imperial heralds. A herald would read a king’s prepared message in the public square using a somber, authoritative, loud voice, so all could hear. The herald was not there to debate or discuss the message but, rather, to demand immediate obedience to it.

He was responsible for repeating exactly what was written, not changing a word. Likewise, Timothy was to proclaim God’s Word unreservedly, without modifications or restrictions. Paul set the pattern:

*And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:1–5).*

Paul preached when he was physically weak and fearful; and he did not use skillful oratory, philosophical arguments, enticing words, or clever expressions of human wisdom. He merely preached “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

**2. Be Ready** (2 Tim. 4:2). Timothy was to “be ready in season and out of season.” The phrase *be ready* means to be prepared always to proclaim the gospel. The phrase *in season and out of season* means Timothy was to be on standby with the gospel whether or not circumstances were favorable and whether or not he was expected to preach. To the unsaved, he was to preach about salvation; and to the saved living in sin, he was to preach sanctification through repentance.

**3. Convince** (v. 2). Timothy’s preaching was to “convince” (Greek, *elegcho*) and convict the unsaved of their sin in hopes



they would become saved, as well as prompt the saved to confess their sins, leading to their sanctification.

**4. Rebuke** (v. 2). The word *rebuke* (Greek, *epitimaō*) means censor or warn. Timothy was to reprimand and warn sinners of the error of their ways and provoke them to repentance. Such messages also should state the penalty if the warning goes unheeded. A preacher should not tone down his message against sin and its consequences. Even when he doesn't see results, he still must fulfill his obligation; and the responsibility falls on the sinner to deal with his or her sin.

**5. Exhort** (v. 2). Preaching should "exhort" (Greek, *parakaleō*), meaning urge, beg, plead, or admonish people to repent. Yet it should also offer comfort and encouragement, showing people how to ask the Lord to forgive them.

Exhortation is to be done "with all longsuffering and teaching." It should demonstrate patience and endurance. Preachers need to resist becoming angry or frustrated when people don't respond to their messages. Longsuffering does not mean compromising doctrine to win people to Christ. Every word preached must be true to Scripture and grounded in sound doctrine.

## THE CONFLICT

Paul also wrote about opposition to sound preaching:

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables (vv. 3–4).*

Interestingly, it is professing Christians who will not "endure" (tolerate or put up with) sound teaching (v. 3). The word *sound* (Greek, *hugiaina*) is the basis for the English word *hygiene* and should be translated "healthy" or "wholesome." People who rejected Paul's sound, theological teaching did so because it was not what they wanted to hear, even though it was God's Word.

Instead, they had "itching ears," preferring people who preached "according to their own desires [lust]." The phrase *itching ears* refers to the listener, not the teacher. Such listeners have an unsatiable craving for liberal, new, exciting, and fanciful speculations about God and Scripture, even though such teaching is unbiblical.

Consequently, "they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (v. 4). Two words for "turn" are used here. The first means the hearers actively turn away from the truth of God's Word. In so doing, they open themselves to Satanic influence that will "turn them aside to fables." The second word for "turn" is a medical term that means to twist out of joint, like a dislocated arm or leg.

## EVERY WORD PREACHED MUST BE TRUE TO SCRIPTURE AND GROUNDED IN SOUND DOCTRINE.

People with "itching ears" will be susceptible to strong delusion, making them incapable of listening to or comprehending truth. Instead, they will believe fables or myths and quickly embrace false new beliefs, even though they are devoid of all scriptural truth.

## THE COMMITMENT

In contrast to heretical teachers, Timothy was to "be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (v. 5).

"Be watchful in all things" carries the idea of being sober, alert, and self-controlled. Paul wanted Timothy to have a clear mind and make prudent decisions; and he gave him three more commands:

**Endure afflictions.** Timothy was to tolerate hurtful treatment from those inside and outside the church. He was to endure all hardships, troubles, rejections, and persecutions the ministry brought to a pastor.

**Do the work of an evangelist.** Paul was not commanding Timothy, who was called to be a pastor-teacher, to leave his position and become a full-time evangelist. Rather, he was telling him to maintain an evangelistic outreach. A pastor's ministry must always include preaching the gospel.

**Fulfill your ministry.** Timothy was expected to do everything the job required in his call and commission as a pastor (preaching, teaching, administering, and admonishing).

The apostle expected Timothy to keep moving forward without him, despite whatever opposition and persecution he might face. Apostasy within the church was coming, and Timothy was expected to carry on the work Paul was leaving behind.

These important truths are not meant exclusively for pastors and evangelists. As part of God's unchanging Word, they are intended for all believers. No matter what happens in the world, we all are to preach God's Word.



by David M. Levy,

media resource specialist and a Bible teacher  
for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry



# JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE

## PART 2: PRAYER AND FASTING

BY DAN PRICE

**If you learned \$3 million dollars in gold lay buried somewhere in your backyard, would you try to dig it up? Of course, you would! And you'd probably be willing to destroy your entire yard to find it!**

Knowing God intimately and pursuing Him daily are rewards worth far more than gold, but few people dig for them. One way to begin is to practice regular spiritual habits, like biblical meditation, prayer, and fasting.

### PRAYER: A LIFELONG DISCIPLINE

Martin Luther famously claimed, “I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.” Many well-known Christians have similar feelings.

The great 19th-century missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, admonished Christians to start every day in prayer; and he compared our days to a symphony: “Do not have your concert first and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.”

For many of us, our prayer lives leave something to be desired. Either we feel too busy or ineffective, or we simply don't know what to say. Most of us can't imagine having a prayer life like the famous Christians about whom we read. But those men and women arrived at that point after years of learning how to pray.

An encouraging Scripture on prayer comes immediately before Jesus taught on the subject. After listening to Jesus pray, one of His disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray”

(Lk. 11:1). Notice who was asking: Jesus' Jewish disciples. They had prayed many times every day throughout their lives. Yet they admitted their need for remedial prayer classes. And Jesus welcomed them. He always welcomes those who acknowledge their need to grow spiritually

and want a closer walk with Him.

Learning how to pray is a lifelong discipline and requires an awareness of our need to seek God and depend on Him. Although we'll certainly never pray as Jesus did, here are a few truths to motivate us to develop the habit of regular prayer.

**Prayer changes things.** God is sovereign over everything. No matter what we pray for, God's will is accomplished; and it is a divine mystery as to how this fact relates to our prayers.

Nevertheless, God desires and commands that we bring Him our requests. Jesus told us, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Mt. 7:7). He wants us to ask, seek, and knock on heaven's door. When we do, we'll receive, find, and have doors opened to us.

Jesus compared our praying to a child who asks his father for bread or fish. No earthly father would give his child a stone or snake instead: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (v. 11).

Our prayers are not wasted simply because God is sovereign. On the contrary, God is as eager to give us good gifts as we are to help our own children. Our prayers change things.

**Prayer transforms us.** James told his readers their prayers went unanswered because they asked “amiss,” praying to fulfill their earthly passions (Jas. 4:3). When we pray rightly, we pray for what God wants. This doesn't mean we shouldn't pray for



what we want. Rather, it means God can use our prayers to transform our passions. When we submit our hearts' desires to Him, He wipes away the petty and empowers the proper. He'll change us to desire what He desires.

Regular prayer also transforms our understanding of our daily relationship with God. The Bible frequently reminds us that prayer deepens our awareness that we must depend on Him (Ps. 16; Col. 4:2–6; 1 Pet. 5:7). God asks us to come to Him weak, weary, and broken and to cast all our cares on Him.

In fact, Jesus told us we can do nothing without Him: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

Do we truly believe that? If we do, we should pray constantly about absolutely everything! Through prayer, God makes available to us a steady flow of communication with Him. In prayer, we are fully known and loved as we bear our souls' needs to Him all day, every day. One three-hour morning session of "popcorn prayer" barely breaks the surface of what our Father makes available to us in constant prayer.

**God loves chutzpah.** The meaning of this popular Yiddish

of the spiritual reality that I need God more than food. This dependency throughout a fast creates a special intimacy and constant-prayer connection to God.

Fasting also brings clarity to our prayers. There are times when we face a need so significant we're willing to stop eating to pray. When we do so, we often find fasting is actually feasting on God.

**2. It connects us to God's priorities.** Isaiah 58 reminds us that fasting, or any form of worship offered merely as a ritual, is meaningless. Isaiah told God's people that fasting without obeying God's laws and providing justice and compassion is worthless.

Biblical fasting should reveal to us the sin in our hearts and the areas we need to submit to God to become more like Christ. If that aspect is not part of our fast, we might as well eat. A true fast is not merely concerned with getting something from God; it involves letting God's heart consume us.

If you've never tried a fast, I recommend starting small. Fast for one meal or one day, and pray and seek God for whatever need He has laid on your heart.

Some people like to abstain from things other than food.

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## God asks us to come to Him weak, weary, and broken and to cast all our cares on Him.

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word varies; but it generally means cheekiness, boldness, or nerve. Many have noted that Abraham, Moses, and even King David had this quality of persistence in praying to God. Some scholars have even argued that sometimes the concept of *chutzpah* seems to characterize what New Testament writers call "faith."<sup>1</sup>

For example, when Jesus talked about praying and not losing heart, He told a parable about a widow who badgered a judge until she got what she wanted (Lk. 18:1–8). Sometimes God answers prayer because of our audacity and persistence. Our *chutzpah* demonstrates our faith.

### BIBLICAL FASTING

Biblical fasting is another way to grow closer to God. The Bible describes two major ways fasting connects us to Him:

**1. It helps us focus on spiritual realities.** When we go without the food that sustains us, we declare that our spiritual dependence is on God more than food. Fasting trains us to know in our bones that we are entirely dependent on Him for life and breath, as well as for all our other needs.

Every time I reach for that breakroom brownie, I'm reminded

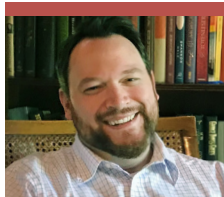
While that method can be valuable, especially for people who have medical concerns, the Bible has no concept of fasting from anything but food (and sometimes water).

Biblical fasting requires us to replace something that sustains us physically with the One who sustains us physically and spiritually. Please seek professional medical advice if you have a medical condition. But for the rest of us, biblical fasting can be a useful tool to strengthen and deepen our walks with God.

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#### ENDNOTE

- 1 Robert L. Lindsey and E. C. Dos Santos, *A Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels* (Jerusalem: Baptist House, 1989).



**Dan Price**

is assistant director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.



# THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS

BY LORI LOWENTHAL MARCUS

**(JNS)**—The Jewish and non-Jewish political left has wildly denounced U.S. Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett for accurately identifying the parties to the only dispute in the Middle East that Westerners care about. Barrett said the dispute is between the Palestinians and “the Jews.”

*Esquire* magazine claimed the only people who think this ridiculous thought are “conservative American Christians whose interest in Israel’s survival is based on anticipating the time in which, some Scripture says, all the Jews will return to Israel, one of the precipitating events leading to the return of Christ and the Final Judgment at the end of the world.”

MSNBC talking head Ayman Mohyeldin complained, “The right-wing in America continues to shape this as a religious conflict to advance their own end-of-time narrative,” calling it “a vehicle for Christians to exploit for their own biblical prophecies.”

These critics have no understanding of Christian Zionists who are not supersessionists—who neither believe that Christianity has replaced Judaism nor that the ingathering of the Jews will lead to the end of the Jews. If you don’t think the dispute between Israel and its neighbors is a war against Jews, then who do you think the parties are?

The left has imaginative answers: It is a dispute, they say, between white people (Israelis) and people of color (Arabs). Never mind that most Israeli Jews are people of color who came to Israel because they were running for their lives from pogroms in Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, and other Middle Eastern countries where their ancestors had resided for millennia.

Or, they say, it’s between Western colonialists, who showed up in the region for the first time in the last 150 years, and indigenous people whom the Westerners dispossessed. Never mind the continuous Jewish settlements in Israel since before the Roman destruction of the Jews’ second Temple in AD 70; never mind the aforementioned pogroms and their consequences; and never mind that the Arab population grew exponentially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Oddly, no outrage came when Zahra Billoo, a prominent Muslim civil-rights attorney, said she does not support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because “Allah has promised us victory.” She warned, “Pay attention to the polite Zionists. The ones that say, ‘Let’s just break bread together.’”

“They are not your friends,” she told American Muslims. Among these haters who must be feared are such “polite Zionists” as



the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Federations, campus Hillels, and “Zionist synagogues.” They are, Billoo said, the people who want to sit down and talk to Israel’s enemies. (They all support a two-state solution, with Arabs in the territories having their own country there.)

So, what is their awful sin? Billoo made that clear: Zionism. And against whom is Zionism a sin? Billoo made that clear, too, when she said, “Allah will give us the victory.” According to Billoo, it is Islam that is offended by Israeli sovereignty over Israeli territory—any of it.

If Billoo’s remarks are not enough to prove Coney Barrett was right, one need only read the Hamas Charter. Even the English version states Hamas’s commitment to destroy not only Israel (Article VI) but also to murder Jews (Article VII). Don’t be fooled—that means Jews not only in the streets of Jerusalem or the disputed territories or Tel Aviv but also in the streets of New York, Los Angeles, Southeast Florida, London, and Jewish neighborhoods everywhere that saw attacks in 2021.

Hamas knows exactly whom it is fighting; its declared enemy is not “Israel” but “Jews.”

Justice Coney Barrett did people a favor by speaking plainly to them. Rather than denouncing her, the Mohyeldins of the world should actually listen to the people whose side they claim they’re on: Listen to the Billoos of the world and read the Hamas Charter. Then let’s talk about whether the conflict in the Middle East is a war against the Jews.



**Lori Lowenthal Marcus**

is director of litigation of The Deborah Project, a public-interest law firm that fights anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in education.



## SPECIAL UPDATE

## Former FOI Executive Director Marvin Rosenthal Passes Into Glory

**M**arvin J. Rosenthal, 86, executive director of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI) from 1973 to 1989, passed into his Savior's presence on January 8 in Florida after a lifetime of service to the Lord.

A Jewish believer in Christ, Marv was known for his exciting vision, deep faith, gifted preaching and writing, and warm personality. The Lord used him to restructure FOI's field ministry; add staff

and programs; increase the size and influence of *Israel My Glory* magazine; institute tours to Israel; and move the international headquarters to its present campus in New Jersey, where the one-year Institute of Biblical Studies began.

Our prayers are for his wife, Marbeth; his son, David (married to Ilona); and three grandchildren—all in Florida. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15).



### POLL: JERUSALEM ARABS PREFER ISRAELI RULE

A whopping 93 percent of Jerusalem's Arab residents polled recently by an Arab media outlet said they want to remain under Israeli rule, *The Algemeiner* reported. The *Shfa* news outlet polled 1,200 Arab Jerusalemites—none of them Israeli citizens—and 1,116 said they want Israel to continue to rule Jerusalem.

### BBC RANKS THIRD IN WORLD FOR ANTI-SEMITISM

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) now ranks immediately behind Iran and Hamas on the Simon Wiesenthal Center's "Global Antisemitism Top Ten List." Wiesenthal head, Rabbi Marvin Hier, said, "People might assume we would put neo-Nazi groups on our list. But the BBC is there because when a globally recognized organization allows anti-Semitism to creep into its reporting, it makes it all the more insidious and dangerous." Hier pointed to the network's reporting of an anti-Semitic attack in London when a group of men made Nazi salutes and yelled "Free Palestine" at a bus filled with

Jewish passengers. The BBC falsely reported that a victim on the bus used an anti-Muslim slur. But a tape recording proved it was a Jewish man speaking Hebrew asking for help. The BBC refuses to correct its report.

### JEWISH MAN KICKED OFF AMERICAN AIRLINES, SUES

A Brooklyn man is suing American Airlines after being thrown off a flight from Miami for failing to put his religious articles on the floor. According to the lawsuit, 71-year-old Roberto Birman and his wife, Elana, were on a flight from Miami to New York in August when a flight attendant pulled Birman's *tallit* (prayer shawl) bag from the overhead compartment, tossed it onto Birman's lap, and told him to stow it under the seat. The bag also contained his prayerbook and phylacteries. When Birman explained the religious items could not be kept on the floor, the attendant screamed at him. "She was screaming at me and pointing her finger," Roberto told the *New York Post*. "I couldn't believe this was happening to me in America." Elana said the request was like asking a

Christian to "throw a cross on the floor." The Birmans were kicked off the flight; and the plane took off with their checked luggage, which included Roberto's diabetes medication. The couple received no help from the airline for food or lodging. American Airlines has declined comment.

### TEL AVIV: MOST EXPENSIVE CITY IN WORLD

Tel Aviv now surpasses Paris as the most expensive city in the world, according to the "Worldwide Cost of Living Report" released by the research organization Economist Intelligence Unit. The strength of the shekel attributes to the ranking, along with the increase in cost of goods and services. Paris and Singapore tied for second place. The most expensive American city was New York, which placed sixth, followed by Los Angeles at number nine.

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PHOTO: ISTOCK

**“Not many people know what the Lord has said because they do not know the Lord.**

*by Zvi Kalisher*

Many dictators, like Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, have called themselves righteous; and people, like sheep, worship them. Such people persecute the Chosen People of Israel, and their followers are so sure of themselves because of their great majority. They think they can do whatever they want to do to Israel, even erase us from the map.

But what has the Lord said to us? “Fear not, for I am with you” (Isa. 43:5) and “‘I am with you,’ says the LORD, ‘to save you’” (Jer. 30:11). But not many people know what the Lord has said because they do not know the Lord. I often go to such people, and sometimes we have long conversations. Many times these conversations take place when I take my wife to the medical clinic. While people sit and wait for the doctor, the Lord presents an opportunity to bring them the Good News.

Many are discouraged by their situations. We are surrounded by enemies and live here as if on an active volcano. Few people can live this way and have peace. When I get to know some of them, I can

slowly begin to speak about the Bible.

I had such an opportunity at the clinic as I waited for my wife.

“We are the Chosen People of God, and we have suffered so much,” one told me. “Our enemies are so happy and sure of themselves. But what about us?”

“We must put our trust in the Lord, and He will never forsake us,” I said.

I showed them what the Lord has done to our enemies. I read Exodus 15:4 to them and how the Lord hurled the mighty army of Pharaoh into the sea. I showed them what the Lord did in Exodus 14:4 before He punished Pharaoh.

We live in the same situation now. The Palestinians are so sure of their victory, but they do not know they will be defeat-



ed. In 1948, when Israel's enemies thought they would cast us into the sea and erase us from the earth, who was on our side? Psalm 124:2–3 says, "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side . . . they would have swallowed us alive."

Many times I read this passage to such people, telling them not to live in fear but to put their trust in the Lord. Usually, they listen to the ultra-Orthodox activists who are against us, calling us traitors because we believe in Jesus.

But when I spoke on this point, I was happy because I could show them who the real traitors are. "We who have believed in the Lord according to the Bible have jobs," I said. "We are constantly working, not eating charity bread. We are not like those who never serve in the army to defend their country. Yet they are considered holy angels, and we are the traitors?"

I told them people have come to our home because they have seen how the ultra-Orthodox manipulate them. I explained that we never go to people with a stack of books, trying to persuade them to follow rabbinic tradition. We bring only one Book—the Holy Bible. They were surprised; and one asked me, "How can you believe in the Bible and also in Christ?"

I was not surprised, as I have heard this question many times. "I believe in Christ not because of a stack of books but because of what is written in the Bible," I said.

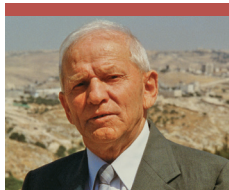
They asked where it is written about Christ in the Holy Bible. This was my great chance to share Isaiah 53 with them. I gave them my Bible so they could read it for themselves. As they read, one asked me, "How did you come to this?"

"I never boycott the Word of the Lord, as many rabbis do," I replied. "They are afraid to see the truth. So they boycott this very important chapter, hiding the truth of the Lord from you. Now write what you have heard, and bring this before your teachers. Listen to the fictitious stories they will tell you."

One of them said, "It was so nice to hear what you have told us, what was once so far from us. We will think about it."

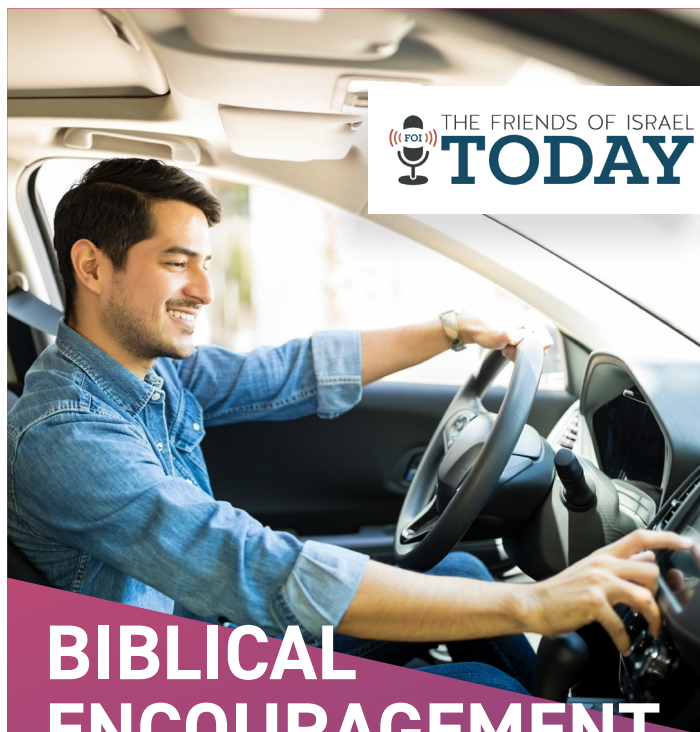
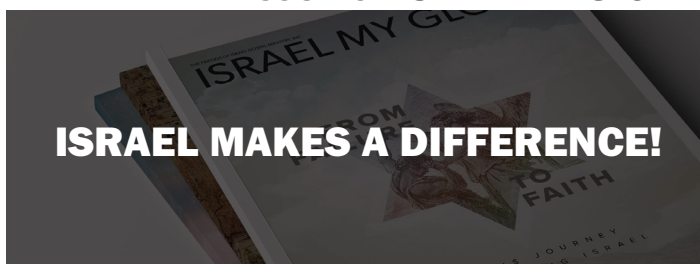
I pray the Lord will lead them to salvation.

*From the Friends of Israel archives*



**Zvi Kalisher** (1928–2014) was a Holocaust survivor who was known for his unswerving faithfulness to the Lord and his bold witness in Jerusalem. He was with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry for more than 55 years.

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