

ISRAEL MY GLORY

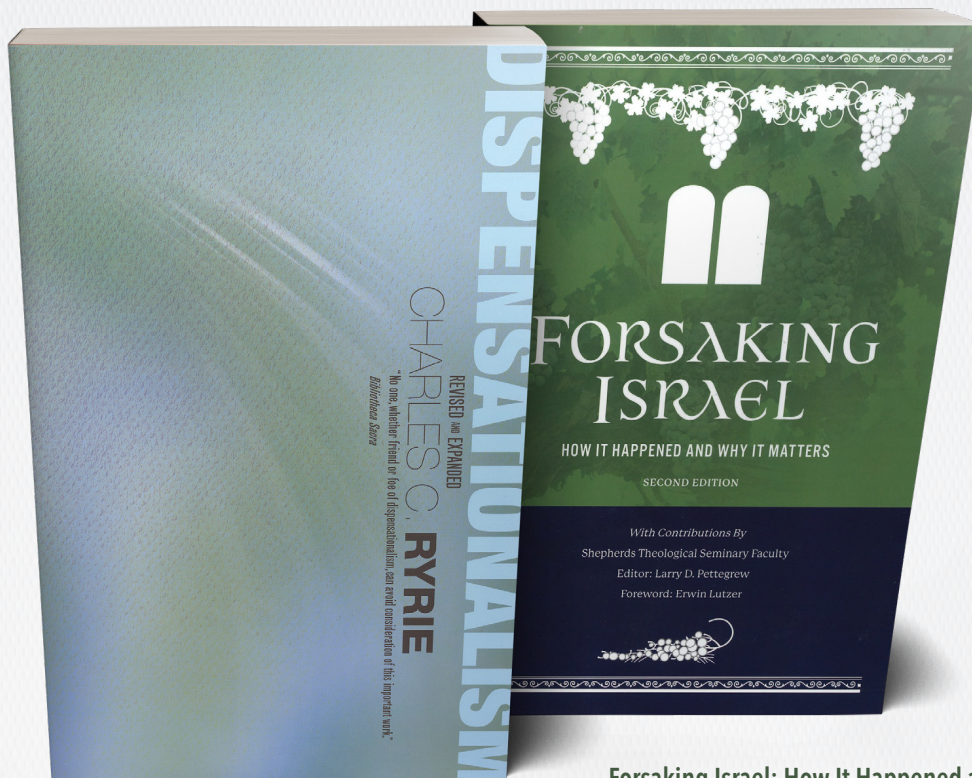
HOW TO READ YOUR BIBLE

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
LITERAL AND ALLEGORICAL
INTERPRETATION

PAGE 14
THE BIBLE: THE GREATEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN

PAGE 18
KINGDOM NOW?

PAGE 26
YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER








Dispensationalism

Has the church turned its back on Dispensationalism? In some circles, yes. But this method of understanding the Bible is too important to neglect today. In this study, Dr. Charles Ryrie effectively teaches the tenets of Dispensationalism, which follows a literal interpretation of Scripture. He addresses the divergent views of Covenant Theology, Ultradispensationalism, and Progressive Dispensationalism, offering clear teaching on the necessity of a proper view of God's Word.
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Israel isn't a popular topic in the pulpit today. Though it seems that churches have recently strayed from the biblical truth of Israel's importance, it's not a new development—it's been an issue for almost 2,000 years. Why has the church missed the mark for so long? This book is highly important to understanding the church's troubled history with God's chosen nation and why we can't afford to repeat the same mistakes. God is faithful to His Chosen People and to believers, a truth you'll understand more deeply in this excellently written study.
US \$22.00; Outside US \$26.50

How to Understand God's Word as He Gave It!

SYNOPSIS OF THE DISPENSATIONS						
INNOCENCE	CONSCIENCE	HUMAN GOVL.	PROMISE	LAW	SPRIT (GRACE)	KINGDOM
						
Time Frame and Duration in Scripture						
Creation to Fall of Man Genesis 1–3	Fall of Man to Flood (1000–2000 B.C.) Genesis 4–8	Flood to Tower of Babel (2000–1800 B.C.) Genesis 9–11	Abraham to Mount Sinai (1800 B.C.–A.D. 33) Genesis 12–Exodus 19	Mount Sinai to Pentecost (1800 B.C.–A.D. 33) Exodus 20–Acts 1	Pentecost to Second Advent (A.D. 30–Jesus' Return) Acts 2–Revelation 19	Second Advent and 1,000-year Reign to End of Time Revelation 20
Goal of Stewardship: To Glorify God						
by governing the earth in worshipful submission to God	by walking before God with a clear conscience	by governing one another with a view to promoting God's righteousness	by living by faith in God's verbal promises to the patriarchs	by living in conformity to the Law	by walking under the control of the Holy Spirit	by living in New Covenant harmony with the church, glorified King
God's Judgment for Failing as Stewards						
Death, Expulsion From the Garden of Eden	Universal Flood	Confusion of Languages	Israel Enslaved in Egypt	Jerusalem Destroyed, Israelites Dispersed	Worldwide Tribulation	Satan's Final Deception
<p>Explanations: This chart represents a fair understanding of the Dispensations. Each Dispensation (after Innocence) brings additional duties, results, and corresponding changes in mankind's responsibility—all with a view to glorifying God.</p> <p>Next: understand the Dispensations in the context of the Bible. Study the Bible, seeking everything through its true, while profoundly grateful for redemption, dispensationalism lies on the eternally principle, viewing everything through the lens of God's plan to glorify Himself.</p> <p>Historically: our redemption is an important part of that plan.</p> <p>The Law: is the confirmation of God's holiness and righteousness. It was designed to help mankind understand God's holiness and to enable them to glorify God by keeping the Law. The church, on the other hand, is to glorify God by living by faith in the context of the Holy Spirit. A revelation of God's righteousness and holiness, the Law is valid forever, but is now applied to glorifying God, the Law is no longer valid. Israel's Law cannot stop related with Christ's death.</p> <p>The church's stewardship will not end with the Dispensation. There were parts of Dispensation (Israel's 70th Week) will bring (1) God's judgment on the Gentiles for their failure under the Spirit stewardship and (2) God's covenant of Israel to Israel through the full implementation of the New Covenant and a new dispensation, which was sealed in Christ's death. It will be sealed and put to rest in the wrong covenant—the dispensation, as it is said—to be made with applied truth, which will not end with the Dispensation. Finally, however, Israel will trust God's stewardship covenant with Israelites, Jews, and Gentiles.</p> <p>Jesus will return to establish Israel's Kingdom, and the Throne of the Gentiles will end with the Antichrist's death. The primary focus of the book of Revelation is Israel's deliverance and restoration. (Revelation 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22)</p> <p>Dr. Richard D. Freeman is the senior professor of Bible and doctrine at Theological Seminary, in England. Dispensationalism and the center of Bible Study Church in Houston, Texas, Texas.</p>						

The Dispensations Poster

This poster illustrates and clarifies the seven dispensations to understand Dispensational Theology in a nutshell. It teaches the timeframe of each era, the judgment God enacted in response to humanity's failure each time, and the ways people's stewardship of each period has brought God glory. It's a helpful tool for interpreting Scripture and remembering the reason and results of each dispensation!
US \$4.00; Outside US \$5.00

See enclosed envelope for ordering details.



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FROM THE EDITOR

A few years ago, I watched a film about a man who never learned to read in school. His mother dies when he is young; and his father moves Stanley around from town to town so many times as a child that Stanley falls so far behind in his education he can never catch up.

As an adult, he rides a bicycle because he can't get a driver's license. If he goes to an unfamiliar part of town, he gets lost because he can't read street signs. He can't hold down a job as a cook because he can't read food labels or directions, and he can't land a job worthy of his high intellect and innate engineering ability because he's illiterate.

The movie has a happy ending because someone teaches Stanley how to read, and it changes his life.

The Bible is not difficult to read. It isn't filled with big, long, complicated words. Perhaps that's why people can use it to teach English as a second language (ESL). According to eslministries.org, "The Bible has been a standard text for centuries and has acted as a regulator of standard English in the English-speaking world since the inception of the printing press."

But some people try to make the Bible difficult. They tell us many of the words don't actually mean what they usually mean. Harold Camping, the late president of Family Radio, was famous for creating a system of interpretation all his own. According to Camping, if he didn't tell you what God actually meant, there was no way to know what the Bible actually said.

We don't agree with that philosophy at The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry. We believe the Bible is meant to be read literally, the way we read the newspaper, so everyone can understand it. And when Scripture says "Israel," it means Israel. It does not mean the church.

If the actual words of Scripture were not intended to mean what they usually mean, we'd all be like Stanley before he learned to read. As a first-grade teacher so aptly put it, "If you don't understand what you're reading, there's no point to reading at all!"

This issue of *Israel My Glory* is devoted to "How to Read Your Bible." We want to thank Dr. Bruce A. Baker and the *Baptist Bulletin* for giving us permission to run Dr. Baker's outstanding article, "Kingdom Now?" on page 18.

How we read our Bibles is important because it determines what we believe, and what we believe changes our lives.

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



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Gospel Ministry, Inc.**

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*
Leket volunteers



I

In the book of Ruth, we see the practice of gleaning in action. Boaz first sees Ruth when she goes to his field to glean grain for herself and her mother-in-law, Naomi (Ruth 2), who are both widows. And we know how events play out: from gleaning to love to a happy ending. The story of Ruth is one of the great love stories in the Bible and teaches us about mercy, grace, and redemption.

God commanded gleaning in the Law (Lev. 19:9–10; 23:22; Dt. 24:19–22). He ordered the Israelites to leave the corners of their fields unharvested so the poor and strangers in the land could glean there. The workers were not to pick up any sheaves left behind. When shaking olive trees to harvest olives, any olives remaining on the trees were to be left for the needy. Similarly, grapes that fell to the ground were to be left for the poor.

This was God's welfare system. It provided for those who couldn't work, such as the widows, fatherless, and strangers; and God promised to bless the work of the hands of those who obeyed this command (Dt. 24:19).

There is an amazing organization in Israel today that helps feed the needy: Leket Israel, a nonprofit charity. *Leket* is the Hebrew word for "gleaning," and Leket Israel has become the national food bank for the impoverished in the Jewish state. Following the principles of gleaning in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, it rescues healthy surplus food that would otherwise be discarded.

Started in 2003, Leket Israel has grown to 105 employees and utilizes 15,000 volunteers annually. The logistics include the daunting job of storing and packaging food for distribution.

Leket rescues 20,000 tons of fruits and vegetables and 2.4 million cooked meals each year. It adheres to the highest food-safety regulations to sort the food and redistribute it to a quarter of a million Israelis each week throughout Israel.

As in the days of Ruth, those in need in Israel are being fed by a portion of the crops grown in the land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8). Even though Leket uses thousands of volunteers, staffing and distribution cost money.

Leket Israel is one of several humanitarian organizations that receives grants from The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry's Israel Relief Fund. Many of you give to the Israel Relief Fund to bless those in need. Our relief fund is one of the ways to "comfort, yes comfort [God's] people" (Isa. 40:1).

Jesus told His disciples He will return to Earth one day and judge the nations for the way they treated His brothers, and He listed several criteria by which He will do so. One of them is "For I was hungry and you gave Me food" (Mt. 25:35). When we support Leket Israel, we are giving food to Jesus' brethren.

The Israel Relief Fund is a wonderful way we can bless the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God promises He will bless those who bless them (Gen. 12:3); and as beneficiaries of God's grace through His Son, we are indeed blessed beyond measure!



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

WE LOST A MENSCH

If you've ever been called a *mensch*, consider it a great compliment. The Yiddish word is used to describe someone of noble character. It is the highest Yiddish praise you can receive for being an upstanding human being.

We lost a true *mensch* when Colin Powell died on October 18, 2021, at the age of 84 from COVID-19 complications. Powell will be honored in American history as the first black United States National Security advisor, the first black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the first black secretary of state.

He was a statesman par excellence who shattered not one glass ceiling but layers of them, paving the way for men and women of color to participate in the highest levels of government when it wasn't easy for them to move up the ranks.

Powell helped the Nixon administration, served in the Reagan administration, and gained international acclaim during his term as secretary of state for U.S. President George W. Bush (2001–2005).

Many people don't realize Powell grew up in the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Hunts Point in the Bronx in New York. His parents were Jamaican immigrants who were surrounded by Jewish friends. As a teenager, Powell worked at Sickser's, a Jewish-owned shop that sold strollers, cribs, and other baby paraphernalia.

Sickser's conducted business primarily in Yiddish. Colin (or Collie, as Jay Sickser called him) learned the language working there. In fact, he learned it so well that, after he made his sales *spiel* (pitch), he would listen as his customers discussed in Yiddish how much they actually were willing to spend, unaware Collie could understand them.

On the Sabbath, Powell served the Jewish community as a *shabbos goy*, a Gentile who performs tasks forbidden to Jewish people

on Shabbat, like turning on the lights.

During an interview, the former secretary of state acknowledged the influence Jay Sickser had on his life. He recalled the day his boss pulled him aside to encourage him to pursue an education: "'Collie, *nu*, come listen. I want to talk.' And he said to me, 'Collie, you're a good worker, love having you in the store. You're part of the family. But listen, you know, you can't ever stay here. You have to get your education. You've got a good family, and you're smart. Go get your education, and make sure you move on.'" Powell eventually became a four-star general in the United States Army and stayed in touch with the Sickser family for the next 50 years.

Powell's story shows us the best of America, how great it can be when we pull together, instead of pulling apart. In the 1950s, a Jewish immigrant invested in a black teenage boy. He told him he was special, was smart, and had a bright future. That moment stuck with Colin Powell for the rest of his life.

Today, it seems this country concentrates on dividing people by race, ethnicity, and economic status. But in his old neighborhood 70 years ago, Powell recalled, "No one was a minority."

As an adult, Colin Powell defended the Jewish people and stood up against anti-Semitism. He believed in Israel's right to exist and wished to see the Jewish people live in peace. Upon his passing, AIPAC (American-Israel Public Affairs Committee) tweeted, "Colin Powell was a genuine friend of the Jewish people who understood the critical importance of the U.S.-Israel relationship."

We may not always have agreed with his politics, but we are saddened nonetheless to say goodbye to a true *mensch*.

by Chris Katulka

ISRAEL PREPARES TO STRIKE

The Israeli government recently allocated 5 billion shekels (\$1.5 billion) to prepare the Israel Defense Forces to strike Iran's nuclear program, much of which is sheltered in heavily fortified sites underground or deep inside mountains.

The allocation was made days after the United States Air Force announced it successfully tested a new "bunker buster" bomb, the GBU-72 Advanced 5K Penetrator. The 5,000-pound device, developed to destroy targets that are hardened or buried deep underground, could be used by both fighter and bomber aircraft to strike Iranian nuclear sites.

The developments come amid growing concern that Iran may soon have nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. In August, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz warned that Iran was merely 10 weeks away from having enough weapons-grade materials to build a nuclear bomb.

Israel says Iran's nuclear program has progressed greatly since U.S. President Joe Biden rescinded former President Donald Trump's sanctions on Iran. In 2018, Trump withdrew the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and reimposed "the highest level of economic sanctions," which the Obama administration had lifted.

Trump warned the JCPOA nuclear deal would not prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and did not address Iran's ballistic-missile program or Tehran's support for terrorist groups in the Middle East.

Biden lifted the sanctions in February

2021, hoping Iran would return to the negotiating table. However, Iran's new president, Ebrahim Raisi, a hardline cleric like Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been driving a hard bargain.

Lt. Col. (ret.) Michael Segall, a senior analyst at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, warned that Tehran will never give up its quest to become a nuclear power: "They believe in the Shi'ite revival," he said. "It's important to grasp the importance they attach to this goal. As Westerners, we ignore their mindset. The Iranians feel that they have divine intervention helping them." Segall added, "The nuclear program is the anchor that would allow Iran to position itself in the role that it has defined for itself. Becoming a nuclear state would influence all of Iran's tentacles in the region."

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett told the UN General Assembly, "Iran's great goal is crystal clear to anybody who cares to open their eyes: Iran seeks to dominate the region—and seeks to do so under a nuclear umbrella." He warned, "Iran's nuclear program has hit a watershed moment. And so has our tolerance. Words do not stop centrifuges from spinning. . . . We will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon."

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said



*
Ebrahim Raisi

Israel is prepared to use military force to stop Iran from gaining nuclear capability. "Iran has publicly stated it wants to wipe us out," he said. "We have no intention of letting this happen."

John Hannah, an analyst at the Jewish Institute for National Security of America, said there is zero chance Biden will order an attack on Iran. Hannah urged the United States to supply Israel with the necessary weapons: "As Iran crashes through one nuclear red line after another, the day when Israel is forced to act could be much closer than many people think. Given the unprecedented threat to Israel's existence that an Iranian nuclear bomb would entail, the United States should do everything in its power to arm its closest Middle Eastern ally, which could very soon be the final obstacle standing between Iran and the bomb."



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

CHRISTIAN BOY, 14, DIES AFTER BURN ATTACK

A 14-year-old Christian in eastern India clung to life for six weeks before succumbing to severe injuries after suspected Hindu extremists threw flammable liquid on him and set him on fire.

Three unidentified men on a motorbike threw the liquid on Nitish Kumar as he was coming home from his early morning routine of purchasing fresh vegetables. Drenched, Nitish initially thought they had mischievously thrown water on him.

"But soon my skin began to burn," Nitish said. He told morningstarnews.org in agony, "The burning sensation increased with every passing second. I dropped the basket and ran towards my house [almost half a mile away] screaming and howling." The fire burned 65 percent of his body, with 15 percent deep burns. He died in September.

His family has faced opposition from Hindu extremists since they left Hinduism for Christianity two years ago. "A month before the attack, some extremists spread word in the village that they would expel all the people who follow the Christian faith," Nitish's 17-year-old brother, Sanjeet, said. "We also heard about it, but it did not deter us from our faith. And suddenly this attack took place."



* Nitish Kumar

the area and would also burn down our church."

The assailants fired hundreds of bullets from Kalashnikov (AK-47) rifles and other assault weapons into homes in a community where more than 300 Christian families live, he said.

Many people called the police emergency helpline after the shooting started at 2:30 p.m., but officers did not arrive until 8 p.m., he said, adding that local police have been lax in prosecuting the suspects, as they were influential people. "The police have been protecting the accused since day one because they are Muslims, and we are poor Christians."

MUSLIM MOB KILLS PASTOR

A Muslim mob in northern Nigeria, agitated over the killing of a woman by a man they believed had converted to Christianity, hacked a pastor to death with machetes and burned down his home.

The Rev. Yohanna Shuaibu of New Life Church "was killed because his ministry had drawn many Muslims to convert to Christianity. He was chairman of the local chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Sumaila County," reported morningstarnews.org.

"We know that at this kind of time, it is an immeasurable risk to be a Christian, especially in the northern part of Nigeria," said Hosle Tongnan Michael, a friend and colleague of Pastor Shuaibu. "Anyone serving Christ can't be sure of being alive the following day in northern Nigeria."

"Recently we have heard of how the growth of the missionary base in Massu had been envied by the Muslims, and they wished for its uprooting from the environment for no justifiable reasons," Michael said. "This is the story of the life of a Christian soldier, the ambassador of the Lord, who was hunted and gruesomely killed at his duty post, and his wrong was that he was a servant of the Lord."

To read these reports and many more in full, go to morningstarnews.org.

MUSLIM GUNMEN WOUND AT LEAST FOUR CHRISTIANS

Muslims in Lahore, Pakistan, fired high-powered weapons into the homes of Christians, wounding a pregnant woman and at least three others.

"When I was telling my kids to get inside, I saw a group of heavily armed men firing indiscriminately at a church located on the street," Asif Masih told morningstarnews.org. "They then trained their weapons on the homes of neighboring Christians and fired volleys of bullets at them." He was wounded in both thighs.

"I barely managed to drag myself into my house and lock the gate, but they did not stop firing," Masih said. "I could hear them shouting that they would not spare Christians living in



* Asif Masih

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Tom Geoghan
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Just Show Up!

In God's grace, He delights in using us to make known His kindness that leads men and women to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Sometimes, He wants no more from us than to show up. In faith, we show up; and God does the heavy lifting.

Carrie Gould, an intern with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI), has a passion to share the love of Christ with her Jewish friends. She knows what it's like to need people who care about you, having suffered the loss of two husbands she loved dearly. After the death of her second husband, she moved closer to her family in New Jersey. In the midst of her sorrow, Carrie reached out to The Friends of Israel to ask how she could get involved in Jewish ministry.

We immersed Carrie in our intensive FOI training program, which involves working with our gospel ministers in Las Vegas, Philadelphia, and New York. She participated in our FOI Equip online classes, our Bridges internship program, and served in our Encounter ministry. Then Carrie took all she learned and put it into practice.

She showed up one day at her local Jewish Community Center with the sole purpose of serving the Jewish people. She met Deborah, the director of seniors programs, to discuss ways to volunteer. A professional artist, Carrie offered to teach a seniors watercolor painting class. Thrilled with the idea, Deborah scheduled Carrie to teach in the fall. "How much do you charge for classes?" she asked.

Carrie responded, "Nothing. It's a free offer. I'm volunteering."

Shocked, Deborah asked, "Why would you do this, when we can pay you?"

Carrie replied, "I want to serve because I love



* Carrie makes friends with Marton, a Holocaust survivor.

the Jewish people."

Deborah's eyes teared up at the thought a Christian would offer such a kind, free gift for the elderly. She thanked Carrie and offered her a job! Carrie turned down the job but said she will make herself available for other needs as well.

Carrie's prayer is that this step will be the beginning of a long-lasting friendship and that the Lord will use her to spread the love of Jesus and share the Good News with people at the Jewish Community Center.

Carrie could have walked away from God after the painful loss of her second husband; but by faith, she showed up. What a blessing we have when we submit to His will and choose to serve Him.

If you would like to support Carrie Gould and interns like her serving in North American outreach with The Friends of Israel, visit 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.

Kevin and His Flute

If you've ever listened to Israeli music, you probably know how unique and hauntingly beautiful it can be. Jewish songs and melodies form a rich cultural tapestry that can help people communicate across cultural lines. That certainly has been the experience of our Friends of Israel (FOI) international field representative Kevin Vigus in Perth, Australia.

Kevin is a classically trained musician who has been invited into the lives of people at his area synagogue because he plays the flute. For years he has used his musical gift to serve the Jewish community alongside his Jewish friends and neighbors by participating in special concerts, memorial services, Jewish festival celebrations, and private functions. He has even recorded in a studio with musicians from the synagogue.

However, through all these concerts and rehearsals, God has given him an even greater opportunity: to show his friends how much Jesus loves them and to tell them about the Messiah.

For example, last April, when Kevin's church was shut down because of the coronavirus, Kevin felt prompted to attend Shabbat services at the synagogue. A man who knew that Kevin was a Christian came up to him and asked, "Why do Christians call this 'Good Friday' when it's the day Jesus died?" So Kevin explained the good news of Good Friday and how those who believe in Jesus' death as payment for their sins will be saved from the penalty of paying for those sins themselves.

Kevin told us how God has used his music ministry: "First, they know who I am. I didn't have to wear a cross for this man to know my Christian faith. I just had to be genuine. Second, they know I am safe. I am not going to force them into anything or embarrass them. Third, there are important parts of the



Christian faith that Jewish people would like opportunities to understand."

The Lord has enabled Kevin to develop genuine friendships built on mutual respect that have blossomed into opportunities to share what he believes. "I truly am astounded," he said, "where the Lord has led me—with a flute—to discover a music, a language, and a culture that enriches my own faith. And from this I am then able to share among Christians the beauty of our common roots as well."

Aside from his music ministry, Kevin also teaches the context and culture of the Bible to Christians and churches throughout Western Australia. Please pray with us that his ministry continues to foster deeper relationships between the church in Australia and the Jewish community.

If you would like to support our Australian team and other FOI ministries like this around the world, visit www.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.



Happy New Year!

Many people make resolutions at this time of year.
But they usually miss the most important resolution of all.

by Steve Herzig

Fireworks. Noisy parties. Large quantities of food and drink. That's how many people welcome the new year. Observant Jewish people, on the other hand, welcome their new year (Rosh Hashanah) by gathering in synagogues to worship God.

So, the world makes noise, and Jews contemplate. The contrast is clear: short-term pleasure versus longer-term awareness of accountability to God.

An 11th-century poem recited at the beginning of synagogue worship is a great example of contemplating a future year. It's called *Unetaneh Tokef* (Let Us Speak of His Awesomeness):

*How many will pass and how many will be created?
Who will live and who will die?
Who in their time, and who not their time?
Who by fire and who by water?
Who by sword and who by beast?
Who by hunger and who by thirst?
Who by earthquake and who by drowning?
Who by strangling and who by stoning?
Who will rest and who will wander?
Who will be safe and who will be torn?
Who will be calm and who will be tormented?
Who will become poor and who will get rich?*

These are sobering words—the opposite of what would make for a good toast at a typical New Year's celebration. But they are perfect for reminding us of the certainty of an uncertain future—but a future overseen by an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God.

He is the God observant Jews fear and revere as they contemplate their new year; and He is the same God we should fear and revere as we enter ours.

I remember when it was a great compliment to be called a “God-fearing man” or “God-fearing woman.” That description is rarely heard today, and some would even consider it offensive. With 2022 upon us, it might be helpful to contemplate what the phrase *fear of the Lord* means since, as Bible-believing Christians, we acknowledge He holds our future.

What Is Fear?

The Hebrew word for “fear” is *yare*. It also translates as “respect” or “reverence.” King David called such fear “clean, enduring forever” (Ps. 19:9). Another psalmist asked God to “establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You” (119:38).

Our reverence, our respect, our awe of God increases as we get to know Him better. That happens as we read His Word regularly.

Our fear, then, is not terror but, rather, a horror of displeasing Him because we love Him so much. It's like the fear children have of their loving parents.

Why Should We Fear?

King Solomon experienced every human pleasure known and found each to be vain, worthless, and futile. His conclusion? “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Eccl. 12:13–14).

Moses, the leader of 600,000 men, along with their wives and children, told his people, “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Dt. 10:12). Moses did not *suggest* the Israelites fear the Lord. He called it a requirement.

This command was intended to serve Israel well; and it will serve us well as we face the uncertainties of 2022.

Fearing the Lord Is Not Always Positive

Adam and Eve feared God and hid themselves after they sinned. Their fear was paralyzing. Rather than going to Him in repentance, they moved farther away, hiding and covering themselves (Gen. 3:7–8).

James told his Jewish brethren, “Even the demons believe—and tremble!” (Jas. 2:19). Satan and his demons don't revere

God, but they tremble at His future judgment.

The unprofitable servant of Matthew 25:25 was also paralyzed with fear, hiding his talent (a form of money) in the ground instead of investing it to earn interest. The fear we are to have for God should not inhibit us but liberate us.

Benefits of Fearing God

Here are three benefits of fearing the Lord:

1. People become better neighbors. King David wrote Psalm 34 to “His saints” (v. 9), “you children” (v. 11), in part to “teach . . . the fear of the LORD” (v. 11). “There is no want to those who fear Him” (v. 9), he said. “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry” (v. 15). If people fear the true God, they will want to “keep [their] tongue[s] from evil, and [their] lips from speaking deceit” (v. 13). They will want to “depart from evil and do good” (v. 14). The fear of the Lord made David a better king and his people better individuals.

2. People grow wise, humble, and forgiving and develop a hatred of sin. Fearing the Lord makes us wise and knowledgeable (Prov. 1:7). It teaches us we can find forgiveness and mercy: “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared” (Ps. 130:3–4). Mary, Jesus' mother, praised God, whose “mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation” (Lk. 1:50).

3. People become satisfied, appreciate life, and experience comfort and peace from God. The fear of the Lord “is a fountain of life” (Prov. 14:27) and “he who has it will abide in satisfaction” (19:23). In the book of Acts we learn, “The churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” (9:31).

The famous ball-drop in Times Square in New York City will no doubt again welcome in another year. People around the world will raise their glasses in its honor. We, on the other hand, ought to bend our knees and bow our heads in reverence and awe before a God who loved us enough to send His Son to die on the cross for our sins.

Whatever comes to us in 2022, we will do well to resolve to fear the Lord. Let us own the command; and, as 1 Peter 2:17 says, “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” If we do that, by His grace, we can handle whatever comes our way. ★



Steve Herzig

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



**THE GREATEST BOOK
EVER WRITTEN**

Sixty-six books that can change your life. Why?
Because they form the indestructible Word of God.

BY DAVID M. LEVY



Voltaire, the famous French philosopher once called the “prince of infidels,” reportedly said in 1776 that within 100 years, the Bible would be a forgotten relic found only in museums. Fifty-eight years after Voltaire’s death, his house was being used by the Evangelical Society of Geneva, which distributed Bibles throughout Europe; and the printing presses on which he printed his revulsion of Christianity were printing the Holy Scriptures.

No other book is like the Bible. It was written by 40 men from all walks of life—kings, priests, prophets, fishermen, and farmers—over a period of 1,600 years (1500 BC to AD 100). Some writers were highly educated, like Moses and the apostle Paul, while others had no formal education. Yet, more than 3,000 times these men claimed what they wrote came directly from God.

What is it that makes the Bible different, continually relevant on a myriad of issues, and the bestselling book of all time? Simply put, the Bible is God’s Word. It is the Book of books—and it has been the wellspring of truth and accuracy for more than 3,500 years.

INTEGRITY OF SCRIPTURE

Jesus affirmed the Old Testament is God’s Word (Mt. 5:17–18; Lk. 24:44). He confirmed the authorships of Moses, King David, and the prophets Isaiah and Daniel; and He validated the truth of such historical events as God’s creation of Adam and Eve, Noah and the universal flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jonah being swallowed by a great fish.

When tempted by the Devil, Jesus countered each temptation by saying, “It is written” and quoting from the Hebrew Scriptures (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10). In Luke 4:25–27, He confirmed the Bible’s divine miracles and, concerning Old Testament revelation, stated, “For assuredly, I say to you,

THE BIBLE

till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Mt. 5:18).

So, Jesus affirmed the inspiration, inerrancy, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures and accepted its books as God's Holy Word. He also confirmed and taught the authority, reliability, unity, clarity, sufficiency, historicity, inspiration, revelation, inerrancy, infallibility, and indestructibility of the Old Testament.

A sure way to prove the Bible's accuracy is to analyze Old Testament prophecies, the Messianic ones in particular. More than one fourth of Scripture is prophetic. The Bible makes at least 1,000 predictions in specific detail, of which approximately 500 already have been fulfilled 100 percent.

For example, 25 Old Testament Jewish writers detailed the life and ministry of their future Messiah. The Messiah is the only Person in history to have had His ancestry, birth, character, teaching, career, reception, rejection, death, burial, and resurrection prewritten at least 500 years before His birth.

Jesus Christ clearly fits all the descriptions and fulfilled all the prophecies, including those that foretold of the Messiah's birthplace (Mic. 5:2; cf. Mt. 2:1), manner of death (Isa. 53:8; cf. Lk. 23:46), and resurrection (Ps. 16:10; cf. Acts 2:29–32). Two of these amazing prophecies spoke of Christ's death by crucifixion (Ps. 22; Isa. 53), written centuries before the event.

There are also many prophecies concerning Israel's persecution and devastation (such as Deuteronomy 28:15–68) and its restoration (such as Ezekiel 36:25–37:28). Some have been fulfilled, and others will be fulfilled.

AUTHENTICITY OF SCRIPTURE

Perhaps you're wondering, *How do we know the Bible we possess today is God's Word?*

First, Jewish scribes meticulously copied the Hebrew text and painstakingly counted every letter they wrote. This was their job, and they took it extremely seriously. If they made a mistake, the text was not corrected but destroyed. The nation of Israel collected and preserved these accurately copied manuscripts through the centuries (Dt. 31:26; 1 Sam. 10:25; 2 Ki. 23:24; Neh. 9:14; Dan. 9:2, 13).

Second, the Dead Sea Scrolls provide evidence of this

extraordinary preservation. For example, in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls (dating from 125 BC to 100 BC), the book of Isaiah was discovered in its entirety and contains the identical Isaiah text we read in our Bibles today.

The same can be said about the accuracy of the New Testament, which was written after Jesus ascended to heaven. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles in writing the content (Jn. 14:25–26). The Holy Spirit superintended everything they wrote, providing the New Testament's content and accuracy (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

What about variant readings in the New Testament? There are more than 5,000 Greek manuscripts and 9,000 versions and translations. New Testament critics have evaluated the text and pronounced it more than 99 percent pure. Not only has it survived in terms of number of manuscripts, but it has survived in a purer form than any other great book of antiquity.

INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

The apostle Paul wrote, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The phrase *rightly dividing the word of truth* means students of Scripture must handle the text truthfully, without falsifying it. Thus, we must read our Bibles using a literal, grammatical, and historical method of interpretation to discover the original intent of the text.

Literal means we employ the plain, normal, common, everyday usage of the words in the text. We interpret each word using its primary, usual, literal, original, ordinary meaning, unless the context indicates otherwise. Certainly, the literal method also takes into consideration the use of types, symbols, figures of speech, parables, and allegories as stated in the context of the verse(s) being interpreted.

Grammatical means we apply rules of grammar to the words. We look at sentence structure, parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, definite articles, and prepositions) in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages to determine proper meaning. We give each word its literal or customary usage for the time in which it was written.

Historical means we diligently study the when and where of Scripture: the historical setting and culture of the day when the words were written. Doing so opens great vistas, helping us understand why an author used certain words, warnings, or customs. This method also safeguards us from misapplying words and misinterpreting Scripture.

Scripture also must be interpreted within the context in which it is written. A passage can have only one interpretation within the paragraph and cannot be interpreted accurately apart from the context in both the Old and New Testaments.

For a proper interpretation, we must compare Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is its own best commentary. The author's meaning is what is important. In other words, the author—not the reader—determines what the text means.

UNIQUENESS OF SCRIPTURE

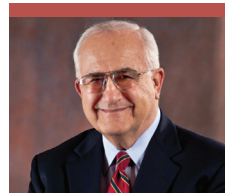
Over the centuries, both Old and New Testaments have undergone extensive microscopic analysis by renowned scholars who specialize in biblical history, literature, grammar, and archaeology.

Although some textual critics have pointed out what they consider to be discrepancies, errors, and contradictions within the Bible, careful analyses have never conclusively proven the text to be in error. While variant readings exist, they are minor and relate to spelling and word order. They affect no major doctrine of Scripture.

To have 40 different authors over a span of 1,600 years write a unified book without error or contradiction is

unique indeed in both ancient and modern history. The Bible is unique in its history, message, universality, influence, fulfilled prophecies, preservation, power to change lives, and testimony throughout history. God's oversight and providential preservation of it give us assurance that today we possess the verbal, inerrant, and infallible Word of God. It stands alone as the greatest book ever written.

Jesus confirmed this fact when He said, "Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). And Jesus said of His own words, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Mt. 24:35). His Word is indestructible and will live forever. ★



David M. Levy

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FOUR IMPORTANT WORDS

BY DAVID M. LEVY

In explaining that we consider Scripture the ultimate authority for life, we often use the phrase *verbal, plenary inspiration*. The apostle Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). The Greek word for "inspiration" means "breathed" and refers to God as the Originator who breathed Scripture into existence. Men were the channels He used to communicate His Word to humanity, but God Himself conveyed what they should write, using their individual personalities and literary styles.

Four key words define this doctrine of inspiration:

1. VERBAL

Although men wrote the Scriptures, God guided each man's intellect to choose the exact words for the text. *Verbal* means the very words themselves were God-breathed, superintended by the Holy Spirit. Thus, God Himself chose the words written in the autograph manuscripts (not later translations). Men wrote, not by their own wills, but as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21). Jesus said every stroke of the pen ("jot" or "tittle") is God's Word and "will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Mt. 5:18).

2. INERRANT

God, who is truth, cannot lie (Num. 23:19; Jn. 17:17; Heb. 6:18); and He is never wrong. Because He divinely inspired the men who wrote the Scriptures, the God-breathed Word is without error (2 Pet. 1:20–21). The Holy Spirit assures Scripture's inerrancy in every matter it touches: creation, geography, salvation, doctrine, life sciences (ethics, social, physical), world history, literature, and every area of knowledge. It is without error in the original autographs and entirely true in all it affirms.

3. INFALLIBLE

Not only is the Bible without error, but it is also incapable of error in the autograph copy. Scripture is always correct in its revelation and rules of instruction on faith and practice as originally written because it is from God.

4. PLENARY

Plenary means "full" or "complete." Thus, God inspired *all* the words; and every area of Scripture is equally of divine origin and equally authoritative. While on Earth, Jesus Christ approved everything written in the Old Testament (Lk. 24:44; Jn. 5:46) and authorized what would be revealed in the New Testament (Jn. 16:12–13).

Applying Scripture to our lives makes us "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). No servant of God should want to be anything less.

KING NO

IT DEPENDS ON



EDOM W?

HOW YOU READ.

BY BRUCE A. BAKER

KINGDOM NOW?



OF all the New Testament references to Old Testament Scripture, the verse that receives the most New Testament attention is Psalm 110:1. It is directly quoted five times (Mt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42–43; Acts 2:34–35; Heb. 1:13) and is alluded to in at least seven other places (Acts 7:56; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22).

When one Old Testament verse receives this much ink in the New Testament, people are forced to conclude that the truth expressed in this one verse is pretty important! So what does this verse say?

To understand it, we must understand the psalm in which it is found. Psalm 110 is a song written by King David. It is also a Messianic psalm, which means the entire song is about the specially anointed king (*anointed* = “messiah”), whom Yahweh will one day send to rule the entire earth in complete righteousness and peace. Concerning this coming Messiah, David sings, “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’”

As for verse 1, which receives so much attention, it seems appropriate to break it down into bite-size chunks to assist our understanding. Notice first that it is the Lord who is speaking. Whenever we see the word LORD (initial capital and small caps), we know this does not refer

to God as the God of the whole world but, rather, as God in His role as the covenant-keeping God of Israel. This particular name is used to emphasize God’s special relationship with His Chosen People. Second, please observe that Yahweh is speaking to someone whom David titles his lord or master (“my Lord”).

Since David is king, we know this person he considers “my Lord” must be a still greater king than David—a King of the whole world (vv. 5–6). We also know when this King will begin His reign. He will reign after the Lord makes His enemies (the nations of this world, vv. 5–6) a footstool for His feet. That will happen when Jesus returns to this earth as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16). Until that time, Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the God of Israel waiting for that Kingdom to begin.

Several conclusions automatically follow this understanding of Psalm 110:1. For example, God has a plan for the future. This plan includes a worldwide Kingdom over which Jesus reigns as King. That Kingdom has not yet begun. God has not yet made Christ’s enemies a footstool for His feet. *Jesus is a king in waiting!*

THE CURRENT EVANGELICAL CONSENSUS

If one were to poll U.S. Christian evangelicals concerning how they view the “kingdom,” the overwhelming majority would proclaim that the invisible Body of Christ (the church) in the here and now is, in one way or another, the Kingdom. Of those holding to a “kingdom now” theology, there would be various opinions concerning what happens in the future; but all would make similar statements concerning what is going on in the present.

Some would state the church is the only form of the Kingdom that will ever be. When Jesus Christ returns, they say, He will destroy the heavens and the earth by fire (2 Pet. 3:10); then the eternal state will begin. The current (and only) kingdom, as seen in the church, is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom. This viewpoint is known as Amillennialism. People arrive at this conclusion by reading the New Testament and concluding

that the church has somehow replaced Israel. In other words, when the Old Testament speaks of a future for Israel, it is really referring to the church.

So, for example, when the prophet Zechariah speaks of a day when all the nations of the world will be gathered against Jerusalem to make war against her (Zech. 14:1–9), he is not speaking of a particular event regarding the city of Jerusalem. No, he is speaking about the hostility of the world system against the church down through time. The worldwide kingdom spoken of in this passage is the eternal state with God in heaven.

Others contend the Kingdom is already here, but in an incomplete form. Of these, a minority would insist that as the church spreads the gospel, more and more people will come to Christ and the world will be made a better and better place until, with the ultimate victory of the gospel, a golden age appears. (Yes, people really do believe this!) They believe that at the end of that golden age, Christ will return and judge the living and the dead, followed by the eternal state.

This was the predominant view in the 19th century. If you read closely, you will see this view alluded to in “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” (“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord”) and in many of our old Christmas carols, such as “Joy to the World.” This idea fell out of favor after the terrible devastation of World War I. People looked around and saw that the world was not becoming a better place. They saw that it was actually getting worse and worse.

Amazingly, this idea (known as Postmillennialism) is making something of a comeback. The main idea behind this view is that the kingdom of God is not a literal, physical kingdom in the future but, rather, the rule of God in the hearts of believers. People who believe this view refer to Luke 17:20–21 and Romans 14:17. They reject as childish the idea of a future, literal Kingdom mentioned in Revelation 20. They insist Revelation 20:1–6 refers to the martyrs in heaven who died during the Roman persecution. Put another way, they reject the plain reading of the text for a reading steeped in allegory.

The rest who argue for a kingdom in the here and now maintain that Christ is ruling the world through the church, albeit in an incomplete fashion. When Christ returns, He will set up a worldwide Kingdom where He rules the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9), which will be the kingdom in its complete form. Still, even though the kingdom is

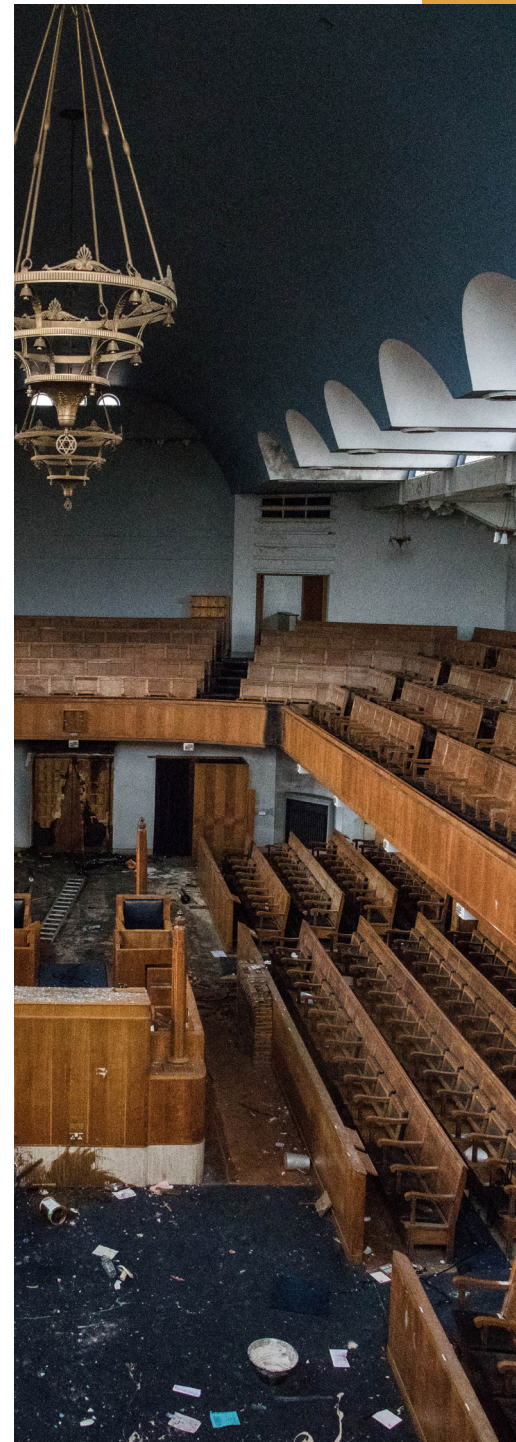
not complete, it is, in one sense, already here.

Some argue that Christ’s reign through His church is an invisible, spiritual reign. Others disagree. As Darrell Bock put it, we are getting a sneak peek of the coming kingdom. This sneak peek means that Christ is ruling in the here and now—physically, not just spiritually—through His church, albeit incompletely. When He comes, His physical reign will be worldwide and complete.

This idea is usually expressed as follows: the Kingdom is already here—but not yet here. This used to be known as Covenant Premillennialism, but now a slightly different version has appeared, known as Progressive Dispensationalism. Regardless of what label is applied, however, this idea of a Kingdom that is already here but not yet here is becoming so prominent that Russell Moore, former president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, has labeled it the “emerging evangelical consensus.”

HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

Even though there is wide disagreement concerning the nature of the Kingdom now, all these views that place the Kingdom either all or in part in the present have one thing in common: They all reject a consistent, literal interpretation of the Bible. They all, to one degree or another, rely on interpretations of portions of the Bible that go beyond the actual



meanings of the words in the text. They replace the ordinary understanding of the text before them with an allegorical or spiritual interpretation.

To be sure, the degree to which they spiritualize the text varies according to the views. Additionally, not all these views spiritualize the same portions of the Bible. But all of them, without exception, abandon the normal, plain, everyday understanding of the text for an allegorical or spiritual one.

As traditional dispensationalists, we read the Bible in a manner similar to the way we read the newspaper. That is, we read the text before us with a plain, normal, matter-of-fact understanding of language. The meanings of individual words are determined by their context. We all know this intuitively, but let's consider an example just for the sake of clarity.

Let's consider the following headlines from a local newspaper. The first one is from the front page: "Truck hits roadside bomb." The second is similar but is found on the sports page: "Hometown slugger hits bomb to left field." The third is like the first two but is found in the entertainment section: "Big-budget movie a bomb."

A plain, literal, matter-of-fact understanding of these three headlines would define *bomb* three different ways. In the first instance, the bomb is an explosive. In the second, it is a home run in baseball. In the third, the bomb is a bad movie. That intuitive understanding of the meaning of the word *bomb* demonstrates what we mean by a plain, literal, ordinary, matter-of-fact reading of the text.

We all know how to read this way. We do it all the time. Traditional dispensationalists maintain that this is exactly the way we should read the Bible. We accept figures of speech when appropriate ("I am the Light of the world," "the bread of life," "the good shepherd," etc.), but we let the context define the meaning of words. We stick with the ordinary, obvious meanings unless there is something in the context to suggest otherwise.

Those who see some form of the Kingdom in the present age depart from this interpretive method. Well-meaning though they may be, when people speak



GOD HAS NOT YET MADE CHRIST'S ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. JESUS IS A KING IN WAITING!

of "kingdom ethics" or "the kingdom now" or "building the kingdom," etc., you may be sure that they are interpreting the Bible at some point in a nonliteral way.

Allow me to provide an example. In Acts 2, the apostle Peter delivers his famous sermon on the Day of Pentecost. In this sermon, Peter appealed to Psalm 16 to justify his statement "But God *raised Him up* again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:24, *italics added*). This verse, at least according to progressive dispensationalist Craig Blaising, is proof that

Jesus is sitting upon the throne of David as King right now. Here is a summary of Blaising's argument as developed in his essay "The Fulfillment of the Biblical Covenants."

Peter uses the words *raised* and *up* (v. 24) when speaking of Christ's resurrection from the dead. The words *raise up* are also used in the Davidic Covenant: "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will *raise up* your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam. 7:12, italics added). This refers to the birth of a descendant who will sit on David's throne.

Since the phrase *raise up* (though in different tenses) appears in both 2 Samuel 7 and Acts 2, the concepts of each passage—namely, raising up one to the throne and raising up one from the dead—must be linked so that they happen at the same time. In other words, since the initial promise to David is connected to raising up a descendant who will sit on the throne, and Peter refers to another promise to David about being raised up in resurrection, both passages must be talking about the same thing.

This raising up from the dead (Acts 2) must be referring to the raising up to the throne as well (2 Sam. 7). Therefore, when Christ was raised from the dead, He was raised to the throne of David, where He now rules His Kingdom through the church. How do we know? Because both passages used the phrase *raise up*.

To show how this type of logic simply doesn't work, let's apply the same method to our fictional headlines: Since the first headline is about an act of war and the second headline is about a baseball game and they both use the word *bomb* in the same newspaper, then the movie mentioned in the third headline must be about a baseball game taking place during wartime. I know this sounds silly, but this is exactly the same method used to declare that Christ is sitting on the throne of David now.

PLAIN, ORDINARY LANGUAGE

When God wrote the Bible, He intended it to be understood. He wanted normal, everyday people like you and me to read the text and believe it. But to believe, we must understand. That's why dispensationalists have always held firmly to what is known as the *perspicuity* of the Scriptures. *Perspicuity* simply means "clarity." So let's take a moment to see what kind of clarity we are talking about.

When we speak of the clarity of Scripture, we do not mean that all passages of Scripture are equally clear. We admit, like Peter (2 Pet. 3:15–16), that some passages are difficult to understand. It is for this reason that God has given teachers as gifts to His church (Eph. 4:11–13). But each passage of Scripture is clear enough that the average person reading

the text in a plain, ordinary way will understand the main idea of that passage. This is why we dispensationalists insist on reading texts, even prophetic ones, like we read the newspaper.

WHEN DOES THE KINGDOM BEGIN?

This may surprise some people, but we know exactly when the Kingdom begins. The apostle Peter tells us the time and circumstances in Acts 3:19–21. As Peter preached his second sermon, he called upon the Jewish people to repent of their crucifixion of the Messiah, for they acted "in ignorance" (v. 17).

Why should they repent? They should repent because when they do, the "times of refreshing" (v. 19) will come from the presence of the Lord. These times of refreshing are defined as "the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (v. 21).

What did the ancient prophets speak about? They spoke of the time when "the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3). They spoke of a time when the nations "will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (v. 4), a time when nations will no longer train for war and there will be universal peace. They spoke of the time we call the Kingdom.

What must occur before this Kingdom begins? God must "send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you [the Jews], whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:20–21).

Please notice it didn't take any special understanding to draw these conclusions. All it took was the plain, face-value reading of a straightforward text. ★

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How to know when to take the Bible literally and when to take it figuratively

by Richard D. Emmons

All of us use figures of speech: “She’s the black sheep of the family” or “He had to eat crow” or “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Mt. 10:16).

Sometimes the word *wolf* really means “wolf,” a four-legged animal that destroys and feeds on other four-legged animals; and sometimes it refers to human beings who prey on other human beings. The first interpretation is literal; the second, figurative.

These two understandings also represent the two basic schools of eschatology: Premillennialism and Amillennialism. Eschatology is the doctrine of future things. Reading Scripture literally leads to Premillennialism: the belief in a future, 1,000-year (millennial) reign of Christ on Earth; and reading figuratively results in Amillennialism, the belief there will be no 1,000-year reign of Christ on Earth.

So how does someone reading the Bible know when to take something literally and when to take it figuratively? This is the fundamental issue of prophetic interpretation. Bible scholar Dwight Pentecost said it well in the introduction of his classic work, *Things to Come*:

No question facing the student of Eschatology is more important than the question of the method to be employed in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures. The adoption of the different methods of interpretation has produced the variant eschatological positions and accounts for the divergent views within a system that confront the student of prophecy. The basic differences between the premillennial and the amillennial schools and between the pretribulation and posttribulation rapturists are hermeneutical, arising from the adoption of divergent and irreconcilable methods of interpretation.¹

Speaking to the issue of hermeneutics, Bible scholar Charles Ryrie wrote,

Hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation. Exegesis consists of the actual interpretation of the Bible, the bringing out of its meaning, while hermeneutics establishes the

principles by which exegesis is practiced.

In actuality every interpreter of the Bible has a system of hermeneutics, whether consciously so or not. As one practices his exegesis, he reveals his hermeneutics, though probably most interpreters do not ever systematize their hermeneutics. Few, if any, interpreters begin by working out their hermeneutics before proceeding to exegesis. Most seem to think about hermeneutics after they have been interpreting for years. But thinking about the subject of hermeneutics serves an important purpose, for it does force one to examine the basis of exegesis and the consistency of his interpretive practices.²

ALLEGORICAL VS. LITERAL

The allegorical method interprets something figuratively that was intended to be understood literally, whereas the literal method interprets words and phrases using their normal, usual, customary meaning, including the use of figures of speech.

All readers recognize figures of speech. But allegorists interpret words and phrases figuratively that were not intended to be understood that way. Herein lies the rub for interpreting biblical prophecy. When is a wolf not a wolf? The interpretation of a word or phrase should be determined by the context—the words around the term itself—which enables the reader (who may be centuries removed from the writer) to figure out the intended meaning.

The prophetic portions of the Bible work exactly the same way. Some of those passages, however, may be somewhat obscure today for several reasons, such as:

1. Much biblical prophecy is poetic in structure, which requires a basic understanding of Hebrew poetry.
2. The writers belonged to a different time and culture, which requires some understanding of the cultural context.
3. Modern readers may have preconceived ideas concerning a prophecy's meaning, so they must listen carefully and humbly to what the prophet was actually saying.

For example, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD” (Isa. 65:25).

The statement “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together” conveys the idea of peaceful coexistence. The question is whether or not this imagery was intended to be figurative, describing different types of people who normally are hostile toward one another (racially, culturally, politically, etc.) living peacefully together. Such is the usual amillennial interpretation, which sees this prophecy as being fulfilled in a spiritual kingdom, like the church.

Clearly, people who are born again by God’s Spirit (Jn. 3:3–8) should love one another (13:34–35), even when they come from mutually antagonistic backgrounds.

But what did Isaiah intend us to understand? To answer

that question, we must examine the context. The ultimate issue with prophetic literature (indeed, with all literature) is the intended meaning of the author. Is there anything in the context that indicates Isaiah’s intended meaning?

The next line (“the lion shall eat straw like the ox,” Isa. 65:25) emphasizes grazing, which in turn emphasizes the literal nature of the statement. The lion will be transformed from carnivorous to herbivorous. The following line (“and dust shall be the serpent’s food”) indicates a similar transformation for the serpent. Both statements argue for the literal interpretation of the words *wolf* and *lamb*.

In the preceding context, Isaiah already stated God will create “new heavens and a new earth” (v. 17). This new creation will include significantly increased longevity for mankind: “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed” (v. 20).

He also said God’s people “shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit” (v. 21); and their days will be “as the days of a tree” (v. 22).

All these factors point toward a literal, physical Earth. However, this is not the new heavens and new Earth of Revelation 21–22 because there remains the possibility of death.

Therefore, based on context, Isaiah intended us to understand that he was describing a renewed, Eden-like heavens and Earth; and the wolf is a four-legged creature who no longer destroys the lamb. Isaiah was describing the earth’s renewal, which will characterize the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1–6) that Jesus will establish at His Second Coming.

A literal hermeneutic only accepts figures of speech when the literal sense doesn’t make sense. When we read John 1:29, where the apostle John said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” we are forced to understand *Lamb* figuratively. But in Isaiah 65:25, the literal sense makes perfect sense—unless the reader already has decided there is no earthly Millennial Kingdom.

Literal interpretation—unless the context demands otherwise—is critical to understanding Bible prophecy (and almost every other form of writing). A wolf is always a wolf (four-legged animal) unless the context tells us otherwise. ★

ENDNOTES

1. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1958), 1.
2. Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1999), 125.



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God is **unchangeable**, which makes His truth **unchangeable**,
which makes His Word the bottom line.

YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER

BY BRUCE SCOTT

It was a scam that worked for months. In 1849, William Thompson prowled the streets of New York City looking for “marks,” people to swindle.

His approach was simple, yet effective. Appearing to be a gentleman, sophisticated and highbrow, Thompson would approach a complete stranger and strike up a polite conversation. After a few moments, he would ask his target, “Have you confidence in me to trust me with your watch until tomorrow?”

Surprisingly, many people obliged. Placing their confidence in Thompson’s honesty, they handed over their expensive timepieces, never to see them again. Thompson continued this ruse unabated until one day, a former victim recognized him and had him arrested. The *New-York Herald* dubbed him the Confidence Man.¹ The name stuck and was applied to any trickster who followed Thompson’s disreputable example. Later, the term was shortened to *con man*.

Many con men (and female con artists) have come and gone over the years with varying degrees of success. Even the Christian community has had its share of hustlers who either scammed people for financial gain or for other nefarious, ulterior motives.

Sadly, charlatans can be found in all walks of life, from

presidents to televangelists to Christian apologists and everything in between. But they all have one thing in common: They are chameleons. They lead double lives: a public one designed to gain the trust and confidence of others and a private one where they indulge their appetites. “Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:2), their word is not their bond. Like weather-vanes, they change with the wind.

GOD NEVER CHANGES

People change all the time. God, however, never changes. Consequently, His Word remains the same century after century. What God loved 3,000 years ago, He still loves. What He despised 3,000 years ago, He still despises. God is not fickle, unpredictable, unreliable, temperamental, or inconsistent. When He makes a promise, He is bound by His character to keep it. So, we can read His Word with confidence, knowing it will stand the test of time.

God can change His plans and programs, as He sovereignly wills. But He cannot alter His Person. He is immutable. *Immutability* means “not capable of or susceptible to change.” In fact, God claims this attribute Himself: “For I am the LORD, I do not change” (Mal. 3:6). No one else can truthfully make

that declaration.

Unlike us, God was never born. He never grew up. He never learned anything because He already knows everything. He never earned credentials. He has never been sick. And though He is the “Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9), He has never aged. Nor has He ever died.

The only exception is the Lord Jesus Christ who, in the mystery of His incarnation as the perfect God-Man, was born (Gal. 4:4), matured (Lk. 2:52), learned (Heb. 5:8), died, and arose from the grave (Acts 13:28–30). Why did Jesus endure this ordeal? So that He could become like us in every way, albeit without sin or corruption (Heb. 2:14, 17). Yet He still remains “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (13:8).

Because God never changes, He cannot lie (Ti. 1:2). He is the “God of truth” (Ps. 31:5). He cannot deny His own nature. God is completely unlike Satan, whom Jesus called “a liar and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44).

Neither is God like us—imperfect, sinful, changeable human beings who lie perpetually due to our fallen, rebellious natures. The apostle Paul said, “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). Because God is Himself unchangeable truth, He can only speak unchangeable truth (Jn. 17:17). When God declares or reveals truth, it is truth forever (1 Pet. 1:25).

Because God never changes, He also cannot fail. Unlike politicians who rarely follow through on their grandiose promises, God always keeps His promises (2 Cor. 1:20). So, “if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:13).

THE SOLID ROCK

Over and over in the psalms alone, God is called our Rock. For example, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (18:2). In large measure, it is His immutability that makes Him our rock and impenetrable fortress, shield, and stronghold.

If God changed, we could have no confidence in His judgments or in His Word. To judge righteously, there must be a consistent moral standard by which to measure right and wrong, good and evil. Because there is no higher standard than God, He is the moral standard. Anything that contradicts or misrepresents His Person or His Word is sin; and it will remain sin forever.

What was considered sin at the beginning of time will be sin at the end of time, despite “those who call evil good, and good evil” (Isa. 5:20); and the wages of sin will always be death (Rom. 6:23). We can have confidence that “even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments” (Rev. 16:7).

If God changed, there would be no universal, consistent, objective moral standard. People would never know if they were offending God or pleasing Him. God’s judgments would be arbitrary, based on His whim of the moment.

If God changed, Scripture could not be settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89). We could have no confidence that the Bible is inspired, inerrant, and infallible. If God changed, He would be capable of error, and the Scripture He breathed out could be wrong. Why, then, would anyone make the Bible his or her only guide for faith and practice? The Bible would be no different from any other book on our shelves, and we would be left asking the same question Pontius Pilate asked: “What is truth?” (Jn. 18:38).

If God changed, we also could not count on His promises. God has made more than 7,400 promises to us.² What good would they be if we could not trust Him to keep them? We could have no assurance of His commitments, certainly not of our salvation or our eternal security. God could change His mind whenever He pleased and break His promises—which would make Him mendacious, capricious, and impotent.

THE ANCHOR HOLDS

The good news is God cannot, does not, and will not change! His immutability is an anchor that gives us confidence in

the Scriptures (Heb. 6:17–19). Because God never changes, we can believe Him when He tells us He loves us and when He promises us eternal life if we place our faith in His Son for the forgiveness of our sins.

Because God never changes, we can trust that His Word is truth. We can be assured that the Bible, like Him, is without error and is immutable and eternal—even if our culture wants to change or cancel it.

Because God never changes, we can trust in His promises. Consider Malachi 3:6 in its entirety: “For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.” From God’s perspective, the sons of Jacob deserve to be consumed because of their sin. But God determined to show them mercy because His immutable character keeps Him from breaking His covenant with the patriarchs (Rom. 11:28–29).

Everything God says is true. Everything God promises will happen. Therefore, we should respond in faith as Abraham did, who was “fully convinced that what He [God] had promised He was also able to perform” (4:21). Even if you don’t believe, your unbelief doesn’t change the facts. God is still immutable; and His Word will never fail (Josh. 23:14; 1 Ki. 8:56; Rom. 3:3).

God’s immutability assures us He truly is the “Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17). He is not a charlatan. He is not a chameleon. He is not a con man. So, if He asks you today, “Have you confidence in Me to trust Me with your soul for all eternity?” you should have no problem telling Him yes. ★

ENDNOTES

- 1 “Arrest of the Confidence Man,” *New-York Herald*, July 8, 1849, [lostmuseum.cuny.edu <tinypurl.com/ConMan11>](http://lostmuseum.cuny.edu/tinypurl.com/ConMan11).
- 2 Dr. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Promises of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), 10.



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THE CONFUSION CURE

SOME CHRISTIANS SAY THE OLD TESTAMENT IS NO LONGER IMPORTANT. BUT THAT DANGEROUS ROAD LEADS TO CONFUSION.

by Robert Gottselig

Once heard a preacher say if you summed up the Bible in a few words, those words would be *from a garden (Gen. 1–2) to a city (Rev. 21–22) with a cross in between.*

The first two chapters of Genesis give us a glimpse of God's Kingdom on Earth, when God saw "everything that He had made . . . was very good" (1:31). God's relationship with Adam and Eve, along with the rest of creation, was in perfect harmony. Then sin entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God (chap. 3). From that moment on, humanity became separated from God and in need of redemption. Earth's title deed passed to Satan (Lk. 4:5–7); and God unveiled His redemptive plan, created before the foundation of the world (Gen. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8).

Throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, God reveals how He will redeem us, return His Kingdom to Earth, and reign over humanity.

Yet today some Christian leaders claim the Old Testament is no longer relevant or important. They believe only the New Testament should be taught. But what about all the unfulfilled Old Testament prophecies? What about the scores of Old Testament verses concerning Messiah Jesus' Second Coming? What about the many Hebrew Scriptures describing the Messiah's future Kingdom? Do we ignore 39 out of 66 books?

FRAGMENTS AREN'T ENOUGH

It's no wonder many Christians today are confused. Without instruction in the Old Testament, they lack the Bible knowledge necessary to see God's Word as

Unless we study the entire Bible, including the Hebrew Scriptures, we will never see the big picture.

a cohesive whole. They're not taught God's magnificent plan for the ages or Israel's importance or how the New Testament rests on the progressive revelation of the Hebrew Scriptures or how the Hebrew Scriptures apply to them.

Consequently, many Christians today are traveling down unbiblical paths and embracing unbiblical doctrines—one of which is Replacement Theology. It teaches God is finished with Israel and the church has replaced the Jewish nation as the recipient of Israel's divine promises. Some even say the land of Israel actually belongs to the church. Many Christians believe they are the ones who will usher in God's Kingdom and Israel has no future whatsoever.

Unless we study the entire Bible, including the Hebrew Scriptures, we will never see the big picture. We'll see only fragments; and we'll never understand what is happening in the world today, why it is happening, or how it all will end.

There can be no clearer word spoken on the importance of the Old Testament than that which was spoken by Jesus Christ Himself. When walking on the road to Emmaus with two discouraged followers who failed to recognize Him, the risen Lord took the opportunity to open their eyes:

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Lk. 24:25–27).

What Scriptures did He use? Certainly not the New Testament! It didn't exist! Jesus taught from the Hebrew Scriptures in one of the greatest Bible studies ever.

The men had expected Jesus to deliver Israel right then and there from Roman rule and establish His long-awaited, earthly Messianic Kingdom. They could not understand why Jesus died. Their hopes were dashed. They needed to understand the Messiah first had to suffer as the final, sacrificial Lamb of God to redeem humanity from sin.

Jesus probably quoted from the book of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; . . . and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken" (53:5–6, 8). Yet He "shall prolong His days" and receive "a portion with the great" (vv. 10, 12).

Isaiah clearly prophesied Jesus' death and resurrection. In fact, Israel's prophets provided hundreds of prophecies concerning Messiah's First Coming so people would be able to identify Him (Isa. 7:14; 9:6–7; 11:1; 35:5–6; 53:1–12; Dan. 9:25–26; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 9:9). These prophecies help us today to verify Jesus' Messiahship.

Perhaps the Lord also used Daniel 7:13–14 on the road to Emmaus, which explains the "Son of Man" (Messiah, v. 13) will have an "everlasting dominion" and a "kingdom . . . which

shall not be destroyed" (v. 14). The two men on the road to Emmaus were correct in their concept of a restored Davidic Kingdom, but they were wrong about the timing.

TAKING THE CURE

The Old Testament also unveils the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land, Davidic, and New Covenants—all given to Israel—which is why the apostle Paul told the Ephesians they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). The Ephesians needed the Jewish Messiah to save them so they could be grafted into the Jewish root.

Israel's prophets could see the mountain peaks of prophecy and the glorious future that awaits Israel, but they could not see the Church Age valley in between. The "mystery" Paul spoke of in Ephesians 3 was that God would make Gentiles "fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ [Messiah] through the gospel" (v. 6). The church did not replace Israel but, rather, joined believing Jews in the family of God.

When the Kingdom returns, with Israel's Messiah ruling and reigning in truth and righteousness (Isa. 2:4; 11:1–9; Ezek. 40–48; Dan. 7:13–14; Zech. 8), the Jewish people will become preeminent (Isa. 2:2–3; 49:22–23; 60:12–16; Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 14:16–17). "In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zech. 8:23). Israel not only has a future, but Israel will be the future; and King-Messiah Jesus will rule the world from the throne of David in the Temple in Jerusalem (6:13; Rev. 7:15).

The Old Testament is rich with details about God, His plan of redemption, His purpose for Israel, the Great Tribulation ("time of Jacob's trouble," Jer. 30:7), the Second Coming, the Messianic Kingdom, eternity, and so much more. God gave us the Old Testament for a reason, and those who fail to study it are poorer by far and more likely to become confused and beset by error.

As Paul told the Romans, "Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the [Hebrew] Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). The best cure for confusion and error is to study the entire Word of God and compare Scripture with Scripture. As the end of the Church Age grows closer, God's prophetic Word becomes clearer. His Word gives us understanding and hope, and we should be excited and encouraged to have all of it at our fingertips. ★



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5 KEYS TO UNLOCKING YOUR BIBLE



BY TOM SIMCOX

When newborns enter the world, they depend on others for everything, particularly for nourishment because they can't feed themselves. When a person accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior, he or she becomes a newborn Christian; and just as infants need physical calories to grow, new believers need spiritual calories. And those "calories" come from the Word of God.

The apostle Peter declared, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). The spiritual food for all believers is the Word of God. Paul encouraged his protégé Timothy, "Be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed" (1 Tim. 4:6). Paul expected Timothy to immerse himself in the Word, which would supply everything he needed for his own spiritual life and those entrusted to his care.

All of us need a regular diet of God's Holy Word so we can mature as believers in our walks with Him. Here are five keys to unlocking the storehouse of Scripture:

1. READ YOUR BIBLE IN THE MORNING.

The best time to get alone with God is early in the morning. King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, affirmed this truth when he wrote, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up" (Ps. 5:3). God hears our prayers whenever we call on Him, but David was inspired to commune with the Lord in the morning, before life's cares and struggles overtook him. His is a good pattern to follow.

2. READ YOUR BIBLE SYSTEMATICALLY.

Structured study is better than haphazard study. Begin in a specific book and read through it. Let the Lord to speak to you through His Word. We speak to Him through prayer, and He speaks to us through Scripture. Read systematically. Some people like to read through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation in a year or two. The study needs to be orderly. Bible scholar Dr. Charles Ryrie suggested, "Whatever book you choose, read it in its entirety first, then do some detailed study in it before starting another one. Hit-or-miss reading usually misses more than it hits!"¹

3. READ UNTIL YOU GET SOMETHING FROM GOD.

This Book is limitless. The Bible is different from all other books: "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). No matter how many times you read a passage, the Holy Spirit can give you something you never saw before. Always begin with prayer, asking the Lord to fill you with His Spirit and teach you from His Word. Then read until He shows you something.

4. RECORD WHAT YOU LEARN.

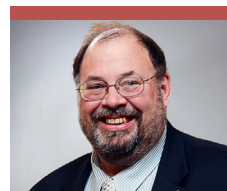
Many people like to write notes in the margins of their Bibles or highlight verses that are special to them. Some use journals and record what the Lord showed them. All of these tools can be helpful to study the Word.

5. MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE.

When we know God's Word, He brings it to mind when we need it; and He helps us obey it. "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Ps. 119:11). Just as babies grow, mature, and often emulate their parents, our goal as believers is to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). We can't do that unless we know God's Word. ★

ENDNOTE

- 1 Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*, NKJV (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1985), vi.



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*
Kekoa (left)
and Jonathan

Discipleship:

The Lifeblood of the Church

BY LINDA CRAFT

The saved and sanctified halls of Christendom are sadly strewn with the remains of weak, passive, vulnerable Christians who, having made a profession of faith in Christ, are left to fend for themselves spiritually in an extremely unspiritual world. This situation ought not to be.

New believers must be disciplined. It's admirable to give a new Christian a Bible, but how much more valuable to also teach him or her how to study it.

Kekoa Kramer accepted Christ three months after Friends of Israel Field Representative Jonathan Craft started witnessing to him and praying with him. As a new believer, Kekoa was vulnerable to false teachers, misinterpretation of Scripture, and lack of assurance of salvation.

Three months after coming to Christ, he was fired from his job, probably for sharing his faith with everyone he met. Isolated by unemployment and COVID-19 restrictions, television preachers caught his attention. He became easy prey for the enemy of his soul. Without a foundation of biblical truth, Kekoa could have been both discouraged and tossed

about by every wind of doctrine.

But Jonathan started discipling Kekoa in weekly sessions, giving him the keys to Bible study. He covered Christ's Kingdom glory, the divisions in the Bible (Old and New Testaments), and explained to whom the books of the Bible were written and for what purpose. They discussed current false teachings, including the prosperity gospel, various pseudo-Christian cults, and the fallacy of forsaking doctrine for the sake of unity.

Jonathan found himself being encouraged and edified as much as Kekoa. Once Kekoa understood the Bible was written for him but not necessarily to him, he avoided the mistake so many Christians make: claiming every promise in the Bible as their own, which creates confusion and disappointment.

When Kekoa could see the difference between the church and Israel in God's plan, he easily recognized the unbiblical, anti-Semitic doctrine of Replacement Theology. Once he understood the importance of prophecy and the book of Daniel, he gained perspective on what is happening in the world today. Once it became clear God was not finished with Israel,

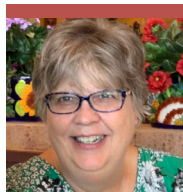
Kekoa understood the purpose of the Tribulation and why the church will be raptured from Earth when God unleashes His wrath. The 18 months spent discipling Kekoa became one of the most blessed times in Jonathan's ministry.

Kekoa is gone now. He is with the Merchant Marines, and his ship is at sea. The phone calls are fewer and far between, but the foundation was laid; and Kekoa is shining the light of the gospel from seaport to seaport. He asks Jonathan for gospel tracts and prayer for those with whom he is sharing the Good News. His heart is steadfast. His knowledge of God's Word is amazing for one so new to the faith. Not only was he delivered from the kingdom of darkness, but he also is serving the One who brought him into the Kingdom of Light.

Every year a multitude of people make professions of faith in Christ, then have no idea what to do next. Teaching,

admonishing, reproving, and encouraging new believers is one of the greatest joys a Christian can have and one of the greatest needs in the church today.

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples" (Mt. 28:19). Just as "location, location, location" is the byword of the real estate industry, "discipleship, discipleship, discipleship" should be the byword of evangelical Christianity—particularly in these perilous times. How important is discipleship? It is the lifeblood of the church. ★



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THE BEREAN BOX



What Was Christ's Self-Emptying?

The apostle Paul's statement about Jesus in Philippians 2 has been misunderstood and misinterpreted over the centuries. What did Paul mean when he wrote the following?

Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (vv. 6–8).

The Greek word for "reputation" (*kenoo*, v. 7) literally means "to empty." This Scripture is commonly called the kenosis passage, a theological term used to emphasize Christ's humiliation during His incarnation. When Jesus became a man, He emptied Himself of something He possessed in His preexistent state with the Father in heaven. However, the text does not reveal exactly what Christ emptied Himself of, which has led to misinterpretations.

Some theologians say He emptied Himself of His deity. However, this view cannot be true because Jesus did not stop being God (Jn. 1:1). Nor did He exchange His deity for humanity. He was the God-Man, fully God and fully man.

Others say He emptied Himself of His divine attributes. But without them, He would not have been God. While on Earth, Christ

manifested His divine attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability. So that view is incorrect.

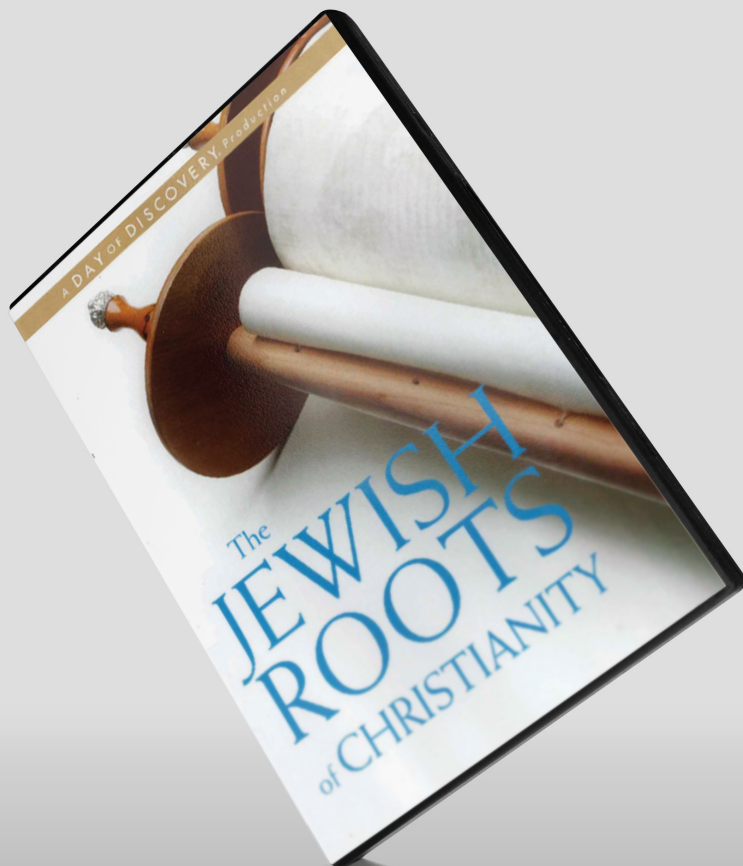
Still others believe He emptied Himself of the use of His divine power. This view, too, is incorrect. Jesus used His divine power to raise the dead, heal sickness, open blind eyes, cast out demons, cure demon-possessed people, calm a storm, and forgive sin. He also knew what was in the minds and hearts of people. Jesus did not empty Himself of being God because Paul wrote, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

In fact, Jesus said He was God (Mk. 14:61–62), accepted when others called Him God (Mt. 16:16–17; Jn. 20:28–29), and let His disciples worship Him as God (Mt. 28:16–17).

The incarnation did not strip Jesus of His essence, nature, or power as God. It did not remove or subtract from His deity but, rather, added humanity to it.

So, what happened when Christ emptied Himself? He willingly set aside His rights and privileges as God, submitted to the Father, left the glory of heaven, and took on flesh—including a human nature, with all its limitations—and surrendered completely to the Father's will (Phil. 2:7–8).

by David M. Levy



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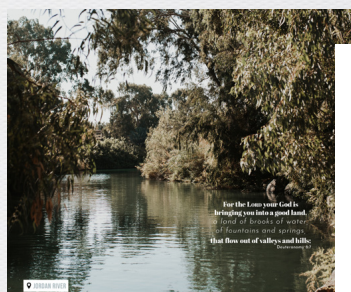
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*
Messianic 4Q175 Testimonia

An Ancient Witness to the Messiah

the ancient Jewish community believed in the Messiah's coming, and Jewish people felt they could discern prophetic texts in their Scriptures that made this case.

Testimonia begins with Moses' hope from Deuteronomy 5:28–29 that if the Israelites would fear the Lord and keep His Word, God would raise up a Prophet like him from among them, place His Word in the Prophet's mouth, and require it of the nation. Then it cites Numbers 24:15–17, explaining that this is the one of whom Balaam prophesied: a Star from Jacob and a Scepter from Israel to defeat Israel's enemies. Then, using Moses' words to Levi in Deuteronomy 33:8–11, it says this one will bless those in Israel who keep the covenant and destroy its foes, explaining that the foremost foe will be Belial (Satan or the Antichrist) who will be a deceptive trap and instrument of violence in Israel and who will commit a blasphemy in Jerusalem and shed blood.

These ancient Jews obviously understood the King-Messiah will come to defeat Israel's enemies, especially the Antichrist, who will bring about the

abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:15) and the Tribulation's persecution of the Jewish people (vv. 16–21). That is a lot of Messianic information from a people without Jesus' interpretive guidance or a New Testament!

The writer of *Testimonia* also wrote another important Qumran document: *Rule of the Community* (1QS). This text also contains a prophetic expectation of the Messiah's coming (based on Isaiah 25:6–9) and a future Messianic banquet that will climax Messiah's victory and His installment as King in Jerusalem (Ps. 2:1–6; Zech. 14:1–9). There, the Messiah is explicitly referred to as “the Messiah of Israel,” and instructions are given as to how the Jewish community is to receive Him at that time.

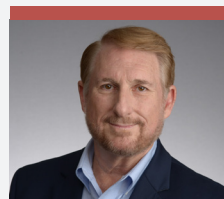
Archaeology has revealed the ancient Jewish people not only knew about their Messiah, but they also encouraged the Jewish community to believe God's Word and look for Him who will redeem Israel.

➔ Many people wonder what the ancient Hebrews thought about the coming of the Messiah. Some see the New Testament as fabricated Messianic prophecy and believe nothing in the Old Testament was actually predictive. Those who teach this view say Jesus taught His disciples to interpret figurative patterns in Scripture that could be compared to His life and ministry but that those patterns were not discernable to others, especially the ancient Jews. Consequently, many wonder what the early Hebrews could have even known about the coming of the Messiah.

Fortunately, we have ancient Jewish documents that tell us the Jewish people did have an understanding of the Messiah prior to the time of Christ. Many such documents are part of the collection of ancient texts and commentaries known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. One in particular stands out.

Known as *Testimonia* (4Q175), this document was discovered with many others in Cave 4 at Qumran, an ancient Jewish settlement near the Dead Sea that existed from 150 BC to AD 68. The almost complete text, written in ink on parchment (animal skin), is dated to 90 BC, almost a century before Jesus' birth. It contains a list of Messianic expectations written in a chain-text style (cf. Hebrews 1:5–13) that links biblical passages together in a continuous stream.

Some of the passages, such as Numbers 24:15–17 and Deuteronomy 18:18–19, are familiar proof texts for the Messiah. Others, such as Deuteronomy 5:28–29; 33:8–11; and Joshua 6:26 are unfamiliar as Messianic texts. However, this document confirms



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PREPARATION FOR PERILOUS TIMES

2 TIMOTHY 3:14–17

The apostle Paul was martyred during the rule of Roman Emperor Nero, an evil, diabolical man whose vicious cruelty and brutality toward Christians were beyond description. Before Paul died, he warned believers that worse times were coming in the last days.

One only need look at the moral decline in society today to see Paul's prophecy taking shape. The increase in lawlessness, materialism, and hostility toward God and the Christian faith; the rise in immorality; and the decline in the value of human life are some of the signs.

Paul taught his protégé Timothy how to prepare for ministry without him in a decadent world. Timothy was to remember three things: his early preparation by a godly mother and grandmother who led him to Christ (2 Tim. 3:14–15), the inspired Word of God's power to counter doctrinal error and apostasy (v. 16), and how he was equipped for ministry (v. 17).

SPIRITUAL EXHORTATION

Paul commanded Timothy to practice what he learned:

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (vv. 14–15).

Timothy was to stand fast in what he knew from Scripture even though the world was unraveling, apostasy was growing, and false teachers within the church were multiplying. Timothy's knowledge alone would profit him nothing unless he put it into practice. Only if we obey the Word do we have the inner conviction, personal assurance, and stability to stand

against evil men and their doctrines.

Paul said Timothy could be "assured of" (firmly persuaded) what he learned. His convictions came from God's Word, which gave him inner stability at a young age. Timothy could have confidence in what he was taught because he had three good sources of learning: Paul, a godly mother, and a godly grandmother.

Paul was Timothy's greatest teacher because the apostle had a vast knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as knowledge he acquired directly from Jesus Christ after his salvation (Gal. 1:11–17). Timothy was also thoroughly trained in the Word by his mother, Eunice, and grandmother Lois. Eunice was a Jewish believer married to a Greek. Nothing is mentioned about Timothy's father's spiritual life. Nor do we know if he was still living. Timothy was not circumcised, probably because his father was a Gentile. So Paul circumcised him (Acts 16:1, 3).

Perhaps Lois and Eunice took Solomon's advice: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). There is a difference between telling a child to do something and training him to do it. Mothers bond with their children early in life, either for good or bad. Usually, it is the mother who molds a child during the first few years of life. That is why it's important to quote Scripture, sing hymns about Jesus, and pray for and with a child. Babies learn by repetition. If a child hears God's Word over and over, the Lord can use the Word to mold his or her character, convictions, conscience, and course of life. Godly mothers and grandmothers can impact children more than they realize.

The word *childhood* (Greek, *brephos*; 2 Tim. 3:15) can mean "embryo, newborn," or "infant." Thus, Timothy was being grounded in God's Word from the day he was born.

The word *Scriptures* (Greek, *Gramma*) means "letters of the Hebrew alphabet," obviously referring to the Old Testament because there was no New Testament yet. Eunice apparently used the alphabet from Scripture, as well as commands and laws, to teach her son to read and write. The word *holy* (sacred) clarifies that Paul was referring to Scripture alone and not to religious literature about Scripture.

Scripture was the primary literature used to train Jewish children, who were taught to memorize passages as soon as they could speak. In fact, Moses commanded Israel to teach children the law of God continuously throughout the day (Dt. 6:4–9).

Although the Old Testament provided only a portrait of the Messiah and His ministry, it revealed God's holiness, majesty, love, mercy, forgiveness, and redemptive plan for humanity. Thus, knowing the Hebrew Scriptures prepared Timothy "for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). Teaching children Scripture is no guarantee they will

experience salvation at a young age, but it could play a major role in them coming to faith in Christ.

Paul emphasized to Timothy how important Scripture is in combating false teaching and apostasy: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (v. 16).

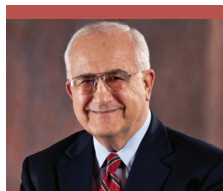
SPECIFICALLY EQUIPPED

Paul concluded this section by giving the reason for using Scripture: “That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (v. 17).

It is one thing to know God’s Word but an entirely different thing to implement it. The whole intent of Scripture is to make believers “complete,” or well adjusted, capable, possessing the qualities needed to carry out the ministry they have been called to perform. The phrase *thoroughly equipped* carries the same idea but takes it a step further, meaning God and His Word have totally outfitted believers to minister.

Paul called Timothy “the man of God,” a title usually reserved for prophets in the Old Testament. But this is a title that should be worn humbly by everyone within the church who is committed to Jesus Christ, whether in full-time ministry or not.

Although Timothy would have an extremely difficult call in pastoring the church at Ephesus, he was well prepared for the challenges. The perilous times we live in today will only grow worse. Delusion and deception are sweeping the world. But God and His Word have equipped us to live and minister for Him until He calls us home.



by **David M. Levy**,
media resource
specialist and a Bible
teacher for The Friends
of Israel Gospel Ministry

GOD’S GUARANTEE TO US

One of the many Scriptures Sunday school teachers encourage their students to memorize is 2 Timothy 3:16. It is God’s guarantee to us that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

The men who penned the Bible did not merely decide to sit down and write about God. Nothing they wrote came by their own initiative or will. They were instruments of the Holy Spirit, and we can trust the Bible to be God’s Holy Word.

“All Scripture” means every word was inspired by God. The word *inspiration* is the Greek word *Theopneustos* (*Theos*, meaning “God,” and *pneu* meaning “breath”). Therefore, *inspiration* means God breathed out the Scriptures.

The apostle Peter wrote, “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). God chose the writers and used their personalities, individual characteristics, and literary styles to pen His God-breathed Word without error. The Holy Spirit guarantees Scripture’s infallibility in all matters it touches.

Jesus affirmed Scripture’s inspiration, inerrancy, and accuracy when He said, “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Mt. 5:18).

The apostle Paul called Scripture “profitable,” meaning useful and sufficient “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Scripture can mold our lives through the following:

- **DOCTRINE.** The word *doctrine* (Greek, *didaskalia*) means “teaching.” The Bible gives all believers what we need for salvation and the Christian life.
- **REPROOF.** Scripture is God’s truth (Jn. 17:17). It exposes false teachers, refutes apostates, rebukes sin, and teaches us how to live in obedience to God every day (Heb. 4:12).
- **CORRECTION.** Because Scripture helps us discern truth from error, it corrects us when we stray from God’s path or behave unbiblically. It shows us how to walk in righteousness and how to put our lives back in order when we sin.
- **INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Since all Scripture is the verbal, inerrant, and infallible Word of God, it should be used to instruct, train, and discipline believers in holy living. This is especially true when it comes to bringing up children.

The apostle Paul concluded this section by giving us a reason for studying Scripture: “That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17).

by David M. Levy

JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE

PART 1: BIBLICAL MEDITATION

BY DAN PRICE

The late U.S. President George H. W. Bush famously hated broccoli. Some claim he mentioned the fact at least 70 times while in public office. He even banned it from Air Force One's kitchen, telling reporters, "My mother made me eat it. And I'm president of the United States, and I'm not going to eat any more broccoli!"

We've all been told to eat healthy in order to grow healthy. In some sense, the same is true of spiritual growth. God expects us to put off the old and put on new life in Christ (Col. 3:10), grow in our ability to love others (Jn. 13:35), press on to know Jesus intimately (Phil. 3:12), and be transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). He expects us to change and become more like Him.

Unfortunately, for many Christians, developing healthy spiritual habits can feel like being forced to eat broccoli. Yet Hebrews 11:6 says God is a "rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." King David repeatedly claimed God (more than water or comfort) satisfied those who earnestly sought Him (Ps. 63:1). And Jesus made it clear that seeking God and His righteousness is the essence of what it means to trust the Almighty (Mt. 6:33).

So, developing habits that help us seek an intimate, personal relationship with God is not "broccoli for the soul" but how we actually live in communion with the Lord on a daily basis. Developing spiritual disciplines teaches us to enjoy the intimacy of seeking His face and being in His presence as He reshapes our thoughts and affections.

Of course, it's important to remember that working to change

ourselves does not save us from sin or make us more lovable to God. Healthy spiritual habits do not make us Christians. We are saved by God's grace through our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ who gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sin and arose from the grave.

Change comes after salvation, and it involves the methodical work of daily following God. It

is the discipline involved in submitting to the Spirit's work in us to transform us.

Certain biblical practices deepen our walks with God and are essential to our growing love for Him. Regular commitment to prayer, fasting, worship, the community of believers, and memorizing Scripture helps us seek and enjoy God more day by day.

WHAT IS BIBLICAL MEDITATION?

Biblical meditation is the practice of thoughtfully, repetitively, and responsively reflecting on a truth or passage of Scripture. The Bible teaches that meditation is a vital part of growing in our love of the Lord.

The Jewish patriarch Isaac habitually meditated in the fields around sunset (Gen. 24:63). Moses mentored Joshua to keep the Law by meditating on it, and God agreed (Josh. 1:6–8). David meditated by sitting before the Lord prior to prayer (2 Sam. 7:18), and in Psalm 63:6 he wrote about spending nights meditating on his bed about God's character. Psalm 1 claims a person who meditates on God's Word will be blessed.

Today, meditation may bring to mind images of yoga, mantras, and eastern mysticism. But those pagan practices,

which attempt to empty your mind, are exactly the opposite of biblical meditation. Rather than emptying your mind, God wants to fill it with truth about Him! Biblical meditation is one way to do that.

What we think about affects our perspectives and behaviors. When we think a lot about food, we eat more. When we think too much about something we'd like to own, we usually buy it. This is why the Bible teaches us to fill our minds with Scripture: It changes us.

HOW TO MEDITATE

Psalm 119:97–104 is particularly helpful in teaching us how to meditate on God and His Word, which should be done thoughtfully, repetitively, and responsively:

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

Thoughtfully. Four times the passage says meditating gives us understanding. The psalmist was not talking about listening to a sermon or even personal study. He was talking about thinking about God and His Word and considering the implications.

Of course, we must spend time studying in order to reflect. But *thoughtfully* doesn't mean trying to determine "What does this passage mean to me?" as much as "What does this passage mean in its context?" We want to know what Scripture says about God and His character, which might require picking up a commentary to learn more about a passage.

Meditation is the next step in taking the truth we're reflecting on and reviewing it in God's presence. As we do so, God can grant us insight. Meditation is not the same as reading your Bible 15 minutes each day, which is more like fast food. Meditation is more like feasting.

The great 19th-century English missionary George Müller put it this way: "What is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God—not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe. No, we must consider what we read, ponder over it, and apply it to our hearts."¹

If the thoughtful work of meditating on God's Word is food for the soul, how often do we starve ourselves or settle for spiritual fast food?

Repetitively. Biblical meditation is also repetitive. First, what we actually say in meditation can be repetitive. The Hebrew word translated as "meditation" in verse 97 carries the idea of repetition, murmuring quietly again and again—not like a mantra but, rather, like a conversation that explores all aspects of a topic.

Have you ever read a passage of Scripture 20 times in a row or written it out or prayed through each phrase? These are wonderful exercises. They teach us how to emphasize different words and phrases and give us an understanding of how the clauses and ideas fit together.

Though this technique can lead to memorization, memorization is not the goal. Rather, the goal is to get to know the passage intimately as God illuminates it. Most of us have a tendency to move quickly past verses we think we know. Biblical meditation calls us to know God by taking time to dwell, repetitively, in a truth He has revealed through His Word.

Second, biblical meditation can be repetitive because it should become a habit of sorts, part of our routine. Whether daily or weekly, spending focused time in God's presence reflecting on the implications of His words can only deepen our relationships with our almighty Creator.

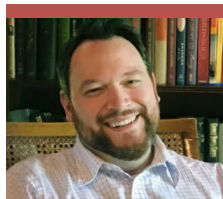
Responsively. Psalm 119:97–104 lists the many benefits of meditating: It makes us wise, fosters a passion for the sweetness of God's words, changes our behavior, keeps us from evil, and causes us to hate sin. In other words, meditating gives us spiritual reflexes so that we begin to respond to Scripture automatically. We put it into practice like a reflex action. This is what we call application.

Biblical meditation forces us to consider what God is calling us to do with what He is showing us. When Scripture penetrates deeply into our hearts and minds, the Holy Spirit lights a fire in us to live out the truths we're learning. Like a reflex, we use those truths, rather than merely know them; and we grow in the faith.

So, let Scripture sink deeply into your heart. Linger over God's promises. I guarantee His words will taste all the sweeter to those who put in the work to develop this healthy habit (v. 103). Much, much better than broccoli!

ENDNOTE

- 1 Cited on goodreads.com, George Müller, *The Autobiography of George Müller* <tinyurl.com/GRMuller-1>.



Dan Price

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

WHAT THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION IS REALLY ABOUT

BY CAROLINE GLICK

(JNS)—The recent U.S. congressional drama about funding for Iron Dome was merely a sideshow to a proposed amendment by Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI) that supports Palestinian terrorism against Israel.

By first scuttling and then opposing the funding of Iron Dome (a joint Israeli-U.S. system that is entirely defensive and works only to prevent the wanton murder of Israeli civilians by indiscriminate Arab missile attacks), lawmakers voiced their support for the Palestinians' terror-war against Israel.

But for all the drama that surrounded the Iron Dome bill, the stunt was a sideshow. The main anti-Israel action was taking place elsewhere.

A few hours before the U.S. House vote on Iron Dome, Levin, a Jewish lawmaker from Michigan, submitted his own bill. And it is far more dangerous to Israel than his fellow progressive lawmakers' "nay" vote on Iron Dome.

Cosponsored by 24 other members (seven of whom are also Jewish), Levin's bill supports Palestinian terrorism while adding a laundry list of anti-Israel policies. It amends the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987 by giving the administration authority to permit the opening of a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office in Washington, DC, and to transfer funds to the PLO-Palestinian Authority (PA) regardless of its terrorist activities.

It also enables the administration to transfer funds directly to the Palestinian Authority even if the PA continues to pay salaries to terrorists and their families, contrary to the 2018 Taylor Force Act that bars the United States from funding the PA so long as it pays such salaries.

Palestinian Media Watch has reported the PA already believes U.S. funding will be restored despite the fact that nearly 10 percent of the PA budget goes to terrorists and their families. Levin's bill also:

1. Bars Israel from using weapons it receives from the United States to defend itself in Judea, Samaria, Gaza, and unified Jerusalem.
2. Discriminates against Israel by legitimizing the anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign against the Jewish state.
3. Bars Israel from marking goods from Judea, Samaria, and Gaza as "Made in Israel." Instead, Israel would be required

to mark them as made in the "West Bank/Gaza."

4. Restricts Israel's scientific, agricultural, and other cooperative agreements with the United States to areas Israel controlled in 1949. Israeli institutions and citizens beyond those areas would be boycotted.
5. Requires the administration to designate all Israeli communities in

Judea and Samaria as illegal. Israeli neighborhoods built in Jerusalem since 1967 also would be illegal.

Ironically, Levin named the bill "The Two-State Solution Act," telling us what progressives really mean when they say "two-state solution." The bill doesn't say Palestinians and Israelis must resolve their conflict through negotiations. Peace talks are irrelevant to Levin and his cosponsors.

Instead, the bill sets out the means the United States must use to coerce Israel into surrendering to terrorism. So "two-state solution" is code for supporting Palestinian terror against Israel.

The theoretical concept of a two-state solution is founded on the notion that a Palestinian state would be at peace with Israel. Yet, for the past 100 years, the Palestinians have rejected any concept of a two-state solution that isn't simply a means to advance their unchanging goal of eliminating the Jewish state.

Since the 1920s, they have stated and demonstrated that for them, the point of a Palestinian state is both to ethnically cleanse the areas they receive of all Jewish presence and, as they have done in Gaza for the past 16 years, use the areas as bases for continued war against the rest of Israel.

A recent poll shows the Palestinians' view of the situation is no different than it was in 1920 or 1947 or 1967 or 1993. For the Palestinians, "the two-state solution" is not a means to achieve either peace or Palestinian statehood. It is a means to advance to the next phase of the war to annihilate Israel.



Caroline Glick

is an award-winning columnist and author of *The Israeli Solution: A One-State Plan for Peace in the Middle East*. This article first appeared in *Israel Hayom*.

BYE-BYE BEN & JERRY'S

New York and Florida will pull a total of \$250 million from investments in Unilever, the parent company of Ben & Jerry's, because the Vermont ice cream maker will stop selling its product in Judea and Samaria in 2023. New York plans to pull \$111 million, JNS.org reported; and Florida is pulling \$139 million, according to *The Times of Israel*. Thirty-five U.S. states have anti-boycott laws. "Our review of the activities of the company, and its subsidiary Ben & Jerry's, found they engaged in BDS [Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions] activities," New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli said. JNS.org reported, "New York's pension fund, the nation's third-largest, invests more than \$800 million in retirement funds in Israel."

BEWARE OF WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

A new booklet by writer John Aman warns Christians about organizations funded by billionaire George Soros that steer Jews and Christians away from supporting Israel. *Hijacked: How George Soros and Friends Exploit Your Church* exposes how they "flip" support from Israel to the Palestinians via J Street and the Telos Group. J Street is "a left-wing Palestinian-friendly Jewish lobby now positioned as an alternative to the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC)," Aman said. Telos brings Christians, often high-profile ones, to the Holy Land but slants the tours against Israel. "It's part of a propaganda or cognitive war against Israel," wrote Dexter Van Zile, with CAMERA. The booklet is available from D. James Kennedy Ministries.

47 NATIONS SIGN PLEDGE

As neo-Nazism soars, 47 countries have pledged to combat Jew hatred, reported *worldisraelnews.com*. The UN's Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which routinely condemns Israel, specifically cited "the recent sharp rise in anti-Semitism and

neo-Nazism and said there was a direct connection to the Covid-19 pandemic," the news source said. Prepared statements, including one from Israel, said anti-Semitism comes from the extreme Left, as well as the fascist Right.

ISRAEL DEVELOPS ORAL COVID VACCINE

Israel's Oravax Medical has received clearance from South Africa to enroll volunteers in a Phase I clinical trial of its novel oral COVID-19 vaccine. CEO Nadav Kidron said the company wants to move directly into Phase II/III trials and appeal for emergency use approval, reported *The Jerusalem Post*. Part of the Phase I trial is supposed to take place in Israel, pending approval from the Health Ministry. The company was founded with technology developed by Jerusalem's Hadassah-University Medical Center.

BARI WEISS: WHAT GOES ON AT THE NEW YORK TIMES

Former *New York Times* opinion editor Bari Weiss said *The Times* rejected her column about anti-Semitic attacks because the perpetrators "weren't white supremacists." *The Algemeiner* reported that Weiss "had drafted a column in the wake of two deadly attacks on Jews in late 2019, including a mass shooting at a Jersey City, NJ kosher grocery store and a stabbing at the home of a Monsey, NY rabbi during Hanukkah. 'I wrote a piece . . . called "America's Bloody Hanukkah," or "America's Bloody Pogrom."'" She was told, "We can't really run this" because, basically, "the people carrying out the attacks weren't white supremacists carrying tiki torches."

ISRAEL APPROVES \$9.4 BILLION FOR ARAB SECTOR

The Israeli government has approved a massive, \$9.45 billion, five-year socio-economic plan to improve life for its Arab citizens. "Our goal is to reduce the gaps in education, social welfare, women's employment and the economic-municipal sphere

in particular. The more we intensify education for mathematics and the sciences in the Arab sector and increase the Arab participation in the high-tech market, the more we will all gain," said Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

NO IMPOSSIBLE PORK!

Apparently, there won't be Impossible Pork on kosher menus anytime soon. The Orthodox Union refused to certify it, even though it's entirely plant based. Yet there are kosher substitutes for cheeseburgers, bacon bits, crab, and shrimp. So what's the difference? *Worldisraelnews.com* asked Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz. Pork, he said, "is so identified as the sign of *traif* [nonkosher], as a betrayal of Jewish commitment to *kashrut*, that giving a *hashgacha* [certification] even on fake pork is like coming to synagogue wearing a swastika tie."

A NEW PALESTINIAN LIE

The Palestinian Authority (PA) told a UN conference on climate change that Israel is destroying the environment, reported *worldisraelnews.com*. However, the PA "is the primary and almost sole environmental contaminator in Judea and Samaria. . . . The Prat Stream is polluted from sewage coming from Al-Bireh. The Shibban Stream is polluted by the slaughterhouses of Ramallah. Nahal Alexander is contaminated by PA oil mills in Samaria. The Hebron River is polluted by Hebron's marble industry. The Ramallah municipality poured massive mounds of trash into an abandoned quarry in the Binyamin region. More than 10,000 cubic feet of garbage were dumped there for weeks and then set on fire. The fire burned for almost a week, and the smoke reached the outskirts of Jerusalem."

For news about Israel updated daily, log on to [foi.org/news](https://www.foi.org/news).



PHOTO: THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL ARCHIVE

“After all they have done to hurt us, we are still not people of revenge.

by Zvi Kalisher

Many people do not want to talk about the Holocaust, especially the elderly, who suffered in the death camps as I did. Our young people know of the Holocaust only from hearing stories. They are angry and want vengeance on the oppressors, and the Orthodox quickly find the passages in Scripture that speak of revenge, such as Psalm 58:10: “The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance.”

Recently I spoke with some of them and asked how old they were. They were all too young to have lived during the Holocaust of World War II. I told them it is wrong to seek vengeance. “It is written in Proverbs 24:17, ‘Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles,’” I told them.

“Of course, you can speak nicely because no one in your family was murdered,” one replied.

“You are gravely mistaken,” I said. “I was in the most dangerous places, especially the Warsaw Ghetto. It was no heaven on Earth.”

“How can you live with this burden and not take revenge?” one asked.

“If we believe in God,” I replied, “we must put our trust in Him. He is the One who takes revenge in His time. As it is written in His Holy Word, ‘Vengeance is Mine, and recompense’ (Dt. 32:35) and again in Jeremiah, ‘For this is the time of the LORD’s vengeance’” (51:6).

They were surprised. They could not understand how I, who passed through the seven halls of Hell, could be so forgiving. “You see,” I said, “though we were nearly destroyed, we still exist! A new generation that has received the Lord is growing up. We are those about whom Isaiah 49:3–6 is written, the preserved ones of Israel. We are going to those who wanted to destroy us and are showing

them who we are and what our duty is.

"We make those who were our enemies yesterday our best friends today. We cannot live all our lives by the sword. Our enemies see our goodness even now. After all they have done to hurt us, we are still not people of revenge. All the nations of the world can see what the Lord has done through Israel, His Chosen People, who bring His salvation to those who have tried to destroy them.

"So, I ask you this: Who are we before God? As the Lord says, 'Fear not, you worm Jacob' [Isa. 41:14]. This little 'worm' has the most important duty of teaching His Word to the world. The Lord clearly said, "I will help you," says the LORD' [v. 14]. What can be better than this? His Word is eternal. If I can forgive, who are you that you are so stiff-necked and cannot forgive?"

They wanted to know how I could feel this way and if I were crazy.

"Do you believe in the almighty God or in your teachers?" I asked.

"We believe in God and also our teachers, as they have shown us how to obey God," one answered.

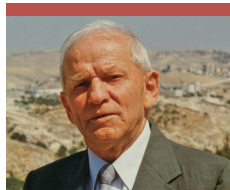
"It is clearly written in Psalm 118:8-9, 'It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes,'" I said. "In whom have you believed? You have lost your direction and are at a crossroads, waiting for someone to bring you to the right way. Can it be that I am the one who will help you?"

"Anything is possible," one said, "But you do not look like someone who believes in God."

"Only because of my outward appearance?" I asked. "It is written in Proverbs 31:30, 'Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing.' I do not come to you in special clothing like the Orthodox wear. What I told you during these few hours you can read for yourself in the Holy Bible. The Lord also said in Leviticus 26 that if you will obey His commands, He will bless you. I do not come like your teachers and read fictitious stories to you. I read from the Holy Bible!"

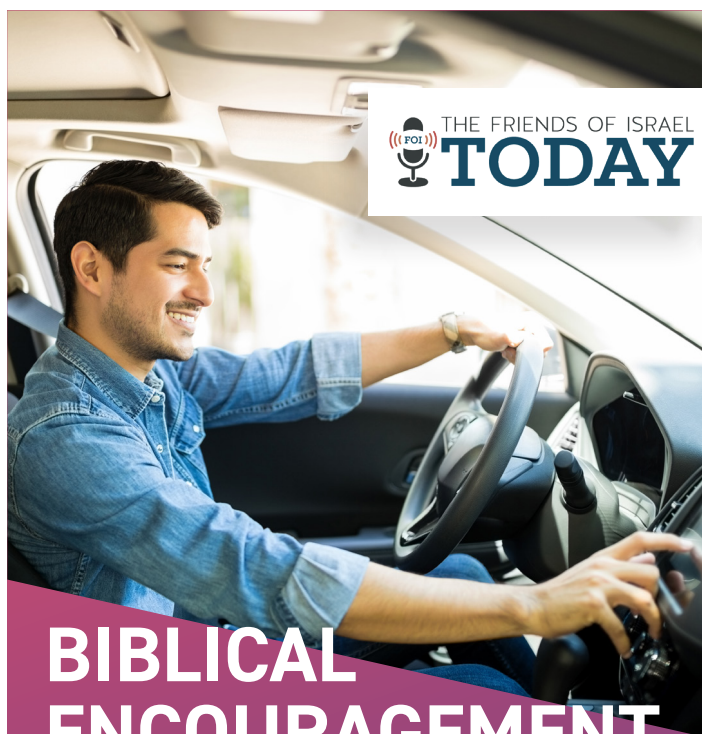
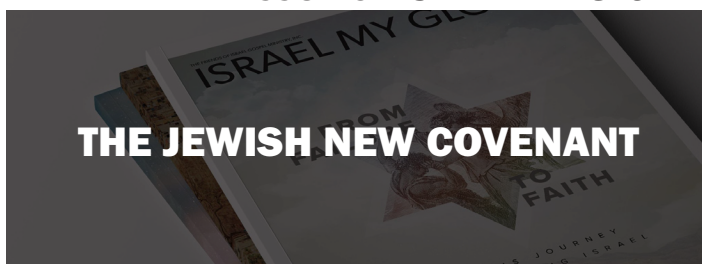
Then I read to them about the Lord's great love from John 3:16 and Isaiah 53. I pray these men will come to know the Lord and His peace and forgiveness.

From the Friends of Israel archives



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

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **ISRAEL MY GLORY**



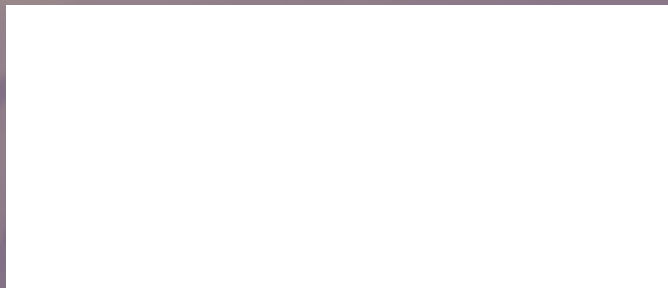
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