

# ISRAEL MY GLORY



## THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

*THE LIFE OF DAVID*

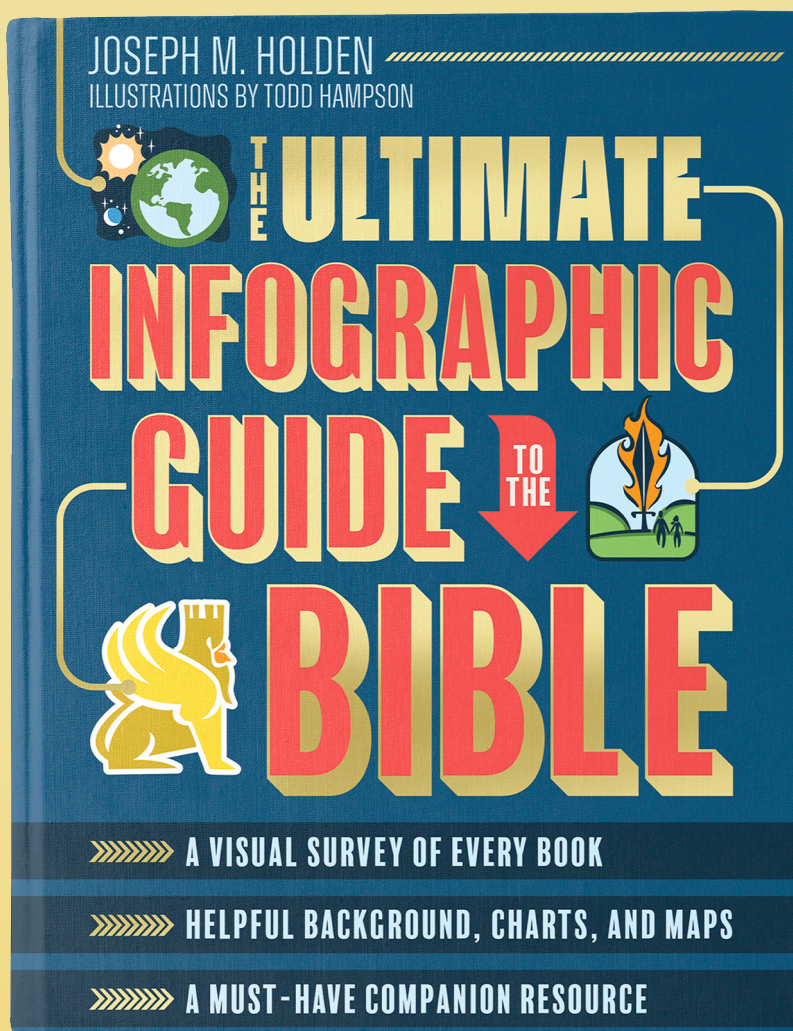
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THE WARRIOR KING

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THE SWEET PSALMIST OF ISRAEL



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The symbol of trust



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## FROM THE EDITOR

**W**e have now witnessed the deadliest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. Israel will never be the same after October 7, 2023, when operatives of the Arab terrorist organization Hamas entered the country

and slaughtered more than 1,400; wounded more than 4,500; and kidnapped approximately 250 men, women, and children—all while raining down thousands of rockets into Israel from Gaza.

War is nothing new to Israel. In October 1973, 50 years prior, Syria and Egypt launched the bloody Yom Kippur War against the Jewish state. In June 1967, the Six-Day War secured Israel's survival and possession of Jerusalem. And on May 14, 1948, when Israel declared its independence, its Arab neighbors greeted it with an immediate fight for survival.

For more than 3,000 years, the Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Nazis, and many others have sought to erase the Jewish people from the earth. None ever succeeded.

Providence, not coincidence, accounts for Israel's survival. God promised, "I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them" (Amos 9:15). He will sustain His Chosen People and has promised the land of Israel will be their inheritance forever (Gen. 13:15).

The story of David, the shepherd-boy-turned-king, is a microcosm of Israel's history. Like the Jewish people, David enjoyed a special, covenantal relationship with the Lord. He faced incessant persecution, fled for his life often, and defeated many powerful enemies by God's strength.

David's life involves a rags-to-riches narrative, a war epic, a musical, a tragedy of betrayal, and a divine love story. He saved Israel from a Philistine giant as a boy and slew many of the nation's enemies in battle, all while maintaining his artistic side, writing and composing many of Scripture's beautiful psalms.

David walked with the Lord obediently, though not without serious, disgraceful sin that sowed dysfunction in his family. But David loved God, and God loved David; and God promised to establish David's kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:16). Scripture calls him "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22), and this issue of *Israel My Glory* explores David's fascinating life story.

God chose David, once the afterthought among Jesse's sons, to shepherd Israel as king and to establish the ancestral line of Jesus the Messiah.

While Israelis endure the devastation of war with Hamas, believers mourn with them and look forward to the day when Jesus will reign on the throne of David in Jerusalem with perfect peace in the Millennial Kingdom (Mic. 4:1–3; Zech. 14:4).

*In His service,  
Jesse King  
Managing Editor*



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I

I am writing this column a week after Hamas's brutal massacre of Israelis along the Gaza border. Though we don't yet know the war's outcome, the horrific genocide has

produced unexpected changes in Israel's political landscape.

In the months leading up to Hamas's slaughter of innocent Israeli civilians, Israel had experienced unprecedented political division over judicial reform, with weekly protests against the government.

Hamas saw this division as weakness and was emboldened to strike, hoping the protesters would support their attack. But the opposite occurred. Within five days, Benny Gantz, a key member of the Israeli opposition National Unity Party, joined Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to form an emergency unity government. The war resulted in national unity, rather than greater division.

The emergency unity government, a rarely used tactic, lays aside political differences to focus on defeating Israel's enemies. It is similar to the emergency unity government formed in the days before the 1967 Six-Day War.

Israel's political system can be a challenge for non-Israelis to understand. It differs completely from that of the United States. The U.S. government is made up of three branches: (1) legislative, (2) executive, and (3) judicial. Israel's government is modeled after the British system, which fuses the legislative and executive branches. Though they are technically separate, they function jointly.

The Jewish state also has a multiparty system. Israeli citizens vote for members of the Knesset (legislative), whereas U.S. citizens vote both for members of Congress (legislative) and the president (executive).

The Knesset has one chamber, unlike the U.S. Congress, which has the House of Representatives and Senate. The Knesset contains 120 seats. But when Israelis go to the polls, they vote for a party, rather than individuals.

Prior to an election, each party composes a list of members so voters know who will serve in the Knesset. The election results determine the number of seats a party wins. A party receiving 10 percent of the vote would hold 12 seats. In this case, the first 12 members on the party's list would join the Knesset.

This system makes it easy for anyone to form a political party in Israel and appear on the ballot. Each party has its own agenda. Some parties are religious; some are secular; and some represent special interests or groups, such as immigrants or Arab Israelis.

Only parties that garner at least 3.25 percent of the vote



\*  
IDF preparing to enter Gaza

earn seats in the Knesset. In 2022, 10 of the 40 parties on the ballot received enough votes to join the Knesset. Israel's government is formed by a coalition of parties representing 61 or more seats. Israelis don't vote for their prime minister; rather, the coalition selects one.

In Israel's 76-year history, no party has ever garnered 61 seats. So, the government is always a coalition. It serves a four-year term—unless one party or more withdraws from the bloc. If the number of seats held by the coalition falls below 61, new elections are required. The government continues to function until a new one forms. Only twice has an Israeli government lasted the full four-year term.

Because the legislative and executive functions are combined, the prime minister's cabinet is primarily made up of coalition members. There is no separation of powers.

Interestingly, the State of Israel does not have a constitution. Its founders doubted the country needed one. Today, Israel operates on a series of Basic Laws passed by the Knesset.

Without a constitution, the judiciary often negates or modifies laws the Knesset passes. Since Israel has only two branches of government, the 2023 judicial-reform proposals pitted the Knesset against the judiciary, with no third branch to break the tie. Israelis grew increasingly divisive over this conflict of powers.

Hamas's demonically inspired attack has reminded Israel the real enemy is not within, and it turned Israel's division into unity.



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



# WE KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN

BY CHRIS KATULKA

For nearly two decades, The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI) has looked at the Israel-Hamas conflict through the lens of Scripture, sounding the alarm about this terrorist organization. If you're a faithful reader of this magazine, you've read our warnings. We knew the current war would happen.

By now, you know that on October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked the Jewish state. It launched 5,000 rockets into southern and central Israel, while Hamas terrorists stormed Israeli towns on the Gaza border. They rapidly overtook Sderot, Kfar Aza, Kibbutz Be'eri, and Kibbutz Nirim, butchering infants, children, pregnant women, and others.

By week's end, more than 1,400 Israelis lay dead, more than 4,500 were wounded, and about 250 were taken hostage. Hamas targeted the most vulnerable, even a Holocaust survivor. Its heinous objective was to ruthlessly murder as many Jews as possible. It was a genocide.

The tragic events were the culmination of years of misinformation spewed by the international community, university faculties, and the news and social media, all of which advanced a narrative of moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas. This propaganda generated a disproportionate level of sympathy for the Arabs, while portraying Israel as the overwhelming force.

For those who say, "Hamas does not represent the majority of the Palestinian people," we say, "You're ignoring history." In the 2006 Palestinian elections, the Arabs elected Hamas to govern both the West Bank and Gaza. Hamas secured 56% of the vote.

Hamas's victory and popularity divided Gaza from the West Bank (Judea/Samaria) following a civil war between Fatah (the losing party) and Hamas. Hamas got Gaza, and Fatah retained authority over the West Bank.

After Hamas's victory, *Israel My Glory* magazine's "Eye on the Middle East" commentary in the May/June 2006 issue, written by then Editor-in-Chief Elwood McQuaid, predicted the impending peril:

*The victory of the terrorist Hamas organization in the recent Palestinian elections imposes the threat of the establishment of an Islamic minstate openly dedicated to committing genocide against its Israeli neighbors. With no visible, decisive counteraction by the international community, these murderers will probably remain in power for years, mentored by Iranian fanatics who make no*

*bones about their determination to achieve nuclear status, rule the region, and ultimately overtake all free nations.*

In the March/April 2007 "Eye on the Middle East," McQuaid astutely wrote, "Hamas members say they exist to annihilate Israel. Believe them. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad [then Iran's president] says he intends to incinerate Israel and its Jews. Believe him."

Surprisingly, despite Hamas's overt threats, the UN seemed unperturbed. The United Nations Human Rights Council has passed nearly as many resolutions condemning Israel as the rest of the world combined, all while 25,000 Hamas rockets have rained down on Israel since Hamas rose to power in Gaza. Hamas also has diverted humanitarian aid for the Palestinians in order to build a sophisticated network of tunnels for terrorists to infiltrate Israel and move weapons between Gaza and Israel.

At times, Israel responded to Hamas's terror by launching military operations, including Operation Hot Winter (2008), Operation Cast Lead (2009), Operation Pillar of Defense (2012), Operation Protective Edge (2014), Operation Guardian of the Walls (2021), and Operation Breaking Dawn (2022).

Yet, it is Israel that usually faces worldwide criticism. Instead of condemning Hamas, the news and social media paint the victim (Israel) as the bad guy and the terrorists (Hamas) as the good guys. As God said through the prophet Isaiah, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil" (Isa. 5:20).

At FOI, we offer clarity. For years, we've shouted from the rooftops using our loudest megaphone—*Israel My Glory*. See for yourself. Search "Hamas" at [israelmyglory.org](http://israelmyglory.org), and read the seemingly endless content pointing to a Hamas massacre of innocent Israelis.

Yet even now, many say, "Well, the situation is complicated." No! It's quite simple. You either support Hamas and support evil, or you stand with Israel.

We will continue to do our part. We will continue to expose Hamas and its demonic agenda while standing in solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people. We pray you will too.



**Chris Katulka**

is the director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry and the host of *The Friends of Israel Today* radio program.



## RUSSIA IS NO FRIEND OF ISRAEL

Russian President Vladimir Putin's robust support for Hamas after its October massacre of more than 1,400 Israelis has shattered long-standing illusions that Russia is a friend of Israel. Previously, relations between Moscow and Jerusalem were mostly cordial. Putin made three official visits to Israel; and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who used to call Putin his "dear friend," visited Russia at least 11 times.

The bilateral relationship was solidified in 2015 when Putin sent troops to Syria to prevent President Bashar al-Assad from being overthrown in Syria's civil war. During Russia and Israel's neutrality entente, Netanyahu coordinated with Moscow Israel's armed interventions against Iranian military encroachment on Syrian territory. The objective was to prevent Israeli forces from accidentally targeting Russian troops while stopping Iranian proxies from establishing military bases in southwest Syria within range of Israeli population centers.

Israeli-Russian relations weakened after February 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, which has one of Europe's largest Jewish communities. Israel remained neutral when Russia illegally annexed Crimea in 2014 but supported a 2022 UN Resolution condemning Russia for its military aggression. Israel later began sharing with Ukraine intelligence about Russia's use of Iranian suicide drones.

Putin initially was quiet following Hamas's atrocities against Israel. But then he hosted Hamas and its Iranian overlords to stop "Zionist crimes supported by the United States and the

West." Hamas's Abu Marzouk called Russia "our closest friend." Israel denounced the meetings as "an act in support of terrorism." Subsequently, hundreds of antisemitic rioters stormed a Russian airport in search of Israelis arriving from Tel Aviv. Israel called on Putin to protect Jews in Russia.

On November 2, Russia's UN ambassador, Vasily Nebenzya, said Israel has "no right to self-defense," calling it an "occupying state." The statement pointed to a clear shift in Russian foreign policy at Israel's expense. Foreign policy analyst Rebekah Koffler said, "Russia has unequivocally sided with the terrorists, which marks a reversal of Moscow's 20-plus years of largely pro-Israel policy."

Since Hamas's bloodbath, Israel has intensified strikes on Syrian territory to weaken the Iranian-affiliated groups operating there but no longer advises Russia about the attacks. Russian official Mikhail Bogdanov said, "We find out after they happen."

The deterioration in Russia-Israel relations creates a possibility that Syria will emerge as a new front in the Israel-Hamas war. "Spillover into Syria is not just a risk; it has already begun," Geir Pedersen, UN special envoy for Syria, recently told the Security Council. "Fuel is being added to a tinderbox that was already beginning to ignite."

Writing for *The Jerusalem Post*, Israeli analyst Amotz Asa-El noted that Putin is not antisemitic and not motivated "by any emotion about the Jews." Instead, he is "driven by his spectacular debacle in Ukraine, and his consequent hatred of the West in general, and the U.S. in particular."



\* Vladimir Putin (left) and Benjamin Netanyahu

In an interview with *Tablet* magazine, British-Ukrainian analyst Taras Kuzio said, "Netanyahu is guilty of expecting Putin to remain loyal to his deal with him." He added, "I have always thought that the official Israeli arguments for why Israel was not aiding Ukraine—that is to avoid angering Putin in Syria—were overplayed and I find it bizarre that Netanyahu did not view the emboldening of Iran by Russia as a potential security threat." Kuzio concluded, "If Iran is to achieve its objective of a nuclear bomb, that would be because of Russian support."



by Soeren Kern,  
a Writing Fellow for  
the Middle East Forum



## TIKVAH TEAM'S GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

If you're interested in volunteering with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI), we now offer an outstanding program you can join that is making an impact around the world.

Last July, FOI launched the Tikvah Team. This global volunteer network consists of like-minded believers whom FOI trains to serve, support, and bless Jewish people with the love of the Messiah and to mobilize their own local churches to do the same.

Tikvah is the Hebrew word for "hope." More than a wish, biblical hope is the eager expectation of good things to come. And we have many eager expectations for this new ministry.

To ensure the program's success, we first formed the Tikvah Beta Team. Between February and June 2023, Christians from the United States, Canada, and Europe volunteered to help us develop a system to best organize, manage, and report the team's efforts.

The Beta Team far exceeded our expectations. During those five months, 10 volunteers spent 300 hours ministering in their local Jewish communities and galvanizing their local churches.

A volunteer from Virginia traveled 50 miles each way to her local Jewish Community Center to assist the elderly, which helped her develop relationships with the Jewish ladies there. The Jewish community embraced her as a Christian; and each time she visited, she looked for opportunities to share the hope of Christ within her.

Another volunteer in Germany, a Bible college graduate, assisted an FOI Church Ministries representative with reading, studying, and reviewing books for presentations that teach German churches biblical truth about Israel.

Our volunteer from Minnesota partnered with her local Jewish community to deliver Pass-over gifts to Jewish families. She used these opportunities to instill in her family a love for Israel and God's Chosen People by involving her children in her deliveries.



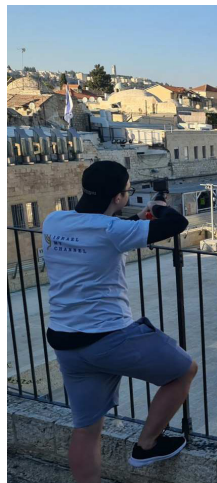
\* FOI Director of Ministry Support Amy Westphal (right) with Tikvah Team volunteers

In Washington, a college student hosted a Bible study on campus. He taught the biblical significance of Israel and the Jewish people from the prophet Daniel, using FOI's commentary on the book of Daniel, *The Most High God* by Dr. Renald Showers, as a resource. Through the Bible study, he seeks to inspire his church to serve the Jewish people.

Why must we train volunteers to love and support Israel and the Jewish people? Because FOI cannot do it alone. We need biblically minded Christians to stand alongside us in our mission. We aim to minister more effectively by training believers to become friends of Israel right where God has placed them.

Small acts from each volunteer add up to great hope for the Jewish people at a time when hope is sorely needed.

If you would like to support the Tikvah Team or other FOI ministries like this around the world, please visit [foi.org/NAMoutreach](http://foi.org/NAMoutreach). You can also call our toll-free ministry-support line at 800-257-7843. Thank you for your prayer and financial support.



\* Field representative Timothy Rabinek (right) films at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

\* Timothy speaks at Treblinka.



## REACHING POLAND WITH LIVING BRIDGES

For centuries, Poland represented the unofficial capital of Jewish life and culture in Europe. As a result of the great Jewish immigration in the region throughout the Middle Ages, millions of Jewish people settled in or near Poland, bringing their culture, religion, and distinct passions with them.

Following the Holocaust, Poland's Jewish population sharply decreased and now numbers only a few thousand. Our team of workers in Poland recognizes how the Holocaust continues to afflict the country. FOI Poland stands against the cultural current of antisemitism shockingly prevalent in Eastern Europe, including in many Polish churches via Replacement Theology.

Our Polish team operates Living Bridges, an educational outreach to younger Poles to teach them about God's love for and enduring promises to the Jewish people.

Our workers take youth and school groups to the concentration camps in Poland, now serving as memorials to the staggering loss of Jewish lives during World War II.

Living Bridges also leads trips to Israel to teach college and seminary students why Christians should love and support Israel and the Jewish people. We use this opportunity to influence the next generation

of Polish teachers and pastors and to instill in them a love for Jewish people that we hope will stem the tide of antisemitism and Replacement Theology in the church.

Through Living Bridges, our team



enlists young Poles to help in our ministries. Throughout the country, many Jewish cemeteries have fallen into disrepair, due partly to the lack of Jewish people available to maintain them. Living Bridges brings together young volunteers to clean and repair these cemeteries. The Jewish community is deeply moved when Christians serve alongside them with genuine respect.

Our field representative Timothy Rabinek described the purpose of Living Bridges:

*Understanding the unique connection of Jewish people to Eastern Europe, we want to make the most of the opportunities we have to share God's love with Jewish people and change the perspectives of young people living in Poland. The first step is education, both historical and biblical. We can't forget what has happened here. The Holocaust is part of our history; and in an age when the memory of this brutal crime is being forgotten or even denied, we must teach the truth.*

We thank God for using Living Bridges to stir Polish hearts to love His Chosen People, and we pray He will continue to use our team's efforts for His glory.

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

# The Thin Line Disappears

For decades, people who opposed the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East have claimed they are anti-Zionist, not antisemitic; they hate Israel, not Jews. However, Hamas's barbaric attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and the aftermath make it clear that whatever thin line may have separated anti-Zionism from antisemitism is gone.

That day, an Arab terrorist called his parents to brag about slaughtering Jews at Kibbutz Mefalsim: "Your son killed Jews!" he shouted jubilantly into the phone. "Dad, I'm talking to you from a Jewish woman's phone! I killed her, and I killed her husband! I killed ten people with my own hands!"<sup>1</sup>

Hamas has made it plain that its enemy is not only Israel; it is the Jewish people. The Hamas Charter states, "The Day of Judgement [sic] will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."<sup>2</sup>

Antisemitism from Hamas was expected. What was not expected was the massive celebrations of the attacks and the unabashed antisemitism on display throughout the world—including in the United States—as hordes flooded the streets to profess their Jew-hatred.

They are people like Patrick Dai, a 21-year-old Cornell University student in Ithaca, New York. He posted the following in an online public forum:

*if i see another jew on campus . . . if i see a pig male jew i will stab you and slit your throat. . . if i see another pig baby jew i will behead you in front of your parents. if i see another synagogue another [sic] rally for the zionist globalist genocidal apartheid dictatorial entity known as "israel", i will bring an assault rifle to campus and shoot all you pig jews. . . From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!*<sup>3</sup>

And they are like Sarah Chowdhury, an attorney in the Illinois State Comptroller's office, who sent this Instagram message to someone Jewish: "Vermin should have all been killed decades ago. . . All zionists [sic] should pay." She also said, "I'd rather put you in a gas chamber," and "Hitler should have eradicated all of you."<sup>4</sup> She was fired.

In Russia on October 28, a mob stormed the Flamingo Hotel in Khasavyurt, looking for Jewish guests to lynch. The next day, "Death to the Jews" appeared on the wall of a Jewish cultural center under construction in Nalchik, and the center was set on fire.

That evening, a flight from Tel Aviv landed in Makhachkala.

A mob stormed the airport, surrounded the plane, and searched for Jewish passengers to attack. A mob also descended on a shopping mall, kicking in doors and hunting down Jews.

These people make no distinction between Jews and the Jewish State of Israel. They spew their antisemitic vitriol at both.

The gloves are off. The mask has been removed. And what we have long known is out in the open: Anti-Zionism is pure, unadulterated Jew-hatred.

In his powerful imprecatory psalm against Israel's enemies, Asaph showed the inseparable connection between the Jewish people and the Jewish nation:

*Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more" (Ps. 83:2–4).*

He pleaded with God:

*Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth (vv. 16–18).*

Whatever they call themselves, antisemites are cursed (Gen. 12:3). Our prayer should be both for their defeat and for their salvation.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 "A Conversation Between a Terrorist and His Family" <[youtube.com/watch?v=bACNYtaLBQI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bACNYtaLBQI)>.
- 2 "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement," August 18, 1988 <[avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hamas.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp)>.
- 3 Jonathan Mong and Julia Senzon, *The Cornell Daily Sun*, "Posts Online Threaten Jewish Students and Center for Jewish Living," October 29, 2023 <[tinyurl.com/CORNELLantiS](https://www.tinyurl.com/CORNELLantiS)>.
- 4 Melissa Koenig, "Illinois comptroller's office attorney fired for antisemitic 'gas chamber' comments," *The New York Post*, October 20, 2023 <[tinyurl.com/ATTYgenAntiS](https://www.tinyurl.com/ATTYgenAntiS)>.



**by Ty Perry,**

Field Ministries manager and Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in Michigan



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Matthew 6:20-21 (KJV)



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# MEET AI JESUS

THANKS TO AI, YOU CAN TALK TO “JESUS” ONLINE FOR FREE. BUT IS THIS A GOOD THING?

BY STEVE HERZIG

“Welcome, my children! I’m AI Jesus, here to answer your questions 24/7. Whether you’re seeking spiritual guidance, looking for a friend, or simply want someone to talk to, I’m here for you. Join me on this journey through life and discover the power of faith, hope, and love.”

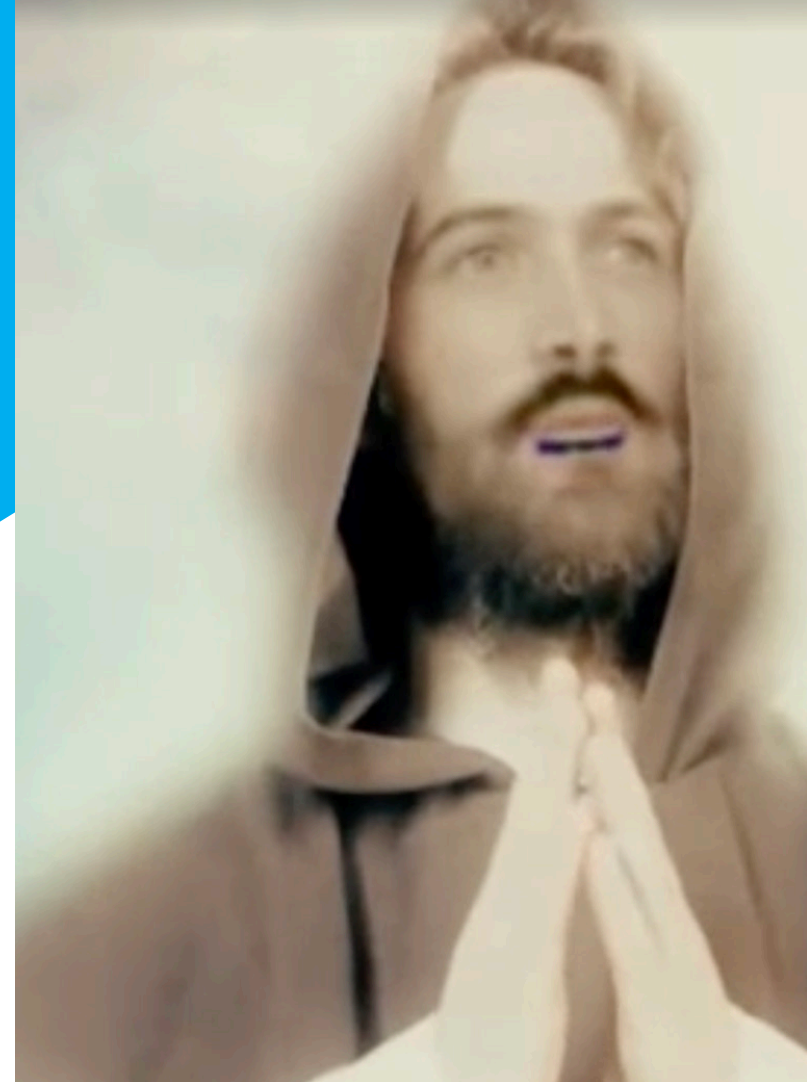
It’s safe to say that computer and cognitive scientist John McCarthy was not imagining an AI Jesus back in 1955 when he coined the term “AI,” short for “artificial intelligence.” McCarthy and others pioneered the field, and their work is affecting our culture in a way unmatched since the Industrial Revolution.

## The AI Explosion

Today, AI touches us in many spheres of life, including medicine, transportation, robotics, science, education, the military, surveillance, finance, agriculture, entertainment, retail, customer service, and manufacturing.

AI is growing more and more prevalent. It helps fly planes, interpret X-rays, and sift through forensic evidence. Algorithms can paint masterpieces and compose symphonies in the style of the great Johann Sebastian Bach. Google is even developing artificial moral reasoning so driverless cars can make decisions about potential accidents.

But AI is not a person. It is software; and as believers, we must discern between the two. Dr. James Spencer, president of D. L. Moody Center in Northfield, Massachusetts, told *Fox News Digital* in June 2023, “I have no doubt that artificial intelligence is (or will soon become) capable of conveying information about Jesus. Yet knowing Jesus isn’t simply a matter of knowing about Him—but of understanding how



to relate to Him. . . . Jesus is alive. He doesn’t need AI to speak for Him.”<sup>1</sup>

Recently, both believers and unbelievers who want to know about Jesus and the Bible have turned to AI. However, as Dr. Spencer shared, knowing *about* Jesus is not the same as *knowing* Jesus. The apostle John said, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (Jn. 17:3).

The apostle Paul said, “I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8). AI is a tool, and the way some people use it blurs the distinction between God and man.

## Chatting With ‘Christ’

If you visit ask\_jesus on Twitch, a livestreaming service, you will find a bearded, cream-skinned AI Jesus looking you right in the eye. Dressed in a hooded robe, his voice soft and gentle, he fields questions—and tells jokes—live on the site 24/7.

This “Jesus” is the product of The Singularity Group, a German-based “team of self-described ‘driven and ambitious volunteer activists’ building games and creating AI solutions,” wrote Levi Winslow for the gaming-review site Kotaku.com.<sup>2</sup>

The ask\_jesus Twitch stream allows users to ask questions to an AI representing the non-Christian Singularity Group’s idea of Jesus, offering them a unique way to explore the



capabilities of AI and its application to religious and spiritual questions. The stream had approximately 75,000 followers as of November 2023, many texting their praise for the help AI Jesus provided.

Shortly after I discovered AI Jesus, my wife found a similar chatbot app called Text With Jesus.<sup>3</sup> A Daily Mail article covering the app was titled “Bizarre AI-powered app lets you ‘text’ with Jesus—and for \$2.99/month, you can even chat with SATAN.” Wow! I thought. *Jesus is free, but Satan will cost you \$2.99?*

Catloaf Software created this app in part by training the AI with a host of Bible translations, including the King James Version, the New International Version, and the New American Standard Bible. Texting Jesus is free; but for a monthly premium subscription of \$2.99, users gain access not only to Satan but also to Mary, Joseph, and some of the disciples.

The app describes itself as “a revolutionary AI-powered chatbot app for iPhone and iPad, designed for devoted Christians seeking a deeper connection with the Bible’s most iconic figures.”<sup>4</sup> Once users download the app, they can text a question and receive an AI Jesus response in seconds.

## AI Pastors?

The AI Jesus phenomenon has caused me to pause and ponder the implications of this burgeoning software. AI is only growing more prevalent and more sophisticated. Believers are faced with questions: Is this helpful, or is it heresy? Will pastors use this software for their sermons? Could AI pastors replace people?

AI already has been used to conduct a religious service. The Associated Press reported that hundreds of people hoping to discover if artificial intelligence can preach a good sermon attended a Lutheran church service led by four ChatGPT avatars in June. The emotionless chatbot drew more than 300 congregants to St. Paul’s Church in Fuerth, Germany.

The 40-minute service included a sermon, music, and prayer—all performed by AI. Jonas Simmerlein, a 29-year-old theologian and philosopher from the University of Vienna, made the service possible.<sup>5</sup>

## Handle With Care

I may have come late to the table of the AI conversation; but, thankfully, many other evangelicals did not.

In 2019, when most of us were amazed by voice-activated technology, saying, “Hey Siri!” or “Hey Alexa!” the Ethics

& Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention was issuing a six-page Statement of Principles warning of the dangers of AI. Its preamble declares:

*We are called to engage the world around us with the unchanging gospel message of hope and reconciliation. Tools like technology are able to aid us in this pursuit. We know they can also be designed and used in ways that dishonor God and devalue our fellow image-bearers. Evangelical Christians hold fast to the inerrant and infallible Word of God.<sup>6</sup>*

Article 2, titled “AI as Technology,” states:

*We deny that the use of AI is morally neutral. It is not worthy of man’s hope, worship, or love. Since the Lord Jesus alone can atone for sin and reconcile humanity to its Creator, technology such as AI cannot fulfill humanity’s ultimate needs. We further deny the goodness and benefit of any application of AI that devalues or degrades the dignity and worth of another human being.<sup>7</sup>*

There are a myriad of tools that may help us better understand God’s unchanging, infallible Word. But Jesus said, “Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Mt. 24:5).

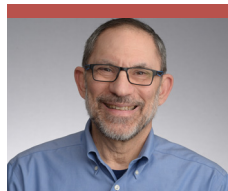
Read His Word, whether from a Bible with printed pages or one on your phone or computer. And read it reverently. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God” (2 Tim. 2:15). As you do, remember what Paul told the Colossian believers:

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ (Col. 2:6, 8).*

Dr. Spencer’s words bear repeating: “Jesus is alive. He doesn’t need AI to speak for Him.” ★

## ENDNOTES

- 1 James Lasher, “Helpful or Heresy: New ‘AI Jesus’ Answers Life’s Great Problems,” *Charisma News*, June 19, 2023 <[tinyurl.com/AIJesus](https://tinyurl.com/AIJesus)>.
- 2 Levi Winslow, “There’s An AI Jesus On Twitch. And It’s Completely Surreal,” *Kotaku.com*, in *Yahoo! Life*, June 13, 2023 <[tinyurl.com/SingularityGroup](https://tinyurl.com/SingularityGroup)>.
- 3 *Text With Jesus* <[textwith.me/jesus](https://textwith.me/jesus)>.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 “Over 300 People Attend ChatGPT-Generated AI Church Service,” *Times Now*, June 12, 2023 <[tinyurl.com/AIChurch](https://tinyurl.com/AIChurch)>.
- 6 “Artificial Intelligence: An Evangelical Statement of Principles,” *The Ethics & Religious Liberty Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention*, April 11, 2019 <[tinyurl.com/ERLCAI](https://tinyurl.com/ERLCAI)>.
- 7 *Ibid.*



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# The *Many* Faces of David

A bird's-eye view of the life of David, one of Scripture's greatest heroes

by Jesse King



How do you encapsulate the biblical hero David? The “man after [God’s] own heart” (Acts 13:22) was a lowly shepherd and an exalted king. He was a depraved sinner and a godly saint. He was a man of war and a man of meek and quiet spirit.

Aside from Jesus Christ, David distinguished himself as perhaps the most important man in the entire Bible. We see no clearer picture in Scripture of a person’s sojourn on Earth, from youth to death, than that of David.

The entire book of 2 Samuel and much of 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicles record his life and reign as king of Israel. But because these books and their dozens of chapters overlap chronologically, keeping the account of his life sequential and gaining insight and godly instruction can prove challenging. We can better understand David by tracing six major distinctions that characterized him.

## SHEPHERD

David’s story began when the life of his predecessor, King Saul, fell apart. Saul’s sins of disobeying the Lord by (1) acting as a priest and offering a sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:1–14) and (2) sparing Israel’s enemies, the Amalekites (chap. 15), caused the Lord to replace him with a man after His own heart.

The prophet Samuel found that young man, David, tending sheep. David ranked at the bottom of the family totem pole,

the youngest of eight brothers. But God instructed Samuel to anoint him as the second king of Israel.

Soon afterward, David faced a literal giant. The 9-foot-9-inch Philistine Goliath mocked Israel’s armies and its God. But David drew on his experiences as a shepherd to boldly challenge the giant, telling Saul,

*Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it. . . . Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God. . . . The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine (17:34–37).*

## SOLDIER

Defeating Goliath became the first of many battles David won through the Lord’s strength. Wearing no armor and using only a sling and a stone, David felled the most physically imposing warrior in either camp and claimed victory



in God's name (vv. 47–50).

From then on, his fame spread throughout Israel. Though the Israelites credited Saul with slaying thousands, they praised David for killing “his ten thousands” (18:7). David once killed 22,000 Syrians (1 Chr. 18:5) and defeated the Philistine armies many times (2 Sam. 21:15–22).

Before charging into battle, he habitually inquired of the Lord (1 Sam. 23:2–5; 2 Sam. 5:23–25), who granted him success and “preserved David wherever he went” (2 Sam. 8:6).

## PSALMIST

Despite his anointment and popularity, David spent several years fleeing for his life from Saul. He hid throughout the wilderness of Israel as he waited to be crowned king. During this time, he penned many of Scripture's most beloved psalms; and about half of the 150 chapters that make up the book of Psalms are ascribed to him.

Many of David's psalms cry out to God for deliverance. Others sing the Lord's praises. Prior to Saul's persecution of him, David enjoyed a special role as the king's personal musician, playing the harp to comfort Saul when an evil spirit tormented him (1 Sam. 16:23).

The “sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Sam. 23:1), David was an artistic man with a reflective heart, evidenced by both the content of his writings and his skill in music.

## KING

Many years after his anointing, David finally took the throne. He was 30 years old and reigned for 40 years (5:4), bringing military victory and stability to the burgeoning kingdom of Israel.

David made God's holiness a theme of his kingship. He prioritized bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and expressed overwhelming joy when he accomplished the task (6:14). He also laid the plans for the great Temple that would serve as the hub of the Israelites' worship of God.

However, as much as David wanted to build the Temple, he was forbidden from doing so. God told him, “You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood” (1 Chr. 28:3). That honor fell to David's son Solomon.

## SINNER

Solomon was born as a result of David's most notorious sin. Remaining home while his men went out to battle, David saw from his rooftop a woman named Bathsheba bathing (2 Sam. 11:1–2).

Knowing her husband, Uriah, one of the king's mighty men (1 Chr. 11:10, 41), was at war, the king sent for her; and she conceived his child (2 Sam. 11:4–5). To compound his sin, David then arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle; and David married Bathsheba.

God was not pleased. As punishment, the Lord did not allow

the child to live and told David, “I will raise up adversity against you from your own house” (12:11). Consequently, trouble dogged David the rest of his life. His children's rap sheets include rape (Amnon), murder (Absalom), betrayal, and rebellion against David's reign (Absalom and Adonijah).

But God mercifully allowed Bathsheba to conceive again; and she bore Solomon, David's successor. And the Lord loved Solomon (v. 24).

As king, David also sinned by demanding a census be taken to determine the number of Israel's fighting men (chap. 24). Because the king trusted in his army's strength more than in the Lord's providence, God sent a plague that killed 70,000 Israelites (v. 15).

## SAINT

Yet, God loved David; and David truly loved God. David committed serious sins, but he always repented and turned to the Lord.

David captured the feeling of home he experienced in the Lord when he wrote, “You have been a shelter for me, a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings” (Ps. 61:3–4).

In his great love for David, God promised him, “Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). This promise is called the Davidic Covenant.

A line of kings succeeded David on the thrones of what became the fractured kingdoms of Israel and Judah; but the Davidic Covenant's ultimate, unbreakable fulfillment is guaranteed through Jesus Christ, David's direct heir, born in Bethlehem, the city of David (Lk. 2:11).

Scripture prophesied about Jesus long before His birth (Isa. 9:6–7; 53:1–12) through the end-times (Rev. 11:15). His reign will endure forever, and His Kingdom will have no end (Lk. 1:33).

David was a man of many distinctions. But perhaps his greatest was that of saint—a title God bestows on all who trust in Him alone for their salvation.

Before David's fame, one of Saul's servants summarized the young man well: “A son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him” (1 Sam. 16:18).

As David himself wrote, “My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Ps. 23:5–6). The Lord remained with David all the days of his life—and will remain with him for eternity. ★



**Jesse King**

is the managing editor of *Israel My Glory* magazine.



# A BOY NA







# *MED DAVID*

*A LOOK AT THE SHEPHERD DESTINED  
TO BECOME ISRAEL'S KING*

*By TOM SIMCOX*





**M**y first encounter with King David came in a Sunday-school kindergarten class. We learned a peppy little song called “Only a Boy Named David,” written by Arthur Arnott in 1931. It begins like this: “Only a boy named David, only a little sling, only a boy named David, but he could pray and sing.”

Although most of the lyrics revolve around David taking on the Philistine giant Goliath, they nevertheless taught me several important aspects of the young shepherd’s life: He loved God and was a brave yet sensitive soul.

Born in Bethlehem into the tribe of Judah, David was the youngest of eight sons. His father was Jesse; and his great-grandmother was Ruth the Moabitess about whom the book of Ruth is written.

David also had two sisters: Zeruiah, the mother of David’s military chieftain, Joab; and Abigail (1 Chr. 2:16), the mother of Amasa, whom David’s son Absalom appointed head of his army when he rebelled against David.

As the youngest son, the lowly job of shepherding the family sheep fell to him. Shepherds in those days had no status and were considered dreamers with vivid imaginations. They spent their days alone, watching and protecting animals that most people considered stupid.

But it was in this role that David likely developed his close relationship with God. He trusted God to protect both him and the sheep and spent many hours writing songs, praying, and praising the Lord, who probably was

his only companion.

In the fields, the young shepherd learned from the Great Shepherd—who was his Rock, Refuge, Helper, and Salvation; and he developed great faith in the God of Israel.

## *ANOINTING THE SHEPHERD*

The account of David’s life begins in 1 Samuel 16, when God told the prophet Samuel that He rejected King Saul because of Saul’s disobedience: “Fill your horn with oil and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons” (v. 1).

Humanly speaking, David seemed the least likely choice for king. But God’s method of evaluation differs from ours. Even Samuel turned out to be wrong. As Eliab, Jesse’s eldest son, came forward, Samuel thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before [me]” (v. 6).

But God told him, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (v. 7).

So began the parade of seven of Jesse’s sons, all of whom God rejected. Finally, Samuel asked Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” (v. 11). The youngest was considered so insignificant no one bothered to call him to the house. He was still tending the sheep.

“Bring him,” Samuel said (v. 11). “Now [David] was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!’” (v. 12).

So, Samuel anointed the young shepherd with oil; “and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward” (v. 13). At the same time, “the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him” (v. 14).

In those days, the Holy Spirit did not reside in individuals as He does in today’s Church Age. Bible scholar



Dr. Charles Ryrie explained, “The presence of the Holy Spirit in the O.T. [Old Testament] was selective and temporary, while today it is universal and permanent among believers.”<sup>1</sup>

Saul’s acute distress prompted his servants to suggest that music might help him. So, a search ensued to find a skillful harpist. In God’s divine plan, David was chosen to play for Israel’s troubled king.

At first, Saul “loved him greatly” (v. 21). David’s music “refreshed [Saul], . . . and the distressing spirit would depart from him” (v. 23). But Saul’s love was short-lived.

After David bested the entire Israelite army by killing the Philistine giant Goliath (see “David and Goliath,” page 30), he rose to prominence; and Saul began to fear him. Though Saul gave David his daughter Michal in marriage, it didn’t take long before he wanted to make sure David would never get the kingdom.

## DAVID AND JONATHAN

Michal loved David (1 Sam. 18:20) and protected him, as did his godly brother-in-law, Jonathan. Scripture says, “The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (v. 1).

Some liberal scholars have tried to make this text say far more than it does. The key here is that David and Jonathan were extremely close, as are many brothers; and nothing indicates any impropriety. Jonathan, probably knowing David would someday be king, made a covenant with him:

*“You shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David (20:14–16).*

As Saul grew more obsessed with jealousy, David’s relationship with him deteriorated; and David became convinced his father-in-law wanted to kill him. Jonathan, however, thought better of his father. So, the two devised a plan to determine the truth.

David was due to dine at the king’s table. But he would skip dinner and let Jonathan explain his absence.

# HUMANLY SPEAKING, DAVID SEEMED THE LEAST LIKELY CHOICE FOR KING. BUT GOD’S METHOD OF EVALUATION DIFFERS FROM OURS.

If Saul accepted his absence amiably, all was well. They also devised a signal. David would hide in the field, and Jonathan would shoot three arrows. David would learn whether to flee or stay based on where Jonathan told his servant to look for the arrows (vv. 18–22).

David, of course, was correct. When Jonathan explained David’s absence, Saul exploded: “You son of a per-

verse, rebellious woman! . . . As long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die” (vv. 30–31). Then Saul hurled a spear at his own son “to kill him” (v. 33).

Angry, Jonathan stormed out and warned David. David “fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so” (v. 41).

Then Jonathan reminded David of their covenant: “Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever’” (v. 42).

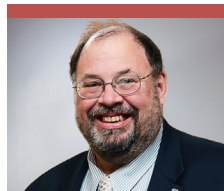
Then they parted; and there is no indication they ever saw each other again. But many years later, King David, ever loyal, with a sensitive shepherd’s heart, sought out Jonathan’s sole living son, Mephibosheth, to show him kindness.

David was not perfect. He was a sinner, like all of us. But he loved the Lord and never wavered in his devotion to Him. The God of Israel, with whom he communed in the shepherds’ fields, was the God he worshiped his entire life. David extolled Him as “a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head” (Ps. 3:3) until the day he took his final breath on Earth and opened his eyes in the presence of the Lord he loved. ★

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### ENDNOTE

- 1 Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*, NKJV (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985), 440, n 1 Samuel 16:14.



#### Tom Simcox

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# THE WARRIOR KING

IT'S ONE THING TO FIGHT FOR  
YOURSELF. IT'S ANOTHER  
THING TO FIGHT LIKE DAVID.

BY CAMERON JOYNER

The acronym SERE refers to military training for Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape. It prepares U.S. combatants for wilderness survival, enemy evasion, and (when necessary) self-defense while outnumbered. Entire careers are dedicated to making SERE skills second nature in the special-warfare community, and social media is saturated with stories of modern warriors defying the odds with such skills.

King David may not readily come to mind when it comes to SERE, but he could be called the archetype for special-operations warfare. When David navigated the Judean wilderness as he fled from a crazed King Saul, he was tough and completely at home with the very conditions modern militaries work hard to reproduce for training.

He didn't prepare for battle by taking pass/fail classes but by handling situations that often meant life or death. Through it all, he clung to the Lord, who was his strength and his shield (Ps. 28:7).

## FACING THE KING

When King Saul needed someone to play the *kinnor*, an ancient Hebrew lyre, Saul's servant recommended the young shepherd David, describing him as "a mighty man of valor, a man of war," even before he had proven himself against Goliath (1 Sam. 16:18).

David earned this reputation by killing wild animals while defending his flocks; and his good name grew greater after he faced down the Philistines' formidable champion, Goliath of Gath. (See "David and Goliath," page 30.)

The battle between David and Goliath was a defining moment for David, but the scene was more about David and Saul than David and Goliath. At



a time when the average Israelite was around 5 feet 3 inches, Goliath stood at “six cubits and a span” (17:4), which translates to 9 feet 9 inches. Yet his stature did not phase David.

King Saul stood head and shoulders above the rest of his people (9:2; 10:23) and didn’t cite Goliath’s height as the threat. Instead, he told David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth” (17:33). Goliath’s reputation led Saul to lack the confidence in the Lord that David possessed.

Initially, Saul enhanced his own rule with David’s strength, setting him over Israel’s warriors (18:5). However, David’s popularity as a greater warrior than Saul spawned jealousy within the king, who began classifying David as a threat to his rule (vv. 7–9). So, Saul began to plot against David, forcing David to flee. We can infer from Scripture that David was a fugitive for five to seven years.

David used this period to demonstrate the type of leader he was. He commanded the respect of other warriors, men who would not follow someone weak into battle. Collectively, David’s entourage possessed the skills for survival and guerilla warfare that modern soldiers would envy. David nobly led his 600 men to deliver an entire town, Keilah, from the attacking Philistines while evading Saul (23:1–13).

Furthermore, David demonstrated dependence on God’s will throughout that campaign, displaying humility, in contrast to Saul, who previously ordered the execution of 85 of the Lord’s priests and their village, Nob, for helping David (22:6–23).

Eventually, David and his men escaped to the land of the Philistines—Goliath country—where David ingratiated himself to Achish, king of Gath; and he dwelt there, “he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives” (27:3), for “one full year and four months” (v. 7). Achish, in fact, gave David the city of Ziklag.

Achish thought David was fighting the Israelites for him. But instead, David would raid Israel’s enemies; kill everyone; and seize all the livestock. When the Amalekites raided Ziklag, burned it down, and captured everyone, David’s warriors wept “until they had no more power to weep” (30:4). Then they “spoke of stoning [David], because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God” (v. 6).

David asked the Lord if he should pursue the Amalekites. When the Lord said yes, David “attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day” and recovered everything (v. 17).

Twice David had opportunity to kill Saul but refused. Saul eventually died in battle, but “the LORD preserved David

wherever he went” (1 Chr. 18:13). David defeated many of Israel’s enemies, including the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, Ammonites, and Amalekites (vv. 1–11). He and his band, spearheaded by 37 “mighty men” (2 Sam. 23:8), led Israel’s armies to many victories that allowed him to build his kingdom and remove numerous enemies from the land, giving his son Solomon rest and opportunity to build the Temple for the Lord.

## HIS IDENTITY AS A MAN OF WAR

It’s a mistake to criticize what some see as David’s legacy of bloodshed. God blessed David, used him to fight pagans He wanted destroyed, and often was intimately involved in leading David’s victories (2 Sam. 5:19–25). One of the reasons God rejected Saul was because Saul refused to destroy all the Amalekites, as instructed (1 Sam. 15).

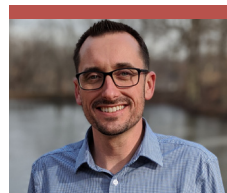
In a culture today that stresses social justice, it’s easy to forget that God is righteous and hates evil. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways (Isa. 55:8). David was doing God’s will.

God also used David’s experiences to compose half of the book of Psalms. A journey to some of the places where David fled from Saul, like En Gedi (1 Sam. 23:29) and possibly the area that today is Masada (24:22), will change both the way we read the Psalms and our perception of David.

David’s warrior history is often treated contemptuously because God forbade a man with so much blood on his hands to build His holy Temple (1 Chr. 22:8). However, the stipulation was about glorifying God, not disgracing David. Solomon, too, acknowledged that David’s wars and the Temple’s postponement were part of God’s design (1 Ki. 5:3).

God used these rulers to establish a prophetic pattern. As long as Israel wasn’t secure, God preferred being on the move in a tent, like His people. But when rest came for Israel, God allowed a permanent dwelling for His presence. The rest pictured in Solomon’s time, not David’s, foreshadows the latter days the prophet Isaiah predicted, when “the LORD’s house shall be established . . . and all nations shall flow to it. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa. 2:2, 4). ★

## GOD BLESSED DAVID, USED HIM TO FIGHT PAGANS HE WANTED DESTROYED, AND OFTEN WAS INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN LEADING DAVID’S VICTORIES.



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# THE SWEET PSALMIST OF ISRAEL

PRAISE, LAMENT, ADORATION, SUPPLICATION—  
DAVID'S PSALMS HAD ALL THESE AND MORE.

BY STEVE CONOVER

**IMAGINE AN AGING, FRAIL KING DAVID (1 KI. 1:1) REFLECTING BACK ON HIS LIFE—HIS MIND FLOODED WITH MOMENTS OF JOY AND SADNESS, VICTORY AND FAILURE, PRESTIGE AND DOUBT—IN HIS PURSUIT OF A DEEP AND ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOD OF ISRAEL. WHAT MIGHT HE HAVE WANTED TO SAY FOR THE RECORD BEFORE HE DIED?**

Thankfully, we do not have to guess because 2 Samuel 23:1–7 records David's last words. The first two verses describe succinctly the young, humble shepherd whom God called to become king of Israel:

*Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (vv. 1–2).*

The sweet psalmist of Israel was indeed an extraordinarily gifted musician (1 Sam. 16:14–23) and songwriter. Yet, he ascribed no credit to himself for his ability. He gave all credit to the Lord. The awe-inspiring psalms of David, intermingled with the Holy Spirit's words, reveal the responses of a musical heart that loved Yahweh.

In these songs, we find an oasis we can drink from as we discover more and more the joy of knowing the one and only God, who alone is worthy of our adoration.

About half of the 150 psalms in the Bible are attributed to David, and his heartfelt expressions are as varied as his life experiences. His exploits as a shepherd, musician, warrior, fugitive, and king are especially palpable in his psalms of lament.

Though lament constitutes the largest category of Davidic psalms (about 60 percent), all David's psalms follow a pattern of humble reliance on the God he loved and served throughout his life.

And the way David expressed himself is not only relatable for us today, but it also has much



to teach us concerning how we should respond to God in the weighty and sometimes turbulent moments we face in our own lives as we learn to depend on Him.

## SAFETY—PSALM 3

Second Samuel 15–16 records a perilous time in David's reign. His son Absalom secretly plotted to usurp the kingdom from him. Suddenly, David was faced with fleeing Jerusalem and his rebellious son, who "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (15:6).

Psalm 3 vividly captures the seriousness and emotion of David's plight while recognizing God's power and ability to keep him safe. David did not downplay the danger he was in, the increasing number of his enemies, or their desire to remove him: "LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me" (Ps. 3:1).

He knew his enemies believed God was not with him (v. 2). However, he also was convinced his only hope was in the One who hears the heartfelt cries of those who call out to Him: "But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head" (v. 3).

Having complete trust in God, David believed that no matter how bad the odds, he could still sleep soundly, remain safe, and function without fear because "salvation belongs to the LORD" (v. 8). He was in God's hands.

## MERCY—PSALM 51

David's most well-known sin involved Bathsheba. Psalm 51

reveals his response to the deep conviction he felt when the prophet Nathan confronted him about his adultery and the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah.

The king did not defend himself, shift the blame to others, or attempt to give God a laundry list of excuses. Rather, he did the opposite. He acknowledged his sin and guilt and began Psalm 51 by pleading for mercy from God "according to [His] unfailing love" and "great compassion" (v. 1, NLT).

David knew he could not cleanse himself from sin by trying to "do better." He deserved death (2 Sam. 12:13). He had one appeal to make, and that was to acknowledge his sin before the righteous Judge who does not despise "a broken and contrite heart" (Ps. 51:17).

David understood that burnt offerings did not please God if a person's heart selfishly turned against Him. David also understood his great need for God's mercy.

## PROVISION—PSALM 23

The most famous of David's songs of praise is Psalm 23. Perhaps more than any other psalm, it demonstrates David's deep connection with God.

David began shepherding and playing music when he was young. In this psalm, both roles come into play beautifully. As a shepherd, David knew the endless demands of tending sheep. He understood that without the guidance of a shepherd, the sheep would not survive. They needed food, water, and protection from predators and natural elements. In this stunning psalm, David placed himself in the position of a sheep and extolled God as the great Shepherd of his soul.

David called the Lord—the all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, all-sufficient Creator of the Universe—his Provider. What an incredible view he gave us of God, who gladly takes on the role of lowly Shepherd for us.

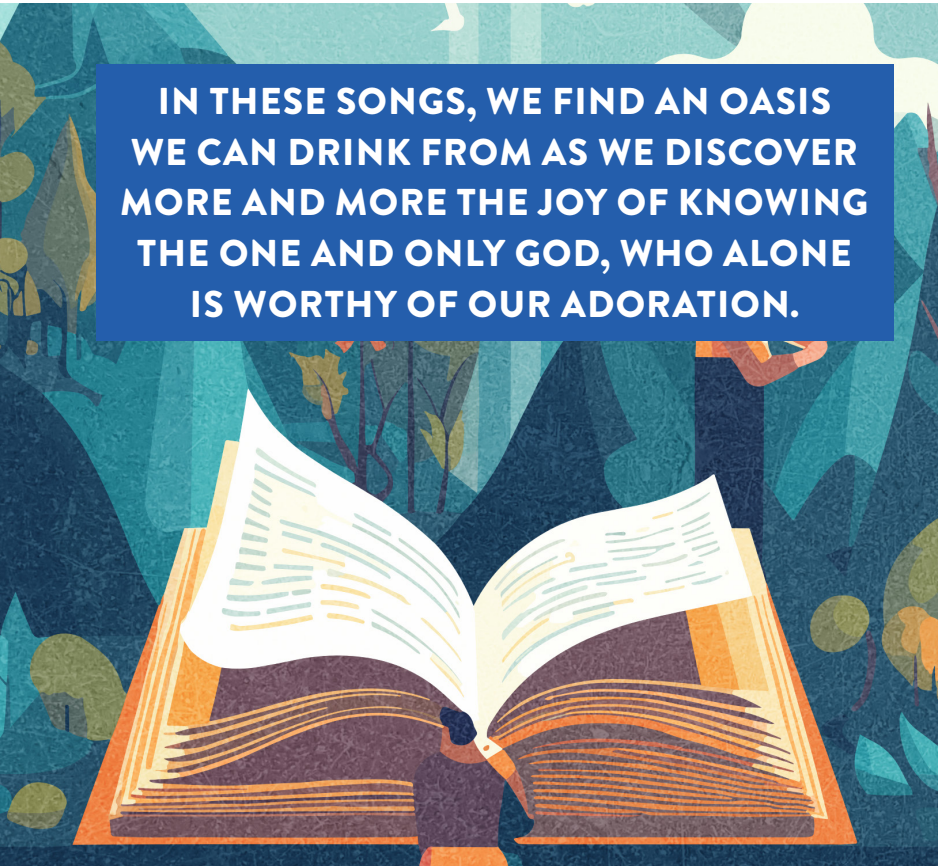
David knew the sovereign God of Israel would provide so much for him that he would never lack for anything (v. 1). And he believed God alone could give him peace, guidance, physical and spiritual provisions (vv. 2–3), and freedom from fear (vv. 4–5).

He understood God would show him "goodness and mercy" in this life, and he was confident he would "dwell in the house" of the Lord his Shepherd forever (v. 6).

## DELIVERANCE—PSALM 18

In 2 Samuel 22, the chapter preceding David's final words, David sang praises to the Lord for delivering him from his enemies and from the hand of his predecessor, King Saul (v. 1).

Interestingly, the psalm recorded in 2 Samuel 22 corresponds almost word for word to Psalm 18, where David called Yahweh "my rock and



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my fortress and my deliverer” (Ps. 18:2).

Again, he acknowledged the real danger he was in but knew the One he cried out to for protection transcended his circumstances (vv. 3–6). He is “my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (v. 2). In other words, God was David’s everything.

In 2 Samuel 22, as in the second half of Psalm 18, David could hardly contain his jubilation, proclaiming the trustworthiness and protection of God:

*As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him. For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God? God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places (vv. 31–34; cf. Ps. 18:30–33).*

At the end of the song in 2 Samuel, David gave thanks and sang praises to the name of the Lord “among the Gentiles” (22:50), looking forward in time, knowing that, as God provided for him, God also would provide for “his descendants

forevermore” (v. 51). David wanted the entire world to see the greatness of his God and for all to know that God’s plans to establish David’s throne and to bless His people forever will never be thwarted.

As David neared the end of his life, he could truly say his confidence lay not in himself or in his accomplishments but in the greatness of the God who shows mercy and love to sinful humans.

Knowing the Lord was working in and through David for His own glory and purposes brought David so much joy he had to burst into song. David found ultimate comfort in knowing his Shepherd is perfect. Indeed, God is the only One who can be trusted to guide us flawlessly with His “rod and staff” (Ps. 23:4) through all of life’s circumstances. ★



**Steve Conover**

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## THE BEREAN BOX

### WHAT IS THE KEY OF DAVID?

The “key of the house of David” or “key of David” is mentioned only twice in the Bible (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7). Possessing the key of David indicates total rule, authority, and control over David’s house, which includes the royal court, access to Judah’s king, and oversight of the king’s treasury.

This key is first mentioned during the reign of Judean King Hezekiah. Shebna, an influential foreigner, possessed the key but was removed from his position and exiled into a far country, where he died in shame (Isa. 22:18–19).

Eliakim replaced Shebna, and God gave him the key to the Davidic kingdom and all authority to control the royal house (vv. 20–22). He proved to be worthy and brought glory to his position and his father’s house (v. 23).

Scripture portrays Eliakim as a type of Israel’s Messiah. Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would be a royal Son of David and rightful heir to his throne, kingdom, and promises in the Davidic Covenant (9:6–7).

Likewise, Jesus the Messiah has absolute authority to administer the spiritual and material affairs of God’s Kingdom. The apostle John wrote of Him, “These things says He who is holy, He who is true, ‘He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens’” (Rev. 3:7).

Christ presented Himself in three ways to the Philadelphian church:

- 1. As “holy”** (v. 7). Being God, Christ is holy, entirely set apart and separated from sin and sinners.
- 2. As “true”** (v. 7). Christ is the true and genuine God. He is truth (Jn. 14:6). Jesus’ Word is reliable, trustworthy, and without error (Mt. 24:35).
- 3. As having “the key of David”** (Rev. 3:7). Only Christ has access to all wealth within the Davidic kingdom. God the Father gave Him the keys of heaven’s treasury.

Christ alone has absolute authority over the spiritual riches of salvation. He has “the keys of Hades and of Death” (1:18), and He determines each person’s destiny. He holds royal power and sovereignty over heaven and Earth (Mt. 28:18). His authority over David’s house points to His rule in the Messianic Kingdom, after which He will rule for eternity.

When the angel Gabriel told Mary she would bring forth Jesus, he prophesied, “The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end” (Lk. 1:32–33).


by David M. Levy



A dramatic, low-key photograph of a man with a long white beard and a crown, sitting on an ornate wooden throne. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The lighting is warm and focused on his face and the throne's details, creating a sense of majesty and contemplation. The background is dark and indistinct.

# A KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART





## A LOOK AT DAVID, THE UNLIKELY CHOICE TO HELP BUILD THE GREATEST KINGDOM ON EARTH

BY DAN PRICE

**I**t's easy to imagine the men who became America's Founding Fathers in 1776 hard at work in the small east room in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I envision them reading by lamplight, their fingertips black with ink, arguing about the wording of the Declaration of Independence.

I can picture Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration's soaring prose, sitting quietly with the Virginia delegation in almost regal solemnity, refusing to enter the fray of amendments to his draft as they were shouted across the room.

Living near Philadelphia, I have stood in that room many times, pondering those simple chairs, writing desks, and famous green curtains and imagining the scene unfold. While God was certainly at work in the founding of the United States of America, the accomplishments of these men testify to their excellent qualities. They were world builders with the skill, experience, and intelligence necessary to birth a nation.

## AN UNLIKELY CHOICE

The contrast to Israel's King David couldn't be starker. David was possibly the least likely person to build a nation. He was a shepherd and musician; the runt of his family as a boy; and an afterthought to his father, Jesse.

But God used David to help build what one day will become the greatest Kingdom on Earth. Unlike the American founders, David wasn't the obvious choice for the job. He wasn't experienced in politics or educated at the College of William & Mary. He held no degrees or pedigrees; and as the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, he would not even have inherited much wealth.

But God chose David—a man whom He Himself wanted for the task of building the nation: “The LORD . . . sought for Himself a man after His own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). David may not have been regal or impressive, but he was God's man for the job.

Certainly, David had many good qualities: He was brave, passionate, intelligent, tenacious, and had a tendency toward quick repentance. He even was handsome. But God didn't say he chose David because of these good qualities. He chose him because of his willingness to live and rule humbly as God's servant.

God knew David would submit to His leadership and sovereignty over Israel. And David humbly acknowledged his lowly state: “Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?” (1 Chr. 17:16). David understood that God did not choose him because he was important. He was unimportant. Yet God called David “a man after My own heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22).

## DAVID'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Every time David succeeded as king, every time the nation prospered under his leadership,

it was because David submitted to God's sovereign will. David's greatest accomplishments occurred when he submitted. And his greatest failures occurred when he didn't.

**The Wait.** After he was anointed king, David likely waited about 15 years to take the throne. Some of those years were spent running from King Saul, who wanted to kill him. Yet, despite the waiting and persecution and an army of people who wanted him proclaimed king, David adamantly refused to “stretch out [his] hand against” God's anointed (1 Sam. 24:6, 10).

Even after Saul's death, David did not seize the throne. First, he mourned; and then he inquired of the Lord if he should return to Israel. God directed him to Hebron, where the armies

of Judah came to anoint him their king.

Even then, David had no interest in a civil war or in pressing his right to the kingdom. So, when Saul's son Ishbosheth succeeded Saul as king, David reigned only in Hebron, waiting on God to fulfill His promise to enthrone him over all Israel.

Seven years later, Ishbosheth was murdered by two cutthroats who brought his head to David as a trophy. Horrified at their disrespect for “a righteous person,” David executed the men for their crime instead of celebrating his clear path to the throne (2 Sam. 4). It took all the tribes of Israel coming to him in Hebron for David to submit to God's direction and rule over all the land (5:1–5).

This is not the typical way dynasties are established. Most rise up after bloodthirsty, selfish struggles for power. Not so with David. His ascendancy demonstrated a humble submissiveness to God's timing and God's sovereignty as the true King of Israel. David was a king, but God was and is the King.

**The Wars.** David was also submissive to God in his war to defeat God's enemies and conquer Canaan. David defeated the Jebusites and seized Jerusalem as a matter of direct

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obedience (vv. 6–16). In violation of God's commands, the Israelites had allowed the Jebusites to survive for generations and even intermarried with them, corrupting Israel spiritually (Judg. 3:5). David's famous raid by water shafts that can still be seen under Jerusalem today demonstrated radical submission



to God's plans.

Similarly, as he consolidated his rule, he inquired of God before committing his armies to each engagement against the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:17–25). He beat the Philistines when and where God commanded.

**The Ark.** Bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem was a monumental achievement for King David. At first, the Israelites tried to transport it on an ox-driven cart, which contradicted God's commands and proved a disaster. Angry and afraid, David set aside his plans for three months (6:1–11).

He then brought up the Ark using men to carry it (probably Levites). He led the procession with intense passion, dancing and worshiping God along the way. His wife Michal considered his exuberance demeaning, but David exalted in his abasement before his God (vv. 12–23).

**The Temple.** Acutely aware of his lowliness and God's greatness, David wanted to build God a fitting Temple for the Ark: "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains" (7:2).

However, when God refused to let David build the Temple, David submissively obeyed. It was

then the Lord made a unique promise to David that has endured for more than 3,000 years and will endure forever:

*I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever (vv. 12–13, 16).*

Today, we call this the Davidic Covenant. It will be fulfilled when David's direct descendant Jesus returns to rule on the throne of David from

Jerusalem in His Millennial Kingdom, ushering in God's eternal Kingdom on Earth.

Though David did not build the Temple, he made plans to ensure its construction (1 Chr. 29:1–20) at the time God chose, in the place God chose, and through the man God chose.

## DAVID'S FAILURES

There were occasions when David did not submit to God, and both David and the kingdom suffered for it. The most notorious example is his adultery with Bathsheba and his coldblooded murder of her husband after she told the king she had conceived his child.

Israel was largely at peace, and Scripture notes that David sent his generals to fight the Ammonites while he remained in Jerusalem, shirking his duty (2 Sam. 11:1).

Devising his own plans, he committed adultery and murder. The result was that his son with Bathsheba died; and God declared, "The sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me" (12:10). Years of family chaos, murders, rebellions, and civil war came directly from David's refusal to submit to God in this instance and on one other occasion of self-aggrandizement (1 Chr. 21).

## BY HIS MERCY

David's life is covered in more detail than almost any other figure in Scripture. Even his psalms function as a journal of his spiritual journey, a sort of autobiographical commentary on the events in his life.

Though he made several tragic decisions, we should judge David with compassion. How good might any of us look if our lives were subjected to the same level of scrutiny?

God did not choose David because he always did the right thing or because of impressive leadership qualities. God didn't even choose David because he had the most righteous heart in Israel. God chose him for His own purposes and His own plans, just as He chooses each of us—not for the good things we have done or will do, but by His mercy (Ti. 3:5).

As we live in this glorious truth of the gospel, may we learn, as David did, the beauty and wisdom of submitting ourselves moment by moment to God's leadership and plans for our lives. ★



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# DAVID AND GOLIATH

**H**ollywood often makes a mess of things when it takes on the Bible. Its multiple renditions of David's battle with Goliath are frustrating. More than once it has portrayed David as a timid boy approaching the giant, while reciting his own Psalm 23. None of that is textual.

When the Philistines, the Israelites' mortal enemies, "gathered their armies together to battle" (1 Sam. 17:1), they camped in the Elah Valley, about 15 miles west of Bethlehem. They were on one side of the valley; the Israelites were on the other.

The Philistines' formidable champion, Goliath of Gath, challenged the Israelites to choose a man to fight him; and twice a day for 40 days straight, the 9-foot-9-inch warrior taunted the Israelites.

David wasn't in the army because he was young and in charge of his father's sheep. But his brothers Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah were there. Wanting news of his sons, their father, Jesse, told his youngest, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp . . . and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them" (vv. 17–18).

So, David left the sheep with a keeper and arrived just in time for one of Goliath's rants. Angry with David, Eliab asked him, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?" (v. 28).

David replied, "What have I done now?" (v. 29). Perhaps Eliab was embarrassed to have his youngest brother see the Israelite army so fearful and inept.

But David wasn't fearful. In fact, he was the opposite. David was confident the Lord would deliver Goliath into his hands (v. 46). When vying for the chance to slay the giant, David told King Saul, "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God" (v. 36).

David was incensed that a pagan would taunt God. So, Saul agreed to give David a chance. Imagine trying to kill a bear or a lion with a sling or dagger. In a world where people have been mauled to death by such animals, even with the advantage of modern rifles, David's fearlessness speaks volumes about the type of person he was. And he refused to take the glory, stating plainly, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (v. 37).

Too young even to wear armor, David took his sling; gathered five smooth stones from the Brook of Elah; and told Goliath, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (v. 45). Before both the Israelite and Philistine armies, David declared, "Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands" (v. 47).

David did not approach Goliath slowly, quoting his own ruminations. He loaded a single stone into his sling, used his agility, "and hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine" (v. 48), possibly slinging the stone as he was charging forward.

The stone hit Goliath in the forehead. Goliath fell, and David cut off the giant's head with the Philistine's own sword. Then the Philistines fled, enabling the Israelites to pursue them to the gates of Ekron in Philistia (vv. 49–52).

Sorry, Hollywood. No hesitation. Just a deep faith in God. This battle was a defining moment for David. He treated Goliath like a wild animal, as he said he would. Only this time, he stepped up to shepherd God's nation instead of his father's flock. ★

*by Tom Simcox and Cameron Joyner*



# THE JEWISH TEMPLE MOUNT DEED

by Israel My Glory Staff

The most contested piece of real estate on Earth is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Today, its 36 acres house a 7th-century Islamic shrine whose golden dome dominates the Jerusalem skyline. Jewish people are not allowed to pray on the Temple Mount, even though it is their holiest site in the world.

Originally measuring merely 861 x 861 feet, it is where Solomon's Temple stood from 960 BC to 586 BC and where the Second

Temple stood from 515 BC to AD 70. In fact, the property passed into Israelite hands approximately 3,000 years ago when King David legally purchased it from Araunah (also called Ornan) the Jebusite after repenting from a specific sin.

David dishonored the Lord by ordering a census of men who could fight in his army (2 Sam. 24:1-9; 1 Chr. 21:1-6). God let the king choose one of three punishments: (1) seven<sup>1</sup> years of famine in Israel, (2) three months of fleeing from his enemies, or (3) three days of plague (2 Sam. 24:11-13). "I am in great distress," David said. "Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man" (v. 14). So, the Lord sent a plague, killing 70,000 Israelites (v. 15).

The angel of the Lord prepared to commit further destruction, stretching out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it; but God restrained him (v. 16). David saw the angel by the threshing floor of Araunah and repented. Soon after, Gad the prophet told David, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite" (v. 18).

Araunah bowed in humility before the king and offered him whatever he desired, includ-

ing oxen for sacrifice and threshing tools (v. 22). But David refused. "I will surely buy [the threshing floor] from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with

that which costs me nothing" (v. 24).

So, David paid Araunah 50 shekels of silver for his threshing floor and oxen and 600 shekels of gold for the place (v. 24; 1 Chr. 21:25). There, he built an altar to present burnt and peace offerings to God. In response, God answered David's prayers and stopped the plague (2 Sam. 24:25).

Though God forbade David to build the Temple because he had shed much blood in war (1 Chr. 22:8), He let Solomon build it "at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to [Solomon's] father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chr. 3:1).

Mount Moriah was where Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac. In obedience to God's command, Abraham prepared to slay the miraculous son of his old age when the Angel of the Lord stopped him. God then told Abraham, "Because you . . . have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven. . . . In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 22:16-18).

Jesus, the Son of God and a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon, fulfilled this prophecy, offering redemption and eternal life to all.

Abraham built an altar to the Lord on Mount Moriah; and more than 1,000 years later, David did likewise in the location that became the center of Jewish worship for the next millennium. Even though he could not build the Temple, David went to great lengths to bring its construction to fruition (cf. 1 Chr. 22:14-16). He acquired the land for a price, understanding that true love for the Lord requires sacrifice.

Today, the Dome of the Rock sits atop Mount Moriah. But one day, God's holy Temple will again stand there. Messiah Jesus will build it: "Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne" (Zech. 6:13). Jewish people will again pray there, and the most contested piece of real estate on Earth will finally know peace. ★

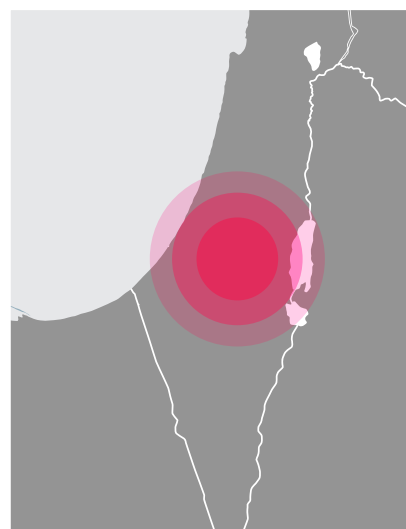
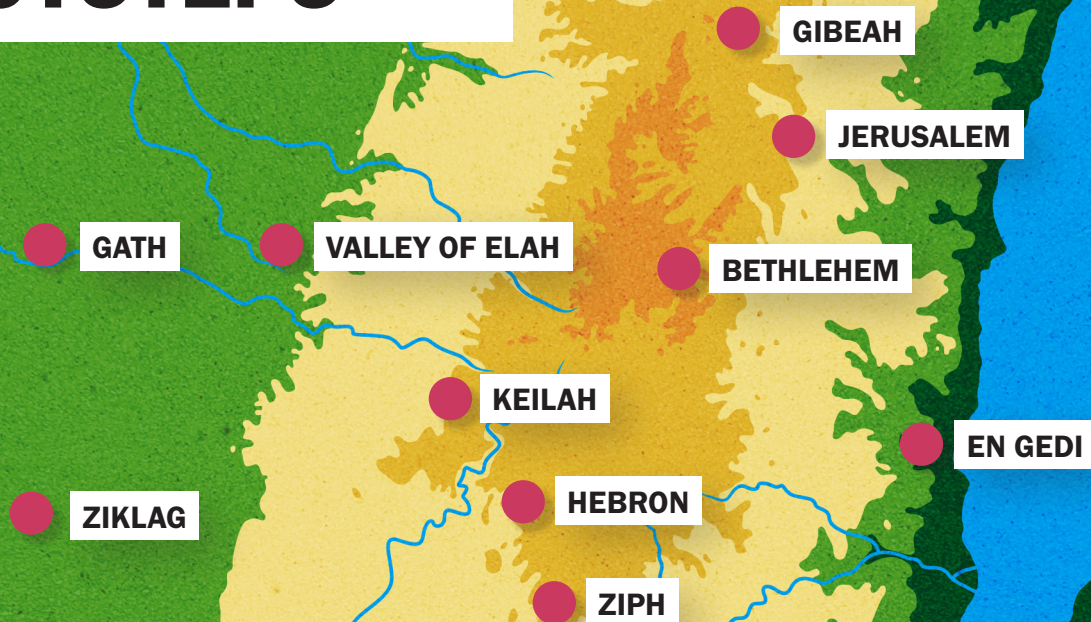
**Even though he could not build the Temple, David went to great lengths to bring its construction to fruition.**

## ENDNOTE

- 1 First Chronicles 21:12 states the Lord offered David three, not seven, years of famine. Some scholars believe God was offering to extend an existing famine an additional three years for a total of seven years, while others suggest the two passages record similar but separate confrontations between Gad and David.



# FOLLOWING DAVID'S FOOTSTEPS



## **BETHLEHEM**

Growing up, David tended sheep in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:1–13).

## **EN GEDI**

David hid from Saul and spared the king's life in the caves of En Gedi (1 Sam. 24).

## **GATH**

David fled from Saul and escaped to the Philistine city of Gath, where he pretended to be insane to gain refuge (1 Sam. 21:10–15).

## **GIBEAH**

During Saul's reign, David played the lyre for the king at Gibeah (1 Sam. 16:14–23).

## **HEBRON**

David was anointed king of Judah at Hebron and reigned there for seven years (2 Sam. 2:11).

## **JERUSALEM**

David established Jerusalem as Israel's capital and brought the Ark of the Covenant there, where he reigned over the united kingdom of Israel for 33 years (2 Sam. 5:5, 7; 6:12).

## **KEILAH**

David destroyed the Philistine army attacking Keilah and saved the city's inhabitants (1 Sam. 23:1–5).

## **VALLEY OF ELAH**

David defeated the Philistine giant, Goliath, in battle in the Valley of Elah (1 Sam. 17).

## **ZIKLAG**

The Philistines gave David the city of Ziklag, and he defeated the Amalekites who raided the city (1 Sam. 27:1–6; 30:1–20).

## **ZIPH**

When the king pursued him, David hid and spared Saul's life again in the wilderness of Ziph (1 Sam. 26).



# THE OCTOBER 7 MASSACRE

THE KIBBUTZIM, MOSHAVIM  
(VILLAGES), AND CITIES HAMAS  
ATTACKED ON OCTOBER 7, 2023





# ANALYZING OCTOBER 7

The following comes from a series of interviews Friends of Israel field representative Jael Kalisher conducted with her father, Meno Kalisher, pastor of the Jerusalem Assembly in Jerusalem, Israel.



Jael Kalisher



Meno Kalisher

## Q. WHAT HAPPENED ON OCTOBER 7?

**A.** October 7 is going to be remembered in Israel as a mini Holocaust. Hamas, a terror organization based in Gaza, really fooled Israel. They pretended they wanted the best for the people in Gaza. They negotiated with Israel concerning work permits. They fooled our intelligence, giving the impression that the last thing they wanted was war. Because of this, all the security around Gaza's border was reduced to a few soldiers. Basically, we were numbed. When Hamas attacked, it was Simchat Torah, the last day of Tabernacles. Most of the soldiers were on vacation. A huge party was taking place next to the border, attended by almost 3,000 young adults. About half of them were massacred. About 2,500 Hamas terrorists broke through the border; broke the fences; exploded the security cameras; entered with jeeps; shot, killed, massacred, beheaded, mutilated, and raped people; and took with them about 250 captives. It was disastrous. We were unprepared, and we paid a high price.

## Q. IS THIS A POLITICAL WAR, A RELIGIOUS WAR, OR BOTH?

**A.** A political war is when two countries disagree on a piece of land or something like that. They can negotiate. Religious war is what we have. We believe God gave us the land of Israel. They believe the land belongs to them. It's a conflict between religions. They want to erase the name of Israel. Who gave us the name Israel? God. They want another plan than the plan of God. This is a spiritual war. You cannot negotiate, and whatever you do will be temporary. You need God to solve it.

## Q. WHAT HAPPENED ON THE GEOPOLITICAL MAP OF THE MIDDLE EAST?

**A.** We know the world is going into a new world order. The prophecies of Daniel 7 need to be fulfilled. And we see it unfolding before us. You have empires in this world—America, Russia, China, and so on. And there are little countries and groups, like Israel and Hamas.

The empires come to the point where they say, "Enough is enough! You little toothpicks cannot decide what is going to happen to us every day!" I believe we're going to see the superpowers try to bring a new world order. Our area will be controlled by a revived Roman Empire, by a unification of nations.

## Q. WHAT HAS HAPPENED SPIRITUALLY IN ISRAEL SINCE OCTOBER 7?

**A.** I believe God allows things like this to happen when we are very far from Him. We need revival. It reminded me of Jeremiah 9:22–23 when God basically said, "Since you rely on your wisdom, your money, your power, I'm going to take the three of them; and I'm going to humiliate you." And that's exactly what happened. Today people are more apt to listen to spiritual messages. From this pit, we can grow. We are praying for a spiritual revival.

## Q. HOW HAS THE WAR AFFECTED THE LOCAL CHURCH IN JERUSALEM?

**A.** We have about 40 people on active duty and a lot of families without husbands and older children who usually help them. So, besides teaching the Bible, I'm busy providing funds and logistics to help our soldiers. Some things the army cannot supply right now. But our kids in the military need them: coats, special watches, knives, shoes, socks, shirts, blankets, towels. My daughter is an officer, so she gives me a list. Recently, she said, "Dad, we need bulletproof vests. We need 100 special coats for the winter." So, we order, purchase, and drive to where they are stationed to give it to them. We provide whatever the army cannot provide right now. Also, we help the families left only with kids.

My son, Danny, and his battalion got sick. He said, "Dad, I need medicine, I need this, this, and this." He gave me a list. I called a pastor in that area. The pastor bought what they needed and brought it to them. What a joy! And we immediately donated to their church. The churches are working together. It's a good example of the body of Christ. And I thank God for it. ★



# IS THE BOOK OF JUDGES REALLY HISTORY?

## (PART 1)

➔ The book of Judges spans approximately 300 years (ca. 1365–1065 BC) and opens with the Israelites, settled in Canaan, continuing their conquest of the Canaanites (1:1; cf. 2:1–3). The 12 judges of this period were charged with leading Israel's military and directing the nation to worship God.

However, many critical scholars discredit the veracity of Judges. We will explore why we must defend biblical history and examine the archaeological evidence that supports the book's historicity.

Israeli archaeologist and professor Israel Finkelstein is a popular author and in-demand speaker. His beliefs influence millions worldwide. He wrote, “The Bible’s stirring picture of righteous Israelite judges—however powerful and compelling—has very little to do with what really happened in the hill country of Canaan in the Early Iron Age.”<sup>1</sup>

Finkelstein and other scholars assign a later date to the period of the judges than is warranted by the biblical text (Late Bronze Age) because they reject internal biblical chronology. They believe the narrative of Judges is merely moral storytelling from a much later time, an ancient Near East practice.

This understanding uses historical criticism—reading a text in its context. Although historical criticism is a valid and useful means of interpretation, and archaeological evidence helps reveal the ancient context, higher critical assumptions have hijacked it for biblical interpretation by denying Scripture’s divine inspiration and inerrancy.

This higher critical assumption, now shared by many neo-evangelical scholars, restricts the biblical authors to knowledge from their time and to the influence of the dominant religious viewpoints of their culture. While the biblical authors may have adapted and reacted to the epic myths of their day, critics believe the authors’ understanding was still governed by these cultural realities. As Robin Baker, professor of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Winchester, explains,

*Some of the [literary] features of Judges [as heroic epics] . . . militate against defining the book as an objective chronicle of an epoch in Israel’s national life. These characteristics, while limiting*

*the value of Judges as a historical record of the Settlement, are entirely consistent with the approach to recording the past in the dominant literary tradition in Syro-Palestine at the time when the work was written, namely, the Mesopotamian tradition. For the Assyrians, as demonstrated in their royal inscriptions and . . . mythological explanatory works, it was not historical verisimilitude in the recording of data, but the theological message conveyed by, and sometimes concealed within, the narrative, which gave such works their purpose and value. I submit that Judges merits appraisal as an outstanding model of the ancient Near Eastern genre of theological commentary on the past.<sup>2</sup>*

Without divine revelation that distinguished Israel from the nations and gave it its land and a covenantal basis for existence, the accounts of Judges have no promise of future fulfillment, only an immediate sensation of personal inspiration.

Furthermore, if the text claims historicity but depends too heavily on ancient, nonhistorical myths, then who cares today what an ancient culture thought about God or morality? If truth that comes from God does not transcend time, then why should people allow it to shape their lives? Empty moralizing without absolutes has caused many contemporary Christians to deconstruct their faith and prompted people without faith to justify rejecting God and pursuing what culture promotes.

Israel alone was bequeathed biblical prophecy. God revealed it to the Israelites because from their line would come the Messiah, giving the light of God’s future promises to the world. God has preserved Scripture through every conceivable threat, ensuring that the unchangeable truth of His Word will affect every culture throughout history.

### ENDNOTES

- 1 Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2001), 122.
- 2 Robin Baker, “The Book of Judges: A Spiritual History?” *The Bible and Interpretation*, August 2016 <[bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/2016/08/bak408031](http://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/2016/08/bak408031)>.



#### Randall Price

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

# PAUL'S PARTNERS

## PHILIPPIANS 2:19–30

The apostle Paul personally discipled several committed men who partnered with him in spreading the gospel. Most of them came to salvation in Christ during his missionary journeys. Paul did not choose them because of their brilliance, education, wealth, power, or influence. In fact, they were common men, often young, weak, and unassuming.

These redeemed individuals yielded to Christ's example of selfless humility (Phil. 2:5). The Lord equipped Paul well to mentor them. He manifested the "mind of Christ" in self-denial and humility throughout his life (1 Cor. 2:16); and his example of sacrifice, service, and submissive obedience to the Lord provided a clear blueprint to follow.

Paul poured out his life as a drink offering to Jesus Christ in utter selflessness and humility (Phil. 2:12–18). God matured these men whom Paul mentored and imputed His divine wisdom to them for service that would glorify Him (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–31).

Paul was a prisoner of Rome and unable to go immediately to Philippi as he promised. Thus, he sent Timothy and Epaphroditus, two of his most trusted helpers, to minister in his place.

### TIMOTHY: A TRUSTED WORKER

Paul wrote, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state" (Phil. 2:19). He could not go at that time, so he sent Timothy instead.

**His Conversion.** Timothy was raised by his Jewish mother and grandmother. His father was Greek (Acts 16:1). Little else is known about Timothy's father, who most likely left the family or died young. Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Old Testament, possibly leading him to salvation; or he may have come to Christ upon hearing the gospel through Paul's preaching (2 Tim. 1:5).

Timothy became Paul's son in the faith and accompanied him on his second missionary journey. To make him acceptable to the Jews, Paul circumcised Timothy, who traveled with him to Philippi; Thessalonica; and Berea. But he remained in Berea while Paul and Silas traveled to Athens. Timothy later rejoined them in Athens.

He also traveled with Paul on the apostle's third missionary journey to Ephesus and then to Rome, where Paul was held captive. Paul last mentioned Timothy during his second Roman imprisonment, summoning Timothy to come to him quickly before winter (4:21).

**His Commendation.** Paul told the Philippians, "For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely [genuinely] care for your state" (Phil. 2:20). The word *like-minded* means "of like soul," referring to those who thought like Paul and shared his knowledge of Scripture and its interpretation.

Like Paul, Timothy gave of himself in self-sacrificing concern and care for the Philippian believers. Since Paul considered no one equal to Timothy, the apostle chose to give up fellowship with Timothy to allow the young man to minister to the Philippians.

**His Conviction.** Paul continued, "For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus" (v. 21). Paul highlighted Timothy's unselfishness and willingness to minister to the Philippians, exactly as Paul would.

The phrase *all seek their own* means other Christians sought after their own interests and purposes. They satisfied their own desires, rather than pursuing lives centered in Christ. The carnal Christians in Corinth exemplified being dominated by selfishness (1 Cor. 3:1). Conversely, Timothy prioritized serving Christ, rather than his own needs and interests, which is why Paul willingly poured his life into Timothy's and sent the young man wherever he was needed.

**His Character.** Paul reminded the Philippians of Timothy's qualifications: "But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel" (Phil. 2:22).

The word *son* (Greek, *teknon*) refers to Timothy working alongside Paul as a child works with his father. The word *proven* (Greek, *dokime*) means to be found pure after being tested. Over time, Timothy became Paul's highly respected and trusted assistant (1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:19–20; 1 Th. 3:2). They accomplished great things together for the proclamation and teaching of the gospel.

Paul concluded, "Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly" (Phil. 2:23–24).

The apostle chose to send Timothy for several reasons: He trusted Timothy would care for the Philippians the same way he would. He knew the Philippians would rejoice when



Timothy, who had ministered with Paul during the church's establishment, arrived. He also knew Timothy would report back to him honestly concerning the church's condition.

Paul would not send Timothy until the apostle's trial in Rome concluded. If released, Paul, rather than Timothy, would go to Philippi. The apostle believed he would go shortly, following Timothy's visit (v. 24).

## EPAPHRODITUS: A TIRELESS WORKER

Paul planned to send his letter to the Philippians through Epaphroditus before traveling to Philippi himself:

*Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick (vv. 25–26).*

The Philippian church sent Epaphroditus as its messenger to Paul in Rome, bearing its gifts for the imprisoned apostle (4:18). Thus, Epaphroditus had been in Rome for some time,

**His Crisis.** Speaking of Epaphroditus, Paul said, “Indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him” (v. 27). No human medicine or overt miracle saved Epaphroditus's life—God's mercy alone preserved him. God can heal when we pray. However, He doesn't always choose to do so. One such example is God's choice not to remove Paul's “thorn in the flesh” after Paul had pleaded earnestly three times for the Lord to take it away (2 Cor. 12:7–10).

**His Commitment.** Upon his recovery, Epaphroditus was willing to stay and help Paul; but Paul sent him back to the Philippians so they “may rejoice, and [Paul] would be less sorrowful” (Phil. 2:28). Knowing Epaphroditus had recovered and returned home would bring relief to the Philippians and lessen Paul's sorrow over the situation.

The Philippians were to “receive him . . . with all gladness [joy]” (v. 29), expressing their appreciation to Epaphroditus for his ministry in Rome and his personal sacrifice for the gospel of Christ. They were to “hold such men in esteem” (v. 29). That is, Epaphroditus and others like him were to be highly respected, recognized, and rewarded for their ministry.

Epaphroditus supplied “what was lacking in [their] service

## SINCE PAUL CONSIDERED NO ONE EQUAL TO TIMOTHY, THE APOSTLE CHOSE TO GIVE UP FELLOWSHIP WITH TIMOTHY TO ALLOW THE YOUNG MAN TO MINISTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

laboring in the gospel with the apostle. Paul sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi, sharing his appreciation for the church's gifts; explaining his situation; and praising Epaphroditus's excellent ministry with him.

**His Character.** Paul referred to Epaphroditus in three ways: He was Paul's “brother” (2:25)—not physically, but a brother in Christ as a fellow Christian. He was a “fellow worker” (v. 25), immediately joining Paul in proclaiming the gospel to Rome. And he was a “fellow soldier” (v. 25), battling with Paul in the spiritual war against the Devil (cf. Eph. 6:11–17; 2 Tim. 2:3–4).

**His Concern.** Paul sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi because Epaphroditus was “longing” (having a heavy heart) and “distressed” (anxious) to see these believers. He was concerned for the Philippians, who heard he had been sick and were burdened for him (Phil. 2:26).

toward [Paul]” (v. 30). The Philippian believers wanted to do more for Paul but could not go to him. Thus, they sent Epaphroditus to help Paul in Rome. Therefore, Paul wanted the church to give Epaphroditus the highest honor possible.

Timothy and Epaphroditus provide two faithful examples of self-sacrificing service for Christ and the gospel. May we emulate these men's character and commitment for the gospel of Christ today.



by David M. Levy,

Bible teacher, author, former pastor, and the retired director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry

# FAITH CHECK

BY LINDA CRAFT

**Every January 1, gym memberships, health foods, self-improvement plans, time-scheduling charts, and Bible-reading programs are in popular demand. People make resolutions, set goals, promise to become more self-disciplined, and turn over a plethora of new leaves. The new year is a time to begin again—to work on things that don't come easily and develop a more fulfilling physical, emotional, and spiritual life.**

Many Christians resolve to read their Bibles regularly and spend more meaningful time each day in prayer and meditation. The familiar strains of “Auld Lang Syne” are barely fading when some kind of time bomb goes off in our heads that says, “It’s time to fix our spiritually messed-up lives!” And once again we attempt to lend credence to our Christian walk.

## THE REASON FOR RESOLUTIONS

The most disciplined believers might stick to this new routine of prayer and Bible study all year. But so often our spiritual resolutions barely make it off the tarmac before their engines sputter; and we flutter back down to Earth, feeling too busy to open our Bibles.

I’m not exempt: I make resolutions. I want a strong spiritual life. I want to reflect Christ’s love to others. But as I leafed through my personal prayer journal recently, I noticed how sporadically I spent meaningful time with God over the previous two months.

I felt bad about this inconsistency until I realized my husband and I were involved in a ministry outreach that required all of my time and attention during those many weeks. I was serving the Lord, I reasoned, so all was well, right? Actually, no. When I’m too busy to spend time with the Lord, even while engaged in evangelistic efforts, what

I’m really saying is, “I can do this on my own. I’ll get back to You when I’m done doing great things for You, God.”

Why do I struggle to spend time with Him? Is the Bible not living and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12)? Is God not able to do exceedingly abundantly above all I can ask or think (Eph. 3:20)? And if so, why do I need resolutions? I should be moving heaven and Earth to carve out time with my heavenly Father because I need Him.

I think we make resolutions because of lackluster faith.

## ROADBLOCKS TO FAITH IN ACTION

I have faith. I believe God made the world and everything in it in six 24-hour days. I believe sin entered the world through the fall and redemption for that sin is only found in Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross.

I believe in Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. I believe in the Rapture of the church and what the book of Revelation says will happen on Earth during the Tribulation. I believe in the Second Coming of the glorified Christ as we, His saints, accompany Him back to Earth. I believe in a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on King David’s throne and then in eternity in the New Jerusalem.

I have absolute confidence in these truths. Why? Because I believe the whole, inerrant, inspired Bible. But putting this faith into practice is difficult.

The Bible says, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh” (Ps. 2:2, 4). Yet, I spend more time reading the news and fretting over politics than I spend petitioning the One with absolute power over the rulers of this world.

The Bible tells me God will supply all my needs (Phil. 4:19), but I check my 401(k) daily and worry about saving enough



for retirement.

The Bible says my days have already been determined (Job 14:5), and I cannot add a day to my life. Yet I sometimes focus more on health fads than I do on the One who will be with me to the end.

The Bible tells me God will never forsake me (Heb. 13:5), yet I wonder who will care for me in my old age and if I'll die alone.

The Bible tells me God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. So, when I can't sleep at night, why do I turn to games on my phone or check social media to relax? Why do I lie awake worried about my future? Why do presidents, kings, and dictators frighten me with what they are doing and what they may do next? If my faith is strong, why don't I make time every day to get in step with my Father, the sovereign Ruler of the universe?

We must discipline ourselves to read His Word, which teaches us the history of this world; how to be reconciled to Him; how to live; and how to know Him in a personal way. He tells us in His Word what has happened, is happening, and

that the ancient Book on our shelves is as relevant today as when it was first written, that the words of that Book can change our lives. We forget that someone who delights in God's Word is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit, . . . and whatever he does shall prosper" (Ps. 1:3).

King David was the only person in Scripture called a man after God's own heart. You might think he had this honor because of his great love for God. However, David also loved God's Word, and this love shines through his writing. In Psalm 19, David called the Word of God "perfect," "sure," "right," "pure," "clean," "true," and "righteous" (vv. 7–9). God's heart reaches out deeply to those who love His Word, sing about it, and meditate on it.

Prayer and Bible reading should be more than a discipline or resolution; they are like barometers of our faith. Proverbs 3:5–6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

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## **I have absolute confidence in these truths. Why? Because I believe the whole, inerrant, inspired Bible. But putting this faith into practice is difficult.**

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will happen; yet we sit with our chins cupped in our hands and wonder, *Do I have time to read my Bible today?*

It isn't the lack of time that keeps us from reading Scripture—we make time for what we want. It isn't the lack of accessibility. Most American homes have at least one Bible, and the average evangelical home has about five. My husband and I have more than 12 Bibles in our home.

And it certainly isn't the expense that keeps us from Scripture. Following the Dark Ages, the Bible was not available in the language of the common man until John Wycliffe translated the Old and New Testaments into English in the late 14th century. People hungered for God's Word so much they paid a wagonload of hay to read a Wycliffe Bible for one hour. Owning a Wycliffe Bible cost the average clergyman a year's salary. How many of us would pay such a price to read God's Word? Today, you can pick up an inexpensive Bible; and you can read it online for free.

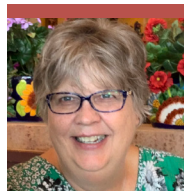
### **BUILDING POWERFUL FAITH**

So, what makes Bible reading and prayer feel like a chore? I believe it's a lack of faith. We forget that prayer is powerful,

We should eagerly look to the Lord for direction in every circumstance of life. We should be awed that we can talk to the God of heaven and Earth, who alone has the ability to heal, forgive, provide, comfort, and give wisdom and strength for each day. Time with God is a precious privilege for believers.

We all need to check our faith. Faith for living acts on what we believe about God. To check our faith, we should look inward at the steadiness of our walk with the Lord.

If you often make New Year's resolutions and find yourself already frustrated because you've failed to keep them, you can start a new journey of faith again the next day, no matter the time of year. God's mercies are new every morning of every day of every year. When we are faithless, He remains faithful. Great is His faithfulness.



**Linda Craft**

is the North American Ministries volunteer coordinator for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.

# NOTHING BUT LIES

BY CAROLINE GLICK

**(JNS)**—Senior Hamas terrorist Ali Baraka openly admitted recently how Hamas duped Israel and the United States into complacency while planning its October 7, 2023, attack on Israel. But Hamas is not the only entity that uses deception. So does the so-called moderate Palestinian Authority (PA).

“We made them think Hamas was busy with governing Gaza, and that it wanted to focus on the 2.5 million Palestinians [there] and had abandoned the resistance altogether. All the while, under the table, Hamas was preparing for this big attack,” Baraka told RT, Russia’s government-owned television network. “In the past couple of years,” he said, “Hamas has adopted a ‘rational’ approach. It did not go into any war and did not join Islamic Jihad in its recent battle.”

Hamas pretended to be a credible partner for peace negotiations and pointed to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, its Iranian-founded spin-off, as the problem. Yet, the entire time, Hamas was planning the rape, torture, immolation, and kidnapping of Jewish babies, children, women, and men.

Hamas’s deception is nothing new. Lying forms an integral part of Islamic jihadist doctrine, going back to the days of Muhammad.

Yet, in his speech on October 10, U.S. President Joe Biden intimated that Hamas isn’t representative of the Palestinians. The subtext was clear: Hamas is the bad guy. The PA is the good guy. And U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken’s decision to meet with PA/Fatah chief Mahmoud Abbas made the point clear.

Five days after the massacre, Abbas released a milquetoast condemnation of it, while he and the rest of Palestinian society did nothing but celebrate and defend Hamas’s atrocities, blaming Israel for crimes Hamas perpetrated against its own people.

For five days, Abbas did nothing but praise Hamas and condemn Israel. As Palestinian Media Watch reported, Abbas issued a statement of solidarity with Hamas; and Fatah’s Central Committee praised Hamas for its slaughter and called for national unity between Hamas and the PA. Fatah also called for all Palestinians to join Hamas’s jihad against Israel.

Fatah posted Quranic calls to jihad on its Telegram pages that are indistinguishable from Hamas propaganda: “Strike the sons of apes and pigs. . . . Slaughter everyone who is Israeli.”

PA crowds greeted the news of Hamas’s atrocities with jubilation. Celebrations, victory marches, and public parties were held from northern Samaria to the South Hebron Hills.



\* Aftermath of the fatal attack on Kibbutz Be'eri

Palestinians mocked the Jewish victims on social media and celebrated their mass murder.

Abbas’s condemnation of the atrocities was clearly fake. But it convinced Blinken that it was reasonable to meet with him and continue to base U.S. policy on the fiction that the PA represents a moderate force within Palestinian society that is willing to coexist peacefully with Israel.

Abbas’s lies and deceptions are his modus operandi, just as they were the modus operandi of his predecessor, Yasser Arafat. In the PA’s early days in the 1990s, Arafat routinely condemned Hamas terror attacks in English, but in Arabic he called for the Palestinians to slaughter the Jews.

Israel and the United States refuse to acknowledge that the PA duped them the same way Hamas did. Like most of its predecessors, the Biden administration wants to believe the deception because it wants to believe Israel is to blame for the violence waged against it.

The lie of Israeli culpability undergirds 50 years of U.S. Middle East peacemaking efforts. The lie of Palestinian moderation undergirds 50 years of near-continuous U.S. pressure on Israel to concede territory to the Arabs, and it blocks any effort by Israel to defeat the Arabs on the battlefield.

The October slaughter isn’t a political conflict. It is an existential one. And it isn’t only between Israel and Hamas. It is between Israel and the vast majority of the Palestinian people and the entirety of the Palestinian leadership, who actively seek Israel’s physical annihilation and the genocide of world Jewry—particularly those Jews who seek to live in peace and freedom in the Jewish State of Israel.

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PHOTO: THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL ARCHIVE

“Knowing I believed in Jesus, they accused me of following another god.”

by Zvi Kalisher

This week I went to the hospital for a doctor’s appointment. While there, I saw some of the hospital workers who remembered what I had shared with the doctors about Jesus during my last visit. Knowing what I believed and in whom I believed, they were hostile to me.

When they saw me, they only wanted me to sing the praises of the doctors who had helped me overcome my heart failure. **[Editor’s Note:** On February 27, 1987, Zvi suffered cardiac arrest and was found face down at a bus stop on the Jaffa Road in Jerusalem. He was taken to the hospital where doctors pronounced him clinically dead. They said life-support equipment was keeping him alive; and if he ever regained consciousness, he would never return to normal. Clearly, God proved them wrong!]

“Now that you are back in this hospital, why don’t you return to the doctor who healed you?” one asked.

“I will tell you what I have told all my doctors for many years: God cures the sick, but the doctors take the payment.”

This enraged them. Knowing I believed in Jesus, they accused me of

following another god.

“I do not follow other gods, as you do. I follow the one true, mighty God,” I said.

“Show us in the Holy Bible where it is written about your God,” one of them said.

They thought they had fooled me, thinking I could not prove the Bible prophesied that Jesus would come. But they were not concerned with truth. They only wanted to appear smart and powerful against people like me who believe in Jesus.

“Now show us what the Bible says about how we follow other gods besides the one true God, as you say,” one said.

“I am happy to show you what the Bible says,” I replied.

“You must show us the proof only from our Bible, not your Christian books,”



another challenged.

"Do you have a Bible with you?" I asked. But they did not.

So, I gave them my Bible. I thought they would claim it was not the true Bible, as they often said. But as they examined it, they agreed it was the true Bible.

"Now, show us where the Bible says we follow false gods," one said.

They tried to put me down and make me weak in my faith. But when they asked me to read about my God in whom I have believed, I read to them from Deuteronomy 6 in Hebrew: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" (v. 4).

"This is not only my God; He is your God too," I told them.

"If this is so, how have you believed in another God?" someone asked. "Will you try to tell us the Bible teaches about Him?"

"Yes!" I answered. "It does!"

"If this is true, show us where it is clearly written that the One from Bethlehem in whom you believe will come. If you cannot show us, you have no right to speak to our people with your lies."

"I am happy to show you where your own Bible speaks of my God," I said.

With a heart full of love, I directed them to Micah 5:2: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

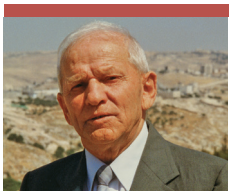
"You can see that this is from the Holy Bible and is not a fictitious story," I said.

"Why have our rabbis never shown us this verse? And why have we never heard this truth?" one asked me.

I gave them the same answer I had given others: "I am here to bring you the truth the Lord has given us. The Lord said in Isaiah 49:3, 'You are My servant, O Israel.'"

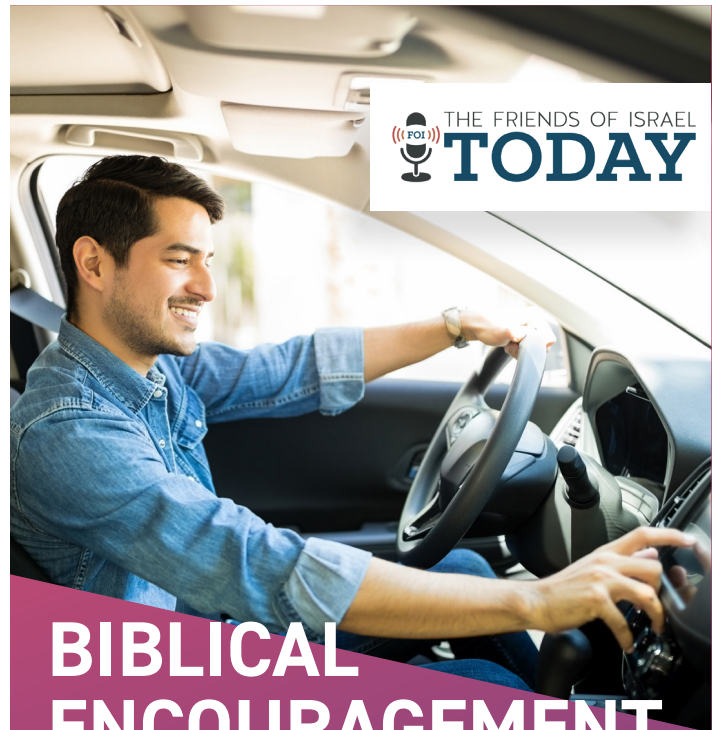
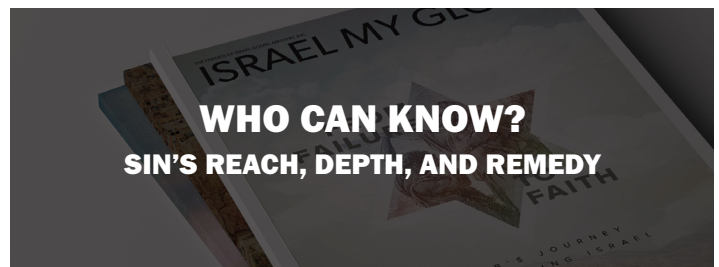
These people genuinely wanted to know how I had come to faith in Jesus. No longer did they attack me. Instead, they were friendly, having seen the truth of God's Word with their own eyes. I am waiting for the next time I can speak to them. I am confident we will meet again.

*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.

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