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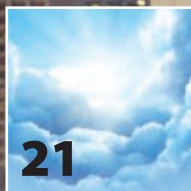
FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

Thank God for Israel



Thank God for Israel



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Our sincere thanks to Dr. Craig Hartman for coordinating this issue of *FrontLine* magazine.

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No doubt you have seen the ads in *FrontLine* over the years for Pastors' Tours to Israel. Many pastors who have taken tours with us in conjunction with Shalom Ministries have followed up with Shalom tours sponsored by their churches. In January 2018, Lord willing, those who have already been to Israel will have the opportunity to participate in an Advanced Tour, visiting sites that they have not seen before. Please contact us for a brochure! However, whether you have or ever are able to visit Israel or not, you will benefit from this issue of *FrontLine*.

November 2, 2017, was the centennial of the Balfour Declaration, a letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild making public British support of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Balfour, a Scottish statesman, had served as prime minister of Britain from 1902 to 1905. Having represented Great Britain in the first meeting of the League of Nations in 1910, he returned to the British government in 1916 to serve as foreign secretary. Because of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations entrusted the United Kingdom with the administration of the region then called "Palestine."

Although the origin of the term "Palestine" is debatable, it is first seen in a fifth-century Greek document, which describes the region south of Syria as "Palestina," or the Land of the Philistines. In fact, it is hardly possible to pronounce Palestine in Arabic, which explains why Arabic speakers pronounce it "Filistin" (unless they are English-speaking Christians, who call it Israel!). The Greek term "Philistine" refers to an Aegean people we know by that name in the Bible. Under the original British mandate, the area included all of modern Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and all of what is now modern Jordan.

The "Palestinians," or Arabic people living in that region, were first given the land mass which is now called Jordan, and after 1948 they began to claim the areas disputed today as stepping stones to claim the entire region. In fact, on Palestinian maps there is no land of Israel at all, and even when their writings do mention the area that most would still call Israel, they refer to it as "occupied territory." But the political conflict surrounding Israel did not begin in 1948; it began at the first mention of a Jewish state. The British had thought that because there was much

American sympathy for the Jewish people, the Balfour Declaration might cause world Jewry to pressure the United States into entering World War I. Later, when British sympathies for the Jews were diminished, they announced in 1939 that a Jewish state was no longer British policy, with the result that many millions of Jews in Russia and Europe were unable to flee to their homeland during the pogroms and the Holocaust. The history of the early twentieth century and the post-World War II era is rich with the story of how Israel became and survived as a nation.

Here, you will read some of that history. You will learn how the Jewish state was born in Israel instead of in Uganda, where some British statesmen and some early Zionists were willing to place it. You will learn some of the intriguing story of British scientist and leader of the Zionist movement Chaim Weizmann, who gave his process for the fermentation of acetone to the British government so they could produce enough gunpowder to keep the Kaiser's army at bay until the Allies were strong enough to win the war. It was largely Weizmann's relationship with Balfour that caused the final location chosen to be the ancient biblical homeland given to the Jews by God. Knowing something of the history of the British mandate and the ill-fated decision by Great Britain in 1939 (when it was already evident that Hitler was determined to destroy the Jews) will help the reader understand why the Israeli War for Independence had to be fought and why Israel has been attacked repeatedly by her Arab neighbors ever since. Tragically, just as liberalism a century ago laid its allegorical hermeneutic and amillennial foundation as the justification for "Christendom" to oppose the Jews in favor of the recently minted "Palestinians" (even chiming in with the antisemitism that equates Modern Israel with Nazi Germany [!]), so today are some Evangelicals, particularly those who have embraced Replacement Theology, loath to stand with Israel.

Authors included here are careful not to insist that the modern state of Israel is the absolute fulfillment of end-time prophecy, but none of them deny that it very well could be and certainly seems to be. All of them would agree that we are under a biblical mandate to love the Jewish people, and anyone who has ever had the privilege of visiting Israel as well as all who will carefully read this issue of *FrontLine* will very likely join us in saying enthusiastically, "Thank God for Israel!"

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Former FBFI President Rod Bell Sr. with the Lord

Dr. Rod Bell Sr., age 82, of Oakwood, Georgia, entered the gates of heaven on Sunday, October 2, 2016, in Gainesville at Northeast Georgia Medical Center with his family by his side. Funeral services were held at 2:00 pm, Friday, October 7, 2016, at Maranatha Baptist Church of Oakwood, Georgia. Pastor Rod L. Bell Jr., Dr. Johnny Daniels, Dr. Bob Jones III, Dr. John Monroe, and Dr. John Vaughn officiated. The family received friends from 12:00 to 2:00 pm. Interment took place at 1:30 pm on Saturday, October 8, 2016, at Woodlawn Memorial Park in Greenville, South Carolina.

Born August 12, 1934, in Ball Fork, West Virginia, Dr. Bell was saved on January 19, 1957, trained for the ministry at Bob Jones University, and became the founding pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. He also founded the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and served as the president of FBFI for over twenty-five years. He served on many boards and preached around the world.

FrontLine greatly appreciates the many expressions of love and support offered to FBFI and the Bell family. Since Dr. Bell stepped down from FBFI in 2003, he and Lenore, like many retired ministry couples, lived frugally with an entirely new level of sacrifice. As a final tribute to the Bells, we have an opportunity to give them a lasting memorial by helping them with a grave marker. At the funeral, we announced that FBFI is raising funds for a bronze memorial marker for the Bells. At this writing, more than half the amount needed has been donated and paid. The marker has been ordered and should be in place by Christmas. If you would like to have a part in this tribute, you may use the "donate" button on the FBFI website (fbfi.org); send a check to FBFI, 2801 Wade Hampton Blvd., Suite 115-165, Taylors, SC 29687; or call the Home Office at 864.268.0777 with a credit card number. This will be a great blessing to Lenore and the Bell family. We look forward to hearing from you.



I just received the Sept/Oct issue of *FrontLine* and I am thrilled to see these issues addressed in such a compassionate and firm manner. I would like to personally buy 15–20 copies of this issue to give out to my church families. I am hoping they will then subscribe to the magazine. Thanks so much for standing firm.

Pastor Roger Dickinson
Greenville, SC

Thank you for your wonderful ministry to fundamental Baptists over the decades. I was not raised in a Christian home and only came slowly and meanderingly to Baptist fundamentalism while in college through my local church. (I graduated in 2013 and moved away, and there aren't any good fundamental churches where I live.) But *FrontLine* was an important part of that and now I find it so helpful and encouraging.

I am friends with Mark Ward, who hosts your site. He mentioned the most recent issue of *FrontLine* to me and encouraged me to read it. I would love to! But here are my questions: (1) Can I just buy the one copy (electronic or print)? (2) Or do I have to get a subscription, either electronic or print? (3) If I get an electronic subscription, does that give me access to the full *FrontLine* archives? I notice you have some PDFs available of earlier issues, but I wonder if a subscription would give me access to more issues.

Please know I am praying for all of you and for Dr. Vaughn. I know times are hard for fundamental people right now, and we need each other. I am praying for you all and would like to attend an annual meeting some year.

David Alves
Bristol, CT

Single copies may be purchased from the Home Office at the cover price of \$3.95 plus S/H. Multiple copies are available by priority mail at cost plus S/H. You may purchase a ten-copy minimum for \$30 (which includes S/H) or fifty copies for \$120 (which includes S/H). Online and regular subscriptions are available for purchase at fbfi.org.

Thank you for your *FrontLine* article, "Approving Things That Are Excellent: Discernment in Music." Please bear with me, as I share my heart with you from a different perspective. As a lay-person that grew up in a fundamental Baptist church, I heard Biblical preaching all my life. Sadly, the church I grew up in split over many issues, one of which was the use of Sovereign Grace and "cleaned up" Getty songs. A year before everything came to a head in that ministry, the Lord had us move to a

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Thank God for Israel

Eschatological discussions, especially as they relate to Israel, often involve reference to the so-called “Dry Bones Prophecy” of Ezekiel 37:1–14. Many preachers and writers will speak in terms of the modern state of Israel as a specific fulfillment of this passage, taking that conclusion for granted and marveling at the miracle that is the state of Israel. This is understandable, of course, since the twentieth century witnessed the beginning of an amazing and continuing return to the land, though in unbelief, etc., which is consistent with the prophecy. That does not end the analysis, however. That the chapter is speaking of Israel can hardly be argued against, especially since the text itself says that it is (e.g., v. 11), but the timing of its fulfillment is technically less clear.

It is true that the text envisions a return to the land that God will bring about (v. 12), and hearing that would no doubt have been a great encouragement to the Israelites in captivity who saw no hope for a revival of the nation after the destruction and captivity wrought in Babylon and who were in despair. Yet can we say with certainty that the modern world has seen its fulfillment beginning in 1947? The answer lies in seeing the full description of the prophecy and all of the elements represented in verse 14 and supported by the entire chapter. You see, God promised not only to bring Israel back to its land at some point in the future but also that He would put His spirit in her and, at that time, she would know that God foresaw it and caused it. So a key to understanding the timing of the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37 is to understand how the events that are coincident with Israel's return to her land relate to the Holy Spirit filling her "whole house." In other words, the return to the land spoken of by God in Ezekiel 37 must be the return to the land that precedes the future national salvation of Israel without interruption. Consequently, we cannot say with dogmatic certainty that Ezekiel 37, is being fulfilled before our eyes today. It certainly could be, but it is also true that the Jewish people can be expelled by God from the land again, only to return far in the future. If that return in the future is followed by the national salvation of Israel (with no intervening expulsion), then that return to the land would be the return to the land that in fact fulfills Ezekiel 37. From today's perspective, should "all Israel be saved" without another expulsion of the Jewish people from the land, then the return to Israel beginning in 1947 would be proven to be the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37. So we can say, the current existence of the state of Israel *could* be the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37 but it is not *necessarily* so.

This subtle distinction is important because without it one might be tempted to be amazed at the miracle that is Israel primarily because of its connection to the fulfillment of that prophecy. The miracle that is Israel, however, is a powerful reality that is completely independent of the Ezekiel 37, prophecy, though that prophecy is a part of the tapestry. More far-reaching is the miracle that is Israel as it is a fulfillment of prophecy given long ago by God through Moses in Deuteronomy 30. In that chapter we are essentially told that the chastisement of the nation for its rebellion against God will include a scattering of its people to the four corners of the earth where they will be subject to the nations—but that there is coming a day when God will bring them back to the land, and when He does He will circumcise their hearts. This circumcision of the heart is a reference to the same moment that Ezekiel referred to by God filling them with His Spirit after He brings them back to the land, yet it is a part of the story of Israel from the beginning. It is foundational to the history of the nation. The theme is similar to the Ezekiel portion, but the implications are broader in Deuteronomy. You see, the magnitude of the Deuteronomy 30 prophecy is that this people Israel would, though they be scattered throughout the world for a long period of time, remain as a distinct people, only to one day be brought back to the land. In other words, there is an implicit promise by God to maintain them as a dis-

tinct people. They would not assimilate, and they would not deteriorate. They would not be destroyed. They would not be ultimately conquered. No other people group in the history of the world has experienced this reality. Yet the Jewish people remain a distinct nation and have returned to the land. Even if their current return does not fulfill Ezekiel 37 and they are expelled and return again, we are still seeing the power of God and His immutable promise to this people.

A Very Important Truth

This is extremely important because it helps us understand much of what God is doing on earth today. It also gives confidence to all believers, Jew and Gentile alike, in the promises of God. This is precisely because outside of God's promise to preserve and maintain the Jewish people, there is absolutely no explanation for the existence of them and the state of Israel. This is an extraordinarily important truth. Furthermore, not only have the people been preserved but even their language has been maintained and, though once near death, is alive and well and being spoken on the streets throughout the Holy Land. Biblical characters are not found only in prayer books or ancient manuscripts but rather on schools and shops, pizzerias, buses, etc.

The enormity of the miracle of God's promised preservation can also be seen in the fact that, while Israel has been in exile among the nations, she has seen many unsuccessful attempts to remove her from the face of the earth. Some of these are recorded in the Bible, such as the persecution of the Jews by Haman (as described in the Book of Esther); or prophesied, such as the attempted annihilation of them under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (as prophesied in Daniel 8); and some have been witnessed outside of the canon and throughout history. The seemingly unrelenting persecution of this small group of people in the various expulsions and persecutions since the first century also bear witness to the matter. Events in the Middle East since 1917 and even before bear vivid evidence as well. The modern Zionist movement, which began at the end of the nineteenth century, was met with great resistance. Yet the plight of the Jewish people gained worldwide recognition after World War I, such that what is now known as Israel and what is now known as Jordan were set aside as a national homeland for the Jews in the Middle East. This land division caused uprisings among the Arab nations which ultimately led to a reduction in the land allocated to the Jews when Transjordan (later called Jordan) became an Arab state. Nevertheless, the Jews were given land sanctioned by the world to call their own, and the number returning to it grew exponentially. The neighboring Arab countries were unhappy with this result, and between the World Wars there were numerous attempts to attack and destroy the fledgling nation while efforts were being imitated all around her to undo what had been done to establish the homeland.

Ultimately, as a result of the Holocaust and World War II, the shock of the atrocities caused a temporary lull in the pressure to eliminate the Jews and deny them a homeland, and the current state of Israel was born.

Interestingly, its original borders were similar to what was left after the land area of Jordan was taken back from the original allocation after World War I. Immediately upon its declaration as a sovereign state, the nation was attacked by all the nations that surround it. Miraculously, the nation survived. Amazing stories reminiscent of Biblical encounters between Israel of old and her enemies are told of enemy fighters killing each other by mistake and inexplicable maneuvers in the field, all resulting in the new nation emerging victorious with cease-fire agreements with its enemy neighbors. That, however, was only the beginning of the nonstop attempts to destroy the nation and the people since 1949.

In addition to the attempts to eliminate Israel through military prowess, the world has shown itself to be against the Jewish state politically as well. The emergence of the so-called Palestinian claims to a state and a people has been a primary factor in attempting to divide the land in non-military ways. Add to that the constant chastisement of Israel by the United Nations while Iran and others speak openly about the elimination of the Jewish state, and we can clearly see that the existence of such a state can be explained only by the hand of God and His commitment to His promise. God's hand is upon the people and nation of Israel, and that reality has proven to be a blessing to the nations.

A Comforting Reality

This reality must bring comfort to any believer because of the confidence it supports in the promises of God. In fact, any time a believer experiences moments of doubt or despair or temporarily loses sight of the promises of God, he need only remind himself of Israel and the commitment of God to her, though she be in rebellion against Him. God keeps His word and His promises, and Israel is one of the most specific proofs of that in the Scriptures.

The nation of Israel is a miracle. A visit to Israel shows the hand of God around every corner. Being there brings the Bible to life, but it also enables the visitor to see that the land has also come alive. While not controlled by the Jewish people the land deteriorated. In contrast now, the land is vibrant with green where there were once swamps and with life and development where there once were barren areas. Towns have grown up—and even thriving cities that have a major impact in the world. Since the modern nation's founding, Israelis have been recipients of more Nobel Prizes per capita than any other country (other than Switzerland). It leads the world in the number of scientists in the workforce with the most physicians and engineers per capita. Israelis have registered more patents in the United States than have citizens of Russia, China, and India combined, yet Israel's population is approximately 8 million and the combined population of these countries is almost 3 billion. That is approximately a quarter of one percent of the population by comparison.

Israel has attracted the most venture capital per capita in the world. It has more NASDAQ-listed companies than Europe, India, China, and Japan combined. The only country

The nation of Israel is a miracle. A visit to Israel shows the hand of God around every corner.

with more companies listed on that exchange is the United States. Israel's average life expectancy exceeds or rivals that of many countries, including the US and the UK. Israel produces ninety-three percent of its own food requirement

and has more museums per capita than any other country in the world. Israel even has the most productive cows in the world! The list could continue, but the point is clear.

The growth and success of Israel has also had a profound effect on citizens throughout the world. Many of the technological advances that we take for granted were either developed in Israel or were produced with Israeli ingenuity. Most mobile phones have significant components thanks to Israel. The same can be said of computers and some of the key operating software systems. Certain e-mail functionalities, voicemail, and search engines are also products from the Jewish state, as well as some of the capabilities of e-books and data storage methods. Too numerous to mention also are the medical advances that have a source in Israel, including many cancer medications and treatments and a large number of pharmaceuticals such as important insulin devices and the most popular multiple-sclerosis medications. Early treatment of Parkinson's disease and innovative epileptic treatments are also on the list. Specialized lasers for throat surgery, advancements in heart stents, and radiation-free x-rays come from Israel. Advances in agriculture in many parts of the world that are used to provide food for underdeveloped nations can be traced to irrigation technologies developed in Israel.

This list only scratches the surface, and much more could be said. We cannot help but be impressed by all of this development and these wonderful contributions, and we must remember that all of this has happened in under seventy years!

Truly Israel Is a Miracle.

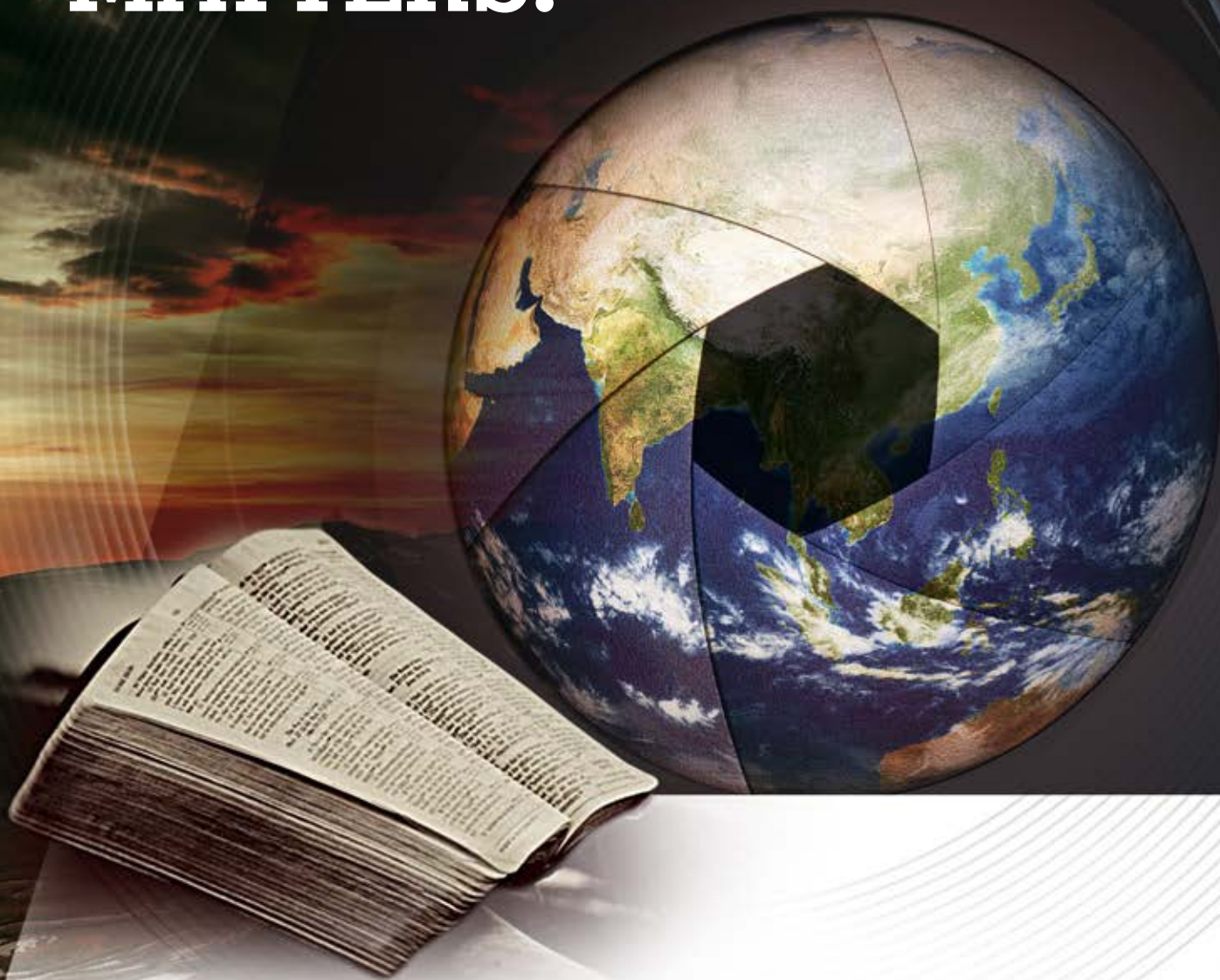
For the believer, we must also remember that Israel was used by God to produce and preserve the Bible. Israel is the root from which the church came forth. Israel produced the Messiah, and salvation is of the Jews. God has promised to complete His plan with Israel, and she is vital to His plan for the world. Israel is also the place where Messiah will return when Israel's heart is circumcised, and it is from there that He will rule and reign and to there where all nations of the world will go to worship Him. Over Israel all followers of Christ should rejoice, and for her peace all believers should pray. From its beginning God promised this tiny nation a future and a heritage, and upon those promises all can stand with confidence in the sovereignty of God. As world events unfold, we cannot help but marvel at our God.

Thank God for Israel!

Dr. Craig Hartman is the founder and director of Shalom Ministries Inc. based in Brooklyn, New York. A frequent conference speaker and teacher, Dr. Hartman is part of the leadership at Bethel Baptist Fellowship in Brooklyn and also serves on the Executive Board of FBF.



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The Making of a Nation

How Modern Israel Came to Be

Dr. A. T. Pierson wrote that history is “His Story.” Although the secular historian would decry any effort to include God in the mix of human events, there are many inexplicables in history if we eliminate God’s role. There are reasons for what happens, and there are results to what has happened. From the beginning of the dispersion a desire of the diaspora to return to Israel has existed, but it occurred only last century. Why did God’s people wait so long to return to their divinely appointed land? I would suggest that it is because there was a “fulness of time” for their doing so.

Jewish Desire

The hand of God in this event can be seen in several ways. First, He made the Jews want to return to Palestine. Everyone knows that they have endured more than their share of abuse during the last two thousand years. In the 1880s events begin to transpire and hearts began to understand that it was time to return to their ancient home. The Jews of Russia had been confined to the Pale of Settlement; for decades their young men had been conscripted into the Russian army for twenty-five year stints; job and career opportunities had been increasingly constricted to the point that most were destitute. Then came the pogroms (officially sanctioned or permitted mob-type actions against Jews), some of which were instigated by the clergy of the Orthodox or Roman Catholic Church. With the pogrom in 1881, Eastern European Jewry began a huge exodus. Pogroms in 1891–92 and 1905–6 instigated even more emigration. Most moved west, with over two million moving to the United States.¹ But a small number made *aliya* (immigration) to Palestine. (Literally, *aliya* means to “go up.” It was originally used of going up to

the temple. Often the expression is “make *aliya*.” Later there was *aliya alef*, which was legal immigration, and *aliya bet*, which was not.)

Over the centuries Jews had tried differing methods to avoid persecution. One that seemed the most obvious was total assimilation into the society of their native country. Alfred Dreyfus, an officer in the French army, had done just that. However, in 1894 he was accused of passing information about parts for French artillery pieces to the Germans. While covering the Dreyfus Affair for a Viennese newspaper, Theodore Herzl came to the conclusion that Captain Dreyfus was being tried not as a treasonous army officer but as a Jew. If a man with no more apparent Jewishness than Dreyfus was not immune, then no one was safe. Upon appeal Dreyfus was eventually acquitted, but Herzl had seen the need, and he dedicated the rest of his life to the cause of Zionism.

Herzl (1860–1904) was not the first modern Zionist, and he certainly stood on the shoulders of others of recent history. His approach, however, was revolutionary: by transforming the problem from one that concerned merely the Jews to one that affected the international community, he set the movement on a new trajectory. In 1896 he published *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*), which rapidly became an international sensation. Response was so dramatic that a year later he convened the first Zionist Congress in Basle. He predicted that the Jews would have their own nation within fifty years. He missed it by a year. At the Congress the 197 delegates adopted the flag that is essentially the same as the one Israel presently uses as well as their national anthem, “*Ha Tikvah*” (“The Hope”). Strangely, however, Zionism was a minority movement even among Jews.

Although almost all of the Jews of Eastern Europe were urban, the settlers that the pogroms expelled formed agricultural communes known as *kibbutzim*. Each kibbutz was

a voluntary communistic community. They instituted them because they were leftist, for the most part, but the kibbutz would eventually prove propitious in absorbing first the adventurer and then the survivors of Hitler's death camps. Inferior land was purchased at exorbitant prices, mostly from absentee landlords. Initially, much of the money came from the Rothschild and Montefiore families in England. In 1901 the Jewish National Fund was created. Many Jewish families had one of this organization's containers into which they deposited coins. Humble as it may seem, these containers helped the fund provide more money to buy land in Israel than any other source.

The *kibbutzniks* drained malaria swamps, hefted multiplied tons of rock, planted eucalyptus trees to siphon the water from the land, and planted crops. Living in the most primitive conditions, harried and robbed by the natives, and dying from malaria, slowly they transformed the swamps of the Hula Valley and coastal plain into land of value. For exactly four centuries (1517–1917) the Ottoman Empire abused and neglected Palestine. Buying land and developing it are good, but this process cannot create a nation.

The Legal Right

God's hand can be seen in a second way: He gave them the legal right to create that nation. The story of how He did so began with a brilliant scientist and a nation in great need. Originally from Russia, Chaim (known to the British as "Charles") Weizmann (1874–1953) studied at several German universities, then moved to England in 1904—becoming a citizen in 1910. During the Great War the British had a crisis of huge military consequence: they were unable to produce enough cordite, the substance that propels bullets and artillery shells. This paucity arose because their old method of manufacturing acetone was inadequate. At one point in 1915 during what the British called "the shell crisis," artillery pieces could fire only four shells a day. In response, David Lloyd-George, then the head of the Ministry of Munitions, asked Dr. Weizmann if he could help. He was able to refine a process that produced acetone from carbohydrates, enabling the British to make the cordite that was needed.²

When asked what compensation he would like for his help, Dr. Weizmann replied that he wanted a Jewish homeland in Palestine. On November 2, 1917, in a letter to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, the Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote what has become known as the Balfour Declaration. It reads, "His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, . . . to use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

At the end of World War I the British possessed that part of Palestine that would include Israel. The hapless Turks had thrown in their lot with the Germans, losing their tottering empire. General Allenby had captured Jerusalem in

1917, dismounting and walking humbly through the city gate. Later the League of Nations would entrust that area to the administration of the British, to be known as the British mandate. It was not, however, a happy arrangement for any of the parties involved. During their sojourn in Palestine Britain would station as many as 100,000 troops there, fighting both the Arabs and the Jews, each of which sought violently to pry British hands off what they respectively thought was theirs. In the interest of maintaining good relations with the oil-rich Arabs they would repeatedly view with disfavor "a national home for the Jewish people." In the beginning of the mandate, Jewish immigration to Palestine was light, but as the Nazi persecution heated up, the number of those who sought to move there increased. When a haven was needed most, the British restricted immigration to 15,000 a year in 1939. From then until Israel became a nation constant attempts were made to smuggle in people. Repeatedly, rusty tramp ships were chartered, filled to the decks with refugees, and sailed to Palestine, where the British refused them entry. Ship after ship was apprehended and its human cargo dumped into the barbed-wire enclosures of Cyprus, which must have haunted the death-camp survivors.

During the turbulent years of the mandate there were Arab riots, bombings by both Arab groups and Jewish extremists, and one-sided enforcement of the peace by the British. Arabs were allowed to carry firearms openly, while Jews could be executed for the possession of a weapon. With the end of World War II, the survivors of the Holocaust sought a refuge. Surreptitiously, on dark nights small boats ferried refugees from the ships that escaped the blockade to land where they were hidden in *kibbutzim*. In practically every way the British betrayed the Jews and nullified the promise of the Balfour Declaration.

Before there was a Jewish nation there was the Jewish Agency. Acting much like a government in exile, it functioned as much as possible as the government of the future state of Israel. Because it recognized that the Arabs of Palestine would not quietly allow *eretz* Israel (the land of Israel) to become a nation, they were preparing for the war that they knew would inevitably follow their declaration of independence. Beginning in the 1930s they began to make provision for their future. Small arms and ammunition were smuggled in using the cavities of peaceful machines (tractors, boilers, etc.). One man scoured the salvage yards and factories of the United States finding the machine tools to make their own weapons. In a machine shop under the fields of a kibbutz they made several thousand Stens, a British submachine gun.

At the end of World War II Europe was awash in the inexpensive surplus weapons of a continent no longer at war. Small arms, artillery, airplanes, tanks, and everything that a nation's military needed carried a for-sale sign. Huge warehouses stacked to the rafters dotted the continent. The Czech Republic was a veritable bonanza. Some of the materiel was legally sold; some came at a little higher price. Not yet being a nation, Israel wasn't supposed to be able to purchase certain items, but money makes things possible.

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Robert Murray McCheyne

"A Lover of Israel"

For a century following the Reformation until Britain's defeat of the Spanish Armada, organized Protestant missions were nonexistent. The Moravians, under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf, account for the first modern foreign-missions movement, which began early in the eighteenth century. An English pastor by the name of William Carey, burdened for the lost worldwide, along with fellow pastor Andrew Fuller and eleven Baptist colleagues, formed the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. Within a year Carey was on his way to India to evangelize. He subsequently has been called the Father of Modern Missions. When it comes to missionary activity, the century that followed is unparalleled. Church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette said of the nineteenth century, "Never had any other set of ideas, religious or secular, been propagated over so wide an area by so many professional agents maintained by the unconstrained donations of so many millions of individuals."

One seemingly insignificant but innovative aspect of this massive universal evangelistic outreach was the growing concern among the believing Church to reach God's ancient people, the Jews. This led to the formation in 1809 of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. Through their influence, a group was formed in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1818. Soon auxiliaries were formed in other areas of Scotland, testifying to the genuine interest among the Scots for the Jewish people. There was a concern for Jewish people in Scotland since the time of the Reformation. A growing burden for the Jews by the Scots seems to have been further enhanced by the arrival of a number of Jewish immigrants early in the nineteenth century. However, this burden for Israel was especially fueled by the revivals of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jewish missions in Scotland can be traced to the earnest prayers and persistence of burdened believers.

Mrs. Smith of Dunesk, who had labored fervently in prayer, that her Church might see that "salvation is of the Jews," added works to faith by placing 100 pounds [\$500] in the hands of Rev. Moody Stuart to be used in founding a Jewish Mission of the Church of Scotland, while as yet the subject had been mooted in the Assembly. About the same time Mr. Robert Wodrow, who was accustomed to spend days in fasting and prayer for the Jews, drew up a memorial which was presented to the General Assembly in 1837, pleading for the establishment of a Jewish Mission.

The General Assembly Meeting of the Church of Scotland in 1838 included many recommendations setting forth the necessity of Jewish mission work. A committee was appointed to consider the most effective way to carry this out and to report to the assembly. The committee decided to send a delegation on an investigative trip to Palestine and also to Eastern and Central Europe to gather information on the state of the Jews. The committee gave

them a list of questions they wanted to be answered. This “Mission of Inquiry” was made up of two senior pastors, Dr. Alexander Keith, pastor of St. Cyrus, Kincardineshire, and Dr. Alexander Black, professor of Theology in Marischal College and University, Aberdeen. Dr. Robert Candlish proposed the idea that two younger men, Robert Murray McCheyne, pastor of St. Peter’s, Dundee, age twenty-seven, and his close friend Andrew Bonar, pastor colleague at Collace, and twenty-nine years old, should also be included. Of these four, it is McCheyne who providentially stands out when Jewish missions are discussed.

McCheyne was born May 21, 1813, in Edinburgh, Scotland. Robert was a precocious child who at four years old, while recovering from illness, studied the Greek alphabet and was able to name and write the letters. He distinguished himself in high school in several academic fields. In the winter of 1831 McCheyne began divinity studies under Dr. Thomas Chalmers at Edinburgh University. The death of his elder brother drove him to Scripture and moved him to seek “a brother who cannot die.” Following his salvation, McCheyne completed his ministerial training and served as assistant to Bonar at Larbert. Robert was ordained November 24, 1836, and appointed to the pastorate of St. Peter’s in Dundee. He had a warm evangelistic spirit wherein the needs at home and abroad lay heavy on his heart. He was known for his holy, consistent daily walk. He maintained strict daily Bible study, prayer, meditation, visitation of the people of his parish, and preparation of sermons, all despite frequent illness.

“Useful to the Jewish Cause”

God providentially moved to make McCheyne a member of the Mission of Inquiry during a forced season of rest from ministry due to illness. One day in 1838 while Dr. Candlish was walking with McCheyne and talking to him about the Mission to Israel, Candlish asked what he thought of “being useful to the Jewish cause.” His “usefulness” can be best seen in the expression of his heart. He stated in a letter to a friend,

To seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel is an object very near to my heart, as my people know it has ever been. Such an enterprise may probably draw down unspeakable blessings on the Church of Scotland, according to the promise, “. . . they shall prosper that love thee.” He is quoted on another occasion as saying, “I now see plainly that all our views about the Jews being the chief object of missionary exertion are plain and sober truths, according to Scripture.” Again, “I feel convinced that if we pray that the world may be converted in God’s way, we will seek the good of the Jews; and the more we do so, the happier we will be in our own soul.”

They departed from Scotland in April 1839 with one objective mind: “To see the real condition and character of God’s ancient people, and to observe whatever might contribute to interest others in their cause.” Traveling via France, Italy, and Athens, they reached Alexandria, Egypt, May 13, 1839. Wherever they went, they gathered all available data regard-

ing the Jewish people in the locality, recording economic circumstances, educational opportunities, Jewish orthodoxy, and openness to New Testament truth. While they gave detailed reports on all the places they visited in Asia Minor and Europe, the major report concerned Jews in Palestine. McCheyne, who was also a talented artist, sketched many scenes they came upon, especially in the Holy Land. They found most of the Palestinian Jews to be from Poland, with a significant Russian representation. The Jewish people in Palestine they encountered were the ultra-orthodox Hasidim. Moreover, they found the Jews in Palestine more destitute than anywhere else. These Palestinian Jews were supported by the contributions of wealthy Jewish people in other countries, such as Sir Moses Montefiore. In fact, McCheyne and Bonar met and enjoyed the hospitality of the noted Jewish philanthropist Montefiore, who happened to be in Palestine at the same time.

What was proposed as a “Mission of Inquiry” became a “Door of Opportunity” to preach Messiah, proclaiming the gospel wherever they went. McCheyne commenced his Jewish missionary activity onboard ship to the continent. He found a Jewish lad and shared the gospel with him from Psalm 1. Bibles and gospel tracts were freely distributed. On at least one occasion they entered into a synagogue and joined in Jewish prayers, even reciting the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4). Visiting in the home of a sick rabbi in Galilee, Bonar wrote that they “had some conversation regarding the pardon of sin.” Upon meeting a Jewish person, he would walk up thoughtfully with his Hebrew Bible and show him passages such as Zechariah 13:1: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” They found the Palestinian Jews to be expectant of Messiah’s coming, largely due to their living conditions. They concluded that the Holy Land was the most fruitful field for Jewish missions, suggesting Galilee as the choicest location in that it accounted for over half of the total Jewish population. They returned home sensing that the Lord had future plans for Israel. “When it is to be we cannot tell, though many signs encourage us to believe that the time to favour Zion is very near.”

During the journey McCheyne became very sick, and it was thought he would die. Meanwhile, at home in Dundee, his flock was receiving spiritual blessings from heaven’s opened windows. It is significant to note that he believed that seeking the welfare of the Jews would bring unspeakable blessing on the Church of Scotland, which is exactly what happened. The young evangelist William C. Burns was McCheyne’s interim pulpit supply. On July 23, 1839, while preaching at St. Peter’s, “the Holy Spirit seemed to come down as a rushing mighty wind, and to fill the place. Very many were struck to the heart; the sanctuary was filled with distressed and inquiring souls.” McCheyne returned to the exhilaration of revival, not only in Dundee, but also all over Scotland.

“To the Jew First”

The Mission of Inquiry submitted a full report to the General Assembly in May 1840. The Committee was authorized:

to take steps for preparing and sending missionaries to the stations most promising; and the General Assembly recommends that collections be made throughout the Church for this object, in the same way as for the other Schemes of the Church; and renew their recommendation to ministers to remember the cause of God's ancient people in the services of the sanctuary.

McCheyne and Bonar were most instrumental in promoting Jewish missions. Robert's preaching reveals his great love for and burden to reach the Jewish people. Upon returning from Palestine he preached a message in his church on November 17, 1839, entitled "Our Duty to Israel." In this message he expounded on Romans 1:16, setting forth reasons that the gospel is "to the Jew first." One of the reasons stated was the current opportunity available to evangelize Jewish people. In July 1840, McCheyne went over to Ireland to promote Jewish missions. As a result, the Presbyterian Church of Ireland sent out the first missionaries to the Jews the next year.

More evidence of his heart for Israel is found in the following letter addressed to Mr. George Shaw of Belfast, Ireland, who hosted a weekly meeting "to read and pray concerning Israel." McCheyne attested that on the basis of prophecy, he felt "that it will always be difficult to stir up and maintain a warm and holy interest in outcast Israel. The lovers and pleaders for Zion's cause will, I believe be always few." He applied Isaiah 62, verses 6 and 7, to the group: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." He then challenged them by saying, "Oh, my dear brethren, into whose hearts I trust God is pouring a scriptural love for Israel, what honour it is for us, worms of the dust, to be made watchmen by God over the ruined walls of Jerusalem, and to be made the Lord's remembrancers, to call His own promises to His mind, that He would fulfill them, and make Jerusalem a blessing to the whole world!" McCheyne concluded with this plea:

All we plead for is, that in sending out missionaries to the heathen, we may not forget to begin in Jerusalem. If Paul be sent to the Gentiles, let Peter be sent to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad; and let not a bycorner in your hearts be given to this cause; let it not be an appendix to the other doings of our church, but rather let there be written on the forefront of your hearts, and on the banner of our beloved church, "To the Jew first," and "Beginning at Jerusalem."

The first missionary to the Jews sent out by the Church of Scotland was Dan Edwards. In 1841 he went to Jassy in Moldavia (modern Hungary). In succeeding months others followed. Alfred Edersheim and Adolf Saphir were two very significant converts of the Jewish mission in Hungary. Strangely enough, it was not until almost fifty years later the first Scottish missionaries were sent to Palestine (Galilee).

Robert Murray McCheyne suffered for several years from tuberculosis; he grew increasingly ill, and died peace-

fully, March 25, 1843, at age twenty-nine. The impact of his holy life, burning heart for Christ, love for lost souls, and particularly his love for "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" is still being felt today. Robert Murray McCheyne can honestly be termed, "a lover of Zion."

On May 24, 1889, at their annual meeting the Free Church of Scotland General Assembly commemorated fifty years since the first mission to the Jews. Professor Franz Delitzsch of Leipzig, Germany, sent a letter addressed to the General Assembly which said, "Blessed be the day on which Fifty years ago, in your Church the thought was expressed, 'We must do something for Israel,' . . . that was indeed a day which the Lord had made, and the signs which followed declared that it was a day according to God's own heart." Thus it was that after approximately 1700 years of virtually no deliberate evangelistic outreach to the Jews by the Church as a whole, Jewish missions received its impetus. So deep was the commitment of Robert Murray McCheyne and other Scottish Christians to Jewish missions, believers presently in Scotland are distinct in their burden to evangelize the Jewish people.

A deep heartfelt interest in missions, including Jewish missions, is the result of an attitude that comes through spiritual revival. Believers who seriously study the Bible realize the special importance that the Lord places on the salvation of the Jews. It is also true that a life of prayer always accompanies a heart for missions.

May the prayer of the apostle to the Gentiles, recorded for us in Romans 10:1, grip your heart and become your prayer also. Can I ask you to personally consider the degree of your commitment to take the gospel of the Messiah to the Jews?

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History, Theology, and the Nation of Israel

How the Theological-Historical Interface Impacted the Rise of National Israel



***Caveat:** To trace the history of any slice of theological development over the last century is a daunting task. To attempt to compress it in the space of 3100 words borders on lunacy. The constraints of brevity compel me to implore the reader's indulgence. What I am attempting here is the verbal equivalent of shooting a movie trailer for a three-part, big-screen, blockbuster. With my iPhone.*

There is no such thing as secular history—not if the phrase means history that has no theological connections or relevance. All history is theological, because all of life is theological. God has interwoven history and theology so tightly that any attempt to separate the two mars and misconstrues both. So history never happens in a vacuum. Even though the starting point for this centennial survey is 1917, the ideas and events that contributed to the context of that momentous year require brief mention.

Belief in the future restoration of ethnic Israel to the land God promised His people has been known to be argued (vigorously, I might add) by some postmillennial covenant theologians (e.g., John Edwards, a seventeenth-century Church of England theologian). And a gratifying number of amillennial covenant theologians have come to agree that Romans 11 teaches a future conversion of ethnic Israel.

But the theological view historically most associated with the ongoing eschatological significance of Israel, ethnically and nationally, is dispensational premillennialism. So this brief historical-theological helicopter tour will particularly concentrate on its role in these events.

Nineteenth-Century Influences

The Church's view on the ongoing relevance of Israel has been historically divided between restorationism and supersessionism. Restorationists argue that God's promises to Israel guarantee a future return of Israel to the land God swore to give to Abraham and his seed. Supersessionists believe that Israel was set aside by God and replaced (superseded) by the Church so that the promises originally made to Israel are transferred to and fulfilled by the Church. The view is ultimately a theological one and by no means inherently anti-Semitic; nevertheless, it too often played a role in much of Christendom's persecution of the Jews. Though the history of the Church is checkered with both views, supersessionism was the predominant view throughout the medieval and early Reformation eras. That began to change in the post-Reformation era, most notably in the nineteenth century.¹

Though various individual threads of the interpretational system that came to be known as dispensational theology can be traced further back, those threads were not woven into a cohesive systematic theological garment until the work of J. N. Darby in the mid-nineteenth century. Darby was no backwoods bumpkin. “His Bible translations in German, French and English reflect serious scholarship,” reports one standard evangelical theological dictionary.² The heart of his system was a consistently literal hermeneutical approach, which informed a consistent prophetic posture (the expectation that promises made to Israel would be fulfilled to Israel *qua* Israel) and, in turn, a distinctive ecclesiological posture (seeing Israel and the Church as discrete entities).

The impact of dispensational theology was both widespread and diverse. It gave birth to a major Bible conference movement, the most famous of which was the annual Niagara Bible Conference. “Though launched in 1875 by conservative Protestants from a broad spectrum of confessional backgrounds, eventually premillennial dispensationalists (mostly Presbyterians) dominated” the Niagara Bible Conference.³ Such conferences came to be duplicated throughout the country. Household names attached to the Niagara Bible Conference include James Brookes, A. J. Gordon, Charles Erdman, C. I. Scofield, and Hudson Taylor. Thomas De Witt Talmage—Reformed, Presbyterian, and “an ardent restorationist”—asserted, “All the fingers of Providence . . . are pointing to that resumption of Palestine by the Israelites,” adding that “the repatriated Jews would transform the country from a wasteland into a cultural and economic Eden.”⁴ Talmage’s famed contemporary across the sea, C. H. Spurgeon, though not a dispensationalist, was also a staunch believer in the Jews’ future restoration to the land.⁵

The interest in dispensational theology perpetuated by the Bible conference movement created, in turn, a Bible college movement. Moody Bible Institute, founded in 1886, was just one of many Bible colleges springing out of the soil of the predominantly dispensational premillennial Bible conference movement. The educational impetus created by dispensationalism’s popularity continued to flourish into the next century, eventuating in the establishment of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). Founded in 1924 (as Evangelical Theological College) by Lewis Sperry Chafer, DTS has played a major role in codifying, defending, and perpetuating dispensational theology. Another undeniably influential outgrowth of the movement was the Scofield Reference Bible (1909), which not only further standardized this hermeneutical system but also made it widely accessible. In short, “dispensationalism came to characterize the views and beliefs of a large constituency of American evangelicalism scattered throughout mainstream Protestantism” including especially “Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregationalist circles.”⁶ Dispensationalism was not merely an American or even Western phenomenon, however. The dispensational teaching of Erich Sauer

The political events of the first half of the twentieth century profoundly shaped the theological developments of the second half of the twentieth century.

influenced not only conservative free churches throughout Germany but much of Eastern Europe as well.⁷ On both sides of the Atlantic dispensational theology was creating, across a broad spectrum of the evangelical Church, a heightened awareness of God’s promises and purposes for the Jews. To properly appreciate the significance of that focus, you have to remember that there was no state of Israel, nor had there been for over eighteen centuries.

It’s impossible to detach such theological developments from historical events. The interest in Israel naturally nurtured by dispensational theology’s emphasis on God’s eschatological promises to the Jews coincided with the birth of an international Jewish movement known as Zionism. From its inception, Zionism was never about displacing anyone. In fact, in the mid to late 1800s, Palestine was a dirty, depopulated, barren wasteland, inhabited by a pathetic four percent of its current population.⁸ In fact, “by the close of the nineteenth century, Palestine had not had an indigenous government since the fall of the Jewish commonwealth” in AD 70.⁹

Though Hungarian-born Theodor Herzl is usually dubbed the father of Zionism, the idea of Zionism preceded him, and the term itself was actually coined in 1890 by the Austrian Jew Nathan Birnbaum. “Zionism” is shorthand for Jewish nationalism, and its goal was to reestablish a home for the Jews in their ancient ancestral land. The movement originated in Europe as a solution to the endemic and systemic anti-Semitism in Eastern and Central Europe, as well as the widespread assimilation of the Jews into the general population of Western Europe and America—both of which were, in their own way, a threat to Jews and their Jewishness.¹⁰ Ironically headquartered in Berlin, “Zionism remained an overwhelmingly European movement” until, well, about 1917.¹¹

1917–38

Jewish historian Michael Oren notes that with America’s entry into WWI, “American Jews were not alone in exerting . . . pressure” on President Wilson to strike a pro-Zionist posture; “restorationist Protestants also demanded a presidential endorsement of Zionism. ‘The Zionist movement of recent years has impressed profoundly many students of the scriptures . . . as the beginning of the fulfillment for that great line of prophecies,’ declared Wheaton College president Charles Blanchard.”¹² The Zionist movement was sweeping swiftly westward into Britain and the US, assisted by a considerable segment of the evangelical church which dispensationalism had conditioned to be more attentive to the significance of Israel.

The year 1917 inaugurated a providential convergence of global events that turned out to have paradigm-shifting implications for the future of Israel. In April the US entered the First World War with a declaration of war on Germany. The October Revolution eventually increased anti-Semitism in Russia, driving up Jewish emigration. December

sounded the death knell for the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire when Jerusalem fell to the British, shifting control of that epicentral piece of real estate westward. What made that event even more significant, however, was a letter written a month earlier. The dispatch, in what came to be known as the Balfour Declaration, stated as official British policy “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” Both Prime Minister Lloyd George and Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, along with many others, believed that there were biblical grounds, both historical and prophetic, for such a policy.¹³ Shortly thereafter, President Wilson “officially identified Zionism with the foreign policy of the United States.”¹⁴ Then, “at the San Remo Conference following World War I (April 1920), the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers determined the allocation of the Middle Eastern territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire and decided to incorporate the 1917 Balfour Declaration supporting a Jewish national home in Palestine into the British Mandate for the territory, a move which confirmed international recognition of the right of Jewish self-determination.”¹⁵ In 1922 the British Mandate was adopted by the League of Nations. Zionism had become government policy in the world’s major power brokers. But the road to realizing that future was still a long and tortuous one, and harsher than anyone but God could have foreseen.

1939–45

So 1917 was, in many ways, an auspicious year for the future of Israel. Not so much 1939. Britain could no longer ignore the rumblings that signaled the imminent eruption of yet another war with Germany.¹⁶ Convinced of the strategic importance of both Palestine and Arab support, Britain “issued what became known as the White Paper of 1939, in essence repudiating the Balfour Declaration in its entirety” and “damning [the Jews] to their fate under Hitler with no homeland for their refuge and virtually no countries accepting Jewish people.”¹⁷

An acrid cloud of anti-Semitic and genocidal frenzy swept over the Axis territories. There were collateral victims as well, of course. (Look up the name Jane Haining sometime.) But no single demographic was more purposefully targeted than the Jews. No single event in the twentieth century has raised the “why” question more poignantly and repeatedly than the Holocaust. At the same time, no other event galvanized more determined rededication to the establishment of a Jewish state in the aftermath of the war.

1948–Present

Immediately in the wake of WWII, the God who rules in the kingdoms of men and places over them whom He will (Dan. 4:17) placed Harry Truman in the Oval Office and used him to shepherd Israel back into the land. It was a complex political problem, however, and Truman himself often needed goading. Of all the arguments for establishing a Jewish homeland, none was more emotionally overwhelming or unanswerable than the Holocaust. But that was far from the only argument. “Not only Jews but also American Christians were hounding Truman,”

notes Michael Oren. “Chicago’s Moody Bible Institute, for example, reminded the faithful that ‘the title deeds’ granting Palestine to the Jews were ‘still extant in millions of Bibles the world around.’ . . . Polls taken in 1947 found that Americans, by a ratio of two to one, were in favor of a Jewish state.”¹⁸ The widespread interest, anticipation, and sympathy generated by dispensational theology on behalf of the Jewish people both in America and abroad unquestionably played a role in conditioning the climate for the creation of a Jewish state in the providence of God.

Only time will tell definitively whether 1948 commenced a prophetic fulfillment. One of the major objections to seeing 1948 as a fulfillment of prophecy is the fact that the modern state of Israel is still largely atheistic and has been since its inception. Eduard Schnabel argues, “The Old Testament prophets expected repentance before restoration.”¹⁹ But Michael Rydelnik (along with many other dispensationalists) observes that “the Bible predicts that Israel would return to her land in unbelief” in passages such as Ezekiel 36:24–26.²⁰ Dispensationalists also point to several unfulfilled prophecies describing events that “cannot happen unless Israel is a national entity in the land of Palestine with political, military, and religious control” (Dan. 9:24–27; Zech. 12; Isa. 19:16–25).²¹

Expanding on Aristotle’s “four causes,” Barry Leventhal identifies five causes for the creation of the Israeli State out of the ashes of the Israeli Shoah (Holocaust): (1) Efficient Cause: the Lord God; (2) Material Cause: the Holocaust survivors; (3) Formal Cause: the reborn nation of Israel; (4) Final Cause: the glory of God; and (5) Instrumental Cause: providentially placed political powers (such as Truman and Churchill) along with the extraordinary personal sacrifices of multitudes of ordinary people (such as the Zionists).²² To the list of instrumental causes, however, I would venture to add the cultural conditioning of Christian restorationism and dispensational theology. Interestingly, one of the effects of these historical events involving Israel has been a noteworthy decline in, distancing from, and redefinition of supersessionism on the part of many theologians and churches, to the point that “supersessionism’s grip on the Christian church as a whole has been lessened significantly.”²³

Israel has fought a war for her survival in every decade since 1948. Not content with mere survival, Israel has flourished against all odds. Read the history of her wars. Evidence of the providential protection of God is undeniable. Humanly speaking, there’s no reason that the Jewish state should still exist, let alone be prospering as the per-capita technological powerhouse of the world.²⁴ Jewish historian Michael Oren says as much as he concludes his riveting account of the 1967 Six-Day War: “Such analyses perhaps explained how Israel won the war; they could not account for its outcome.” Almost no “stage of the conflict was planned or even contemplated. . . . Even the ‘liberation’ of Jerusalem, as Israelis call it, regarding the event as the most significant of the war and assigning it almost messianic ramifications, came about largely through chance.”²⁵

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When War Broke Out on My Mission Field

If you asked the average Israeli if and why he is thankful for Israel, you would get a variety of answers. Some would bemoan the weather, others would rave about the readily available falafel, and yet others would vividly describe the beautiful landscapes. Some of the older generation would list the war triumphs they were a part of, while the younger would likely tell you they can't wait to leave. For me, as a new Israeli citizen, I have many reasons to be thankful for my new home. I'm thankful to live in the land of the Bible and in the Jewish State. However, the reasons I am most thankful for Israel are spiritual ones. I am thankful for Israel because two years ago, on a survey trip prior to my move here, the Lord taught me lessons that I will never forget. It was in Israel that He grabbed hold of my heart and made His calling for me sure, and it was here that he challenged my heart with how to serve Him in the most difficult of circumstances.

What does one do when a war breaks out on his survey trip or mission field? What does one do when he's learning the culture from a bomb shelter? What if his language study is to the background music of pipe bombs, air-raid sirens, and heavy artillery exercises? What does he do if the news no longer covers meteorological thunderstorms but rockets thundering down on him? What if in every prayer meeting someone is praying for a kid they went to school with who is now at war? What if every week his pastor's first announcement is directions on how to get to the bomb shelter? What if rather than learning how the people live in the country he's in, he's learning how they bury their dead?

These are the questions I was forced to ask myself on my survey trip in the summer of 2014 as I was faced with living in a war zone. Growing up seeing the mission trip presentations from peers returning from all corners of the globe, I had never seen a slide show that mentioned a war. I was ill prepared for what was going on, but God used it to teach me three very important lessons that I want to share with you. They are to know your identity, love your enemy, and run with suffering.

Know Your Identity

Naturally when a war breaks out people take sides. Usually, as was the case on my mission field, the sides are countries or political parties. It is not always apparent that

there is a right or wrong faction, but in this case it was. The difficult part about living in Jerusalem is that Muslim and Jewish people live extremely close to one another. Almost immediately after the war began, the riots started. The Palestinians and Arabs living in Jerusalem began setting off pipe bombs and destroying tram stations nearly every day. The daily tension in the city was palpable. Another thing that added to this was the removal of tourism from the equation. Tourism decreased thirty-one percent over the summer with estimated losses of over \$544 million. This fact, combined with the month-long Muslim fast of Ramadan caused the city to be very tense and on edge. Merchants were struggling, restaurants were empty, and people had the whole day to sit and think about the war as they listened to their stomachs growling with hunger. People were grouchy. Police with automatic weapons were everywhere. Nearly every major street corner near the old city of Jerusalem was guarded by armed soldiers or police officers. On almost every bus or tram ride I took, there was an automatic weapon somewhere on board.

As a believer in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, I found myself in a weird position. The Muslims didn't like me because I was Jewish, and the Jewish people didn't like me because of my position on the identity of the Messiah. So my attempts to find where I belonged in this conflict were frustrated. As I fellowshipped with Christians and other Jewish believers, I realized that our identity is with Christ alone. There is no other way to look at it. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:20 that, "our conversation [i.e., citizenship] is in heaven." We can spend our whole lives trying to align with a movement or an ideology or even a trendy theologian's doctrine. But if a war breaks out, we will find ourselves lost. It is not by taking sides that we find our place in the church but by aligning ourselves with our Head, Jesus Christ. No one else is able to give peace and security when war breaks out other than our Captain Himself. When a war breaks out in the earthly country that has issued our passport, we have to remember that we are holders of a heavenly passport with all the rights of citizenship in the heavenly kingdom.

In Israel, when a Jewish person becomes a citizen, it is called making *aliyah*. The literal meaning of this word is "going up." New immigrants are called *olim*, which means "ones going up." One day all true believers in Jesus as

Messiah will “go up” and become *olim* in the kingdom of heaven. If our identity is with Jesus, we are always guaranteed to be on the victorious side.

Love Your Enemy

Another thing that naturally takes place when a war breaks out is that people begin to develop animosity toward their enemy. During the months of July and August alone, over 3700 rockets were fired at Israel by Gaza terrorists. Each one of these rockets was aimed at civilian areas, not military targets. The rockets weren’t coming from logical places either because the terrorists were shooting them from within UN-run schools, mosques, playgrounds, and private homes. Soldiers were dying nearly every day, and civilians suffered by having to live in their bomb shelters for almost two straight months. Naturally, there was animosity.

Very early on in the war, at our congregation there was a conference for Muslim believers who were working to reach Muslims around them with the gospel. A handful of the Jewish believers volunteered to serve food for the conference. As we stood there handing food to these Muslim believers, I realized that the love and brotherhood of Christ transcends even war. There was true love in the context of a fellowship of believers regardless of what ethnic side they fell on during the conflict. Each Sabbath meeting, the pastor would remind us that we should not talk badly about the terrorists because it could dissuade an unbeliever present from accepting the truth. His reasoning was that every other unbeliever in the world was out on the streets cursing the terrorists, and we as believers should be different. Can you imagine that? Each time we prayed, we prayed for our enemies, the terrorists, and for the people in Gaza suffering through a time of unspeakable horror at the hands of those terrorists. I think we probably prayed for our enemies the same amount, if not more, than we prayed for our own soldiers that were on the front lines.

The experience brought home the depth of Matthew 5:44 to my heart. It was a type of love that I had never seen before, and it was an incredible challenge to me. It taught me something important. Many people go to the mission field and talk about how much they have a burden and love for the people they are going to reach, and that is very good and necessary. However, I truly believe that one is not fully ready to go to a mission field to serve until he has come to love both the enemies of the people he is going to reach with the gospel as well as the enemies of the gospel itself. This is because we don’t have a full understanding of the gospel if we don’t know that the central theme is that God sent His Son to die for His enemies. So for me, I realized that I could not be fully ready to reach Jewish people until I had a love for the terrorists trying to kill the Jewish people.

Each person going to a mission field will face opposition and enemies. The enemies may not be shooting rockets toward him and forcing him into a bomb shelter, and they may not be trying to eliminate the people he has been sent to reach. However, they will be attacking in some way, shape, or form. The opposition to the Truth is growing across the globe. There is coming a day very soon where

sharing the gospel will be met with hostility on nearly every mission field. For those of us who are on fields that do not have enemies with weapons, or where the opposition to the gospel has not yet escalated, we most likely are faced daily with cultural prejudices. In each subculture within the United States there are natural prejudices that creep in to how we share the gospel. People don’t look like us, believe like us, sound like us, smell like us, and live like us, so we don’t want them in our church, and we don’t approach them on the street. These same people do, however, die like us. And until we love every soul in the world and recognize their eternal destiny, we are not ready to reach even a few.

Run with Suffering

Hebrews 12:1 reads, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” Although this book was written originally in Greek, it was written to a Jewish audience, as the title “Hebrews” clarifies. In Hebrew the word for patience is *savlanut*, which comes from the root word *sevel*, which means “suffering.” From a Hebrew perspective, the words “patience” and “suffering” are joined at the hip. As I was meditating on this verse throughout the war, I realized that not every battle on the mission field was a battle with guns and tanks. Sometimes people argue, divisions spread, and feelings are hurt. As I was witnessing my mission field being lit up with rockets, I realized that throughout the world, missionaries were experiencing different kinds of war. Perhaps it is a war among the missionaries themselves—a church split, or family health problems, etc.—whatever the specific battle is, each person called by God is faced with some kind of war.

The writer of Hebrews challenges us to run with patience and suffering. We are able to face these wars and struggles when we lay aside every weight which could slow down our race. And by doing what the next verse says, by following the example of Jesus who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, we can have peace and confidence during our war. After all, it was He who endured the cross on our behalf and provided the greatest example of patient suffering in the history of mankind. Before anyone is ready to go forth and serve God, every weight must be put aside. I believe that until this step is completed, the missionary will be unable to face war on his field. He will be unable to know his identity or love his enemies until he is running with suffering.

We are living in a world that is not thankful for Israel. In fact, our world is continually ridiculing, criticizing, and throwing hate at Israel. Just this past month as Benjamin Netanyahu was addressing the United Nations, asking for the constant war against Israel in the media and at the UN to stop, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, was condemning Israel in front of the same body. The Jordanian king took the UN platform to condemn Jews for desecrating Muslim holy sites, when in reality it is Jewish graves

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2017

February 6-7, 2017

Rocky Mountain Regional Fellowship
Westside Baptist Church
6260 West 4th Street
Greeley, CO 80634
970.346.8610
rockymtnfbfi@hotmail.com

February 13-15, 2017

FBFI Winter Board Meeting
Atlanta, GA

March 20-21, 2017

Northwest Regional Fellowship
Westside Baptist Church
1310 Echo Hollow Road
Eugene, OR 97402

March 20-22, 2017

South Regional Fellowship
The Wilds
1000 Wilds Ridge Road
Brevard, NC 28712

May 23-25, 2017

Pacific Rim FBFI Fellowship
Bible Baptist Church
714 Suson Street
Mandaue City, Cebu 6014
Philippines

June 13-15, 2017

97th Annual Fellowship
Maranatha Baptist University
745 West Main Street
Watertown, WI 53094

July 31-August 2, 2017

Alaska Regional Fellowship
Immanuel Baptist Church
7540 E. Cottrell-Campus Dr.
Palmer, AK 99645
907.745.0610
<http://www.akbeb.com/akfbf.html>

October 23-27, 2017

Caribbean Regional Fellowship
Calvary Baptist Tabernacle
PO Box 3390
Carolina, PR 00984

2018

June 11-13, 2018

98th Annual Fellowship
Tri-City Baptist Church
2211 W Germann Road
Chandler, AZ 85286

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When War Broke Out on My Mission Field

(Continued from page 19)

and synagogues across the globe that are being desecrated on a weekly basis. As a Jewish boy in London was being forced to remove his *yarmulke*, the traditional skullcap worn by Jewish men, a US embassy in Tel Aviv was apologizing for placing wine made in Judea (contested territory) in their annual Rosh Hashanah gift baskets.

The hateful and blatant lies of the media and anti-Semites will not slow down. This is a war that is just beginning even though the rockets have subsided, at least for now. I trust that what I learned during my summer in a war zone will help each of you to thank God for Israel with me even in spite of all opposition. And it is my sincere hope that we will together know our identity in Christ, love our enemies, and run with suffering.

Grant Z. Hartman oversees the activities of the Jerusalem Branch of Shalom Ministries Inc. He is a recent graduate of Bob Jones University Seminary and is a member of FBFI.



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SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

First Partaker

Pastoral Cautions

Editor's Note: *There are probably more books and journals being written for preachers today than at any time in church history. Some are good, but there are older resources for preachers as well.*

One of these generally untapped treasures is the small trove of ordination sermons buried in the printed works of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ministers. Reprints of their collected works sometimes include them, generally in one of the final volumes. Occasionally, volumes of their miscellaneous sermons or even their biographies will contain one or two. You'll quickly feel that they are distinctive for their scriptural compass, earnest tone, pointed application, experiential reality, earnest appeal, and general spiritual savoriness.

Abraham Booth (1734–1806)

Very close to the end of his ministerial life, the English Baptist minister Abraham Booth* preached an ordination sermon for a pastor named Thomas Hopkins. Booth was a man of long experience, having pastored for nearly fifty years, thirty-six of them in a Baptist church located on London's Prescott Street. Andrew Fuller paid him the high compliment of being, in his estimation, the first counsellor of our denomination.

Booth's sermon to Hopkins in 1805 was titled "Pastoral Cautions." Before his death a year later, he greatly enlarged it for publication as a forty-eight-page address. Reading it recently, I experienced much good, and came to feel strongly that it ought to be resurrected, at least in abbreviated form. Booth's text is 1 Timothy 4:16.

Take Heed to Thyself

As you, my brother, are now invested with the pastoral office in this church, and have requested me to address you on the solemn occasion; I shall endeavor to

do it with all the freedom of a friend, and with all the affection of a brother; not as your superior, but as your equal.

Take heed to thyself. This apostolic precept comes recommended to our serious and submissive regard as the language of a saint who was pre-eminent among the most illustrious of our Lord's immediate followers. It is the advice of a most accomplished and useful minister of the Gospel, hoary with age, rich with experience, and almost worn down by arduous labor. It is the command of an Apostle who wrote by the order and inspiration of Jesus Christ. This divine precept I shall now take the liberty of urging upon you in various points of light.

"The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits"
(2 Tim. 2:6)

Take heed to yourself, then, with regard to THE REALITY OF TRUE GODLINESS IN YOUR OWN SOUL.

That you are a partaker of regenerating grace, I have a pleasing persuasion. That you have some experience of those pleasures and pains, of those joys and sorrows which are peculiar to real Christians, I make no doubt. But this does not supersede the necessity of the admonition. Make it your daily prayer and your diligent endeavor, therefore, to feel the importance of those truths you have long believed—of those doctrines you now preach. Often enquire at the mouth of conscience as to what you experience of their comforting, reproving, and sanctifying power. When you have been preaching the promises of grace or urging the precepts of duty, earnestly pray that their practical influence may appear in your own dispositions and conduct. Endeavour to realize the force and to comply with the requisition of that precept: *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

In proportion as the principles of true piety are vigorous in your heart, may you be expected to fill up the wide circumference of pastoral duty. For there is no reason to fear that a minister, if tolerably furnished with gifts, will be remarkably deficient, or negligent, in any known branch of pastoral obligation while his heart is

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alive to the enjoyments and to the duties of the Christian character. It is from the pastor's defects as a disciple that his principal difficulties and chief dangers arise.

Take heed to yourself, LEST YOU MISTAKE AN INCREASE OF GIFTS FOR A GROWTH IN GRACE.

Your knowledge of the Scriptures, your abilities for explaining them, and your ministerial talents in general may considerably increase by reading, study, and public exercise. But real godliness may be far from flourishing in your heart. For among all the apostolic churches, none seem to have abounded more in the enjoyment of spiritual gifts than the church at Corinth. Yet few of them appear to have been in a more unhappy state, or more deserving of reproof.

When you have been preaching the promises of grace or urging the precepts of duty, earnestly pray that their practical influence may appear in your own dispositions and conduct.

I have long been of the opinion, my brother, that no professors of the genuine gospel have more need to be on their guard against self-deception respecting the true state of religion in their own souls, than those who dispense the gracious truth. For as it is their *calling* and their *business* frequently to read their Bibles and to think much on spiritual things—to pray, and preach, and often to converse about the affairs of piety—they will, if not habitually cautious, do it all *ex officio*, merely as the work of their ministerial calling, without feeling their own interest in it. To grow in love to God, in zeal for his honor, in conformity to the will of Christ, and in heavenly mindedness should be your first concern. Look well, therefore, to your internal character. In the course of your public ministry and in a great variety of instances you may perhaps find it difficult to enter into the true spirit of a precept or of a prohibition, so as to reach its full meaning and its various application, without feeling yourself *convicted* by it. In cases of this kind you must fall under the conviction secretly before God and pray over it with undissembled contrition. *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* When ministers hardly ever make this practical application of their public admonitions and cautions, as if their own spiritual interests were not concerned in them, their consciences will grow callous and their situation, with regard to eternity, extremely dangerous.

Take heed that your pastoral office prove not a snare to your soul BY LIFTING YOU UP WITH PRIDE AND SELF-IMPORTANCE.

Forget not that the whole of your work is ministerial, not legislative. That you are not a lord in the church, but

a servant. That the New Testament attaches no honor to the character of a pastor, except in connection with his humility and benevolence, his diligence and zeal, in promoting the cause of the Great Shepherd. And that there is no character upon earth which so ill accords with a proud, imperious, haughty spirit as that of a Christian pastor.

If not intoxicated with a conceit of your own wisdom and importance, you will not, when presiding in the management of church affairs, labor to have every motion determined according to your own inclination. For this would savor of ecclesiastical despotism, be inconsistent with the nature and spirit of congregational order, and be implicitly grasping at a much larger degree of power and of responsibility than properly falls to your share. Nor, if this caution be duly regarded, will you consider it as an insult on either your ministerial wisdom or your pastoral dignity if now and then, one or another of your people, even the most illiterate among them, should remind you of some real or supposed inadvertency or mistake either in doctrine or in conduct; no, not though it be in blunt language and quite unfounded. In such cases, to be soon irritated, though not inconsistent with shining abilities, nor yet with great success in the ministry, would nevertheless be an evidence of pride and of your being, as a *Christian*, in a poor, feeble state. For to be easily shoved out of the way, pushed down as it were with a straw, or caused to fall into sin by so feeble an impulse, must be considered as an undoubted mark of great spiritual weakness. The health of the soul and the vigor of the spiritual life are not to be estimated by our knowledge and gifts, but by the exercise of Christian graces in cheerfully performing arduous labors, in surmounting successive difficulties, and in patiently bearing hardships for the sake of Jesus. And in proportion to the degree of your spiritual health will be your meekness and forbearance under those improprieties of treatment by one and another of your people, with which you will undoubtedly meet.

On examining ourselves by this rule it will plainly appear, I presume, that though many of us in this assembly might, with regard to the length of our Christian profession, be justly denominated *fathers*; yet, with reference to spiritual stature and strength, we deserve no better character than that of *rickety children*. It has long appeared probable to me, that a majority of those uneasinesses, animosities, and separations which take place between pastors and their churches, may be traced up either to the unchristian tempers, or to the gross imprudence, or to the laziness and neglects of the pastors themselves.

Take heed and BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS.

This evil turn of heart is to be considered as extremely subtle and equally pernicious. It evidently stands opposed in Scripture to contentment with the allotments of Providence, to spiritual mindedness, and to real piety. It is an extremely evil disposition of the heart. Whatever excuses or palliatives may be invented, either to keep the consciences of covetous professors quiet or to support

a good opinion of others respecting the reality of their piety, the New Testament declares the covetous unworthy of communion in a church of Christ, and classes them with persons of profligate hearts and lives.

I have somewhere seen it reported of Socrates, that on beholding a great variety of costly and elegant articles for sale, he exclaimed, *How many things are here that I do not want!* So, my brother, when entering the abode of wealth we behold the stately mansion, the numerous accommodations, the elegant furniture, the luxurious table, the servants in waiting, and the fashionable finery of each individual's apparel, with what propriety and emphasis ought each of us to exclaim, *How many things are here which I do not want; which would do me no good; and after which I have no desire!*

Possessing the necessities of life without being indebted to any man, resolutely determine to live, if possible, within the bounds of your income. Not only so as to keep out of debt, but if possible, to spare something for the poor. Supposing, my brother, that either through the afflicting hand of God or the criminal neglect of your people, unavoidable straits approach, be not afraid of looking poverty in the face. For poverty is a very innocent thing, and absolutely free from deserved infamy except when it is found in scandalous company. If its forerunner and its associates be pride, laziness, a fondness for good living, a lack of economy, and the contracting of debts without a probability of paying them, it deserves detestation and merits contempt. It is inconsistent with virtuous conduct and must gradually sink the character of any minister. But if it be found closely connected with humility and patience, with diligence, frugality, and integrity—such integrity as impels you, for instance, to wear a thread-bare coat rather than run into debt for a new one, to live on the meanest wholesome food, or to go with half a meal, such poverty will never disgrace either the minister himself or the cause of Jesus Christ. Not the minister himself, because in the purest state of Christianity the most eminent ministers of our Divine Lord were sometimes distressed with lack of both decent apparel and necessary food (II Cor. 11:27; Acts 3:6). And not the cause of Jesus Christ, because his kingdom is not of this world, and it cannot be either adorned by riches or disgraced by poverty. Besides, the ministers of the evangelical truth must be poor indeed if they are in humbler circumstances than Jesus himself was.

Take heed, I will venture to add, take heed to YOUR SECOND-SELF, IN THE PERSON OF YOUR WIFE.

A minister's most tender attention is due to the domestic happiness and the spiritual interests of his wife. Next after your own soul, your wife and your children evidently claim the most affectionate, conscientious, and pious care. But sadly there are not a few wives who have felt as one wrote,

I have married a preacher of the gospel, but I do not find him to be an affectionate domestic instructor for either myself or my children. My husband is much

esteemed among his religious acquaintances as a respectable Christian character. But his example at home is far from being delightful. He is affable, condescending, and pleasing in the parlors of religious friends. But he is frequently trifling, imperious, and unsocial in his own family. Little caring for my soul or for the management of our growing offspring, he seems concerned for hardly anything more than keeping fair with his people. I have often calmly remonstrated and submissively entreated, but all in vain. Surrounded with little ones and attended with difficulties; destitute of the sympathies, the instructions, and the consolations which might have been expected from the affectionate heart of a pious husband and evangelical minister, I pour out my soul to God and mourn in secret.

Such has been the sorrowful experience of many a minister's pious, dutiful, and prudent wife. Take heed, then, to the best interests of your SECOND-SELF. To this end, except when impelled by duty, spend your evenings at home.

A minister's most tender attention is due to the domestic happiness and the spiritual interests of his wife. Next after your own soul, your wife and your children evidently claim the most affectionate, conscientious, and pious care.

Take heed to yourself, with regard to THE DILIGENT IMPROVEMENT OF YOUR TALENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES, IN THE WHOLE COURSE OF YOUR MINISTRY.

It behooves you, as a public teacher, to spend much of your time in reading and in study. Of this you are convinced, and will act, I trust, agreeably to that conviction. For suitable means must be used, not only *in season and out of season* for the good of others, but with a view to the improvement of your own mind in an acquaintance with divine truth. Yes, my Christian friend, this is necessary in order that your ability to feed the flock with *knowledge and understanding* may be increased, that your own heart may be more deeply tinctured with evangelical principles, and that you may be the better prepared for every branch of pastoral duty and for every trying event that may occur. Study your discourses, therefore, with a devotional disposition.

It is reported of Dr. Cotton Mather, *That in studying and preparing his sermons, he would endeavor to make even that an exercise of devotion for his own soul. Accordingly, his way was to make a pause at the end of every paragraph and endeavor to make his own soul feel some holy impression of the*

truths contained in it. This he thought would be an excellent means of delivering his sermons with life and spirit, and warming the hearts of his people by them. And so he found it.

You should seek with peculiar care to obtain the approval of conscience in each of your hearers, as appears by the following words: *By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* This illustrious passage presents us with a view of Paul in the pulpit. A very solemn appearance he makes. He has just been adoring in secret at the feet of the Most High. Recent from converse with the Most Holy, he is now going to address his fellow sinners. Penetrated with the importance of his office and the solemnity of his present situation, he manifestly feels. He seems to tremble. Nor need we wonder, for the subject on which he is to speak, the object he has in view, and the witness of his conduct are all interesting and solemn to the last degree. Truth, conscience, and God—the most important and impressive thoughts that can enter the human mind pervade his very soul. Evangelical truth is the subject of his discussion. The approval of conscience is the object of his desire. The omniscient Holy One is the witness of his conduct. This is the example which you and I and every minister of the word are bound to imitate.

If not intoxicated with a conceit of your own wisdom and importance, you will not, when presiding in the management of church affairs, labor to have every motion determined according to your own inclination. For this would savor of ecclesiastical despotism, be inconsistent with the nature and spirit of congregational order, and be implicitly grasping at a much larger degree of power and of responsibility than properly falls to your share.

Finally, take heed that you pay a HABITUAL REGARD TO DIVINE INFLUENCE, as that without which you cannot either enjoy a holy liberty in your work or have any reason to expect success.

You should endeavor to live continually under the operation of that sacred maxim, *Without me ye can do nothing.* With humility, with prayer, and with expectation the assistance of the Holy Spirit should be daily regarded. In all your private studies and in all your public admin-

istrations the aids of the Sacred Agent should be sought. Consistency of conduct, peace in your own heart, and success in your labors all require it. Surely you do not mean merely to compliment the Holy Spirit with your creed. Our Lord, when addressing his disciples relative to the gracious work of the Holy Spirit says, *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.* By which we are led to infer that when a minister sincerely seeks and mercifully obtains divine assistance in preaching the word, his discourses will have a sweet savor of Christ and his offices.

Nor can you pray over your Bible in a proper manner when meditating on the sacred text, without feeling a solemnity in your ministerial employment. That solemnity should always attend you in the pulpit. For a preacher who trifles there not only affronts the understanding of every sensible and serious hearer, but insults the majesty of that Divine Presence in which he stands. Guard, therefore, against every appearance of levity in your public work. In all your studies and in all your labors watch against a spirit of self-sufficiency from which that profane levity often comes. Remember that your ability for every spiritual duty, and all your success, must be from God. To him your eye must be directed, and on his promised aid your expectation of usefulness must be formed.

Take heed, I once more charge you, take heed to thyself. This duty performed, you can scarcely fail to take heed either to the doctrine you preach or to the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you an overseer. Amen. ☞

* Robert Oliver's biographical sketch, "Abraham Booth (1734–1806)," in Volume II of *The British Particular Baptists*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Particular Baptist Press, 2000), is the best introduction to Booth. Old Paths Gospel Press (Choteau, MT) has republished three volumes of his selected works.

Join the conversation online

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Proclaim & Defend website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, About Us, Resources, and Contact. Below the navigation bar, there's a featured section for "FrontLine" magazine, highlighting the "Convergence" issue. To the right, there's a sidebar with a "Subscribe to all posts" button and a list of "Our recent posts" including articles like "The Bible at the Center of the Modern University" and "The Bible at the Center of the Church".

proclaimanddefend.org

Dr. Mark Minnick serves as senior pastor at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. To access Dr. Minnick's sermons, go to mountcalvarybaptist.org/pages/sermons.

Bring . . . the Books

English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley
Edited by David Lyle Jeffrey

Do you like “treasure-trove” books—books that bring you far more profit than the amount of money you expend in the purchase? If so, then this is a book for you. I find myself picking this book up at least once a year, knowing that almost no matter where I turn in the book and begin reading, I will be spiritually encouraged and challenged with my heart strangely warmed toward the Lord and praying for the Lord to bring an awakening to our land.

The editor compiles into one volume some of the best English writing from the time of the Great Awakening (as well as a little before and after). The book is distinctly English writing as opposed to the efforts of Scottish, Welsh, and American authors. And the “writings” take various forms: journal excerpts, letters, books, sermons, prayers, hymns, and poetry. Each section of the book begins with a brief biography about a person’s life followed by scores of pages of some of the best writing that the particular author produced.

The editor first begins with an introduction to the times in one of the finest descriptions for laymen of the end of the Puritan era leading to the time of the Great Awakening. England at the time was as bad as Rome at its worst state in many respects, a condition to which the United States in many ways has not yet sunk! Here is the encouraging thing: God established a good church in the middle of the filth of Rome, and God brought a genuine revival to England at one of its worst times. Our God can do it again in our day!

The book’s unveiling of these people’s works is divided into three main sections: the Nonconformists, the Methodists, and the Evangelical Anglicans. Isaac Watts, Elizabeth Rowe, and Philip Doddridge comprise the Nonconformists. Watts was known not only for his hymns but also for his sermons and scriptural meditations on various subjects. Watts was sickly most of his life, which gives great encouragement to those who struggle with sickness, that the Lord can still greatly use them. Of course, some of Watts’s hymns are included, but there is tremendous value in the excerpts included from *On Prayer* and *Abuse of the Emotions in Spiritual Life*. We all would do well to review just these two writings of Watts about every other year for the rest of our lives.

Elisabeth Singer Rowe attended the church Watts pastored. Her contribution is an extended prayer entitled “Devout Exercises of the Heart” (compiled and edited by her pastor). In some ways this work rivals *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions*. Here is a lady who knew what it meant to pursue God personally in her prayers. I have often thought that a tremendous idea for a ladies’ conference would be building themes for the conference around different aspects of Rowe’s life and prayers.

For the past twenty-five years I have had two best friends whose lives have impacted me almost daily:

George Whitefield and John Newton. This book has introduced me to a third with whom my heart resonates: Philip Doddridge (whom Watts mentored). Of all the leaders of the Great Awakening, Lady Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, looked to Doddridge as her

pastor and relied on his counsel. His portion in the book includes “The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.” The sections on “Growth in Grace” would repay every Christian for a review every two years, especially “Love for Those We Find It Difficult to Love.”

The Methodists are represented by the Wesley brothers, along with George Whitefield and John Fletcher. Whitefield’s letters on ministry and preaching and his model evangelistic sermon, “The Almost Christian,” are worth the price of the book. Fletcher was the model pastor for the entire age; his “The Preaching Hypocrite” from *Meditations on Hypocrisy* should be read at least once a year by every minister.

The Evangelical Anglicans are represented by John Newton and three of his congregants: William Cowper, Hannah More, and William Wilberforce. Most of us are familiar with John Newton. Many of Cowper’s “Olney Hymns” are included. Hannah More’s contribution, “Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education,” deals with the scriptural education of females as opposed to mere fashion or culture of the day (another excellent idea for a ladies’ conference). Wilberforce’s contribution is a portion of *A Practical View of Real Christianity*, an excellent basis for a Sunday school series and an invaluable resource for every layperson to read.

Sisters and brothers, by all means get this book. Used copies of this edition are offered for \$0.17, and previous editions, under the title *A Burning and Shining Light*, can be found for a penny on Amazon. Of course, you can also look up some of these authors’ material for free on some Internet sites.

I’ll conclude with Wilberforce: “Let true Christians pray continually for their country in this season of national difficulty. We bear upon us but too plainly the marks of a declining empire. Who can say but that the Governor of the universe, Who declares Himself to be a God Who hears the prayers of His servants may, in answer to their intercessions, for a while avert our ruin.” God brought genuine revival in answer to those prayers prayed by some unknown individuals. May the Lord bring genuine revival again in our day to our land by reviving our interest in the scriptural topics these authors address! ☞☞

“... when
thou comest,
bring with thee
... the books”
(2 Tim. 4:13)

Aaron F. Young has been a pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Elko, Nevada, since 1998.

Paul warns that all who want to live godly lives will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), but American believers have experienced little severe or life-threatening treatment because of our faith in Christ. I never feared being disowned by family, being displaced from my home, or being tortured or killed. Many believers face just those kinds of threats, however; and we may be next. Therefore, we need to know how to respond and how to counsel persecuted believers. When Jesus sent His disciples on their first evangelistic assignment, His admonitions provide the guidance we need. The overall approach can be summed up in Jesus' famous statement, "Be . . . wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," but a closer look at Matthew 10:16–23 yields several other principles as well.

Be Led as Sheep

Jesus begins with an easily overlooked truth regarding His followers: He sends them forth as sheep. "Sheep" are vulnerable. But is Jesus saying, "I am sending you as sheep to be slaughtered"? Of course not. Believers are sheep among wolves, but the Good Shepherd never deserts them. The Shepherd watches His flock night and by day, and as they follow Him they are under His watchful eye.

Be Wise as Serpents

Like sheep, believers may be defenseless, but they are not supposed to be dumb. Jesus exhorts them to be as wise as serpents. The word "wise" points to the need for careful thought when confronted with difficult situations. Imagine a converted Muslim telling his family he is now a follower of Christ. He is going to need to put forth his best mental effort to know how to handle the coming storm of persecution. Wisdom is called for but not a deviation from gospel priorities. The apostle Paul, when he heard of a plot against his life, wisely changed his travel plans (Acts 20:3) and used his Roman citizenship to his advantage (Acts 16:37–39).

Be Innocent as Doves

The convert will need shrewdness, but Jesus says he must at the same time seek to be innocent as a dove. Blomberg captures the balance: "Innocent' literally means *unmixed* and refers to purity of intention. Shrewdness and integrity form a crucial combination" (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 173–74). Innocence alone will not protect, but shrewdness alone can easily morph into guile.

Be Aware of Men

"Beware of men," Jesus exhorted. Early in His ministry, when believers were apparently multiplying as a result of His miracles, we read that "Jesus did not commit himself unto them." Why? "For he knew what

was in man" (John 2:24–25). Being aware of men, even specific individuals who are known to be opposed to the gospel, is an extension of being wise. The apostle Paul named individuals and warned Timothy to be aware of them. For example, he labels Hymenaeus and Alexander as men who of their "faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. 1:19–20). In 2 Timothy Paul again references an Alexander as one who did him "much evil" (4:14). Paul's admonition parallels Jesus' exactly, for he warned Timothy, "Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words" (4:15).

Be Confident of God's Help

God overrules in the affairs of men, and the arrests will be turned to witnessing opportunities. Jesus assures His lambs that they will be given supernatural help to speak in these situations. Therefore, they are not to be afraid about lacking the courage or the words, for the Holy Spirit Himself will be speaking through them (10:20). A good example of the Spirit's enabling a believer is Stephen: "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the [S]pirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10).

Be Steadfast

As we look back over the various challenges facing persecuted believers we must note that Jesus is utterly candid about the possibilities. In some cases, even family members will deliver over their own loved ones to death. Evidently natural love will be no match for the overpowering hatred of the family member's faith in Christ (10:21; cf. 10:34–35). Later in this chapter Jesus makes the astounding statement that even "a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (10:36). The prescription for believers in light of these terrible truths is simple—be faithful to the end even if that end is death, for "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (10:22b).

Be Mobile If Necessary

Courage is required to face the antagonistic inquisitors, but not every situation will require the same response. In some cases, the best reaction is to be mobile and to actually *flee* to another city (10:23). In Matthew 24:16 Jesus counsels those in Judea to "flee into the mountains," and He Himself left places of danger (Matt. 4:12; 12:14–15), as did Paul (Acts 9:24–25, 29–30; 14:5–7).

Fervent believers in the service of the Shepherd must be both serpent-like and dove-like. Being in the midst of vicious opponents of truth requires wisdom, tact, courage, and thoughtfulness. But being the follower of the Great Shepherd also requires purity, innocence, integrity, and endurance. Cultivating these qualities is possible for those who know and follow the Shepherd's voice. ☞

**"Rightly
dividing
the Word
of Truth"
(2 Tim. 2:15)**

As significant as the statement “Let my people go” is to the Old Testament narrative, so is the Great Commission in the New Testament. Churches today strive to communicate their focused priorities by producing a concise mission statement. The purpose of this statement is to keep the focus on what is most important. The Great Commission is the inspired mission statement of the church.

All four Gospels record the commission to go with the good news to the entire world. Each renders it differently and emphasizes varying aspects of the commission. Its significance and authority are due to the fact that it is the resurrected Savior’s final command to His disciples. As disciples of this same Jesus, this commission still serves as the mission statement of the New Testament church. The regular proclamation of this commission in our preaching will keep the church focused on Jesus’ final command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Go!

“You must GO forward on your knees” (Hudson Taylor).¹

The imperative of the commission is to go! The church must consider God’s calling of the missionary as one of its highest priorities and thus equip, send, and sustain missionaries as partners together in ministry.

“George Stott, a one-legged school teacher from Scotland, volunteered for missionary service in China. When asked why he with only one leg thought of going to China, he said, ‘I do not see those with two legs going, so I must.’ Thus began his more than twenty years of missionary work in China” (Grace Stott, *Twenty-Six Years of Missionary Work in China*).

Sow!

“The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner” (William Townsend).²

The parable of the sower and seed has to be one of the most instructive for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The following illustration spoke to me of the cost sometimes encountered in sowing, but the sowing is based on faith in the sure promises of God and His laws of sowing and reaping. The following story comes from a missionary who spent fourteen years in West Africa.

I was always perplexed by Psalm 126 until I went to the Sahel, that vast stretch of savanna more than four thousand miles wide just under the Sahara Desert. In the Sahel, all the moisture comes in a four-month period: May, June, July, and August. After that, not a drop of rain falls for eight months. The ground cracks from dryness, and so do your

hands and feet. The winds of the Sahara pick up the dust and throw it thousands of feet into the air. It then comes slowly drifting across West Africa as a fine grit. It gets inside your mouth. It gets inside your watch and stops it. The year’s food, of course, must all be grown in those four months. People grow sorghum or milo in small fields.

October and November . . . these are beautiful months. The granaries are full—the harvest has come. People sing and dance. They eat two meals a day. The sorghum is ground between two stones to make flour and then a mush with the consistency of yesterday’s Cream of Wheat. The sticky mush is eaten hot; they roll it into little balls between their fingers, drop it into a bit of sauce and then pop it into their mouths. The meal lies heavy on their stomachs so they can sleep.

December comes, and the granaries start to recede. Many families omit the morning meal. Certainly by January not one family in fifty is still eating two meals a day. By February, the evening meal diminishes. The meal shrinks even more during March and children succumb to sickness. You don’t stay well on half a meal a day.

April is the month that haunts my memory. In it you hear the babies crying in the twilight. Most of the days are passed with only an evening cup of gruel. Then, inevitably, it happens. A six- or seven-year-old boy comes running to his father one day with sudden excitement. “Daddy! Daddy! We’ve got grain!” he shouts.

“Son, you know we haven’t had grain for weeks.”

“Yes, we have!” the boy insists. “Out in the hut where we keep the goats—there’s a leather sack hanging up on the wall—I reached up and put my hand down in there—Daddy, there’s grain in there! Give it to Mommy so she can make flour, and tonight our tummies can sleep!”

The father stands motionless. “Son, we can’t do that,” he softly explains. “That’s next year’s seed grain. It’s the only thing between us and starvation. We’re waiting for the rains, and then we must use it.”

The rains finally arrive in May, and when they do the young boy watches as his father takes the sack from the wall and does the most unreasonable thing imaginable. Instead of feeding his desperately weakened family, he goes to the field and with tears

“To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, ‘A window shalt thou make in the ark.’”

Charles Spurgeon

streaming down his face, he takes the precious seed and throws it away. He scatters it in the dirt! Why? Because he believes in the harvest.

The seed is his; he owns it. He can do anything with it he wants. The act of sowing it hurts so much that he cries. But as the African pastors say when they preach on Psalm 126, "Brother and sisters, this is God's law of the harvest. Don't expect to rejoice later on unless you have been willing to sow in tears."

And I want to ask you: How much would it cost you to sow in tears? I don't mean just giving God something from your abundance, but finding a way to say, "I believe in the harvest, and therefore I will give what makes no sense. The world would call me unreasonable to do this—but I must sow regardless, in order that I may someday celebrate with songs of joy."³

Pray

"Send me anywhere, only go with me. Lay any burden on me, only sustain me. Sever any ties but the tie that binds me to your service and to your heart" (David Livingstone).⁴

David Livingstone was a pioneer missionary to Africa who walked over 29,000 miles. His wife died early in their ministry, and he faced stiff opposition from his Scottish brethren. The hymn composed from Livingstone's prayer has always challenged my heart with the necessity for total dependence upon God to sustain. Today, I fear we have replaced dependence upon God with program and performance.

C. T. Studd, the famous cricket player turned missionary, made this observation back in his day: "How little chance the Holy Ghost has nowadays. The churches and missionary societies have so bound Him in red tape that they practically ask Him to sit in a corner while they do the work themselves."⁵

Stay!

In our American way of thinking, God's work is sometimes done on a business plan driven by productivity and the bottom line. Scripture would remind us that God's ways are not our ways. The work of the Spirit of God is sometimes unforeseen and often unpredictable from human perspective, but it is always perfect from divine perspective.

"Some of the greatest missionaries of history devotedly spread the seed of God's Word and yet had to wait long periods before seeing the fruit of their efforts. William Carey, for example, labored seven years before the first Hindu convert was brought to Christ in Burma, and Adoniram Judson toiled seven years before his faithful preaching was rewarded by seeing his first converts."⁶

The following excerpt from Heather Hanley's *Courage to Conquer* illustrates the necessity of faith in the face of no physical evidence of the working of God's Spirit. God would remind us that without faith, it is impossible to please Him!

Faith honors God and God honors faith. For ten years Robert and Mary Moffat labored faithfully in Bechuanaland (now called Botswana) without one ray of encouragement to brighten their way. They could not report a single convert.

Finally the directors of their mission board began to question the wisdom of continuing the work. The thought of leaving their post, however, brought great grief to this devoted couple, for they felt sure that God was in their labors, and that they would see people turn to Christ in due season. They stayed; and for a year or two longer, darkness reigned. Then one day a friend in England sent word to the Moffats that she wanted to mail them a gift and asked what they would like. Trusting that in time the Lord would bless their work, Mrs. Moffat replied, "Send us a communion set; I am sure it will soon be needed."

God honored that dear woman's faith. The Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of the villagers, and soon a little group of six converts was united to form the first Christian church in that land. The communion set from England was delayed in the mail; but on the very day before the first commemoration of the Lord's supper in Bechuanaland, the set arrived.

The Great Commission must become the center of our mission statement. It is full of the promise of God's presence and backed by the authority of the Almighty. It is the all-encompassing call to discipleship and full obedience to the whole counsel of God. It is most importantly centered in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation. Let us never forget that it is fueled by the leadership of God's Holy Spirit and is exclusively for the glory of God. I conclude with this reminder of the privilege and high calling of God—to serve!

William Carey, who is called the Father of Modern Missions, served the Lord in India for many years. He gradually became very concerned about the attitude of his son, Felix. The young man had promised to become a missionary, but he reneged on his vows when he was appointed ambassador to Burma by the Queen of England. Carey wrote to his friend, asking prayer for his son with these words: "Pray for Felix. He has degenerated into an ambassador of the British government when he should be serving the King of kings."⁷ ☞

¹ <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/quotes-on-missions>

² <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/quotes-on-missions>

³ <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/e/evangelism.htm>

⁴ <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/david-livingstone-s-prayer>

⁵ <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/quotes-on-missions>

⁶ <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/wait-for-fruit>

⁷ <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/serving-the-king>

Israel's Future

In the last one hundred years Jewish people have gone from the promise of the Balfour Declaration (1917) to the tragedy of the Holocaust to the joy of statehood (1948). Since that time the nation has been marginalized by increased malicious hatred by her Mid-Eastern neighbors and the nations of the world.

The media turns a blind eye toward the atrocities of Israel's enemies and accuses her of violating human rights. Both political and educational liberals are increasingly anti-Zionistic (a thinly veiled term for anti-Semitism). Traditional denominations call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions, while many Evangelicals say Israel is replaced by the church.

It gets worse before it gets better. Satan knows God's purposes are invested in Israel, so he will do what he can to intensify hatred and opposition to Israel. This will all culminate in the Tribulation, when Israel experiences the wrath of both God and Satan—but the best is yet to come. The intense trial of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) will lead to Israel's conversion and literal fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

Kingdom Conditions

Before a summary description of the conditions of the kingdom, one may ask, "Why does the New Testament not give a detailed picture of the kingdom?" Simply, it is not necessary. The nature of the kingdom is presented in ample form in the Old Testament. The New Testament in the Gospels presents the King's offer of the kingdom during His ministry on earth, but Israel rejected it. That which was rejected by Israel during Christ's ministry on earth is now welcomed by regenerate Israel.

The Government

The government will be a theocracy under the kingship of the Second Person of the Trinity. What will be the structure of His administration? All of the functions of government will center in Him. Isaiah 9:6 states, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." He exercises the perfect balance of powers: "For the LORD is our judge

[judicial], the LORD is our lawgiver [legislative], the LORD is our king [executive]" (Isa. 33:22).

As the Divine/human ruler, He can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Isaiah 40:10–11 speaks of His strong arm of authority, yet He gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them.

He will establish an administration from Old and New Testament believers. He that was faithful over a few things will be made ruler over many things (Matt. 25:21, 23). Old Testament saints such as David (Ezek. 34:23–24) and Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:20–23) will serve in His administration. The apostles (Matt. 19:28) and church-age believers who are overcomers by faith (Rev. 2:26; 1 John 5:4–5) will also rule with Him.

Length of His Reign

Jesus will end earth history with a reign of one thousand years. Throughout the Old Testament the kingdom was prophesied and described. It was not until John wrote Revelation 20:1 that the length was known. This did not change anything concerning the kingdom, except for chronological information. Before Revelation 20 everyone was pre-kingdom. After Revelation 20 we are premillennial.

Realm

The scene of kingdom conditions is the earth. Some of our Reformed (Covenant) brethren have difficulty with a physical reign on earth. To them it seems carnal or earthly. A physical glorious kingdom should present no problem because Jesus, the God-man, lived and walked among corrupt society in a human body. Saints today, in nonglorified bodies, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The description of the kingdom in the prophets presents a picture in which a holy, not a carnal, atmosphere prevails (Zech. 14:20–21). The greater issue is that of the interpretation of prophecy. The Lord gave language to communicate, not confuse. Thus, clear statements about Israel's future should be taken at face value. Alongside face-value interpretation is the principle that the Old Testament informs the New

Continued on page 34

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The Bible is our mandate. The mandate of the League is only a recognition of this right and does not establish new things.

—David Ben-Gurion during the hearing on the Holy Land in 1937

I will insist the Hebrews have [contributed] more to civilize men than any other nation. If I was an atheist and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations. . . . They are the most glorious nation that ever inhabited this Earth. The Romans and their empire were but a bubble in comparison to the Jews.

—John Adams

We shall live at last as free men on our own soil.

—Theodor Herzl, February 1896

Jerusalem has been besieged more than forty-six times. It has been completely razed to the ground seventeen times.

—Paul Lee Tan

Somehow the Jews managed to escape the cultural death of each of the civilizations within which they dwelled. Somehow the Jews managed to survive the death of one civilization and continue their cultural growth in another which was emerging at the time.

—From the Preface to *Jews, God, and History*, Max I. Dimont

Our Lord's mother was a Jew.

—Anonymous

The view of Jerusalem is the history of the world; it is more, it is the history of earth and of heaven.

—Benjamin Disraeli

Some people like the Jews, and some do not. But no thoughtful man can deny the fact that they are, beyond any question, the most formidable and most remarkable race which has appeared in the world.

—Winston Churchill

How odd of God
To choose the Jew,
But not so odd
As those who choose
The Jewish God
And hate the Jew.

—Unknown; quoted by Edith Schaeffer

When John Kennedy became President of the United States he did not surround himself with Catholics as his Protestant opposition feared. . . . [The men he surrounded himself with] were Jews.

—John Phillips

When Frederick the Great of Prussia challenged Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf to defend the veracity of the Bible, the count replied in two words: "The Jew!"

I feel convinced that the Crucifixion has not much to do with the world's attitude toward the Jew; that the reasons for it are much older than that. . . . I am convinced that in Russia, Austria, and Germany nine-tenths of the hostility to the Jew comes from the average Christian's inability to compete successfully with the average Jew in business.—Mark Twain, *Harper's* magazine, September 1898

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.



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The Making of a Nation

(Continued from page 11)

What the future nation needed was money, and since the Jews of Europe were destitute, it would need to come from another source.

Golda Meir (1898–1978) began life in Russia as Golda Mebowitz, the daughter of a carpenter. In 1900 her family emigrated to United States. Eventually she married Moses Myerson with the stipulation that they move to Palestine. Arriving in 1921 she became the political secretary of the Jewish Agency in 1948. The agency sent her to the United States to raise funds for the future military. She arrived in New York in such haste that she had no baggage, no winter coat, and no meetings scheduled. Even so, in a flurry of rallies and dinners she raised about \$50 million within a month. As a result, the weapons buyers were able to amass a respectable cache to bring to Israel as soon as their statehood was official.

We know from both the Bible and history that when God wants to do something He raises up someone to lead. David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) was born in Russian-occupied Poland and came to Palestine before World War I. As the editor of a newspaper, one day with the scratch of a pen, David Green became David Ben-Gurion. Evidently he had visions of an auspicious future, for Ben-Gurion means “son of the young lion.” Barely five feet tall and suffering perpetually from bad-hair days, Ben-Gurion was a true leader of men. His foresight, planning, and leadership led a people with seemingly insurmountable obstacles to nationhood.

On November 29, 1947, in its temporary facilities in Flushing Meadows in Queens, the participating countries of the United Nations voted to allow the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It was a gerrymandered monstrosity dividing the tiny territory between the Jews and the Arabs and making Jerusalem an international city. The Jews in Palestine celebrated throughout the night, and the Arabs summarily rejected the decision from then even to the present.

Possibility Becomes Reality

Lastly, God’s hand can be seen in transforming possibility into reality. When Ben-Gurion declared the statehood of Israel on May 14, 1948, few expected anything more than another slaughter of the Jews. With no time for additional preparation the Israelis faced five invading armies (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq) and the armed inhabitants. Initially, with little more than small arms and improvised weapons, they opposed tanks, airplanes, and artillery. Fortified with hearts white-hot with desperation, the Jews fought to defend their solitary hope. The Holocaust and the Arab promise that they would drive the Jews into the sea motivated them to actions and measures that would have otherwise defied reason.

Conversely, the Arab states distrusted one another and, thus, were not true allies. Lacking unified command, they fought in a disjointed, haphazard fashion. Before the fighting began most of the Arab potentates made exaggerated

pronouncements about the ease with which they would massacre the Israelis. Severely underestimating their enemy and inflating their own military abilities, many of them began their invasions as if on a lark. When they smashed into stubborn Israeli resistance, they were dismayed.

To Ben-Gurion, territory was the supreme goal, so he demanded that every kibbutz, every settlement, and Jerusalem be defended. The narrative of Israel’s war is an incredible tale of constant disaster frequently barely avoided. Everywhere there was too little of everything, and they faced certain defeat. However, by moving men or weapons just in time, they not only retained control of most of their original land but made territorial gains. But what they wanted most eluded them. In Jerusalem the Jews fought the Arab Legion (Jordan). Staffed with well-trained Jordanian enlisted men, commanded mostly by former British officers, and properly equipped, the Arab Legion possessed a formidable military. Unlike the other Arab nations, this was truly a professional army. The Israelis could not take Jerusalem.

On June 11 a truce was called, and the panting armies rested. Re-equipping was not allowed, but both sides did so anyway. However, the Israelis had the most to gain. The armaments that they had purchased and had been unable to access arrived. They had artillery, planes, armor, heavy machine guns, and plenty of small arms and ammunition. With these they were equals to their enemies in war materiel, and therefore superior. Within ten days the Arabs wanted another truce. Early the next year each nation except for Iraq arranged an armistice.³

Israel fought wars with her neighbors in 1956, 1967, and 1973. In the Six-Day War in 1967 they were able to regain control of all of Jerusalem, thus possessing the Temple Mount. In what might be perceived as a strange agreement, the Muslims kept control of the temple area. Perhaps in a fog of overconfidence, Israel was caught napping in the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and was nearly defeated. A massive resupply by the United States enabled them to achieve victory.

Israel is a nation preoccupied with many dangers and national security issues. All true Christians should sympathize with the millennial ideas found in Isaiah 51:11: “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

Stephen Christopher has served as senior pastor of Memorial Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, for twenty-seven years. Before that he was the assistant pastor of Bay Ridge Baptist Church, also in Brooklyn. He is a board member of Shalom Ministries.



¹ Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1987), 365.

² www.historyextra.com/did-conkers-help-win-the-first-world-war/

³ Johnson, 527.

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THE STORY OF DAVID, PART 9:

In 2 Samuel chapter 12 David grievously sinned, genuinely repented, and was graciously forgiven. But actions have consequences, and sins have more than most. The events of the next seven chapters must be viewed through the lens of 12:10–12. Repentance removes the guilt created by sin. Repentance does not, however, erase the consequences set in motion by our sins. It does not exempt us from chastisement for our sins; nor does it necessarily cancel the moral fallout from our sins—the loss of moral credibility, moral respect, and moral influence on others including, most painfully, our children. The issue is not whether that fallout is right or not. But the Amnon/Absalom saga is a warning that this is part of the cost of sin we’d better count realistically.

Amnon’s Lust (13)

The event recorded in this chapter is not historically relevant, but it is morally crucial because of what it displays about all the people involved in the process. So we’ll look at this incident by focusing on the characters. On one side are Amnon and Jonadab; on the other are Absalom and David; and in the middle is Tamar.

Amnon—passion without love (13:1–2). He called it love, of course. What would you expect? But his emotional reversal and even his verbal abruptness after the deed say it all. (13:15 literally reads, “Up! Out!”)

Jonadab—wisdom without principle (13:3–5). The descriptor “subtil” (13:3) in this context means “crafty.” He’s “the consummate politician” who “knows how to get things done” (Davis). He seems to be a gifted young man of great potential, but unprincipled. His skillful duplicity is further unveiled later in the passage (13:30–33, 35), highlighting his ability to position himself between opposing parties as the cool-headed, well-informed, skillful advisor. He seems to enjoy setting things in motion between others and then watching them unfold—a kind of moral arsonist.

Tamar—conscience without power (13:12–13). She’s the only one actually using her moral compass. She understands privilege and responsibility (“no such thing ought to be done in Israel”). She calls sin what it is (“folly” here means “senseless”). She’s mindful of the consequences—both for herself and for Amnon. She suggests alternatives to sin. But like the voice of conscience too often, she is ignored.

David—anger without action (13:21). Is David’s inaction a kind of moral paralysis because of his own sin? After all, who is he to address such crimes after what he had done? His failure to act might be understandable, but it is not

excusable. We are not told what David was thinking, only that he failed to act. So someone else did.

Absalom—hatred without compunction (13:22ff.). Some have suggested this whole outrage was an elaborate conspiracy between Absalom and Jonadab, at the expense of Tamar, to remove Amnon and pave Absalom’s way to the throne. If so, the narrator has been fooled completely; he conveys no knowledge of this. The facts of the narrative are: Amnon lusted, Jonadab facilitated, Tamar was trashed, David was angry but impotent, so Absalom acted out of hatred “because he had forced [violated] his sister Tamar” (13:22). It may be, however, that Absalom also saw this as a chance to eliminate a major rival to the throne. The bottom line is, no one is doing righteousness in Israel except Tamar, and she is silenced.

Absalom’s Ambition (14–18)

David “despised” God and rebelled against Him (12:9–10). Now others are despising David and rebelling against him. Again, let’s trace the story through the cast of characters.

Ziba the Manipulator (16:1–4). Despite an ostentatious show of loyalty and support (16:1–2), Ziba lies to the king (as we later discover) about one of the king’s subjects (16:3) and is rewarded with all his master’s property (16:4). David makes a snap judgment—and a bad one—on the basis of a manifestly shabby story. But stress can obscure our judgment; so can gifts. Ziba purposely misleads the king about one of his closest subjects, further demoralizing David and exploiting the king’s misery and misfortune for his own profit. This seems to have been Ziba’s aim all along. To have so little regard for the feelings and relationships of others in the pursuit of such self-aggrandizement is despicable.

Shimei the Theologizer (16:5–14). Shimei is not only a Benjamite but a remnant of the house of Saul. He apparently never did believe all of David’s professed loyalty to Saul or his protests of innocence in the death of Abner and Ishbosheth. So he thought he knew exactly what was happening to David and why. God was punishing him for what Henry V calls “compassing the crown”—plotting and executing an illegitimate takeover of the throne. Some people will believe what they want to believe, no matter what. But David’s response is intriguing. David understands why this is happening; it is chastisement for his iniquity, but not for the alleged iniquity Shimei accuses him of. Remember God’s promise of chastisement in 12:10–11 (“the sword shall never depart from thine

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (2 SAMUEL 13–19)

house; . . . I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house"). David understands that this is exactly what is happening (cf. 12:11 and 16:11–12). Yet David does not defend himself; he knows himself to be a sinner, deserving of whatever God is pleased to send into his life. It is a mark of genuine repentance to be willing to submit to providential chastisement.

Ahithophel the Traitor (16:15–17:4). Ahithophel, David's counselor (15:12) and obviously a valued man of skillful and perceptive advice, joined Absalom's conspiracy. When David learns of his treachery, he prays that God would undermine him at the very point of his skill and strength (15:31). When Absalom asks Ahithophel's advice (16:20), he advises Absalom to take over his father's harem—a signal of power-transfer designed to publicly solidify Absalom's position, but also a prophesied consequence of David's sin (12:11). He then counsels Absalom to allow *him* to lead an army in pursuit of David immediately, exploit his weakness and vulnerability, and slay the king alone (17:1–3). Absalom and the elders think this plan is perfect (17:4), until someone else shows up.

Hushai the Royal Spy (17:5–16). David sends Hushai as a counter-operative (15:32–37). There is an exquisite ambiguity in Hushai's greeting to Absalom, "God save the king!" (16:16). Does Hushai mean Absalom or David? The ambiguity surfaces again when Hushai affirms, "Whom the LORD . . . choose[s], his will I be" (16:17–18). Again, does Hushai mean Absalom or David? Hushai urges Absalom *himself* to go after David (17:5–13). Everyone agrees that Ahithophel's idea was good, but that Hushai's was even better. Why did they buy it? In the end, it was because "the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom" (17:14). But note, this providential plan was accomplished through both human strategy and prayer (15:34, 31).

Thanks to Hushai's undercover work, Absalom's coup ends with his death. The people, ever fickle, hail the king's return (19:9–18). In fact, Israel—most of whom seem to have followed Absalom (15:13; 16:15)—ends up arguing with Judah over who is more loyal to the king and who has more right to the king (19:40–43). Hoping to keep their heads, everyone is conspicuously falling all over themselves to show how glad they are to see the king back again and jockeying for position by professing their loyalty to the winner.

Even Shimei shows up again (19:18–23). Maybe he's sincere, or maybe he's merely scared and desperate. If you're

bold enough to kick a strong man while he's down, you'd better watch out when he gets back up. Shimei pleads for mercy and seems to admit his "sin" candidly enough, but you can't help wondering if he means "sin" or "error in judgment."

Throughout the narrative, we witness the difficult position of a king forced to make massive decisions based only on what often-insincere people tell him. Some decisions are good and some are bad, in part because he is surrounded by so many fickle, fawning, calculated responses to his power. One gets the feeling in these chapters that David is not so much acting as reacting. While his fate often seems to lie in the hands of others—Hushai, Barzillai, Joab—it's ultimately in the hands of God's providence.

David has become an enigmatic mix of strength and weakness, of conflicting decisions, of confidence in the Lord while haunted by his conscience. Being a king is not all it's cracked up to be—not all glory and trumpets, wealth and fine clothes, comfort and good food, power and ceremony. David seems jaded—worn out and world-weary and tired of all the ulterior motives and machinations that surround a person of power. That's why the last encounter is a breath of fresh air.

Mephibosheth's Loyal Gratitude (19)

In Mephibosheth's eagerness to explain himself to David (19:24–28), one thing shines through clearly: he is so devoted and grateful to the king for all the grace he has shown him up to this point, that whatever David decides is okay with him. He simply falls on his mercy, without ever even asking for it. In fact, he doesn't ask for anything. And when he is given something, it's not the *something* that he cares about; he's just glad the king is back where he belongs.

Mephibosheth is a remarkable parable of right response to the grace of God. He's from the race of the king's rival. He's lame, helpless, pathetic. He fears for his life when he is called to the king; yet, *because of a covenant promise*, the king shows him not merely mercy but amazing grace and favor and privilege. When he is wronged and slandered, he makes every desperate effort to explain to the king. But listen to his explanation! His concern is not to be righted and restored and revenged. His is a loyalty not driven by survival and self-justification (like Shimei's) or by greed (like Ziba's). His heart beats nothing but selfless, grateful, undying fealty to the king who means everything to him, because he knows he would be nothing without him. I don't know a more humbling model for us.

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A Shameful Vote

On October 13 of this year UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) voted 24 to 6 for a resolution that denies Jewish and Christian ties to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall. The resolution calls for identifying the site in Muslim terms only.

While it might be understandable that some nations have a vested political interest in such an outcome, such a vote is devoid of any historical reality.

In an op-ed on the vote, Elliott Abrams from the Council of Foreign Relations did highlight some positives from the vote. In France a backlash from a similar vote in the past moved them from "for the resolution" to "abstention." Other nations that previously supported similar resolutions also abstained: Spain, Argentina, Sri Lanka, Guinea, and Togo.

NOTABLE QUOTES

Nothing has done more harm to Christianity than the practice of filling the ranks of Christ's army with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession, and to talk fluently of his "experience." It may be painfully forgotten that numbers alone do not make strength and that there may be a great quantity of mere outward religion, while there is very little real grace. —J. C. Ryle

Furthermore, joy in spiritual accomplishment must be moderated because it is not intrinsically abiding. If we place all our joy in the fact that the spirits submit to us, what will happen when they do not? What if Jesus sends us where there is no response to our giftedness? What will happen to us when successes are few and far between? —R. Kent Hughes

Let no man think to kill sin with few, easy, or gentle strokes. He who hath once smitten a serpent, if he follow not on his blow until it be slain, may repent that ever he began the quarrel. And so he who undertakes to deal with sin, and pursues it not constantly to the death. —Richard Baxter

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, refused to be discouraged. He stated, "Regardless of what happens in the months ahead, I have total confidence that in the years ahead, the revolution in Israel's standing among the nations will finally penetrate this hall of nations. I have so much confidence, in fact, that I predict that a decade from now an Israeli prime minister will stand right here where I am standing and actually applaud the UN."

Read more at <http://blogs.cfr.org/abrams/2016/10/14/who-supported-the-shameful-unesco-vote-on-jerusalem/> and <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/UNESCO-Director-General-criticizes-harmful-drive-to-erase-Jewish-ties-to-Temple-Mount-470135>.

Newsworthy is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of FBFI.

Compiled by Robert Condict, FBFI Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

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ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

I love scintillating observations and engaging anecdotes in a Bible lesson—and I think those are tools every Bible teacher of any kind should use purposefully (without trusting in them or making them master rather than servant). But I have often commented to my wife, “All I’m really asking is that a preacher *give me the text*.” (She knows I’m serious when I speak in italics.)

I recently heard a relatively new Christian, an insurance adjuster who was filling in for his absent pastor on a Wednesday night, present a simple sermon on a passage in Luke. There were no homiletical pyrotechnics, no hair-raising illustrations, and a number of verbal awkwardnesses. But I came away exhilarated. He had lovingly done his homework; he managed to *give me the text*.

I have also heard renowned preachers—both in and outside of Fundamentalism—who utterly failed to give me the text of Scripture. One prominent Fundamentalist pulpiter (not a member of FBFI) did nothing short of play around with a text in Jeremiah for an hour in front of 5000 people. He allegorized it into talking about America coming back to God. I was both steamed up and deflated. Why is it so hard, I came away asking myself, for someone to just *give me the text*?

The biggest strength of my education in Fundamentalist schools from ages thirteen to thirty was the impulse I was given to go to the Bible, to trust the Bible, to study the Bible. Fundamentalists are supposed to be Bible people.

But sobering experience has shown me that there are numerous ways to be unfaithful to the Bible while proclaiming one’s allegiance to it. We’ve all done it, and now I get about eight lines to say something constructive to help us never do it again, by God’s grace.

But what can I say? *Go to seminary? Read good books? Listen to good sermons?* Yes, sure, all those things. These are all ways to receive and value God’s gift of teachers to the church (Eph. 4:11–14). But my angle is supposed to be *On Language & Scripture*, so let me try that.

Remember Jesus’ words: “Have you not read . . . ?” Five times He says this in the Gospels, always to the “Bible people” of His day who had found some way of getting around what God had actually said. Reading is a moral activity; you can do it faithfully or not, with love for God and neighbor or not. Imagine Jesus asking you about every passage you study, “Did you really read this?” And the people you teach, whether toddlers or seniors—do they come away from your teaching understanding your text better than before? Imagine Jesus saying, “Did you help them read this?” Only when we feel the fear of God in those questions can we be truly committed to *giving people the text*.

Dr. Mark Ward Jr. is a Logos Pro at Faithlife.



Regional Reports

New York City FBFI Regional Fellowship

The New York City FBFI Regional Fellowship was hosted on Tuesday September, 13, 2016, by Heritage Baptist Church while being held at Grace Baptist Church in Franklin Square, Long Island. Dr. Bud Steadman, director of Baptist World Mission, spoke two messages on "The Importance of a Biblical Hermeneutic" and "The Theology of a Missionary Call." After the excellent preaching, the Heritage Baptist Church food ministry team led by Deacon Ashook Ramroop and his faithful wife, Liz, fed the pastors, missionaries, and mission board directors a delicious meal.



Central Regional Fellowship

FBFI's Central Regional Fellowship was held at Wheatland Baptist Church, McPherson, Kansas, on October 17-18, 2016, with Terry Post as the host pastor.

We had 120 in the Monday evening service. For the conference we had 30 pastors, retired pastors, and missionaries along with their families. Chaplain Joe Willis; Pastor Michael Wessberg of Faith Baptist Church, Raymore, Missouri; as well as Pastor Joseph Hansen of Carol Baptist Church in Atchison, Kansas, were the speakers. Pastor Wessberg's wife, Candace, spoke to the ladies, and the Wessberg family brought special music.

The theme of the conference was "Trusting God in Evil Days." We had a great time and great preaching and fellowship. It was very encouraging for everyone there. As they say, "A good time was had by all!"



New Mexico Meeting

Pastor Richard Johnson and Scripture Baptist Church of Las Cruces hosted the State of New Mexico meeting of FBFI on Monday and Tuesday, October 17 and 18.

Dr. Les Ollila was our keynote speaker. We were blessed by his practical biblical preaching.

There were eight pastors from the State of New Mexico present.

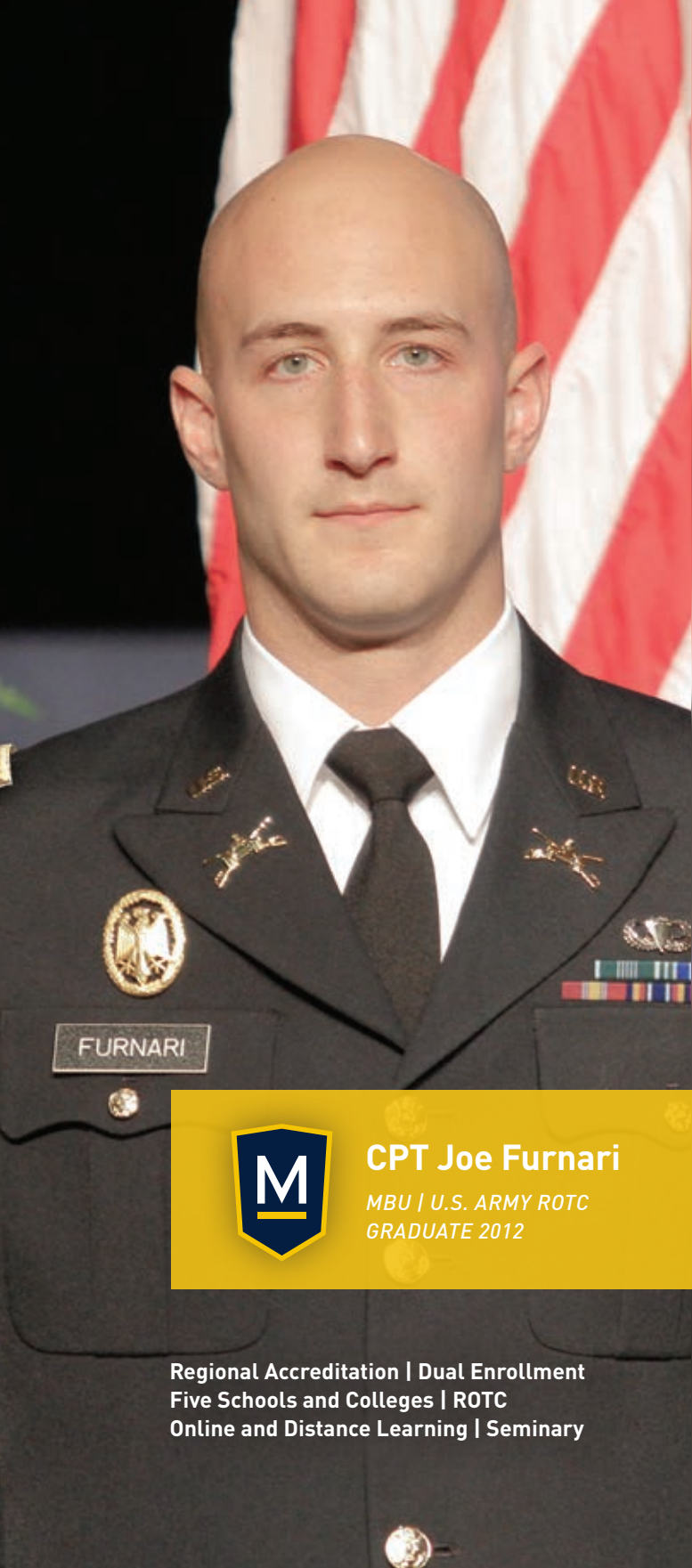


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Israel's Future

Continued from page 21

Testament, rather than the New Testament reinterpreting the Old Testament. Thus the unconditional covenants with Abraham and David are to be accepted as recorded for national Israel.

A straightforward reading of the Old Testament presents the kingdom on earth. The central geographical location is Israel with her people regathered (Isa. 11:11–16; 27:12–13; 43:5–6; Jer. 30:8–9). Jerusalem will be the capital city (Isa. 2:1–4; Micah 4:7). The King will reign from David's throne (2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Chron. 17:12; Luke 1:32), which is always associated with a throne on earth. All nations on earth will share the blessings of His reign (Amos 9:11–12; Zech. 2:11).

Physical Conditions

The land will be returned to astonishing fertility. Amos 9:13 is almost humorous in describing the productiveness of the soil. The land will support continuous farming. Amos pictures an individual "yelling" at the harvester to get out of his way, so he can plant a new crop.

Another physical feature is that wildlife will return to tame life. Wolves and lambs, leopards and young goats, lions and calves, as well as cows and bears, will not be at odds. Reflecting their original Edenic diet, lions will eat straw. Children will even be able to have "poisonous" snakes as pets (Isa. 11:6–9)!

Social Conditions

These conditions are what people desire, but only God (not government) can provide. There will be genuine justice on earth. Isaiah 11:3b–4 gives the standard for justice. The Lord is not influenced by nor dependent upon externals. He sees right to the heart and judges accordingly. Isaiah 32:1 reveals that the millennial administration as well as the Lord will dispense authentic justice. In a society like ours it seems we have departed from a system of justice to a legal system. If you can afford the right legal representative, you can get away with murder. That may "be legal," but it's not just. In the kingdom, there will be "justice for all."

There will be peace, since the coming King is "the Prince of Peace." Zechariah 9:9 introduces the King offering the kingdom to the joy of the crowd that rejected Him just days later. Verse 10 states He will "speak peace" in His Second Coming. When He speaks this time, it comes! There is only one person who would have that power and use it rightly. The Lord has the power and character to bring worldwide peace.

Zechariah 9:10 refers to the instruments of war being destroyed. The chariot, horse, and battle bow will be cut off. Isaiah and Micah state, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4; cf. Micah 4:3).

As a result of justice and peace, there will be economic equity. There does not seem to be any verse in kingdom context about taxes! The inhabitants of the millennium will enjoy the fruit of their labor. They will build homes and

occupy them without threat of someone taking them. They will plant vineyards and eat the produce. They "shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. 65:21–22). After his words concerning no more war, Micah says, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (4:4). There will really be a time of peace and safety.

Life for Mankind

Consider man's daily kingdom experience. It seems "healthcare" has been an issue for the last few decades. Now that healthcare is the law, we have discovered it is not really an "affordable healthcare" and that recent "care" has not been in the area of health but in the growth of a nanny state. In contrast the kingdom will be a time of excellent health (Isa. 35:5–6). Health will be so good that the length of a man's life is likened to the age of a tree (Isa. 65:22)! On the other hand, if someone dies at one hundred, he will be considered a child. Such a premature death at age one hundred seems to indicate it is a result of God's activity of judging him for sin (Isa. 65:20). This indicates that ungodliness will be the exception.

Spiritual Conditions

The spiritual conditions take us to the very foundation and heart of the kingdom. The ruler is a King/Priest (Ps. 110; Zech. 6:12–13). Isaiah 2:3 speaks of His teaching ministry; it reveals Him as a spokesman of God. Hence, the Messiah is the combination and culmination of all three offices of Old Testament leadership.

Only Regenerate Enter

Only regenerate people will enter the kingdom. Ezekiel 20:33–44 describes the purging of rebel Jews during the Tribulation. Matthew 25:31–46 presents the separation of saved and unsaved Gentiles. As a result of these two judgments, only saved Jews and Gentiles enter the kingdom. They will bear children who must choose to trustingly submit to the Messiah.

The New Covenant

The key spiritual characteristic of the millennium will be the New Covenant. Before Israel went into exile, Jeremiah introduced the last major expansion of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. While we enjoy the benefits, the actual fulfillment is in the kingdom. The unconditional nature of the New Covenant is illustrated by the inviolability of the day/night cycle and man's inability to comprehend the vastness of creation (Jer. 31:35–37).

The experience of the New Covenant summarized in Jeremiah 31:31–34 includes God's law indelibly internalized (v. 33a), intimate relationship with the Lord (v. 33b), and forgiveness described in these words: "I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more" (v. 34b). Ezekiel 36:25–27 enhances our understanding. The covenant cleanses from idols (v. 25), provides a new heart (v. 26), and God's Spirit indwells to produce obedience to God's Word. The external ritualism Jesus encountered in Israel in His first coming is out. A genuine relationship with the Lord in the inner man is in.

Kingdom of Priests

As a result of the New Covenant the knowledge of God will be universal (Jer. 31:34; Mal. 1:11). Israel will fulfill her mission as a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:5–6; Isa. 61:6) in an atmosphere where the knowledge of the Lord they represent permeates the world. Instead of the anti-Semitism so prevalent today, there will be a universal pro-Semitic attitude and practice. “Many people and strong nations . . . of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you [to worship in Jerusalem]: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:22–23).

Kingdom Temple

Ezekiel 40–46 describes the kingdom-temple and its worship. Zechariah 14:16 informs us that nations will come there to honor the Lord. The millennial sacrifices appear to present a problem, but they are not reverting to the Old Testament’s external system. They memorialize the finished work of Christ and also serve a very practical purpose as well. Although the New Covenant changes the heart, human subjects are not sinless. A sin against government is a sin against God, since it is a theocracy. Thus, sacrifice will be a millennial confession of sin. It illustrates repentance for sin against God/government. It has an added benefit of reminding those unsaved born during the kingdom that sin is active rebellion against the King of the universe.

God Is All in All

The war that ends all wars follows the kingdom. In fact, it is the last event in history. Satan will be released, unchanged, after one thousand years in the bottomless pit. He will be all the more hardened in his deceptive activity. There will be many born during the kingdom who externally conform but do not believingly submit to Christ. They join Satan in a final attempt to destroy God’s purpose. Fire from God ends it, and Satan will be cast permanently into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:7–10).

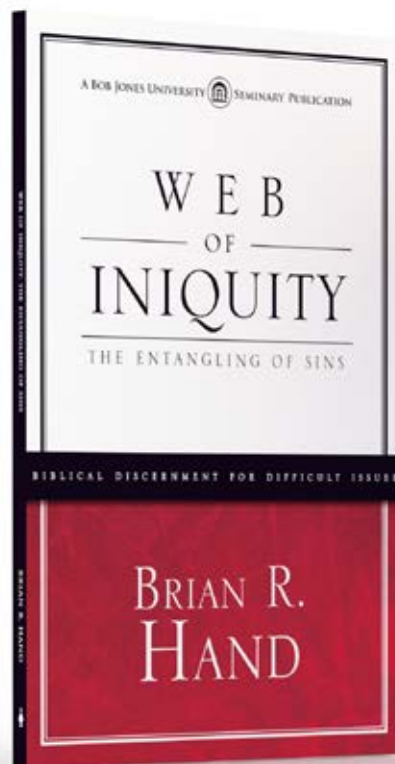
The Lord’s unique purposes for Israel will then be complete. Time will be no more. Satan and the last enemy (death) will be destroyed. As Messiah, the Lord will “transfer” the kingdom

into the eternal state “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24–28).

Dr. Ernie Schmidt has pastored for over twenty-five years and has taught Bible, Theology, and Pastoral Theology at Northland Baptist Bible College, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, and Faith Baptist Theological Seminary for about thirty years. Recently he served as interim president at Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary. Currently he preaches in churches, holds conferences, and is Midwest representative for Shalom Ministries.



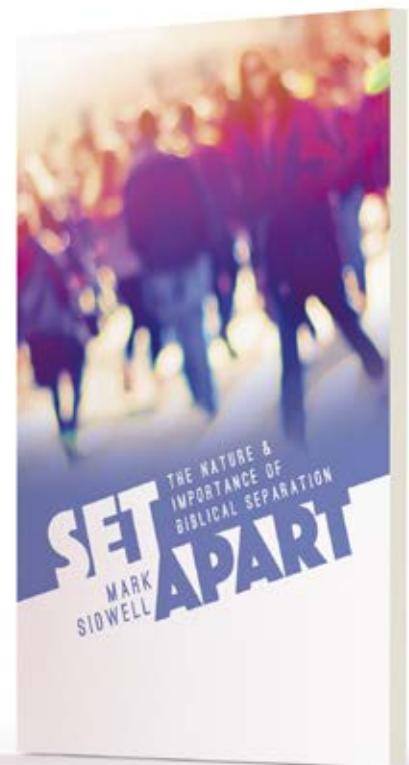
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Mail Bag

Continued from page 5

different area, where we are attending a church with a good godly music pastor, whom you know very well. Before we moved, my wonderful wife Allison was having a very hard time singing those songs. You see, she did not grow up in a fundamental church, but rather in the New-Evangelical camp. She heard and learned these songs in their CCM version. But by the grace of God, He turned her heart away from that problem. When these songs started to be played and sung by our congregation, I was unaware of the problem, but for my wife it was a real struggle. She asked me why we were singing CCM songs even though they had been “cleaned up”? Soon, a majority of the music in use was CCM, and she could not remain in the auditorium because it was such a stumbling block for her. Her need drove me into the “stay away from it entirely” camp (as you put it), if for nothing else than to protect my wife’s heart. The call for discernment is needed in our churches today. I believe some pastors are unaware of the struggles some of their people have—people like my wife. A sensitive conscience is not a spiritual weakness but may be an abundance of discernment. Christian liberty is not my selfish freedom to disregard the conscience of others, but my freedom to serve by saying “no” to anything that is a stumbling block to others. I think we have forgotten this truth in the area of music.

Thank you again for letting me share my heart, and for your ministry. May God bless you in all you do.

*Paul S. Duckworth
Norristown, PA*

Thank you for the tremendous article on music by Tim Fisher and John Vaughn in the September/October 2016 issue! They have fairly and graciously stated the case for discernment regarding music coming out of Sovereign Grace and its associated “artists” such as Keith and Kristen Getty and Stuart Townend. It is disheartening to see so many fundamental churches and Bible colleges so quickly turn to the music of these groups, ostensibly to appeal to the younger generation. Businesses spend great resources to improve the quality of their products and services. Yet in the Bible-believing sphere, many feel they have to depart from long-standing standards of separation and quality in order to attract. The maxim still holds true: What we win them with, we win them to.

*Rusty Allen
Mauldin, SC*

To all who make this magazine possible—thank you. I am thankful for the stand those in charge have taken. When I first subscribed, I was not sure what I would get. I didn’t want to read sermons, nor articles about someone’s experiences. I wanted a magazine that would help me grow, teach me, and exhort me. But I was almost afraid your magazine would be preacher-oriented with

theological speak that only a preacher understands.

When my magazine came, I cried. It had articles on prayer that helped me. It was what I had been searching for. Continue to keep up that good work that has begun. I will subscribe as long as I can read.

*Shirley Wolfe
Puyallup, WA*

I respectfully submit that you are becoming more academic and less understandable to most of your readers. Brian Collins article in your July/August issue is a perfect example. He references Scripture without quoting text as if his audience has memorized the entire Bible. It takes him forever to get to the point; instead he confuses readers with tangential arguments for and against his postulations. This may appeal to academics who enjoy being impressed with thorough research and vocabulary but fails to deliver a clear and meaningful message. In future issues, please consider the welfare of a broader audience.

*Stephen Blanton,
Bluffton, SC*

There is a yawning generational gap in the FBFI, and it will take major effort from both sides if we are to bridge it. I’m willing to help build a bridge, under your leadership, to give FBFI a smooth passing-of-the-torch. I tend to think the only way we can bridge that gap is to lovingly shoot straight between generations. I also think a major push for a best-we-can-make internet presence is an absolute necessity, and although I’m already helping with that as you know, it will require much broader support from within the FBFI to be successful. You, Dr. Vaughn, have invited me to edit an issue of *FrontLine*. I have been planning one for several years that might be perfect for this moment: “Why We’re Still Here: ‘Young Fundamentalists’ Explain Why We’ve Stayed.” I have in mind reaching out to younger guys (30s and 40s) in and outside the FBFI. I might fail, but I am willing to try

*Mark L. Ward Jr., PhD
Mt. Vernon, WA*

(The paragraph above was the conclusion to a lengthy letter to me from Mark which led to a long, pointed, and greatly edifying discussion sparked by the issue on “Convergence.” I pray it will result in the publication of the issue of FrontLine he described above. If so, by that time, we will be enjoying the initial phase of our plans to improve our internet presence through a website face lift now underway. Ed.)

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To which the only biblical response is: it was *not by chance*. None of this has been.

During his first term as president, Ronald Reagan appointed lifelong Democrat Jeane Kirkpatrick as Permanent US Representative to the UN. Kirkpatrick, “shocked by the level of hatred she saw for Israel at the U.N.,” once remarked, “I think the Holocaust is possible again. I didn’t think so before I came to the United Nations, but I think so now.”²⁶ Little has changed in the UN since then. And if the dispensational premillennial understanding of Daniel and Revelation is correct, it’s not only possible, it’s prophesied. But so is the future salvation of the nation when they finally recognize and take refuge in their Messiah. None of this has anything to do with Israel’s deservedness, but it has everything to do with the integrity of God, who always keeps His promises to those to whom He makes them.

Conclusion

The political events of the first half of the twentieth century profoundly shaped the theological developments of the second half of the twentieth century. Some would argue that they also validated the theological developments of the second half of the nineteenth century as well. Critics have often accused dispensationalism of “newspaper exegesis.” While the charge is a helpful reminder that current events do not interpret Scripture, it is just as mistaken to insist that Scripture provides no lens for interpreting current events. Every fulfillment of prophecy is nothing less than the convergence of revelation and reality. At some point, the prophesied future becomes the actual present. To risk putting it somewhat crassly, every prophecy eventually becomes a newspaper headline, because every prediction eventually converges with a point in time.

Mark Twain, though no great friend of Christianity, cultivated an affinity for the Jews. He toured Palestine when it was still a deserted wilderness and wrote about it. He had a Jewish son-in-law and, while in Paris, was himself the subject of anti-Semitism

when the French press (remarking on his first name, Samuel, and the size of his nose) suggested he was Jewish.²⁷ It was Twain who wrote, “All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?” The only feasible explanation is the one the Bible offers: the secret lies in the promises of God to Abraham and to his seed. Those promises, and the prophecies that grow out of them, are ultimately rooted in the integrity of God—His ability to say exactly what He means and to do exactly what He says. And that, more than anything else, is what dispensational theology is all about.

Dr. Layton Talbert is professor of Theology on the Seminary faculty at Bob Jones University.

¹ Michael Vlach, “Israel in Church History,” in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel*, ed. Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 198–99.

² H. H. Rowden, “Darby, John Nelson,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988), 187.

³ Michael J. Svelg, “The History of Dispensationalism in Seven Eras,” in *Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption*, D. Jeffrey Bingham and Glenn R. Kreider, eds. (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 77.

⁴ Michael Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Norton, 2007), 277.

⁵ Vlach, “Israel in Church History,” 207–8.

⁶ Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton: Baker, 1993), 11.

⁷ Svelg, 84.

⁸ Michael Rydelnik, *Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 72–73.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹¹ Oren, 353, 359.

¹² *Ibid.*, 359.

¹³ Rydelnik, 84. This was not the first time that political considerations converged with religious motivations on behalf of Israel. Cyrus’s policy of repatriating those displaced by the Babylonian captivity, including the Jews, was politically

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Guard Your Heart

The Bible says in Proverbs 4:23, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” There could not be a greater exhortation to those who are saved than this matter of guarding their hearts. I read a commentary that gives an excellent explanation regarding the heart. This man of God stated, “The heart commonly refers to the mind as the center of thinking and reason.” That’s true—“My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart” (Prov. 7:1–3).

The heart also includes the emotions. Proverbs. 15:15 reads, “But he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.” And Proverbs. 15:30 states, “The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.”

The heart also includes the will: “They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight” (Prov. 11:20); “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself” (Prov. 14:14).

The heart is the repository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech—see Proverbs 4:24: “Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.”

The heart also affects sight: “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee” (Prov. 4:25). And the heart affects a person’s conduct—Proverbs 4:26–27, “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” What a tremendous commentary on the heart!

The prophet Jeremiah warned the Lord’s people about their hearts. He declares in Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. preached, “No man falls suddenly! His fall was because of a process of wicked thinking.” He then used the following illustration: “A man walks by a bank and says to himself, ‘You know, a person could rob this bank.’ Then he begins to think, ‘Well, you know, I believe that I could rob this bank.’ Then he says to himself, ‘I believe I will rob this bank!’ It was a process of wicked thinking that brought him to his ruin because he got caught, arrested, and put in jail.”

Many of the Lord’s people have committed sins that they thought they would never do. It all begins with a single wicked thought that is not guarded against. We read in Matthew 15:19, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” So many people believe they can sin and get away with it—and they may, for a time. But there is a God in heaven who knows all about man’s wicked and deceitful heart. In Jeremiah 17:10 He declares, “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” What a solemn warning from the Lord Himself. This ought to stir the life of the Lord’s people who should pray, “Lord, help me to guard my heart.” No one knows what he is capable of doing if there is no safeguard that he has built around his heart. What should our desire be? The psalmist said in Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” There could be someone who has committed a sin and their heart is truly broken over it: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17). Confess that sin to the Lord as King David did in Psalm 51:3: “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.” First John 1:9 promises, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Psalm 103:12–13 gives us this reassurance: “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”

Another way to safeguard the heart is to memorize God’s Word. Psalm 119:11 states, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Do not allow your emotions to be the ground of making decisions in your life. Let the Word of God be the foundation of your decisions. If you are tempted to sin, have your mind filled with Scripture to combat that temptation; they are your authority for defeating sin in your life. Hebrews. 4:12 says, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

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History, Theology, and the Nation of Israel

(Continued from page 37)

astute, but Ezra 1 informs us that the policy was also religiously motivated and prophetically predicted.

¹⁴ Oren, 365.

¹⁵ Joshua Teitelbaum, "Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People: From the San Remo Conference (1920) to the Netanyahu-Abbas Talks," *Jerusalem Viewpoints* Series No. 579 (September-October 2010), Synopsis.

¹⁶ It has often been argued that the Allies effectively created the conditions for Hitler by inflicting crippling and humiliating conditions on Germany in the Treaty of Versailles. Perhaps, but a little historical context is helpful. Only a year before Versailles, the Germans had inflicted even harsher terms on Russia via the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. In any case, whatever its human contributions may have been, the bigger consideration in the rise of Hitler is the theological context of divine providence.

¹⁷ Rydelnik, 90.

¹⁸ Oren, 488.

¹⁹ Eduard Schnabel, *40 Questions about the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Kregel

Academic, 2011), 141.

²⁰ Rydelnik, 132. Remarkably, nowhere in his book on eschatological prophecy does Schnabel even cite Ezekiel 36.

²¹ John S. Feinberg, "Israel in the Land as an Eschatological Necessity?" in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel*, ed. Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 184-93.

²² Barry Levanthal, "Israel in Light of the Holocaust," in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel*, ed. Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 234-35.

²³ Michael Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 69-72.

²⁴ George Gilder, "Silicon Israel," *City* (Summer 2003, Vol. 19, No. 3).

²⁵ Michael Oren, *Six Days of War* (New York: Random House, 2003), 311-12.

²⁶ Peter Collier, *Political Woman: The Big Little Life of Jeane Kirkpatrick* (New York: Encounter Books, 2012), 130. Though appointed as a Democrat, Kirkpatrick became a Republican for the last thirty years of her life.

²⁷ Oren, 283-84.

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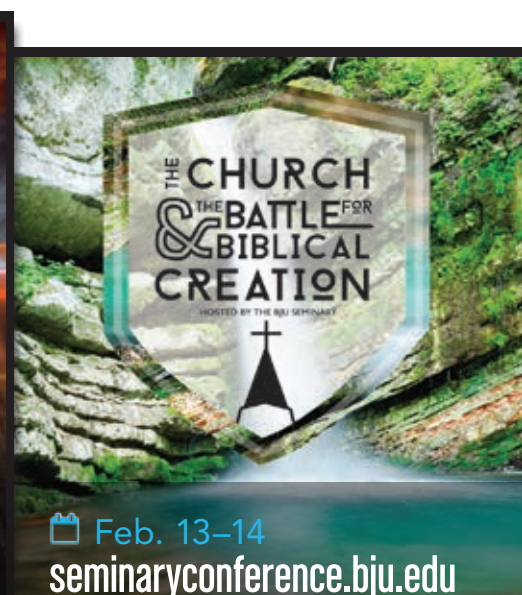
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