



A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM CHALLENGED

NEW VIDEO GIVES OTHER SIDE TO ISRAELI - PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

A REVIEW BY ALBERT JAMES DAGER

A new DVD entitled, *With God on Our Side* (Rooftop Productions), has thrown down the gauntlet to Christian Zionists who champion the modern state of Israel in its conflict with the Palestinians. Christian Zionists believe modern Israel is the fulfillment, or the beginning of the fulfillment, of biblical prophecies that speak of God's chosen people returning to their ancient land (Zion). They also believe that the return of the Jews to Israel is a prerequisite to the coming of the Lord.

In the video Malcom Hedding, with International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, a Christian Zionist group, defines his cause:

Well biblical Zionism is—the short answer is—the belief that the Abrahamic Covenant, either in part or in full, has never been abolished.

George Morrison of Christians United For Israel (CUFI), states:

You can't separate the land from the people. When God made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to all the Jewish people—it included a piece of real estate called Israel. It is the only country in the world where God actually outlined its borders and parameters, and gave it that land. So if I were to strictly look at the Bible, and look at its borders, I see parameters go further north than what it is now, even up to Damascus, and down south to the river—Egypt river—over to the Mediterranean, and then, of course, all the way across the east side of the Jordan River, which include Jordan and that.

Now that's not the way it is now, and I don't know if that's what it's going to come back to in our lifetime, but I do believe in the end, when God—which I believe will establish His Kingdom on this earth—there will be a return to those borders.

Upon these beliefs rest the actions and teachings of leaders within Christianity dedicated to supporting the state of Israel through lobbying of the U.S. Congress and president. The

objective of Christian Zionism is to aid Israel in just about any way possible to maintain its hold upon the land of Palestine.

To briefly set the background to the issues addressed in this video we must start with the beginning of Israel as a nation state in 1948. (Some historical events leading up to the beginning will be of interest later.)

Israel holds the land granted it through the partitioning of Palestine by the British who occupied that area after defeating the Ottoman Turks after World War I with the help of native Bedouin tribes. The British promised the Bedouins a nation of their own, but reneged on that promise and established a British protectorate over the land.

Led by Britain, the United Nations mandated creation of a homeland in Palestine primarily for displaced Jews who had suffered under the Holocaust. Implementing that UN mandate, the British displaced many Arabs and other ethnic Palestinians in order to make room for the Jews, thus creating a climate of hatred and conflict from the beginning. Even before Israel formally declared itself a state the surrounding Muslim countries determined they would destroy it before it could be born.

Five Arab states—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria—attacked Israel in May, 1948, shortly after it had declared its independence on the eve of final British withdrawal. But they were soundly repelled by a poorly trained, ill-equipped, and vastly outnumbered Israeli army, leading to an armistice that allowed Israel to remain. That war, known by Israelis as the War of Independence, and by Arabs as “the Catastrophe,” was the first in a series of wars and diplomatic maneuvering that came to be known as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Since its inception Israel has been on a state of military alert, and virtually all citizens are considered members of its army.

Originally, the UN General Assembly, in its Resolution 181, would have created side-by-side both an Arab state and a Jewish state. But that Resolution was rejected by the Arabs, thus

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Media Spotlight is a ministry to the Body of Christ, bringing understanding of the ways in which the world shapes our thinking and lifestyles through the influence of the mass communications media.

God's Word exhorts, "buy the truth and do not sell it" (Prov. 23:23). Therefore we do not sell *Media Spotlight*. Begun in 1977, *Media Spotlight* was the first ministry on a national scale to address the ungodly nature of the secular media—motion pictures, television, toys, games and myriad other things that contribute to Christians living no differently than the rest of the world.

The mass media have impacted the Body of Christ as much as they have society. Many Christians are so dependent upon the media that they aren't aware of how lukewarm they have become. We have many testimonials from readers who tell us that, because of *Media Spotlight*, they have become aware of the effect the media have on their thinking, and are now more selective in their choices.

But the problem of ungodliness is not exclusive to the secular media. Of major concern are the religious media that present messages contrary to God's Word. *Media Spotlight* addresses the impact that religious teachers have upon believers in Christ, whether for good or for evil.

It has escaped the understanding of many Christians that what they believe is more often shaped by the teachings and traditions of religious men and institutions than by Scripture. Most teachers in the institutional churches rely more upon their theological disciplines than on the pure Word of God. Yet the wisdom of the world is no substitute for God's Word, even if offered from the pulpit or in the Christian media.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:24 that in the last days false Christs and false prophets would arise and would show great signs and wonders, "so that, if possible, they will deceive the very elect." He also states in Matthew 24:12 that in the last days the love of many toward Him would grow cold because evil would increase in the world. If we believe Him, then we would be foolish not to guard ourselves against deception. There is little time to waste in the short span of life granted us by God. We must choose today whom we will serve. **MS**

Scripture quotations by *Media Spotlight* writers are from the King James Version of the Bible, rephrased in modern U.S. English unless otherwise stated.



A Personal Note

Dear Friends,

As we come to the close of another year we thank our heavenly Father for sustaining us through the years that increasingly fly by. But one thing remains constant: the love of God toward His children, and our hope for a future salvation into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We also thank you who have supported us through your prayers and gifts to the ministry. It is truly amazing how the Lord has supplied our needs.

Years ago we determined that if the time came when the Lord did not supply we would know that the ministry is to come to an end. But should that happen we look forward to whatever new thing He has for us in the few remaining years we have left.

We need to let you know that *Media Spotlight's* phone number has been changed. It got to the point where we were receiving so many solicitation calls that we had to just drop the number altogether. For a month callers were referred to a new number, but afterward they received the message that the number has been disconnected and there is no new number.

We're sorry if this has caused any problem for those who may have tried to reach us the past few weeks. We are still here, but now we have a new number: (425) 392-1719, which is also our fax number.

We are still in the process of building our list of recipients for e-mail messages. If you have not yet applied, please do so soon. You may send your request to be added by merely typing "e-mail messages" in the subject line of an e-mail to us. Send the e-mail to aldager@mediaspotlight.org.

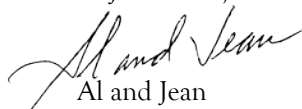
It is our hope that enough people respond to make it worthwhile. As yet we are not at the point we would like to be for it to happen.

Our lead article reveals one avenue through which efforts are being made to turn Christians away from seeing the modern state of Israel as a prelude to the Lord's return and His gathering His people into the land promised to the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We are not Christian Zionists, but we do understand from Scripture that God still has a purpose for natural Israel in the last days. As Israel has continued to lose support among the nations, the United States is virtually its only ally today. This is largely due to the efforts of Christian Zionists who strongly lobby the U.S. government for Israel. But the climate is changing; Christians are increasingly being propagandized against Israel. The day is coming when the hope of the Lord's return will wane among Evangelical Christians. Then will be fulfilled the Lord's prophecy, "At an hour when you do not expect, I shall come."

Israel depends much on the support of Christians in the U.S. When that support is gone, and the U.S. finally pulls its support of Israel, that tiny nation will stand alone against the entire world. According to Scripture the time will come when all nations, under the command of the last-days anti-Christ, will surround Jerusalem to drive the Jews into the sea. Then the Lord will rescue His people who have wandered from His truth, and will establish His tabernacle in His holy mountain.

Truly we are living in exciting times.

In Jesus' love,


Al and Jean



A Review

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creating a large displaced population of Palestinians who insist that Israel has been an obstacle to their having an independent state. Generations of Israelis and Palestinians have grown up in that area, propagandized to hate one another.

In 1956, in violation of the 1949 Armistice, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba in violation of the Constantinople Convention of 1888 which guaranteed the passage of all ships during times of war or peace. This led to the Suez Canal Crisis, during which Israel, with British and French support, invaded and captured the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip. Under pressure from the United States and the UN, Israel withdrew from the Egyptian territories and Egypt ceased its blockade and agreed to demilitarize the Sinai which was overseen by the newly created United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF).

The most significant war in the Arab-Israeli conflict occurred on May 19, 1967, when Egypt again closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Having earlier expelled the UNEF monitors, Egypt then deployed 100,000 troops to the Sinai and mobilized them on Israel's southern border. Joining Egypt in this new attempt to destroy Israel were Jordan, Syria and Iraq who amassed on Israel's eastern border.

On June 5, Israel preemptively launched a surprise attack on Egypt. The Israeli Air Force destroyed most of the Egyptian Air Force, then turned east to destroy the Jordanian, Syrian, and Iraqi air forces.

So swiftly did Israel dispatch its enemies that the conflict came to be known as the Six-Day War. In the process of defending itself Israel gained control of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and eastern Jerusalem. This brought all of Jerusalem under Israeli control.

Since the Six-Day War the Arab states and the Palestinians have demanded that Israel relinquish their control of the captured territories. Instead, Israel has continued to expand its settlements into those territories, creating more hardship for the Palestinians who fled into refugee camps maintained by the Arab states. Palestinians who remain in those territories captured by Israel are subjected to difficulties they had not known prior to the Six-Day War. Unable to dislodge Israel through conventional military means, the Arab states have resorted to financing and supporting Palestinian terrorism through what it calls Intifada (uprising). As a result of that terrorism launched against it by Palestinian terrorist organizations such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Hamas in the south and east, and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, Israel has taken harsh measures to protect itself. Palestinians and other Arabs must now pass through numerous checkpoints and undergo rigorous scrutiny to move about within those territories controlled by Israel.

Christian Zionists insist that Israel must not give up those territories because they are part of Israel's God-given land and the Jews are entitled to it in perpetuity. Many, if not most, Christian Zionists take a laissez-faire approach to the plight of the Palestinians, often ignoring even Christian Palestinians who are also subject to Israeli restrictions.

With this background we may assess the message of *With God on Our Side*.

The video opens with John Hagee, founder and pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, speaking to the applause of a congregation waving American and Israeli flags, some dancing the Jewish Hora:

I repeat, we cannot change the past. But Christians and Jews can unite, and we can control the future. Fifty million Evangelicals with five million Jews in North America is a match made in Heaven!

John Hagee is arguably the most visible proponent of Christian Zionism. In conjunction with 400 leaders from the Christian and Jewish religions, he founded Christians United For Israel (CUFI) in February, 2006. Hagee, a strong supporter of the Christian right, has taught that Jesus did not die for the Jews, but for "the Church." Therefore, Hagee reasons, it is not necessary to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews:

The Jewish people have a relationship to God through the law of God as given through Moses. I believe that every Gentile person can only come to God through the cross of Christ. I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah, which is the Word of God, has a relationship with God and will come to redemption.

The Law of Moses is sufficient enough to bring a person into the knowledge of God until God gives him a greater revelation. And God has not.

Paul abandoned the idea [of evangelizing Jews]. In the book of Romans he said, "I am now going to go to the Gentiles from this time forward." Judaism doesn't need Christianity to explain its existence. But Christianity has to have Judaism to explain its existence.¹

This aberrant teaching ignores the historical and biblical evidence that the other apostles, including Peter, continued to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews while Paul concentrated his efforts on the Gentiles. But this evidently doesn't matter to the Christian Zionists who seem to have more affinity toward Jewish anti-Christians than toward their own brethren living in Israel and the surrounding Arab nations.²

While claiming to love the Jews, many Christian Zionists withhold the only avenue to God's love in the person of Jesus Christ when interacting with Jews on behalf of modern Israel.

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¹ Julia Dunn, *Houston Chronicle*, April 30, 1988, Religion, p. 1.

² When we say, "Arab nations" we understand that all the nations outside the Arabian peninsula are not truly Arab. But that name has come to include the nations that are generally allied against Israel and are part of the Arab League, or League of Arab States.



Christians massacred in Iraq

In the worst massacre of Christians in Iraq since the Iraq War started in 2003, 58 people died at the hands of Islamic suicide bombers affiliated with the terrorist group al-Qaida. The October 31 blast at Our Lady of Salvation Church, a Syrian Catholic Church in central Baghdad has left the entire Christian community in Iraq mourning.

The attack began when a group of gunmen said to number anywhere between six and fifteen burst into the church, taking hostages. They killed a number of the hostages immediately, firing randomly into the congregation. One of two priests killed, Wassim Sabih, was pushed to the ground. He was shot, his body riddled with bullets, as he grasped a crucifix and pleaded with the gunmen to spare the worshippers.

Iraqi security forces stormed the church, freeing some hostages, but a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that 23 of the hostages were killed when two of the gunmen detonated suicide vests upon the security forces entering.

COMMENTARY

Yes, I include Catholics among Christians for a few reasons: the term “Christian” has come to mean anyone who subscribes to any denomination that names Christ as its head; Christians of many denominations are deluded; only God knows the heart.

The situation in Iraq has steadily deteriorated since U.S. combat troops were recalled in September, 2010. As early as September 7, Iraq’s President Jalal Talabani, met with Iran’s ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Danayefar, to discuss ways to expand ties in all areas. A year earlier, on September 27, 2009, Talabani said that the major powers dealing with the Iran nuclear issue should genuinely negotiate with Iran and guarantee Iran’s peaceful use of nuclear energy. He also vowed that Iraq would never allow Israel or any other country to use its airspace to carry out an attack against Iranian nuclear facilities.

Under Saddam Hussein Iraq was in a war against Iran, but following his ouster the two Shiite majority countries have improved relations with one another.

Saddam Hussein’s Iraq had been in an almost perpetual war with Iran until 1988. Although a Sunni Muslim, Saddam

took a secular approach to government, and was responsible for many Western-styled reforms such as providing for women’s literacy and education, compulsory free education, farm subsidies, and free hospitalization for everyone. Although opposed to Israel, Saddam did not persecute Jews under his regime, and he was very beneficent toward Christians, even supporting Christian schools and churches.

Now virtually all the Jews have fled Iraq, and Christians are increasingly becoming targets of Islamic terror.

This isn’t to say Saddam was without fault. He was known as ruthless against his enemies, and governed with an iron hand. His genocide against the Kurdish opposition in the northern provinces of Iraq turned world opinion against him.

But he did keep order among a people whose history is fraught with bloodshed and rebellion.

With the U.S. invasion in 2003 on the supposition that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and was somehow complicit in the 9/11 attacks, Iraq has become a killing ground for all sides in the many-faceted conflict. Only time will tell if the outcome of U.S. intervention and the deposing of Saddam Hussein will ultimately be a blessing or a curse for the Iraqi people.

Saddam’s enemies in Iraq rejoiced at his downfall, but many of them were insurrectionists who wanted government by Sharia rather than a secular one. They could not overcome Saddam’s iron fist. Chances are good that they will soon get their wish. ❖

Football player penalized for praying

During a football game at the state playoffs in Tacoma, Washington, on Nov. 29, a player for Tumwater High School was penalized for praying in the end zone after scoring a touchdown. Star running back Ronnie Hastie was flagged for dropping to one knee and raising his hand toward Heaven. His act caused his team to suffer a 15-yard penalty on the ensuing kickoff.

Hastie was surprised by the call, stating that he had often done the same during the season at other venues, saying, “That’s just something I do every time I get into the end zone. It’s to honor my Lord. I play for Him; I give Him the glory because He’s the one who gives me the strength.”

The referee’s call was for “unsportsmanlike conduct.” because the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association’s rules prohibit athletes from calling attention to themselves.

A number of fans were upset at the call, but Tumwater’s coach, Sid Otton, said he has to agree with the referee’s decision: “If it’s a rule, and they made it, I agree with it. But I admire the young man. He’s a great player and a great person off the field, too.”

Hastie said that he would abide by the rule for the sake of his team in order that it not be penalized on his account.

COMMENTARY

Was Hastie right in deciding not to pray after scoring for the rest of the playoffs?

Some might point to Acts 5:28-29 where the apostles are recorded as saying, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Granted, a 15-yard penalty comes nowhere near being persecuted for one's faith. But it's still a penalty for having prayed. The apostles were on a mission of evangelism; Hastie was playing a football game and interjected a thank-you to God for His abilities. He wasn't trying to draw attention to himself; he was trying to draw attention to God, but the referee who flagged him most likely didn't understand what he was doing.

I don't believe Hastie's decision not to exhibit his thanks on the field constitutes denial of his faith. Most of his teammates are not believers in the true sense of the word, and to have them share in his penalty would not serve any purpose toward honoring God. He is certainly free to pray in secret, just as the Lord said we should pray.

Yet I would have been heartened had the team rallied behind Hastie and said, "Go ahead and pray; we'll gladly take the 15-yard penalty." ❖

Obama visits mosque

On his recent junket to Indonesia Barack Obama visited the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, the same mosque at which Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was greeted by a throng of Muslims shouting, "Fight America! Fight Israel!"

It has been pointed out by Jewish critics that Obama has made it a point on several occasions to visit mosques, but not once has he visited a Jewish synagogue. Rabbi Aryeh Spero, president of Caucus for America, has stated his belief that Obama has a goal to "mainstream Islam," and that visiting mosques is in line with that goal. Spero said in an interview with CNSNews that visiting a synagogue "doesn't fit his agenda."

COMMENTARY

Obama's sympathy for Islam has never been a secret. He remembers with fondness his familial ties to Islam and its call to prayer. Although claiming to be a Christian, he has yet to find a church to call home in Washington D.C. Nor has he opted for a house assembly. He occasionally visits churches, but after two years in office he hasn't joined with any.

His last stint as a member of a church was at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, headed by the now infamous Jeremiah Wright. Wright mentored Obama for twenty years, yet after Wright's radical anti-American and anti-Semitic views became public during the previous presidential race Obama stated that he was surprised, saying he had no idea Wright believes as he does.

The incredulity of such a statement—to suggest that after being mentored by someone for twenty years without knowing what that someone believed—was largely ignored by Obama's supporters infatuated with his messianic persona.

Although Obama's love for Islam is evident, is it really important whether or not he visits synagogues as well? For that matter, is it really important whether or not he joins a church? Obama is at best a nominal Christian who hasn't an inkling of what it means to be a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then, how many Christians do? ❖

Mosque builders seek federal funding

Sharif El-Gamal, CEO of SOHO Properties, the developer behind the mosque proposed to be built near Ground Zero in Manhattan, has applied for federal funding through the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). The project to build the mosque, known as Park51, has met with considerable opposition from family members of victims who died in the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. A majority of Americans also oppose the mosque's construction so close to what many consider sacred ground.

It has been reported that Park51 has requested \$5 million, but the LMDC has not confirmed or denied the amount. El-Gamal said the money would "in part fund social service programs such as domestic violence programs, Arabic and other foreign language classes, programs and services for homeless veterans, two multi-cultural art exhibits and immigration services."

COMMENTARY

El-Gamal's claim that the money would be spent on social services rather than on religious programs begs the question. Such a grant would free up money to be used for religious purposes, thus making taxpayers indirect supporters of the Islamic religion. ❖

SBC commission joins ADL to aid building of mosques

The Anti-Defamation League, which historically has policed episodes of anti-Semitism, is sponsoring the Interfaith Coalition on Mosques (ICOM), comprised of individuals and organizations from different religious traditions, including Christians, Jews and Muslims. ADL's concern is for Muslims meeting opposition in their attempts to build mosques in the United States. Says the ICOM in its Statement of Purpose:

In recent weeks we have seen reports about a disturbing rise in discrimination against Muslims trying to legally build or expand their houses of worship, or mosques, across the United States.

From Florida to California, ugly rhetoric has replaced civil dialogue at local government planning meetings and community debates over proposals by Muslim citizens to exercise the rights guaranteed to everyone in America....

We believe the best way to uphold America's democratic values is to ensure that Muslims can exercise the same religious freedom enjoyed by everyone in America. They deserve nothing less than to have a place of worship like everyone else.

Joining with the ICOM in defending the rights of Muslims to build mosques is Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

Land has come under fire for joining with the ICOM. In response he maintains that although he defends the right of

American Muslims to build their houses of worship in places where they live, he is not involved in efforts to encourage or aid the building of those mosques.

Citing the Free Exercise (of religion) clause in the U.S. Constitution, Land states, "As Baptists, we believe in religious freedom, that is the right of people to the free exercise of their faith without interference from government authorities. All Americans should be ashamed when they hear that their fellow Americans are involved in acts of violence and vandalism in their attempt to deny Muslim citizens the same rights they demand for themselves."

Land also reminds how "Baptists have been victimized by such religious discrimination in the past."

COMMENTARY

At the risk of (again) sounding heartless, it is not the place of believers in Jesus to aid any false religious system in any sense. The fear that government discrimination against any religion may eventually result in discrimination against all religions should be a non-issue for those who have been warned by their Lord that they must expect tribulation in this world.

I don't care if mosques are denied the "right" to be built. Nor do I care if synagogues or churches are denied that right. They are all institutions of man and, in all cases with the exception of a few churches, disseminate anti-Christ philosophies.

The appeal to the U.S. Constitution is an appeal to an instrument of human government, the best of which (the U.S., to date) is still anti-Christ in its basic structure. I expect the ADL to get involved in this fight, but we cannot sanction any allegedly Christian institution's involvement.

Thanks be to God for granting us the privilege of living in what political commentator Michael Medved calls "the greatest nation on God's green earth." But we cannot allow ourselves to be cajoled into thinking that any human government is godly, or that the "rights" guaranteed by any human government supersede the commands of God's Word for His people. To fight for the "rights" of ungodly men to build their edifices that are a stench in God's nostrils is to join on the side of anti-Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 addresses this:

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what fellowship has light with darkness? And what agreement has Christ with Satan? Or what part has he who believes with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God has said, "I will live in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

"Therefore come out from among them, and be separate," says the Lord, "and do not touch the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

Those who are more concerned with the right of people to worship false gods than they are with the purity of the faith are enemies of the true God and His only-begotten Son. ❖

Christian student wins in court

The Rutherford Institute has reported victory in its suit against the Butte, Montana, School District No. 1 which forbade a high school valedictorian from acknowledging "God" and "Christ" in her 2008 commencement remarks. In a 5-1 ruling the Montana Supreme Court upheld the Institute's arguments that Renee Griffith had a constitutional right to free speech at graduation, and that the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment would not have been violated by allowing her to include religious references in her remarks.

Renee Griffith was selected to speak at the graduation ceremony on May 30, 2008, along with several other students. Renee and another student by the name of Ethan planned to deliver their speeches together, alternately mentioning things they had learned in school. Although school officials allegedly did not object to Ethan's testimonial about humanity's inherent "power for change," they did object to Renee's statement about how she learned to persevere and not fear by standing up for her religious convictions: "I learned to persevere these past four years, even through failure or discouragement, when I had to stand for my convictions. I can say that my regrets are few and far between. I didn't let fear keep me from sharing Christ and His joy with those around me. I learned to impart hope, to encourage people to treat each day as a gift. I learned not to be known for my grades or for what I did during school, but for being committed to my faith and morals and being someone who lived with a purpose from God with a passionate love for Him."

Just prior to the graduation ceremony Renee was ordered to replace the words, "Christ" and "God," in her speech with the following phrases: "sharing my faith" and "lived with a purpose, a purpose derived from my faith and based on a love of mankind." When Renee insisted on her right to use the words of her choice she was forbidden from speaking altogether.

The Court rejected the District's claim that the censorship was needed to avoid an appearance of endorsing religion, stating, "no objectively reasonable observer could perceive that Griffith's religious references bore the imprimatur of the school district."

COMMENTARY

There is a strong element of Christian Reconstruction within the Rutherford Institute, but in the past we have suggested that Christian parents threatened by the state might benefit by the Institute's help.

Public schools are largely anti-Christ and will often bully students into relinquishing their Constitutional right to free speech. Although we have often stressed that in this world believers have no guaranteed rights, we may also take the apostle Paul's example. When he was about to be beaten by the Romans because they perceived him responsible for a riot among the Jews, he appealed to his Roman citizenship for a fair trial.

Yet we must accept that with this victory the rights of students from all religions to share their beliefs openly has also been upheld. We rejoice with Griffith on her victory, but we are also sure the anti-Christ public school administrators will continue to bully Christians to prevent them from sharing their beliefs. ❖

**Have You Heard
The Awesome
NEWS
that the
end of the world
is almost here?
It's not the year
2012!**

***The Bible guarantees
the end of the world
will begin
MAY 21, 2011.***

**For free complete
information of
this awesome event
you are invited
to visit the web page:
www.familyradio.com**

**or to write:
Family Radio,
Oakland CA 94621**

**Or to call:
1(800) 543-1495.**

Will the World End on May, 21, 2011?



I've known of this prediction for some time, but chose to ignore it considering the source. However, with the publishing of a 1/3-page ad in the December, 2010 issue of *Reader's Digest* (left), and the erection of some 72 billboards in various locations, I guess it's time to go for it.

The ad was placed by Family Radio located in Oakland, California. The brainchild of Harold Camping, an independent Bible teacher, Family Radio was established in 1958, airing its first broadcast over radio station KEAR FM in San Francisco. Over the years Family Radio has built a number of AM and FM stations throughout the United States and in a number of locations abroad.

This is not the first time Camping has predicted the end of the world. In his book, *1994?*, he posited a strong possibility that the world would end in September of 1994. He did say in his book, however, that "the possibility does exist that I could be wrong." With his new prediction he makes no claim of such a possibility. This time he is more emphatic about the date.

Camping's claim that "Holy God will bring Judgment Day on May 21, 2011" is based on his particular interpretation of the following Scriptures:

Genesis 7:4 tells of God's warning to Noah that in seven days He would cause rain to fall for forty days and forty nights to destroy all living beings on the land (those that have the breath of life in them);

Genesis 7:10-11 reveals the date when rain began to fall—the seventeenth day of the second month;

2 Peter tells us that with God one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Camping states that in 2 Peter 3:8 "Holy God reminds us that one day is as 1,000 years. Therefore, with the correct understanding that the seven days referred to in Genesis 7:4 can be understood as 7,000 years, we learn that when God told Noah there were seven days to escape worldwide destruction, He was also telling the world there would be exactly 7,000 years (one day is as 1,000 years) to escape the wrath of God that would come when He destroys the world on Judgment Day."

Now here's where Camping puts it all together: seven thousand years after 4990 B.C. (the alleged year of the Flood, according to his calculations) is the year 2011 A.D. ($4990 + 2011 - 1 = 7,000$ [One year must be subtracted in going from the Old Testament B.C. calendar date to a New Testament A.D. calendar because the calendar does not have a year zero].) Says Camping:

Thus Holy God is showing us by the words of 2 Peter 3:8 that He wants us to know that exactly 7,000 years after He destroyed the world with water in Noah's day, He plans to destroy the entire world forever.

Because the year 2011 A.D. is exactly 7,000 years after 4990 B.C. when the flood began, the Bible has given us absolute proof that the year 2011 is the end of the world during the Day of Judgment, which will come on the last day of the Day of Judgment.

Amazingly, May 21, 2011 is the 17th day of the 2nd month of the Biblical calendar of our day. Remember, the flood waters also began on the 17th day of the 2nd month, in the year 4990 B.C. (Emphasis in original)

Camping claims there are “additional astounding proofs that May 21, 2011 is very accurate as the time for the Day of Judgment,” but one must request that information from Family Radio.

Might Camping be right? What about the Lord’s words that no man knows the hour of the Lord’s return except the Father?

Camping believes that theological learning cannot reveal the time of the Lord’s return, but he appeals to Ecclesiastes 8:5 which states, “Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man’s heart discerneth [better translation: *will know*] both time and judgment.” (KJV - Camping’s parenthetical)

Camping further believes that about 35 years ago God began to open the true believers’ understanding of the timeline of history, and that just a few years ago God began revealing a great many truths that have been completely hidden until this time when we are so near the end of the world. His appeal is to Daniel 12:4 and 9 where God tells Daniel to hide the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Now, he believes, God has revealed to him the timeline for the end of the world.

But what if everything is still here on May 22, 2011?

Will Camping remind us that he said, “The Bible guarantees us the end of the world will *begin* May 21, 2011”?

If so, he’d have to explain what he says on his Website about the rapture occurring simultaneously with Judgment Day:

Thus far we have seen from four separate and distinct Biblical paths that the rapture must be on the last day of this earth’s existence. It must be simultaneous with the resurrection of all humanity and with judgment day.

In his book, *We Are Almost There*, Camping says the rapture will occur on May 21, 2011, and the end of the world will occur five months later on October 20, 2011. In either case, if he’s still here on May 22 will he admit to having missed the rapture?

Elsewhere Camping equates Judgment Day with the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles:

Since the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated the harvest and related it to the end of the year, and since Christ speaks of the end of the world as a harvest time, we can see that a beautiful relationship exists between the Feast of Tabernacles and the end of the world.

It is no wonder, then, that the phrase “last day” is found in connection with the resurrection of believers, Judgment Day, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

The final day of the Feast of Tabernacles in 2011 will be October 20, the date Camping has set for Judgment Day.

So which is it? Will the rapture occur on May 21 before the actual Judgment Day, or simultaneously with Judgment Day on October 20?



HAROLD CAMPING

Something doesn’t add up. Camping appears to have outsmarted himself with his disjointed ramblings about exactly when the rapture and the end of the world will occur. But I’m sure he will come up with a reason why we don’t understand him. And when October 21 comes, we’ll most likely hear some lame excuse about how he is really correct, but somehow we’ve missed a proper understanding of what he said.

Camping bases many of his theories on biblical mathematics, ferreting out hidden meanings according to how he understands the use of numbers in the Bible. His mathematics brought him to the conclusion that the “Church Age” ended on May 21, 1988, when, he believes, the churches stopped being a source of salvation. But then, he says, on September 7, 1994, God again poured out His Holy Spirit so that for the next 17 years a great number of people would be saved. September 7 was the first day of the seventh month, when the Jewish Jubilee was observed. Thus no one was saved between May 21, 1988 and September 7, 1994.

At the heart of Camping’s prediction lies great potential of harm to the Gospel. By saying, “the Bible guarantees the end of the world will begin May 21, 2011,” and tying that date to the rapture, he places God’s Word on the line before the entire world. When his prediction fails, the integrity of Scripture will suffer in the eyes of many.

Camping has come up with a number of bizarre conclusions based on his peculiar brand of biblical numerology. That’s not to say there is no truth in some of his teachings. Like all deceptions his brand has many truths. But those who follow him unequivocally—who place any stock in him as a sound teacher—will most likely end up in a cult-like environment, glued to their Family Radio programming and eschewing proper gathering together according to Scripture’s admonition.

The assembling of believers must have some biblical structure without falling into the institutional model and the clergy-laity format. Camping rejects any gathering as an apostate representation of the now-ended “Church Age.” So the best believers can do is gather to listen to Family Radio and get their instructions from Camping.

I shudder to think...❖



CROSSING THE LINE

THE INTIFADA COMES TO CAMPUS

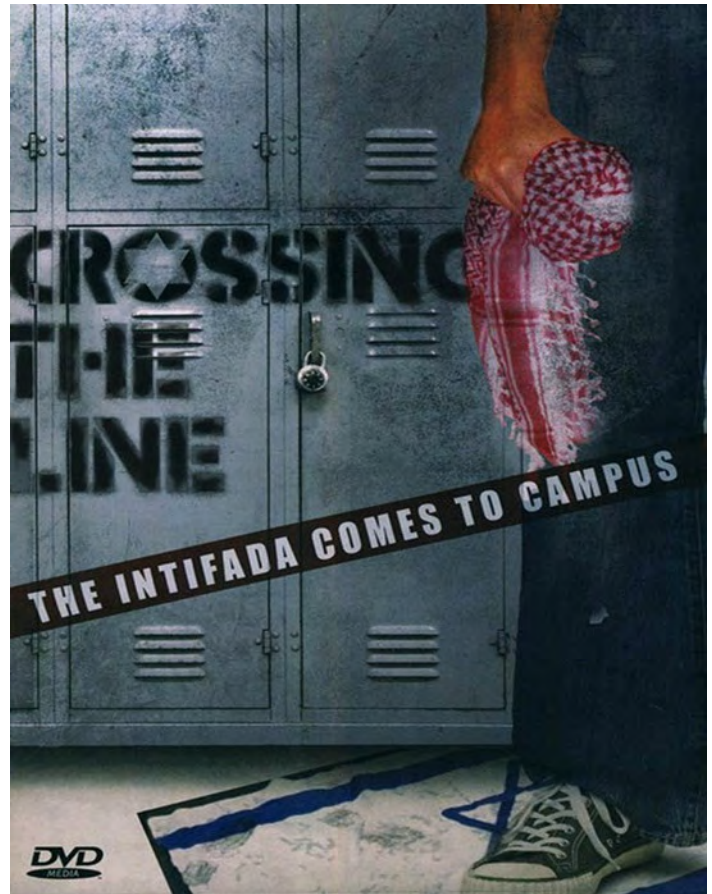
We have reported in the past how Islam is being taught in government schools on the elementary and high school levels, not just as a study on culture, but in practice as a religion, incorporating Muslim prayers and other religious practices. Now comes an important video that exposes financial ties between Arab nations and Middle East Studies departments in American institutions of higher learning, as well as the historical connection between the Muslim Student Association and the infamous Muslim Brotherhood which has ties to Islamic terrorism.

Crossing the Line documents how, because of the Islamic connection to university and college campuses across America, there is a growing anti-Israel sentiment taking hold which threatens a new rise of anti-Semitism among students and faculties even within prestigious institutions of higher learning.

It is one thing to be against some of Israel's policies relative to the Palestinian question, or other mundane issues, but the line is being blurred between the nation of Israel and Jews in general, thus creating a growing climate of anti-Semitism. This is not something that may be regarded as youthful indiscretion; the policies of these institutions of higher learning are laying the groundwork of ideology for the coming generation of political leaders in America, as well as in areas of education, journalism and the mass media.

The influence of Islam on these campuses is not muted; it is bold and brash, calling for the destruction of Israel. These protagonists for Islamic conquest of Israel are not necessarily members of terrorist organizations, but they reveal the strong undercurrent of hatred against Jews and Christians endemic to Islam.

Apart from the United States, Israel has no allies on which it can count for support in the event of a serious confrontation with the oil-rich Arab states. And that is fast eroding with the present administration. It will take very little to tip the balance against Israel in the U.S., leaving that nation with virtually no support from any nation state. Once that occurs, it will be only a matter of time before the entire world turns against Israel.



Scripture reveals that in the days just prior to the Lord's return the Jews will be in the land given them by YHWH, and the nations of the world will surround it to drive the Jews out, not only from Jerusalem, but from the Middle East entirely.

And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars [Israel (Gen. 37:9-10)]. And being with child she cried out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in Heaven, and look! A great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads [the kingdom of anti-Christ under Satan's dominion]. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered in order to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And she brought forth a man child [the 144,000 saved Jews (Rev. 7:4-8)] who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God, and to His throne [Rev. 14:1-4].

And the woman (the remnant of Israel) fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God so that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

And the great dragon was cast out—that old serpent, called “the Devil,” and “Satan,” who deceives the whole

(Continued on page 29)



A Review

(Continued from page 3)

Having dismissed the Gospel as irrelevant to the Jews, Hagee has no problem with working side-by-side with Jews who reject Christ as long as they stand together for the state of Israel, as Hagee states in this clip from *With God on Our Side*:

When the enemies of Israel threaten the existence of the Jewish state, silence is not an option. When it comes to standing with Israel in her fight for survival—the survival of the only democracy in the Middle East—all of our differences disappear, and we truly become Christians united in behalf of Israel.

All our differences do not disappear. One may have sympathy for the state of Israel for any number of reasons, but to say that *all* our differences disappear for that cause is essentially to deny Christ as the only way to the Father. Christian Zionists are so blinded by their inordinate love for the secular state of Israel and “democracy,” that the Gospel takes a back seat to their agenda.

With God on Our Side takes a strong stance against Christian Zionism, but unfortunately that stance is predicated only upon what the producers see as tolerance of Israeli injustice toward Palestinians (which, admittedly, is a problem). They do not even address Hagee’s aberrant theology, choosing rather to focus on Dispensationalist eschatology which underlies Hagee’s Christian Zionism.

Besides combating the ideology of Christian Zionism, a primary focus of *With God on Our Side* is a call for justice for the Palestinians. The video takes issue with the Christian Zionist appeal to Genesis 12:3 where God says to Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you, and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

At issue is the question, “To whom is God referring?” Christian Zionists say that this is a mandate to bless the Jews in all circumstances. Others, such as preterists and amillennialists, say that God is addressing spiritual Israel—that is, all who come to faith in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile; Genesis 12:3 has nothing to do with Jews as God’s chosen people because all who are in Christ are God’s chosen people.

But why must it be either/or? For those who believe the Lord is coming to establish His physical reign upon the earth with His headquarters in Jerusalem, the land will again be populated by natural, mortal Israelites whom Jesus calls from out of all the nations. At the same time, the inheritors of the Kingdom—the resurrected saints, both Jews and Gentiles—will reign with Him, administering His government with a rod of iron. Confusion on both sides exists because neither has a proper understanding of biblical prophecy related to the Kingdom of Heaven, which will be manifested on the earth during the Millennium. Until then, Israelites will not inherit all the land.

It is on misunderstanding the Kingdom of Heaven as it functions now as opposed to how it will function under Jesus’ direct rule during the Millennium that both Christian Zionists and their detractors base their arguments. This video builds its case against Jews as the legitimate inhabitants of the territory it has occupied as a nation since 1948, particularly the territories it annexed in the Six-Day War, on a largely preterist viewpoint which rejects any future application to biblical last-days prophecy.

With God on Our Side follows a young American named simply “Christopher,” who has had his eyes opened since visiting the Middle East and seeing firsthand what he perceives as Israeli injustice against Palestinians. Christopher introduces Palestinian Christian Salim Munayer, Ph.D., founder of Musalaha, an organization that promotes reconciliation between Israeli and Palestinian believers in Jesus. Munayer states that the Jews “left this land” two thousand years ago; why are they coming back now?

To be accurate, the Jews never “left this land,” in the sense they chose voluntarily to leave. They were driven out by the Romans in the first century, creating the third and final Diaspora. Over the past two millennia other peoples, primarily Arabs, migrated into the land and settled there, but there was never a nation state established. It was more like an unincorporated area. Some Jews remained, but a large influx of Arabs created an Arab majority. The video states that by the time the Ottoman Empire was defeated the population of Palestine was 95% Arab and only 5% Jewish.

Salim Munayer takes the side of the Arabs, being one himself, albeit Christian, not Muslim:

In reality there were people here, living. But how you are going to justify it? Do you say, “Well, this land is desert, it’s empty, and swamps, and we came here and we turned the desert into green, and we dried the swamps, and we flourish, and we made all this area like a Garden of Eden, and as a result, Arabs from the neighboring Arab countries came and moved in to live here as a result of the prosperity that the Jewish people brought here?”

Well, my life story and my experience challenge those two premises: one, my parents were living here generation upon generation. We trace our history back to the twelfth century in the Middle East—in this part as well. My great grandfather built a church here, and it’s written evidence—historical evidence. My family owned a lot of land here. In 1948 they been ordered by gun to go out of their home, and some people in the city did not want to, they got shot. It was a massacre in the city so people, out of fear, they were running for their lives. And as they were going out, as a matter of fact, they were not allowed to take anything with them.

As compelling evidence of Israeli atrocities, Munayer’s words are spoken while a scene of dead bodies is displayed on the screen. It is strongly implied that Arabs were shot merely for refusing to leave the city. The problem, however, is that the bodies on the ground are those of men in military clothing.

We are now some 62 years removed from these events. Munayer appears to be in his early 60s, which means the best he

can offer is anecdotal accounts of events passed down by his parents and other Arabs. But we should not dismiss his claims of Israeli injustice on the face of it.

In response to Munayer's appeal, Christopher says:

Wait. I'd always been told that the Palestinians were the aggressors. Before I went any further I knew I needed to find out more about what had happened in the past hundred years or so.

Christopher's case for rethinking what he had believed about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is followed by Ben White, a Middle East journalist, who is featured often in the video. White sets the stage for others who accuse Israel of committing ethnic cleansing when it became a state in 1948. White says that before Israel became a state there was no conflict between the Jews and Arabs. The conflict, he says, has a specific historical root—the establishment of Israel as a nation.

This is true, but when Israel became a nation it had no militaristic aims; it faced fierce opposition from the surrounding Arab nations. It is those Arab nations that started the conflict.

The video presents a brief history from the World Zionist Organization in 1897 whose purpose was to work for the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, to the establishment of the state of Israel. It gives scant reference to the first war that resulted as Arab countries determined to destroy Israel upon its birth. The narrator concludes this brief history by saying, "By the time a lasting cease fire was brokered, Israel controlled over 77% of Mandate Palestine. There were over 700,000 refugees."

Ilan Pappé, Ph.D., author of *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, states, "In my mind, in 1948 the Israelis committed ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians. And I think the historical evidence proves beyond any doubt that the ideology, the strategy, and the policy itself can only be described as ethnic cleansing."

Ben White also accuses Israel of committing ethnic cleansing, and gives the UN's definition of ethnic cleansing: "Ethnic cleansing is rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons of another ethnic or religious group."

Matthew Hand, Middle East Director of Reconciliation Walk, has a slightly different take:

Like other places in the Middle East, it was a tremendous misfortune—the kind of misfortune you have in war. But certainly both sides were suffering from different causes, and both sides can look at the other and claim that they were the victims of the other. Some of the new Israeli historians have described the events of Israel's independence in 1948 as an ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians. I think it's too early to say that.

A search of historical documents reveals that there is more to the story than Israelis arbitrarily driving out people from their homes.

In its Proclamation of Israel's Independence, the Jewish state began by offering full and equal citizenship to all the inhabitants without regard to religion, race or gender:

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace as conceived by the Prophets of Israel, will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex; will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture; will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and will loyally uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be ready to cooperate with the organs and representatives of the United Nations in the implementation of the Resolution of the Assembly of November, 29, 1947, and will take steps to bring about Economic Union over the whole of Palestine. We appeal to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building of its State and to admit Israel into the family of Nations. In the midst of wanton aggression, we yet call upon the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve the ways of peace and play their part in the development of the State, on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its bodies and institutions - provisional and permanent.

We extend our hand in peace and neighbourliness to all the neighbouring states and their peoples, and invite them to co-operate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all. The State of Israel is prepared to make its contribution to the progress of the Middle East as a whole.

Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfilment of the dream of generations for the redemption of Israel.

With trust in Almighty God, we set our hand to this Declaration, at this Session of the Provisional State Council, on this Sabbath eve, the fifth of Iyar, 5708, the fourteenth day of May, 1948.

So what happened to Israel's extension of goodwill toward the Arabs? Unfortunately, Israel was attacked at its inception. Somehow Israel managed to repel its enemies, but with the Arab states warning the Arab inhabitants of Israel that they were in danger from the Jews, many Arabs fled in fear, abandoning their homes, thus creating the refugee situation that continues to grow.

Matthew Hand of Reconciliation Walk states:

What happened eventually in the War of Independence was that the Arabs were not very well led; they were displaced from their homes, and Jews who were themselves refugees ended up settling in many of those homes, in the Jerusalem area in particular.

Christopher responds by asking why he was never told about this episode in Israel's history while growing up in the Church.

This is a good question, but it is asked as an indictment against Israel rather than as an objective look at the problem as it occurred. When the Arabs fled, many chose not to return, abandoning their homes because they had been propagandized by their leaders that they would be killed if they remained in Israel. In much the same way that Arabs populated the land of Israel during the third Diaspora when the Jews fled their homes, now the Jews began to settle in the homes vacated by the Arabs when they fled. This is not mentioned in the video; rather, we are consistently hammered with the idea that the Israeli government purposely drove the Arabs from their homes.

Now, to be fair, such did take place at least on a limited scale. But the vast majority of Palestinian refugees were not displaced as the result of ethnic cleansing as much as they are victims of their own leaders' propaganda efforts against the state of Israel. Every expansion of Israel's territory has been the result of defensive warfare against its Arab enemies bent on its destruction.

Since its inception in 1948 Israel has been a thorn in the side of the Arab nations. Because of their largely Muslim populations, a number of those nations have decreed that the Jews in Israel must be driven into the Mediterranean Sea. There is no love lost on either side of the conflict toward the other.

The history of modern Israel is a testament to the tenacity and determination of those Jews who have settled there from out of many nations. Yet there are many Jews who are against the state of Israel for a number of reasons. One reason is found among some Jews who consider themselves true to the Torah by asserting that it is un-Jewish to have a state; Jews are to await God's redemption through the appearance of the Messiah, at which time the only Jewish state sanctioned by God will be established.

Other religious Jews also reject Israeli politics, claiming that there is no need for a Jewish state because there is no real anti-Semitism to be protected against. Still others take a secular approach, considering themselves more a part of humanity as a whole than part of an homogeneous people with a common ancestry. One Jew who takes an overwhelmingly pro-Arab position, consistently indicting Israel as the bad guy in the conflict, is Norman Finkel. An anti-Israel Jew, Finkel accuses Israel of acting contrary to international law:

U.N. Resolution 242 states that it's inadmissible to acquire territory by war. That's a basic, bedrock principle of international law. And so that effectively says to Israel, "You conquered the West Bank in the course of a war; you conquered the Golan in the course of a war; you conquered Sinai in the course of a war; you have no title to that territory, so you have to withdraw fully, unequivocally, unambiguously.

Outrage over Israel's occupation of the disputed territories led to a series of Palestinian uprisings known as the Intifada.

Finkel makes it seem as if Israel purposely acted contrary to "international law." But UN Resolution 242 was enacted *after* the Six-Day War specifically to indict Israel for annexing those

territories. Never before had the UN sanctioned any nation for annexing conquered territory, even if that territory had been taken by aggression.

Only when Israel, in defending itself in 1967, took control of the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, and the West Bank did the UN decide to retroactively impose Resolution 242 to forbid the taking of territory by war.

The truth is that Israel has continuously returned captured territory to its antagonists, only to be set upon again and again, either through threat of war with surrounding Arab nations, or through terrorist attacks by organizations such as Hamas, the PLO, and Hezbollah. How often can Israel be expected to jeopardize its security by allowing its enemies strongholds within close striking distance to its central regions?

Although the UN during the mid-twentieth century created Israel as a nation state, within a few years it began to turn against Israel. Any sympathy the UN nations felt for the Jews as a result of the Holocaust quickly gave way to a wave of anti-Semitism—or at least anti-Zionism—as dependence on Arab oil began to influence those nations' foreign policies.

What would the UN and the anti-Israel factions have said had the Arab nations succeeded in their attacks against Israel? In view of no serious sanctions against those Arab states for having attacked Israel in the first place, it is obvious that the UN wouldn't have been unduly concerned.

Turning the other cheek is a mandate from the Lord to His people as individuals. But if a nation is attacked it should be able to take the territory it conquered in its defense, particularly if doing so positions it to prevent further attacks, such as is the case with Israel annexing the territories it captured.

Finkel blames Israel for the creation of the Intifada. And Ron Dart, director of Amnesty International, B.C. Yukon Division from 1985 to 1995, adds his justification for the Intifada:

Intifada was just one reaction amongst many. Once you really trace the decades leading up to it you can begin to understand it. Any oppressed people are going to respond.

You can't have people living over decades in contexts which dehumanize people without reactions. If you put your heel on someone's head, and hold it and press it in, there's going to be a reaction. Eventually, eventually it will come. The tinder is there for the fire. Put spark to tinder you get eruption. That happens in any social context. That's just not a Jewish-Palestinian—that happens in any place in the world, what Dickens would call "Tale of Two Cities."

So let me get this straight. If a nation attacks another nation and is defeated, losing territory in the process, then the nation that was attacked is responsible to give back the territory it took. Otherwise, if they don't return the territory, terrorism is justified in order to retaliate against the nation that was attacked.

When such arguments are presented in this video it quickly becomes apparent to any thinking person that this is a propaganda piece in favor of the Arabs and against Israel. We are treated to scenes of a number of Arabs living their domestic

lives as soft music plays. The Arabs go about trying to do the best they can under Israeli oppression. Not a single Jewish home is interviewed. But when Israel is spoken of, the music turns ominous, suggesting some evil is afoot.

We are also shown Jewish radicals waving Israeli flags as they move through an Arab enclave shouting, "Death to Arabs!" Arab merchants complain that Jews pelt their stores with stones and garbage from their apartments above while Israeli soldiers stand idly by. Thus the Arab merchants have shielded themselves with fencing above and around their marketplace.

These are deplorable circumstances to be sure. But where are the scenes of Arabs shouting "Death to the Jews!?" Where are the scenes of Arabs pelting Israelis, including Israeli soldiers, with rocks? Is only one side culpable?

In truth, I must confess that as I was watching this video I thought to myself, "This would make a great Nazi propaganda film."

My apologies to the producers; I am absolutely certain that they would never take the side of the Nazis against the Jews. In fact, as the video began to unfold further, it was stated a few times that Israel has a right to exist. But it took a while before Israel's right to exist was stated. Even so, all inferences about Israel's right to exist were essentially followed by a "But..."

Even as we are told that Israel has a right to exist, we are constantly told that Israel has no right to be in the territories it annexed in the Six-Day War, and that the Arabs are constantly harassed by the Israelis.

One Palestinian Muslim woman named Deena is interviewed and describes the hardships she must endure because of the wall. She heard that a pregnant Palestinian woman died at the checkpoint because she couldn't get through to the hospital in time to give birth. There is no evidence to support this claim. She merely "heard" about it. But the emotions of the viewer are manipulated to feel sorry for something that may or may not have happened. In truth, anecdotal renderings of Israeli injustices are a large part of this video.

Christopher is seen walking with a Palestinian named Ayman who tells him how his family was oppressed by the Israeli army. Ayman relates how, when he was ten years old during the first Intifada, life was very difficult for his family. They were under constant curfew and often were forbidden to move about freely. Says Ayman:

I remember the army entered our house, and they took my brother, the middle one. They took him outside the house and beat him up, broke three ribs and we had to take him to the hospital.

Deplorable. But what is the context? Was his brother involved with the Intifada? Had he been seen throwing rocks at Israeli troops? Had he fled into his home pursued by Israeli soldiers after committing an act of insurrection? We're not told. But it is made to appear as if this is just a regular pastime for the Israeli army—to arbitrarily enter people's homes and beat someone up.

I'm sorry, but there must be more to the story than what we are told; else why wasn't Ayman or other members of his family subjected to a beating? And that's a problem with this video. Much of its accusations lack context.

So let's put the shoe on the other foot for a moment. What would happen to a Jew in an Arab state, were that Jew to rebel against the authority? In most cases he would not have been beaten up only, but would have been beheaded. Nor are Jews represented in Arab countries, but Israel's Knesset has the United Arab List, representing and supported by Arabs.

Ayman continues by telling Christopher how the Israeli army occupied his house for over a month, cutting off the water and not allowing his family to leave the house. After the army left, the water was polluted and they could not drink it.

"We had a lot of problems," says Ayman. "We experienced harassment, violence and persecution. We often wondered if we should pack up and leave this land. But our ancestors have been here and this is our land. Therefore we decided to stay and live here. We are trying to convey to the world that we are people who really want peace."

The question comes to mind, if they had no water and were not allowed to leave their house for over a month, how did they survive? They should have been dead in less than a week. Something is not being fully stated here.

And everyone wants peace. But why is Ayman not also blaming the Arab nations for attacking Israel on numerous occasions in the first place, thus creating conditions for such restrictions? Why not put at least some blame on the Arabs for forcing Israel to take such drastic measures to protect itself?

I am not justifying anything Israel does that is contrary to compassion for one's enemies or suspected enemies. We are dealing with unregenerate men on both sides of the issue. We cannot expect such men to act lovingly toward those who threaten them. The Arabs feel threatened by Israel; Israel feels threatened by the Arabs. Both have acted ungodly toward the other. So why pick on Israel and ignore the Arabs' atrocities?

Anecdotal history does not tell the full story. Hard evidence alone should be presented for both sides of the conflict in order to come to a proper understanding of what is truly happening.

Special disdain is exhibited toward Israel's Security Wall which was built to stem the tide of suicide bombers that wreaked havoc upon Israelis for decades. Evidently it is difficult for Palestinians to cross through checkpoints along the wall. Sometimes they cannot get through, creating serious difficulties such as not being able to get to Israeli hospitals. A pregnant woman must prove she is pregnant to get through for hospitalization to give birth. Sometimes they don't get through in time and they give birth at the checkpoint.

Yet at least the video does show Malcom Hedding pointing out that since the Security Wall was erected terrorism on the Israeli side went down over 98% overnight. Even so, Hedding is countered by Christopher who says that "officially speaking" the barrier was constructed to combat terrorism. This suggests another, ulterior motive. He is then followed by others who infer that the real reason for the wall is not security but to separate some Palestinians from others so they can harass and persecute them. This is because portions of the wall do intrude into Palestinian communities resulting in some 100,000 Palestinians living on the Israeli side of the wall.

The reason the Israeli government would do this is merely hinted at; it is left for us to build upon those hints and imagine some sinister reason other than safety from terrorist attacks. We are told that the wall is unnecessary because the Palestinians don't use suicide bombers anymore.

Yes. Because the wall is there to keep them out! Without question Israelis have lived more securely since the wall was constructed.

No doubt the wall creates problems for Palestinians, but the answer is not as simplistic as deconstructing the wall or even rerouting it so that virtually all Palestinians are kept outside. The truth is that the Palestinians residing within the confines of the wall along with the Israeli citizens depend on the Israeli economy for jobs and other benefits. The hardship is primarily upon Palestinians living outside the confines of the wall. The oil-rich Arabs haven't built them hospitals or provided jobs for them.

With God on Our Side has no mention of the Jewish exodus from the Arab nations due to persecution. Beginning in the late 19th century and peaking after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, a mass migration of Jews resulted when over 1 million Jews were driven from their homes due to persecution, anti-Semitism and political instability. Virtually all the Jews expelled from the Arab nations were required to either sell or abandon their homes and give them to the state. This persecution was a deliberate policy decision on the part of the League of Arab States. Approximately 260,000 of those displaced Jews settled in Israel between 1948–1951. By 1972 the number increased to 600,000. The state of Israel offered hope to those Jews by giving them a homeland in which they could feel safe. But they've never felt safe because of continued Arab attacks.

So while we agree with some of the concerns about Palestinians having to flee their homes in Israel, we ask why there is no similar concern for Jews being forced by the Arab nations to leave their homes. The only Middle East refuge the Jews have found has been in Israel and Lebanon, until recently a relatively Christian nation.

As for Christian Palestinians suffering under Israeli dominance, one might reasonably ask if they would rather be under Arab dominance. Jesus told us to expect tribulation in this world regardless of where we live. Christians are treated better in some places than in others. In Israel the problem is greater for Jews who receive Christ than for Christians from other backgrounds. The mistreatment of Jewish Christians comes more at the hands of family, friends, and neighbors than from the Israeli government, although the government tends to turn a blind eye to persecution of Jewish Christians.

I viewed *With God on Our Side* at Westminster Chapel in Bellevue, Washington, one of several churches in which the video was being premiered. At the conclusion of the showing the audience was invited to ask questions (no comments, please) of the producer Porter Speakman, Jr., and one of the video's featured interviewees, Stephen Sizer. For the most part they were commended for showing Christians the other side of the Arab-Israeli conflict. One man stood to comment on how, when the video was shown at his church, about a dozen Muslims came.

They were extremely happy and said, "Thank you for showing this." The man described how the video resulted in a feeling of solidarity with the Muslims.

Porter Speakman's response also demonstrated solidarity with Arab Muslims who appreciate what he is doing through this video.

Here is the problem: although the video criticizes Christian Zionists for their solidarity with the Jews in Israel, evidently there is no problem with fostering solidarity with Muslims in America, many of whom hate Jews.

Let's be honest. In the Middle East there is tremendous hatred of all Jews among the vast populations of the Arab states, and among Arabs living within Israel. And there is tremendous hatred of Arabs by many Israeli Jews. Now, not every individual Arab hates all Jews, nor does every individual Jew hate all Arabs. But Israel is in a constant state of war, surrounded by so many who hate Jews and have vowed to destroy Israel.

If there is any love between Arabs and Jews it is really only between Arab Christians and Jewish Christians. And that is brought out well in the video. Yet the Arab Christians seem to be sympathetic to the Palestinians over the Jews regardless of religion. Even some Jewish Christians have sympathy for the Palestinians, as we all should. But my concern is how unbalanced this video is in presenting its case against Israel and taking such a pro-Palestinian approach.

When I had my chance to speak at the viewing I first commented that I believe Christian Zionism is a deception, particularly John Hagee's brand that says we do not need to evangelize the Jews. I then told Speakman and Sizer that their video is not evenhanded, and asked why they never mentioned Hamas or Hezbollah in the video (actually they did mention them once, but so briefly I missed it, and not in any sense as being the threat they are). The same may be said about the PLO and other terrorist organizations.

Porter Speakman stated that he doesn't claim that the film is balanced, nor has he ever made that claim. He believes the situation isn't balanced, and that American Christians are getting only one side of the picture from Christian Zionism. His goal is not to be evenhanded, and he stated that if a documentary is evenhanded it's just entertainment.

I thanked him for at least being honest about it. In truth, however, if a documentary doesn't present all sides it isn't a documentary; it is a propaganda piece.

Sizer said that nearly half the people in the video are either Israelis or Jewish, so their viewpoint was given.

To which I replied, that, yes, they gave their viewpoint, but their viewpoint was always countered by an anti-Israeli viewpoint. Also, that they showed a number of Palestinian citizens giving their side, but not a single Israeli citizen. There was no answer.

I also pointed out how the video ridicules Dispensationalism, particularly where Stephen Sizer is interviewed. Sizer picks apart Dispensationalism but doesn't offer his eschatology to counter it. Thus, my second question to both men was to ask them what is their particular eschatology.

(Continued on page 28)

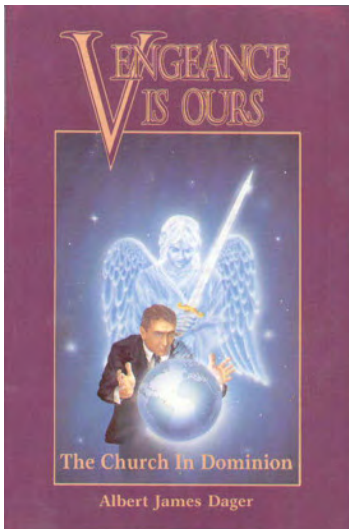


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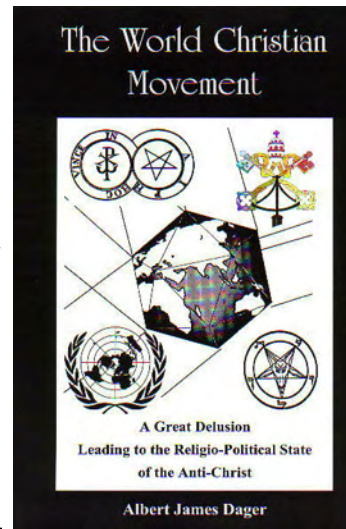
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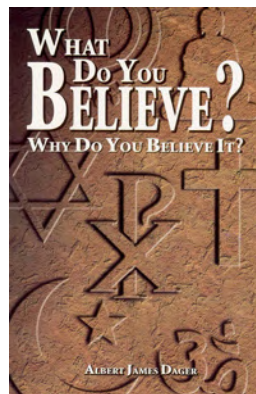
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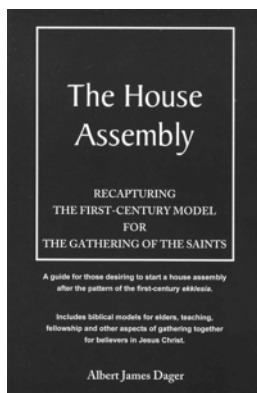
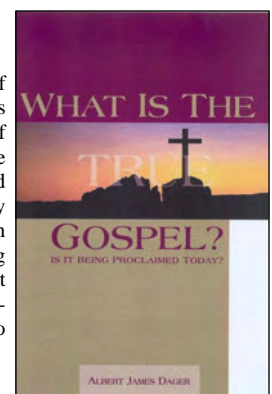


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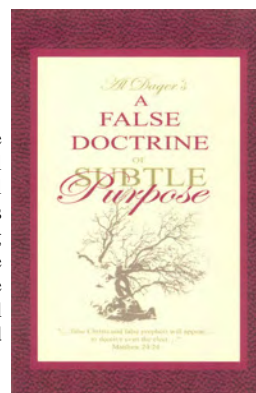
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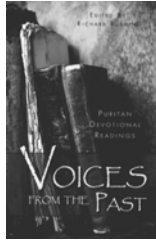
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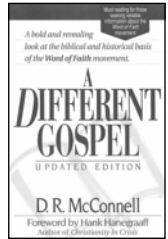


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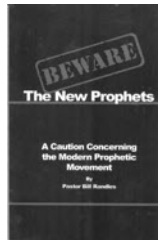


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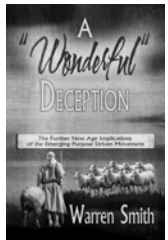


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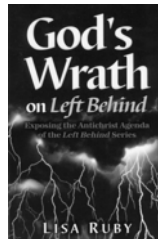


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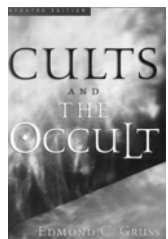


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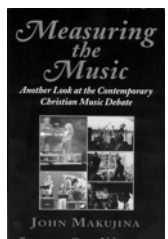


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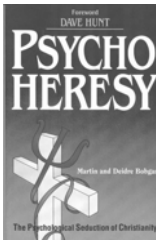


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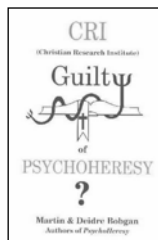


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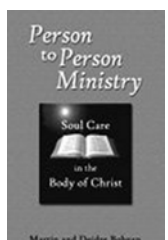


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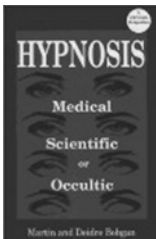


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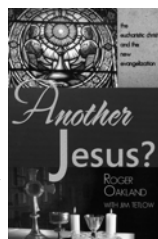


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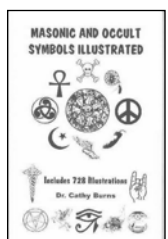


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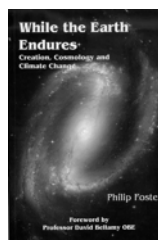


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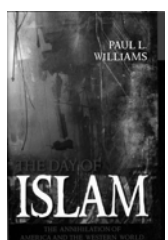


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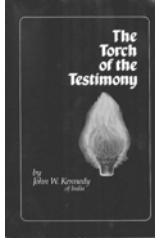


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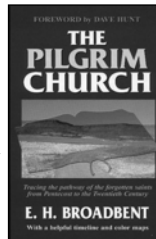
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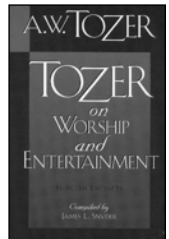
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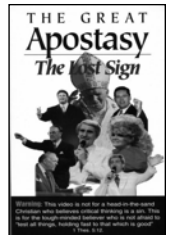
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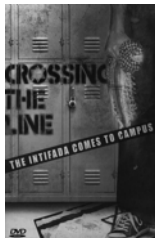
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With the death of Jesus on the cross Satan and his anti-Christ minions in both the spirit and physical realms must have believed they had won the day. Surely God’s plan of redemption had been thwarted. At the least they must have thought that they had delayed God’s plan of redemption. The Savior’s blood had been spilled and mingled with the mud of the earth, defiled and trodden underfoot by the crowd that followed Him to the cross and that stood mocking Him. What a victory for His enemies to savor.

As He was dying in agony they taunted Him:

And those who passed by vilified Him, wagging their heads, and saying, “You who destroys the temple, and builds it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

Likewise also the chief priests with the scribes and elders, mocking Him, said, “He saved others, but He cannot save Himself! If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross now, and we will believe Him! He trusted in God! Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him, for He said, ‘I am the Son of God!’” (Matthew 27:39-43)

Picture, if you will, these blasphemers laughing at the pitiful figure impaled before them. The more He writhed in agony the more they mocked Him.

Truly, the spirit of anti-Christ is cruel and profane. For even if Jesus were not the Son of God—even if He were a deceiver as they claimed—had those religious leaders possessed hearts toward God they would not have rejoiced at seeing Him die, especially in such a terrible manner. Their own law indicts them:

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles lest YHWH see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him. (Proverbs 24:17-18)

If your enemy is hungry give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you will heap coals of fire upon his head, and YHWH shall reward you. (Proverbs 25:21-22)

This latter verse is often quoted with the suggestion that treating one’s enemies with kindness should be motivated by seeing him ultimately suffer. But that is not the intent. It is merely stating what will happen to him should he not reconcile with us. We are not to rejoice at his fall, or hope for coals of fire to be heaped upon him. Rather, we should pray in hope that he will be converted and become a brother in Christ.

Jesus’ commandment that we love our enemies does not allow for us to hold animosity toward them while offering only outward solace.

Even God does not rejoice at the destruction of His enemies:

“Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord YHWH, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel!’” (Ezekiel 33:11)

If God takes no pleasure in the death of the evil, what justifies any man doing so?

But such is the spirit of anti-Christ which is alive today, even in the hearts of many of God’s people. An example is found in Luke 9:51-56 where James and John wanted to call down fire from Heaven upon the Samaritans that rejected Jesus. The Lord told them they did not know of what spirit they were.

How often do Christians harbor in their hearts the desire to see the enemies of God destroyed? Is it not because those enemies of God impose upon their comfort and convenience? It takes far more effort and submission of one’s own self to reach out to those who hate us than it does to hate in return.

The anti-Christ spirit that surrounds us knows how to take advantage of our proclivity to hate those who merely rub us the wrong way, let alone those who seek our destruction. We must follow the example of Jesus who said, “Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing.”

But suppose Jesus had acted upon their words that if He came down from the cross they would believe Him? What do you suppose would have happened (although knowing the purpose of the cross we know it never would have happened)?

I believe they would have fled in terror, regrouped in the nearest synagogue, and said, "Okay, now what do we do?"

So corrupt were their hearts that they would defy their own Scriptures and act lawlessly in condemning and crucifying their own Messiah—and that in a mocking manner.

So on that Passover afternoon the sinless Lamb of God was slain for the sins of the world. He was put in a tomb that was sealed at the order of Pontius Pilate acquiescing to the request of the Jewish religious leaders, and guarded by a company of Roman soldiers. And the day following Passover day—the high Sabbath beginning the Feast of Unleavened Bread—drew on.

The followers of Jesus went into mourning. The hope they had for the Kingdom and its King had been shattered. The finality of death impressed upon them the loss of great promises.

But the Sabbath of all Sabbaths was coming!

The day after that high Sabbath, the women bought spices and prepared them for the Lord's burial, then rested for the weekly Sabbath that followed. As the weekly Sabbath came to a close the soldiers that guarded the tomb were stricken with tremendous fear as they saw the angel of God come down from Heaven and roll away the stone.

Now late on Sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

(And, look! There had been a great earthquake. For the angel of the Lord, having descended from Heaven and having come and rolled back the stone from the door, was sitting on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, those keeping guard trembled and became like dead men.)

And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not fear, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen as He said. Come look at the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead. And, look, He goes ahead of you into Galilee. There you shall see Him. Look, I have told you."

And they left quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. (Matthew 28:1-8)

When the women came to the tomb, the weekly Sabbath had not yet ended. The angel had already rolled away the stone; the Lord had already risen; the guards were either still lying on the ground, or had fled to the Jewish leaders to seek an alibi:

Now when they were going, look, some of the watch came into the city, and revealed to the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were gathered with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money to the soldiers, saying, "You say, 'His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and keep you safe."

So they took the money and did as they were told. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Matthew 28:11-15).

Even the Lord's resurrection did not soften the hearts of the anti-Christ religious leaders. They purposely instructed the soldiers to lie in order to cover up a miracle beyond human explanation.

Just as Jesus prophesied, His body had lain in the tomb for exactly three days and three nights (Matthew 12:38-40).

The truth that the Lord rose on the weekly Sabbath was corrupted by anti-Christ who, by the third century, had convinced the paganized Christians in Rome to assign what they called "the Venerable Day of the Sun" as the alleged day of the Lord's resurrection. Thus, "Sun-day" replaced the Sabbath as the day of gathering to worship weekly. It was also a ruse to distance Roman Christianity (which would encompass virtually the entire world known to the Romans and Greeks) from its roots in the faith of Israel and Judah, with whom Jesus established His New Covenant. That Covenant was hijacked by an apostate Christianity that saw itself as the replacement for Israel in God's economy rather than as a people who would be grafted into Israel through faith in Israel's Messiah.

We've seen how the faith had become perverted by rabbinical Judaism by the time Jesus appeared on earth; in future installments we will see how the faith as interpreted by the very giver of the faith would be perverted by pastoral Christianity in like manner.

After His resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples on numerous occasions over a period of forty days, instructing them on how they should proceed as His witnesses throughout the whole world. In the process He further confirmed His authority and power through miracles. But for some, there would be no belief without experience. The most notable doubter in Scripture was the apostle Thomas who, not being present when Jesus had previously appeared to the other disciples, said, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

As innocuous as this may seem, it is also evidence of the anti-Christ spirit. Thomas had been with Jesus almost from the beginning. He had seen the miracles—the healings, the raising from the dead, the Lord's authority over nature—but he hardened his heart against the idea that God could or would raise Jesus from the dead. That is, until Jesus appeared to him also, and told him that those who believe without having seen would be the more blessed.

In that encounter, there is something that escapes the anti-Christ spirit in many people: when Thomas saw the Lord he did not touch His hands or put his own hand into the Lord's side. Rather, Thomas merely confessed, "My Lord and my God!"

Anti-Christ's have seized upon the Lord's silence about being God when He walked the earth as a man. They say, "Jesus never claimed to be God." Even word-faith guru Kenneth Copeland famously (or infamously) said, "Jesus never claimed to be God. He only claimed to be the Son of God." Yet when Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus did not reprimand him for it, or deny that He is Thomas's God.

He could easily have said, "No, Thomas, I am not God; I am only the Son of God." But as the Word of God who created

all things, He became as a man to die for mankind's sins. Now, with His resurrection, He would resume His status as a member of the Godhead.

He had set aside His glory to become totally reliant upon His heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit who guided Him. This is why He said in His prayer at the close of the Last Supper, "And now, O Father, glorify Me with Yourself with the glory that I had with You before the world existed."

Jesus was anticipating that He would attain the same glory as the Father, which He had with the Father before the creation. As the Word of God who came forth from the Father, uncreated, His nature is the same as the Father's—divine. He is the second person of the Godhead. Within Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

This truth has been one of the most assiduously attacked by the anti-Christ spirit from the time of Jesus' birth until today. And it will be attacked until He appears again to rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Why is anti-Christ so determined to destroy faith in the truth of Jesus' divinity? Because unless Jesus is God in the flesh, then His death cannot be an atonement for the sins of mankind. He would be merely a sinful man. And a sinful man cannot be a perfect sacrifice for sin. Or, as claimed by the Jehovah's Witnesses of the Watchtower Society, He would have to be an angel (the archangel Michael, as this cult says). This, too, is a lie of anti-Christ. Scripture says God never called any angel His Son:

God, who at different times and in diverse ways spoke in past times to the fathers through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us through His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For to which of the angels has He ever said, "You are My Son: I have fathered you this day?"

And again, "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me?"

And again, when He brings the first-begotten into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

And of the angels he says, "Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire."

But to the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Your Kingdom is a scepter of righteousness. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God—Your God—has anointed You with the oil of gladness above your fellows. And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They shall perish, but You remain, and they all shall grow old as a garment does, and You shall fold them up as a garment, and they shall be changed, but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail."

But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit on My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool?"

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation? (Heb. 1)

The Son is subservient to the Father, but the Father exalts the Son with His own glory. This is why the Father says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." He acknowledges that the Son is of the same essence and nature as the Father—God.

This truth is the most destructive to the purposes of the anti-Christ. For all who believe this truth and worship the Son will escape the anti-Christ's snare that leads to eternal damnation.

Just before He ascended into Heaven Jesus gave two commands to His disciples:

And being assembled together with them, [He] commanded them that they should not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, "you have heard through Me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Therefore, when they came together they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You restore again the kingdom to Israel now?"

And He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has put in His own power. But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth."

And when He had said these things, while they looked He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Acts 1:4-9)

Thus ended the anti-Christ's direct assaults against the Son of God. Now he would have to turn his focus toward the small group of called-out believers who, prior to the day of Pentecost, would be utterly powerless against him.

Pentecost was a day of spiritual significance to the Jews. Its commemoration is commanded in Leviticus 23:15-21:

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath [the high Sabbath after Passover day—the first day of the feast of unleavened bread], from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete, even until the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall count fifty days. And you shall offer a new offering to YHWH.

You shall bring out of your homes two wave loaves of two-tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the first fruits to YHWH.

And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams. They shall be for a burnt offering to YHWH, with their food offering, and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire, of sweet savor to YHWH.

Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of

peace offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before YHWH, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to YHWH for the priest.

And you shall proclaim on the same day, that it may be a holy assembling for you. You shall do no work; it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Pentecost fell fifty days after the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. It appears as if Pentecost occurred about one week after the Lord ascended into Heaven, counting three days from His crucifixion, then forty days when He remained with His disciples. So it wasn't a very long time before He sent the Holy Spirit upon them.

The significance of Pentecost was that it was a day for a new offering to God. These offerings were to be presented with the bread (the body) of the first fruits (Christ) as a wave offering to God.

The disciples upon whom the Holy Spirit fell were the first fruits of the Body of Christ. In a very real sense they were a new offering that would be sacrificed for the witness of Jesus.¹

With the Lord's resurrection and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all believers beginning at Pentecost, the anti-Christ's focus became channeled against the Body of Christ. As faith in Jesus grew through the witness of the disciples, anti-Christ stirred up the Jewish religious leaders once more. The first instance recorded in Scripture came in much the same manner as when Jesus ministered healing to the people.

Peter and John went up to the temple for prayer one day when they encountered a man crippled from birth being carried to the temple. When the man asked them for money Peter famously replied, "I have no silver or gold, but such as I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk."

The people who witnessed the miracle were astonished and came running to Peter and John. Peter then indicted Israel for having killed its Messiah, and called upon the people to repent of their sins. This greatly disturbed the priests, so they had Peter and John arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. The next day they were questioned by what authority or name they performed the miracle.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "You rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we are examined today about the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name

¹ There are reasons why God does what He does when He does it. The Jewish feasts have significance to us because of their prophetic nature relative to the Messiah's appearance, ministry, sacrifice, and rule over the Kingdom of Heaven. But much of that significance has been lost due to the anti-Christ's work in turning Christians away from their Hebrew roots during the first few centuries, again particularly through the imperial power of the Roman papacy. Thus the vast majority of Christians today do not have a solid grasp on their faith, not understanding the significance of the Lord's work as prophesied in the Jewish feasts. Of great prophetic significance is Passover, which typifies the sacrifice of Israel's Messiah. The papacy substituted for Passover the celebration of Easter—a pagan feast to the goddess Ishtar (see our special report, *Facts and Fallacies of the Resurrection*).

of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him does this man stand here whole before you.

"This is the stone that was set aside by you builders, who has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12)

Unable to counter Peter's words, and seeing the evidence of God's power standing before them in the person of the healed man, the religious leaders conferred how they could prevent further spread of the Gospel. They commanded Peter and John never to speak or teach about Jesus. But again, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge, for we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard."

For fear of the people the Sanhedrin allowed them to leave, but this was merely the first of many attempts by the anti-Christ to thwart this new move of God among men.

The next recorded move by anti-Christ came in the persons of Ananias and Sapphira as an attempt to defraud the believers who had come to unity in deciding to share all their possessions in common with one another. Having sold a property, both Ananias and Sapphira separately lied to the apostles about how much they had received. They were immediately judged by God and paid the ultimate price.

Some think their deaths were too severe a penalty to pay, but the Lord had His purpose in taking their lives: 1) they were an example to those who would lie to God; 2) they had tested the Lord; 3) they threatened the unity of the Body of Christ at a time when that unity was most important—the beginning of the Gospel being proclaimed by men without the Lord present among them in the flesh.

As the Gospel began to spread throughout Jerusalem and Judea the apostles performed many miracles to prove their authority came from God. Many Jews came into the Kingdom as a result. But the more success they had, the more they came under scrutiny of the religious leaders. And the more they began to experience the wrath of the anti-Christ.

They were arrested and put in prison. But an angel of the Lord released them and told them to go to the temple and proclaim the Gospel. Because the religious leaders feared the people, they did not arrest them again at that time, but they brought them before the Sanhedrin and gave them a stern warning, upon which the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men!" They again indicted the religious leaders of murdering their Messiah, causing the leaders to call for their death.

Upon the wise counsel of Gammaliel, the Sanhedrin spared the apostles' lives, but had them flogged.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they were counted worthy by God to suffer for the name of Jesus.

The next recorded incident of persecution from anti-Christ resulted in the first martyrdom—that of Stephen, one of the seven chosen by the disciples to minister to the needs of the widows among them. Stephen is said to have been a man full of faith

and power by the Holy Spirit. Jews from a particular synagogue disputed with Stephen who had been working miracles and wonders among the people. When they could not resist the wisdom by which he spoke they hired false witnesses who claimed that Stephen had blasphemed against God and the Law of Moses (Acts 6:11).

In the face of these accusations Stephen testified the truth from Abraham to Jesus, accusing his captors and their fathers of murdering the prophets, including Jesus. Hearing his words they were “cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth” (Acts 7:54). When he said he saw Heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God the entire council ran at him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him to death as he called upon the Lord to receive his spirit.

Acts 7:58-8:1 records that standing by with the murderers’ clothes at his feet was a young man named Saul who was consenting to his death. This Saul would be for a time anti-Christ’s greatest emissary of persecution and death against the saints, though Scripture does not reveal that he ever personally murdered any of them. The Lord may have stayed his hand in order that he not carry even greater guilt.

Whereas Satan thought to destroy the fledgling group of disciples, the result of his persecution was to scatter them abroad where they would spread the Gospel far and wide.

Scripture testifies of many signs and wonders granted by God through the disciples as they fled persecution.

This prompted the anti-Christ spirit in Saul to go to the high priest for letters that he could use to take prisoner those in the Damascus synagogues who preached faith in Jesus Christ. But on the way to Damascus he was struck to the ground and blinded by the Lord who accused him of persecuting Him. It was at this point that anti-Christ lost one of his greatest warriors, named Saul, and the Kingdom of Heaven gained one of its greatest warriors, the apostle Paul. Because of his conversion Saul would become arguably anti-Christ’s greatest enemy, marked for death.

Even while he was still in Damascus the Jews took counsel to kill him, but the disciples learned of their plot and rescued him by night. When he went to Jerusalem and found favor with the apostles there, he disputed with the Greek Jews, so they, too, sought to kill him. Again he was rescued by the brethren who took him to Caesarea and sent him from there to Tarsus.

To fully realize the extent to which Saul was so used by anti-Christ, we need only learn from Scripture that upon his conversion the Body of Christ “had rest throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and their numbers multiplied” (Acts 9:31).

For a time, anti-Christ was held in abeyance by God. He was powerless against God’s protection of His growing called-out company of believers in Jesus. But that respite was not to continue for long.

King Herod arrested a number of believers, and had James, the brother of John, put to death by the sword. Seeing how this pleased the Jews he seized Peter also and had him held until he could be tried after Passover. But an angel of the Lord rescued Peter and led him on his way. When the angel left Peter he

realized that what had happened was no dream or vision, and he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, where a number of brethren were praying.

When Peter was nowhere to be found, Herod had the guards arrested, and ordered that they be executed.

At Antioch the Holy Spirit told the disciples to set aside Saul and Barnabas to embark upon the greatest recorded journey for the spreading of the Gospel, beginning in Cyprus. At Paphos in Cyprus they were called for by the proconsul, Sergius Paulus because he wanted to hear about the Word of God from them. But anti-Christ, acting through the sorcerer Elymas, opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. But Saul (called Paul for the first time here), challenged Elymas, accusing him of perverting the ways of the Lord and pronouncing blindness upon him for a time. Seeing this, Sergius Paulus believed, not merely because of this wonder, but because he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Sergius Paulus is the first recorded convert among the Gentiles that came at the proclamation of the Gospel by the disciples.

When Paul went to Pisidian Antioch to proclaim the Gospel in the synagogue on the Sabbath his words were well received by the Jews and by the Gentile proselytes. The next Sabbath day almost the entire city came to hear what Paul and Barnabas had to say. When the Jews saw the crowds they were filled with envy and were incited by the anti-Christ spirit within them to speak against Paul’s teaching, contradicting him and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you put it away from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, look, we turn to the Gentiles. For so has the Lord commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light of the Gentiles so that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the Word of the Lord was announced throughout all the region. (Acts 13:46-49)

As Paul and Barnabas began their outreach to the Gentiles, new avenues of persecution by anti-Christ developed. His target was enlarged. It was no longer just the Jews, the Messiah, and His immediate disciples that came under anti-Christ’s close scrutiny. Now he had to contend with an entire world of believers from all backgrounds. The Body of Christ became identified as one Body without distinction among Jew and Gentile, all being one in Christ. Thus began what Scripture calls “the time of the Gentiles.”

But upon most of Israel fell spiritual blindness that has remained until the time of the Gentiles will be completed upon the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly! ❖

NEXT
THE FIRST CENTURY AD



In this column we share a lesson we enjoyed within one of our house assembly meetings. It has been written as a narrative, but contains the thoughts of those who shared together. There is no single teacher in our assembly. This writing is a compilation of the thoughts expressed at one particular meeting, as well as some additional thoughts I have added in producing it. **AD**

Sometimes we can just get too busy with everyday stuff. Even with ministry, believe it or not, even with reading the Word of God—doing all the right things—that we forget our first love. We’re not spending the time with the Lord that He wants us to spend with Him.

And sometimes we can spend an inordinate amount of time with important things and still not get anything done.

During my (Al’s) recent month-long ordeal with kidney stones I had an opportunity to reflect on my own walk with the Lord. As I lay in the hospital trying to manage the pain and awaiting laser surgery, the Lord showed me that I had become so busy with everyday life while also concentrating on the ministry that, as I saw it, I was in danger of leaving my first love. I was just too busy.

Now, it’s good to be busy, but it’s not good to be so busy that we neglect communion with our heavenly Father.

As He showed me these things I also reflected on my life and some of the things I’ve been through over the years. I began to praise Him and thank Him for putting me in that position, as painful as it was.

At a certain age one begins to reflect on one’s mortality, particularly when facing surgery and realizing that even undergoing anesthesia can be fatal to a weak heart. As it turned out I had to undergo anesthesia three times within an eight-day period, and even then it wasn’t over. It’s not necessary to go into details; the important thing is that the Lord was gracious in pulling me through and in using that time to help me see some spiritual truths relative not only to my life, but in relation to His Word. And although I had some trepidation about going under anesthesia so often, the Lord gave me peace when the time came. I knew I was in His hands, and whatever transpired would be His will.

We tend to look at pain and suffering as evil, but what we endure could actually be God’s voice—His blessing to guide us. It’s a wake up call—an attention-getter. And I thank Him for allowing me to undergo that time of physical trauma.

It was not unlike the time I went through quadruple bypass surgery in 2004. I was actually thanking the Lord for the blessing.

When things are going really well, and we’re on top of things without a care in the world, it’s very easy to begin moving

away from the Lord. We may be doing all the right things; we may not be sinning overtly or seriously, but we may not be in the place the Lord wants us to be. Our daily prayer should be for the Lord to show us where He wants us to be—what we should be doing in order to be obedient to Him.

Now, I don’t take credit for any of this. It was His Holy Spirit that comforted me as He promised in His Word. I share this as an encouragement to others who may also be going through times of distress. Whenever fear begins to enter into my mind I recall Philippians 4:6-7:

Be worried about nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Scripture tells us that Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). Remember, when He came the first time He put aside His glory to become a man. He was completely subservient to the Father’s will, led by the Holy Spirit. If the Lord had to learn obedience through suffering, how much more do we fallible creatures need to do so. But we take heart in what Paul said about the sufferings of this present age being nothing compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us through the resurrection from the dead (Romans 8:18).

So as difficult as it is, we should welcome suffering if we have faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and in His Word.

Admittedly, that may not make the suffering any less painful while we are enduring it. Our unredeemed flesh is still going to pay the price, often the result of our own abuse.

Just think of the suffering that the Lord went through from the Garden of Gethsemane to His moment of death. None of it was because of His abuse, but because of our abuse, not physically but spiritually through sin.

I have to say that the suffering I’ve gone through is nothing compared with the suffering that He endured on that cross, and not for His own fault.

God’s Word is replete with accounts of God’s people suffering, seldom due to their own fault. Job is the most notable example, but as we’ve been studying the Book of Daniel we’ve seen how the faithful of Judah had to endure the same captivity that came upon the nation because of the idolatry to which the majority had largely succumbed.

In Daniel 1:1-7 we learn that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and captured King Jehoiakim, removing to the treasure house of his god all the vessels from the temple.

When the Lord sent Judah into captivity He did not cherish even the vessels in His own house; He let everything go. Everything in Judah, even the elements of temple worship, had become so despicable to God that He gave them all into the hands of a pagan king to be placed in the temple of his god.

We may think things or people are so holy that God would never allow them to be desecrated—even us. But there is nothing and no one created that is so holy, God will not give it up if it becomes unholy.

After removing the Jews to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar commanded Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to choose from among the Jews certain young men who had no physical defects. These young men had to be skillful in wisdom, knowledge, and science, able to stand in the king's palace and learn the wisdom and language of the Chaldeans.

The king apportioned a daily provision of his food and wine for three years so that at the end of that time they could appear before him.

Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, whom the master of the eunuchs renamed Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego respectively, according to the names of certain Babylonian gods.

Satan will come if he can and try to rename us—give us a different spirit. That is not of the Holy Spirit, and this is what God is showing in the account of the four Hebrew men who would have to prove themselves faithful in the face of terrible consequences.

So here God gave Judah over to a pagan king, and they were told that they would submit to him and serve him. And that would include service within the house of his false god.

Now, think about how utterly desolate in spirit the nation of Judah had become, to the point that God would command them to serve in the house of a false god. In the process, the pagan Chaldeans were going to teach them not only their language, science and arts, but all the wisdom of their mystery religion.

But was that not fitting? After all, the nation had already largely given itself over to serving false gods in the presence of God's temple. Just as God gave them an abundance of quail in the wilderness to the point of choking them because of their constant complaining and crying out for food other than the manna, so now Judah would choke on the bitter herb of slavery to false gods in the house of a pagan king.

We see later how God would use this for His own glory, but it would be seventy years before Judah would be released from this captivity.

Certainly the Jews were so confident in their standing as God's chosen people that they couldn't conceive the idea that God would give them over to such captivity. Evidently they considered themselves better than their brothers in Israel that had never come back from the Assyrian captivity. They didn't learn from what befell Israel, so they continued to the point where they were doing as much or more evil than Israel ever did.

The prophet Micah lamented, "What is the transgression of Jacob [Israel]? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?"

Israel sinned by erecting an altar in Samaria in rebellion against God's command that all temple worship must be in Jerusalem. But Judah, in spite of having the presence of the living God in its midst within Jerusalem's temple, still turned to idolatry.

So Israel went into the first Diaspora, never to return to the Land given it by God. Yet God's purpose in bringing forth the Messiah required Judah to be restored to the Land for a season. That was the saving grace for the nation—not that Judah

deserved to return because of its own righteousness, but because of the mercy of God toward not only the Jews but toward the Gentiles.

The lesson of Judah for us today is that if we don't maintain holiness to the Lord we could be given over to captivity as well. We also could be made to lose everything we have and many would serve false gods.

If our hearts are truly right before the Lord He will preserve us through any calamity, just as He did Daniel and his faithful companions. But I'm speaking now about this nation—America—as a so-called Christian nation, founded upon the biblical ethic that for centuries acknowledged the God of the Bible as the God whom the nation trusts.

But the nation has strayed as a people. Christianity in America has strayed from the truth of God's Word to myths and pagan-influenced rites and philosophies. New Age influences, psychological integration, the gospel of self-fulfillment—these are but a few of the ungodly elements that occupy the thinking of most professing Christians.

We're on the verge of going into captivity as a nation. And it doesn't matter how many Tea Parties we throw. Unless there's a revival in the hearts of America's believers, and they get away from all the "feel-good" religion—the prosperity teachings and the entitlement mentality that says "God owes me because I'm a 'king's kid,'" and all such things that permeate the Christian media and the pulpits, there is a rude awakening coming for America's Christians.

It's not just going to be the unbelievers that will be held captive to a bad system; we're all going to be paying the price.

I pray all the time for the Lord to spare America for what is coming upon the world. And He can do that. But I'm not so confident this nation is going to turn around—even that those called by the name of Christ will sufficiently turn to the Lord so that He might heal the land. All the evidence in the Christian media and what is going on in the churches points in just the opposite direction. It's a "feel-good" religious Christianity that they're following. But we do not have to go the way of the world or of the churches. We can learn from what Judah suffered, not just as a people, but as individuals.

When we look at what happened to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah we see that the trials as well as the blessings they received in Babylon were not because they were of the house of Judah, but because of the special relationship they had with God.

The Jews looked upon the temple as the place where God dwelt, and that was true. But He did not spare the vessels of the temple, nor did He spare the people as a whole. Even then God dwelt more with the individuals who were faithful than He did within the temple. Today, it isn't in the houses of worship or the particular denomination that one finds salvation; it is in a personal relationship with the Lord.

The vessels in the temple represented the character of God. And that is what He wants in us as vessels of His Holy Spirit; He wants us to be a reflection of His character. When we give in to sin we are in essence worshiping in other temples.

When we gather together in pure fellowship, speaking the Word of God to one another by the Spirit of God, then the Lord is able to bring judgment upon that sin in our hearts and cleanse His temple.

Many Christians speak about revival. They want it; they know they need it. But revival comes only after repentance. The Body of Christ as a whole needs to repent. It isn't enough that we have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us through faith; we must also live out that righteousness, submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

But what we see today is a perversion of the concept of revival. The prevailing attitude is that revival means getting excited about God, flopping on the floor, screaming, barking like dogs—getting emotional and losing control of oneself. Or it may be the other extreme represented in the mystical aspects of contemplative prayer and meditation. That may seem like revival to some, but it isn't holiness.

God wants holiness. He is the one who creates true revival in a society, but first there must be a holiness that underlies the revival.

Many years ago I attended a singles group at a large church in Orange County, California. The elderly married man who led the group had to leave town for a week or so, and he asked me to take over for him one evening. The Lord put upon my heart to share about His desire for holiness in His people. Now, I was no shining example of virtue, but I felt compelled to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

After asking the group what they thought God wanted of us, and receiving a lot of good answers, but not the answer I was hoping for, I said, "I believe God wants us to be holy."

The reaction from a number of those in attendance stunned me. I thought I was going to be stoned. People were yelling at me, "We don't need to be holy! We already have righteousness in Christ!" and other claims to imparted righteousness. Some were red-faced, with neck veins sticking out.

I thought, "I think I've struck a nerve."

When word got back to the leader I became persona non grata. His coldness toward me made it clear that I was no longer welcome to join them in fellowship, even if I kept my mouth shut.

Stressing holiness first may seem backward to some who think that first comes revival, then holiness. But without holiness in God's people there will be no revival within society, which is what many believers pray for. Unfortunately, many Christians want revival of their society not because of the holiness that might accompany it, but because of the material blessings they hope will come with it. American Christians want revival so that America will be spared God's judgment—so that we not lose our way of life, the good things that our culture offers us.

Yes, I would like to see America spared, but what is the true meaning of revival? It means to make alive again; it implies that there was once life where there is none presently.

There is no question that the nation needs revival, but the Body of Christ also needs revival. And if the Body of Christ needs revival it means the Body of Christ is dead—or at least not

fully alive. Not in the sense that we have lost our salvation, but that there seems to be a disconnect somewhere between the Body of Christ and the will of God.

I'm speaking of the corporate Body of Christ. As individuals God can still spare us just as He spared Daniel and his companions.

Admittedly, in some parts of the world the Body of Christ is living out holiness if for no other reason than that it is cut off from the world, persecuted, and left totally reliant upon the Lord for its very survival. These are like islands spread throughout the world. But they are not continents; they are not large bodies of believers, our Chinese brethren notwithstanding.

When we speak of the Body of Christ, there are first of all those individuals who have been born-again by the Spirit of God. Then there is the greater element of Christianity—those who go by the name of Christ. These may have sincere hearts; they love God as they understand Him, but they may be bound by religious systems. Yet they are numbered with the Body of Christ in the sense that they go by His name. And if they go by His name they have a responsibility to live according to His truth.

Considering how the vast majority of Americans call themselves Christians, the question arises, have we passed the point of no return in much the same manner as Judah? There was a point where God had determined that Judah would go into captivity to Babylon, and there was nothing that was going to change that. Jeremiah spoke the Word of God consigning Judah to exile, and there was no provision for change.

However, we read in 2 Chronicles of how God granted mercy upon Judah because of the righteousness of King Josiah. Josiah was eight years old when he succeeded his father Amon, who had done evil by worshipping idols.

Josiah was not like his father, but did what was right in the sight of YHWH, and walked in the ways of David. When he was 16 he began to seek after the God of David, and when he was 20 he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the places of worship to false gods.

When he was 26, in the eighteenth year of his reign, he sent men to repair the temple. In the process of repairing the temple, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the Law of Moses. He gave the book to Shaphan the scribe, who in turn took it and read it to King Josiah.

This was like finding a Bible in the average Protestant church today. The impact was so great that when Josiah heard the words of the Law he tore his clothes and commanded that Hilkiah take others and inquire of YHWH concerning Judah and Israel, recognizing that the wrath of God was upon them because their fathers had not kept the Word of God.

It wasn't enough that the book of the Law was found in the temple. What counted was that the king wanted to dust it off, read it, and then act in obedience to it.

And Hilkiah and those whom the king had appointed went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in the second quarter of Jerusalem) and they spoke to her to that effect.

And she answered them, “YHWH God of Israel says this (tell the man who sent you to me) YHWH says this: ‘Look, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon its inhabitants—even all the curses that are written in the book that they have read before the king of Judah. Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore My wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.’

“And as for Judah’s king who sent you to inquire of YHWH, so you shall say to him, ‘YHWH God of Israel says this concerning the words that you have heard: “Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place, and against its inhabitants, and humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes, and wept before Me, I have heard you also,” says YHWH.

““Look, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, neither shall your eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon its inhabitants.””

So they brought the king word again. (2 Chronicles 34:22-28)

Prior to hearing the Word of God, Josiah was acting only on his own conviction of what he believed was right before YHWH. He knew instinctively that YHWH was the true God of the nation, and that it must be wrong for the people to worship other gods. But that was enough for God to give him greater light by allowing His Word to be discovered and brought to Josiah.

Even though God had pronounced a judgment upon Judah from which He would not relent, still He granted Josiah peace in his days because of Josiah’s righteousness.

Certainly there were other righteous people in Judah, but because the king himself was righteous in his actions God spared Judah for a season.

God honors those whom He has placed in positions of authority, whether to render evil for evil, or good for good. In this case He rendered good for Josiah’s good.

Has America reached the point of no return? Has God pronounced a judgment upon this nation from which He will not relent?

Not that we can see. There are no prophets pronouncing the ultimate judgment of God upon the nation, although there are many voices warning of that judgment. We are seeing the warning signs, but the question is whether or not the nation will heed the warnings and turn in time to be saved.

We do not have a king, but we do have a president and others in positions of authority within the nation. Were the person occupying the office of president to repent and turn wholly to God, God might well grant America more time before His judgment falls.

But what if the person occupying the office of president doesn’t turn? And what if the next president doesn’t turn to God? The truth is that God has many kings and priests in

America—His people who may, if they will turn to righteousness and away from the idolatry of self and ungodliness, gain some time for the rest of the nation to come to repentance.

We talk about what we do when we take the Lord’s table, when we get baptized. These things matter. Every action we take in real time, in real relationship with the Lord, He takes note of. There is nothing in our lives that escapes Him.

Do you remember about the priest Eli, when he heard from Samuel about judgment coming upon Eli’s house because of his sons’ rebellion? What was Eli’s response? He didn’t tear his clothes; he didn’t lament his failure before God. All he did was say, “Yep, that’s the Word of the Lord.”

And he just let it roll off like water from a duck’s back.

Now, had Eli done as Josiah—had he repented—the Lord most likely would have granted mercy to Eli’s house, and in some way he would have spared Eli’s sons.

Because that’s how the Lord is; He looks for opportunities to manifest His grace and to show His love. He would have done that for Eli.

That’s what He did for Hezekiah. When Hezekiah turned his head to the wall and beseeched God for mercy, God extended his life fifteen years.

And here, when Josiah cried out and tore his clothes, God’s response demonstrates that what we do here in real time matters.

We could be like Eli where we just resign ourselves to the worst. There’s a prophecy in Jeremiah 15 where it says that those who are destined for the sword will go to the sword, those who are destined for captivity will go into captivity, and so on. We could take the Lord just like that and say, “Well, ‘c’est la vie.’ The Lord’s going to do what He’s going to do.”

But real faith engages the Lord in such circumstances. And all the things we’re given in our lives, we’re to take them and deal with the Lord regarding them. That’s why they are given to us, so that we come to know the Lord in greater depth.

And looking back at Daniel we see a heart that desires to walk perfect before God—a heart that is undefiled by the world around him. It is a heart that is open to receive from God the blessings reserved for only those who seek His will in their lives.

May we all be encouraged to seek God’s will in our own lives, regardless the cost. ❖

From Sports Desk of Dwight Perry in Seattle Times:

[Buffalo] Bills receiver Stevie Johnson dropped a winning pass in OT Sunday against the Steelers, then took God to task for it.

"I PRAISE YOU 24/7!!!!!!" he tweeted after the game. "AND THIS IS HOW YOU DO ME!!!! YOU EXPECT ME TO LEARN FROM THIS??? HOW????!! I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS!! EVER!!! THX THO..."

If the Vikings' cornerbacks are smart, they won't be covering Johnson very tightly this Sunday. The next thing he catches might be a lightning bolt.



A Review

(Continued from page 14)

Speakman replied that he doesn't know what his eschatology is. His concern is justice; eschatology doesn't matter.

Sizer also did not state his eschatological position, but merely said that he was always raised as a young Christian to believe "Jesus died yesterday, He rose today, and He's coming back tomorrow."

I thanked him but said that his answer could also fit Dispensationalism. As far as what he was always raised to believe, what does he believe today? Reading his book, *Zion's Christian Soldiers* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010), I found him to be largely non-committal, but leaning toward preterism and amillennialism.

Sizer is a vicar at Christ Church in Virginia Water, Surrey, England. He eschews what he calls "ultra literalism," and thus dismisses much end-time prophecy as either unable to be understood or irrelevant. He seems to have a problem with prophecy in general, preferring to use the word "predictions" even when speaking of Jesus' prophecies—particularly those that address the last days. But predictions are little more than educated guesses based on observation, experience, or scientific reason; prophecy is a sure word from God.

Sizer's apparent aversion to supernaturalism seems to cloud his understanding of the part God has been playing in preserving Israel against overwhelming odds. Even while Israelis are largely secular, and even anti-Christ, God's hand is upon that nation to accomplish His will.

After my prodding of Sizer and Speakman on their eschatology, Westminster Chapel's pastor, Dr. Gary Gullbranson, diverted the talk away from eschatology. The consensus was that eschatology is not an issue.

But if it's not an issue why is Dispensationalism attacked so strongly in the video? And how can someone whose eschatology is vague at best, attack another's eschatology? If Speakman and Porter don't have any specific understanding of eschatology, who are they to say Dispensationalists are wrong, let alone indict them for creating problems for Palestinians without good cause?

The truth is that one's eschatology shapes one's viewpoint about Israel. Dispensationalists believe Israel's existence is evidence of the Lord's soon return. They also believe in the millennial reign of Jesus on the earth during which time all the natural descendants of Israel will be gathered in the Promised Land. But not all who believe these things are Dispensationalists. I disagree with much Dispensational teaching, but not everything from the Dispensational camp is erroneous.

In direct opposition to Dispensationalists are preterists who deny the millennial Kingdom and believe that all prophecy has been fulfilled. Preterists deny that they believe in replacement theology—that is, that "the Church" has replaced Israel in God's

economy—but in all practical terms that's exactly what they believe. They will say that "the Church" is a new creation of God, bringing both Jew and Gentile together as one new man, which is biblical on its face. But they deny that natural Israel has any further place in God's plan for the future.

This is Stephen Sizer's position. So we can see why he has taken the side of the Palestinians against Israel. He believes there is no divine purpose to Israel's existence. Yet he forgets that all nations exist by the will of God. All nations are established by God; all nations fall at the behest of God. If Israel exists it is because God has established it. And Israel's existence in the face of an entire world's opposition must be a clue that God has not abandoned the natural seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

When the Lord returns at the ending of the time of the Gentiles, Israel will behold its Messiah coming to Zion. They will look upon Him whom they had pierced, and they will mourn, not only for the sin of their ancestors, but for having rejected Him through the centuries. Then they will be saved through faith in Him (Romans 11:26). In the meantime there is a remnant of Israel being saved along with Gentiles who are grafted into Israel by faith. Many Jews will be in Zion when Jesus comes again to gather the rest from the nations. There is a supernatural quality to the existence of Israel as an homogeneous people after three Diasporas. Although assimilated into many cultures they have retained their unique identity. Without God's intervention Israel would have ceased to exist centuries ago, particularly in view of the world's hatred of them, which itself is supernatural. God has not abandoned His promise to Abraham.

Of course none of this justifies any ungodliness Israel commits. Judaism is as anti-Christ as Islam. Unbelieving Jews have no more standing with God than unbelievers who go by any other religious or non-religious appellation. Yet we would be remiss to ignore the supernatural means by which Israel has been sustained on numerous occasions against overwhelming odds.

It's likely true that Christian Zionism has the lion's share of Christian attention, particularly in America. Sizer and Speakman believe that it is a matter of justice and fair play for Christians to be shown only the Palestinian viewpoint. That's why they purposely made this video so unbalanced in favor of the Palestinians.

So let's talk about justice and fair play.

How often do Christians sanctimoniously decry injustice in the world while in the churches justice is often lacking? Speak of justice to brethren who are ostracized from fellowship for having the audacity to speak truth to the powers that be. Speak of justice to the weak and poor within the churches who are ignored or patronized by pastors in favor of the wealthy and better educated. Speak of justice to those who have served in a church for years—even decades—only to be told to leave over some disagreement with a worldly program or for protesting the ungodly disposition of some members, including some of the leaders.

Justice is not to be found in the churches any more than it is to be found in the world. Yet Christian leaders want to change the world without first changing their own behavior. God has not made us judges of the world during this age. That will come

during the Millennium. In the meantime we are to judge only what happens within the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

And fair play? Of all the nations in the world only the United States has stood by Israel as a staunch ally, at least until now. The entire world is against Israel, yet Sizer and Speakman think that it is fair play to propagandize American Christians against Israel by building an inordinate sympathy for Israel's enemies. May Israel be allowed one ally among the nearly two hundred nations? Particularly when tiny Israel is surrounded by huge Arab nations bent on its destruction?

Apparently not.

Proponents of this video insist that it's only right that American Christians see things from the Palestinian perspective. But that's not true. It's better if they see things from the perspective of truth. And the truth is that both sides have suffered, and both sides are culpable for the suffering.

We can't justify what evil men do, but we've got to see God's purpose in it. History is replete with instances of injustice and persecution. But history is also in God's hands. Although we should seek justice where we may today, we must also thank God for all that has transpired throughout history. Why? Because even the most horrific events of the past have been used by God to bring us to where we are today. Persecution drives people from their homes; they settle elsewhere; they meet people they would not have otherwise met, including their spouses; they marry and have children they would not have otherwise had. Most people alive today—I'd say virtually everyone alive today—exists because of the events throughout history that led to their parents coming together at a specific time to conceive them. Move one major historical element out of its place and most of us would not have been born.

Palestinian youth who decry the injustice of their refugee status—who are propagandized to feed their hatred of Jews—were born because their parents came together as a result of their experiences in life, bad as well as good. Were people on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict able to accept this truth they would thank God for the suffering of their ancestors.

With God on Our Side misses this truth. It would be far better were it to present both sides of the issue while at the same time encouraging American Christians to be sympathetic toward the plight of the Palestinians—particularly Christian Palestinians.

By portraying Palestinians as the sole victims in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Israel as the villain, *With God on Our Side* panders to anti-Semitism. Although to be anti-Zionist is not necessarily the same as being anti-Semitic, the truth is that all anti-Semites are anti-Zionists. One may be against some of the things Israel does without being anti-Semitic or even anti-Zionist, but one who truly understands the history behind the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot easily be anti-Israel without being anti-Semitic.

By all means point out the faults of Christian Zionism and Israel. But don't demonize Israelis as if they are fully to blame in this conflict. And don't neglect the faults of the Palestinian Arabs or the Arab nations that have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the plight of the displaced Palestinians.

This could have been done in *With God on Our Side*, but it wasn't. ❖

CROSSING THE LINE THE INTIFADA COMES TO CAMPUS

(Continued from page 9)

world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, "Now has come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

"Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time."

And when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child. And two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman so that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time (the last half of Daniel's 70th seven-year-period Dan. 9:24-26), from the face of the serpent.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman so that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood that the dragon cast out of his mouth.

And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

God will protect the Jews when the anti-Christ's nations come against them. The 144,000 saved Jews will be caught up to Heaven, and those saved afterward will be persecuted when Satan perceives that he cannot destroy the Jews who have fled into the wilderness. We aren't given all the details, but it appears as if believing Jews will remain vulnerable, perhaps as they proclaim the Gospel among the nations, or at least in the environs of Israel.

As godless as the state of Israel is currently, God has a plan for it in the last days. *Crossing the Line* reveals how the U.S. is being poised to abandon that nation and set the stage for the anti-Christ's siege against it.

Truly we are living in exciting times. But we must be informed of the enemy's devices if we are to remain faithful until the end. One of his devices is to propagandize the world, and especially Christians, against the Jews for whom He has a purpose in these last days. ❖

**Crossing the Line is available through
Sword Publishers.**



Hey Al and Jean. :-)

Trust all is well and you are blessed. We are well and blessed here also. The goodness of Jesus remains the pinnacle of our existence, as well it should.

Anyway Al, I received an email from a friend of many years saying he's been working with Roger Oakland who introduced him to Chris Pinto who is releasing a documentary called *The Hidden Faith of the Founding Fathers*. This documentary supposedly reveals Thomas Paine's anti-Christian writings, Jefferson reviled Christ, Franklin participated in satanic rituals, John Adams called the Gospels an awful blasphemy, George Washington's pastors doubted his faith and he would not confess Christ, and a quote from the Treaty of Tripoli that we were not in the least based on Christianity as a nation.

I know that not all the founders were as you and I, and many were deists and religionists, but I also know that your outspoken remarks over the years about certain practices in the churches hardly make you an enemy of Christ. I also know that your heart can be right even though, for now, your doctrine may not yet be totally correct. I have read many of these founding fathers' writings, public and private, and I wanted to get your input.

I don't know, at this hour, what these people hope to accomplish by undermining a point of view (Christian roots in our country's founding) that is already teetering on being made irrelevant as a result of the Word of God being relentlessly attacked 24/7 and anything at all that is connected to the Lord demeaned continually.

I have heard Roger Oakland before and he appeared to be an intelligent and informed guy.

Your thoughts?

G.D.,

Dear G.D.,

Like you, I also don't know what the purpose is in working so hard to find anything that will separate Christ from the founding of the nation.

Yes, many of the founders were Freemasons, deists, what have you, but when they spoke of God they generally were referencing the God of the Bible, not some god of paganism. The influence of the Gospel on Europe and Western Civilization in general is what has kept us from devolving into barbarism. I've written about the pseudo-Christianity of the founding fathers, but it was at least that; it wasn't pseudo paganism or true paganism. They, too, had been influenced by the Bible as far as their more noble aims were concerned, whether or not they understood that.

Especially in light of the current onslaught against the Faith by our alleged president and his cronies, it doesn't serve the Lord to add fuel to their fire.

As for Roger Oakland, he has produced a lot of good stuff.

Lord bless,
Al



Dear Brother Albert,

I greet you in the love of Jesus our precious Redeemer.

I am writing about a religious book that a man here found. It's called the *Urantia Book*, and it speaks of Jesus, but just as the J.W.'s do, as Michael. I stopped counting after about a dozen different deities.

It seems to me a mixture of a lot of different cult teachings. So if you know anything about it, any information would help.

I love you, and you and your family and ministry are in all of my prayers.

In His Grace,

B.V., Ione, CA

Dear B.V.,

No one seems to know the exact origins of this book, although it is said to have originated in Chicago sometime between 1924 and 1955 as a compilation of messages spoken through a medium. It was first published in book form by the Urantia Foundation in 1955. It fits well with New Age philosophy, and claims to reveal hidden wisdom that people may use to achieve expansion of their cosmic consciousness. It is sometimes called *The Urantia Papers* or *The Fifth Epochal Revelation*. Its current subtitle is "Revealing the mysteries of God, the Universe, Jesus, and ourselves."

I've had a copy in my possession for at least thirty years, and can tell you that it is a convoluted attempt to explain everything from God to human destiny.

Urantia is the unknown author's name for planet Earth, and the book addresses the origins of life on earth, written in a manner that suggests it has numerous, different authors of celestial origins for each paper. There are four parts containing a total of 181 papers.

God is defined as the Father of each individual, and is said to have imparted a portion of His eternal spirit called a "Thought Adjuster," also called a "Mystery Monitor," "Inner Voice," "Divine Spark," and "Pilot Light." This is said to be comparable to the Hindu atman, the ancient Egyptian ka, and the Quaker inner light, as well as what Socrates called his "daimonion," from which we get the word demon.

These are demons or fallen angels masquerading as "spirit guides" that channel their thoughts through willing humans.

In short, I'd strongly urge you to keep yourself from this thing.

In Jesus' love,
Al

We wish we could include all the letters we receive. Please know that we read each one personally. We regret that we are often late in replying to those that require answers. We'll do our best to get to them. If you haven't heard from us after three months, please write again. Some questions require lengthy research. Not having a staff keeps us from always being able to give a timely response. Thanks for your understanding.

Dear Al,

Thank you for reconnecting with me to receive *Media Spotlight*. I'd like to comment on your "Personal Note" in the spring issue.

Since 1975 I have been studying about the New World Order and the truth behind the facade we have been fed by the propaganda machine. As a history major I was fascinated to learn that the victors write the history books, and truth often falls by the wayside. You might say I became consumed in uncovering who is really pulling all the strings.

Your "Personal Note" hit me between the eyes. All our struggles with Obama, the economy, the Muslims, Israel, are aimed directly at propelling us into the New World Order that must occur. There is no stopping what God has planned.

We'd all be better off if we took our focus off fighting the world system and pulled in closer to Jesus.

What I saw a the true picture of reality is opened much wider with your insight.

God is in control!

Thank you,

S.A., Kailua-Kona, HI



Dear Al and Jean,

Thank you for sending the issues of *Media Spotlight*.

I have had a busy week and haven't gotten to read all of the issues yet, but I have appreciated your position on what I have read.

One point I particularly noticed and found refreshing is your view of Christianity's relationship to government and the world in general. Jesus said we are not of this world, just as He is not of this world. The world and its governments will continue to wax worse and worse. That is not our responsibility. Our responsibility is to the souls in the world. Our goal is to bring honor to Christ through living out His will through the power of His Spirit. As you wrote: "...we don't expect, nor should we desire, that the government become an arm of Christianity."

"The Islamizing of America's Churches" exposes the incredible spiritual blindness and lack of concern for the Christian faith on the part of today's professing church. We have watched with amazement since 9/11 as the terrorist religion that is

seeking to destroy is promoted and applauded for how peaceful it is. It almost looks like a very successful act of salesmanship.

God bless your labors for Him,

G.M.,



Dear Al and Jean,

Thank you for the last issue of *Media Spotlight*. I appreciate the hard work and time you put into these articles, and I am eagerly looking forward to the next issue.

I also wanted to write in order to get your view on the Sabbath. There are many controversies over the adherence of this day, and it is included in the Ten Commandments. I do believe in a day of rest, and it is clear that it is beneficial for many things. The Lord did say He made the Sabbath for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

I always applied Romans 14:5-6 and Colossians 2:16-17 when it came to this issue. Am I wrong to do this?

I would appreciate any research you have done concerning the Sabbath, and also church discipline. I thank you for your love and devotion toward the faith.

Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you and yours.

God bless,

R.C., Beaumont, TX

Dear Readers:

We sent this brother a copy of *Facts and Fallacies of the Resurrection*, which deals with the Sabbath. If you are interested in this topic, we'll send it to you.

As for "church" discipline, it is really quite simple: the only thing to which individuals within the Body of Christ are to be held accountable is the Word of God. Man-made rules and regulations have no authority over the believer. Scripture deals extensively with how we are to treat one another with love and humility, not lording it over others, regardless of knowledge or length of time in the faith. Any act contrary to love must be addressed, but also in love.

Men have made things more complicated than God intends, devising methods such as "discipleship" or "shepherding" in order to control virtually every aspect of the believers' lives. This has been a great evil within the churches.

So, too, has been the clergy-laity model that places some above others in

authority without regard to spiritual maturity as much as book learning.

A humble spirit on the part of the elders within the assembly, coupled with fear before the Lord and a genuine love for the brethren will go a long way toward righting any wrongs within the assembly.

Al



Dear Al and Jean

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Hoping you are both doing well, as I am.

As an ex-prisoner, I affirm that, yes, you are right. The majority of church leaders who do prison ministry are politically correct. We are blessed to have men like you. Because of you we are able to stand firm, but in love speak the truth that saves.

I am now a free man and intend to be God's mouthpiece as I used to be while in prison. Thank you for the vital role you played in my Christian life.

Yours in Christ,

A.M., Klerksdorp, South Africa



Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

I hope all is well with you. May the Lord continue to bless you and your ministry.

I'm writing to let you know that (the Lord willing, and I live, and everything goes as scheduled and unhindered) I'll be paroling in two weeks. So most likely I won't be here to receive the next issue of *Media Spotlight* (and hopefully ever after). So you should take my present address of your roster so it doesn't get returned to you. However, if you're willing and can afford it you can continue to send me *Media Spotlight* at my new address.

It's been a long 19 years, and I look forward to tasting freedom again. I hope to hear from you guys, or at least eventually meet you in person if not until "that day" I'll meet you by that crystal clear river next to one of those trees, and we'll find out what kind of mysterious fruits those are. Then we'll really be tasting freedom!

God bless you and take care of you in the name of Jesus.

P.P., Bakersfield, CA



Jean's Turn

RELATIONSHIPS

BY JEAN DAGER

Life is about relationships. Whether it be with close family members, friends, brethren or simply casual acquaintances, we are surrounded with different types of people. Some folks are easy and pleasant and really a joy to be with. Others are not. The question is, how do we deal with those difficult relationships? As members of the Body of Christ, we need to be cognizant about our conduct with everyone and especially those we find irritating or downright frustrating. In our fleshly state it's natural for personalities to clash at times. But if we make the effort to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord we'll do our best not to react in an ungodly manner toward those we find offensive. When I pray I frequently ask the Lord to help me be loving toward people so that I may reflect the light of the Lord within me. To be a good witness, I need God's divine intervention!

Reading from *Voices from the Past* (available in the Sword Publishers catalog) I came across a writing by Puritan author, Thomas Brooks. He addressed Romans 5:20 which reads, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."

Brooks was speaking primarily about how the Lord looks upon our graces more than He looks upon our weaknesses. It occurred to me that we should do the same with others, especially when we struggle with our attitudes toward those we find "unlovely." If our Lord, who knows us better than we know ourselves, is willing to extend us grace despite our human weaknesses and failures, shouldn't we do the same toward others? An excerpt from Brooks's writing reads:

We will not throw away a little gold, because of a great deal of dross that cleaves to it, or a little wheat, because it is mixed with much chaff, and will God?

We do not cast away our garments because of spots, or books because of some blot, or jewels because of some flaws. Will the Lord cast away His dearest ones because of their spots, blots and flaws? Surely no! ...

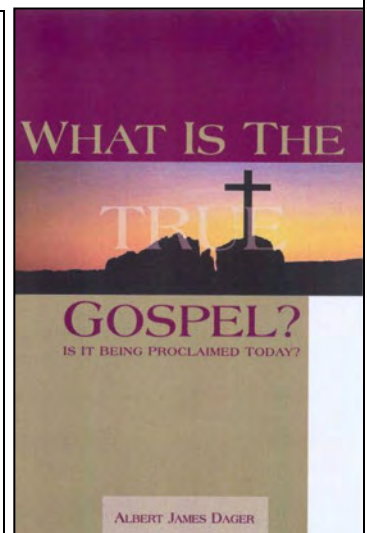
God looks upon the pearl, and not the spot on it.

I thought this an excellent example of how we can improve our relationships with others. Just remember how gracious and loving the Lord is toward us despite our frailties. Just so, we can make an effort to concentrate on people's strengths rather than weaknesses.

God's desire is that we live out our faith daily. Relationships with others are important parts of our walk with the Lord. He desires that we be examples of Christlikeness to the world in order that we may light the way to our heavenly Father. ❖

Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and commissioned His disciples to do the same.

Many false gospels have arisen since then. A great apostasy based on the traditions of religious institutions substitutes a weak easy-believism in place of the true Gospel of the Kingdom. This book points the reader back to Scripture for understanding the significance of the true Gospel Jesus proclaimed.



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