

Fall 2020 / Volume 1 / Number 36

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ARIEL
MINISTRIES

The Nature of the
MESSIANIC KINGDOM
as Found in the Covenants

Plus:

**Translation Errors and
Flat Earth Theories**

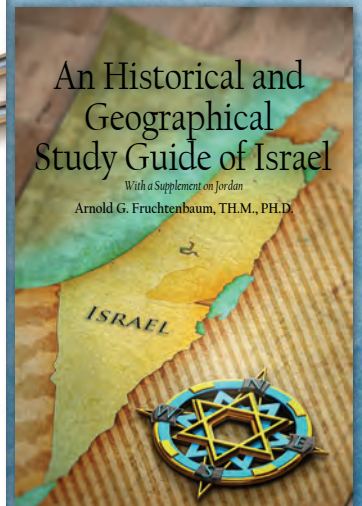
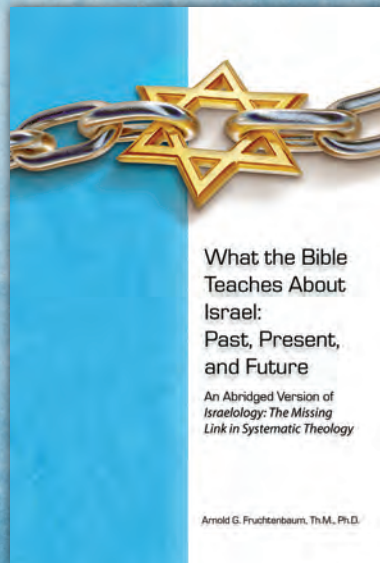
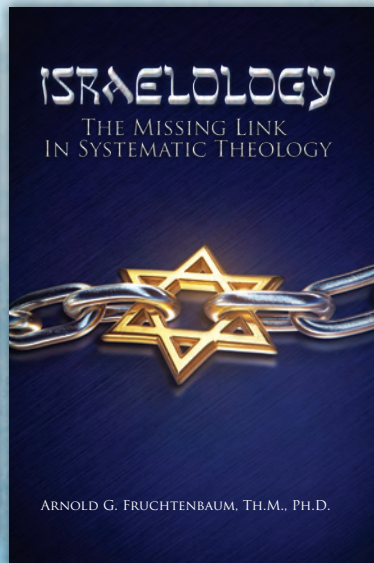
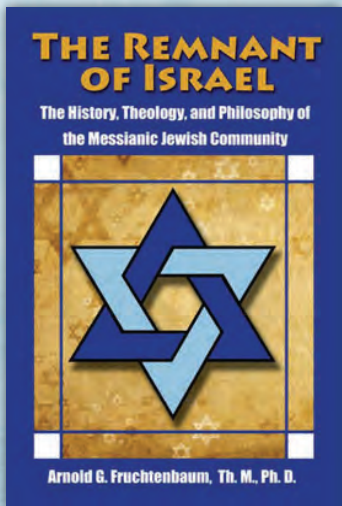
The Inquisition in Castile

**Galatians and the
Believer's Freedom in Messiah**

How to Pray Like Daniel

Henry Ford's Legacy

QUESTIONS about Israel? Answers are here!



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06 Cover Story

The purpose of this article by Dr. Daniel Goeprich is to explore the biblical teaching of the nature of the Messianic kingdom from the four unconditional covenants established by God. It shows that a literal understanding of the numerous passages written about the kingdom reveals a physical kingdom in a physical territory promised to a specific, physical nation.

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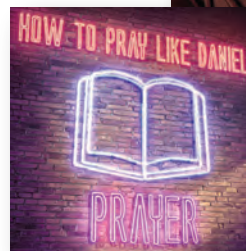
28 Anti-Semitism

When people hear the name Henry Ford, most will think of the Ford Model-T or the invention of modern factory lines. Olivier Melnick uncovers another aspect of Henry Ford, one that is little known and is a much darker part of his legacy: his anti-Semitic ideology.

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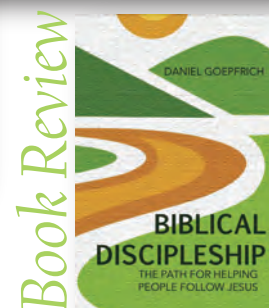
As believers, we desire an intimate and expectant relationship with God. But what if we are in a rut? What if we feel like God is far removed? What if we have allowed the cares and concerns of this world to take our focus off of Him? What do we do? Tim Velasco suggests that we start praying like Daniel.



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Purpose Statement

Ariel Ministries exists in order to evangelize Jewish people and to disciple Jewish and Gentile believers through intensive Bible teaching from a Jewish perspective.

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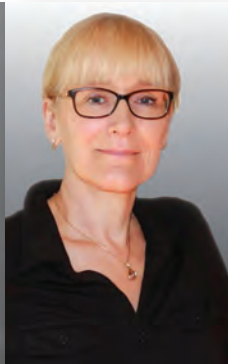
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BIRTH PANGS

Whenever I read Matthew 11, I cannot help but turn into a wet noodle. The tender heart of my God gets me every time. There is Yochanan (John) the Baptizer sitting in prison because some evil people could not stand that he was pointing out their sin. When he heard of Yeshua's miracles, he sent some of his disciples to Him and asked if He might be the One Israel had been

waiting for. Yeshua did not have to respond. After all, He is God! Yochanan was His servant, nothing more than a crumb underneath the King's table. Yet, Yeshua did respond and answered Yochanan with one of the most powerful prophecies found in the book of Isaiah: *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have good tidings preached to them* (Mt. 11:5). This, my friends, is love!

When working on Dr. Fruchtenbaum's newest commentary, the one on the book of Acts, I came to a similar point in the narrative. Acts 18:9-10 record a divine revelation given to Paul: *Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."* The section that got me was "for I am with you." There is no doubt that Yochanan and Paul were special men. Nevertheless, God did not have to respond to them. He did not have to bring comfort and peace in difficult circumstances. Yet, He did.

We at Ariel Ministries have received many questions this year from people struggling to make sense of what has been happening. One of the most relevant questions was, "Dr. Fruchtenbaum relates Matthew 24:7 and the beginning of the end times to World Wars I and II. But these wars happened a long time ago. How much longer are these end times going to go on?" One of the most merciful things God has done for His people is to provide answers in His Word. We who study and know His Scriptures do not have to worry and wonder about the end times. We know that what has been going on since the beginning of the end times are birth pangs. If we look at the world today, these birth pangs seem to be speeding up. That's what birth pangs do. They get stronger and more frequent over the course of labor before the delivery. Babies are not born within minutes.

We serve an utterly personable God. His Word is the most powerful expression of His unfailing love, for it provides the peace the Messiah promised us: *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid* (Jn. 14:27).

May Yeshua, our Prince of Peace, be personally present in your life today and always,

Christiane Jurik

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Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives

MEET THE TEAM



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Chris and Lisa Savage represent Ariel Ministries in Australia. Based in Victoria, they teach the Scriptures from the Jewish perspective in weekly and bi-monthly classes and day seminars.



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J. I. and Sharon Gabizon represent Ariel Ministries in Canada. Their projects include door-to-door evangelism of Jewish homes in Montreal and translating Ariel's manuscripts into French. Ariel Canada established a messianic congregation in Montreal called Beth Ariel.



Jackie Fierman

Jackie Fierman has been with Ariel Canada since January of 2005, traveling and sharing about the ministry and teaching Ariel material in Canada and the U.S.A.



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Bakul Christian represents Ariel Ministries in India and resides with his wife in Ahmedabad. He teaches Ariel's material all over the country and is responsible for the translations into the Gujarat language.



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Sasha and Lilian Granovsky represent Ariel Ministries in Israel. The husband and wife team has been representing Ariel Ministries in Israel since October 2009. They are responsible for coordinating the translation of our manuscripts and books into Hebrew and Russian.



Ariel China

For safety issues, we must protect the identity of this branch. Please keep them in your prayers.



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Thanks to Manfred Künstler and his wife Hanna, Ariel Ministries has had a presence in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland since 1985. In 2002, the work was passed on to Georg Hagedorn who, eight years later, turned it into a full branch. Today, this branch is led by a team of brothers and sisters.



Ariel Hungary **Ivan & Rita Nagy**

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Ivan and Rita Nagy represent Ariel Ministries in Hungary. The husband and wife team has developed a Come & See website in Hungarian. They also host several home Bible study groups, teaching from Ariel's materials. Their goal is to make teachings available to Jewish and Gentile believers and unbelievers in Hungary.



Ariel New Zealand

Web: <http://ariel.org.nz/>

This branch is led by Johan Jansen van Vuuren, Nigel Christensen, Matthew Lord, Don Thompson, and John Cavanagh. For information about the many activities of this branch, please contact info@ariel.co.nz.



Ariel Ministries Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

This branch is devoted to teaching the Word of God from a biblical Jewish perspective in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. We also travel throughout the United States. If you are interested in hosting a teaching session, symposium, or seminar contact us at dfw@ariel.org.

ARIEL REPRESENTATIVES



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Michael and Hannah Gabizon are missionaries representing Ariel Ministries in Canada. The young couple has actively been involved in teaching and discipling people through God's Word. Their goal is to identify other young people within their sphere of Influence who may be interested in becoming involved with Ariel.



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Missionary and author John Metzger represents Ariel Ministries in North Carolina. He is a teacher and speaker who actively travels throughout the central and eastern part of the U.S., speaking at various churches and conferences.



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Gary and his wife Missy are the managers and camp facilitators of the Shoshanah campus in Upstate New York. Every summer they help host Ariel's Program of Messianic Jewish Studies.



Roberto Anchondo – Field Representative **(El Paso, Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico)**

Roberto Anchondo represents Ariel Ministries in parts of the Southwest regions of the U.S. and some cities in Mexico. He is currently discipling groups of men in the Jewish perspective. He also works with numerous churches in Mexico, teaching the importance of standing by Israel.



Jack Nakashima **(Ohio)**

Email: jacknariel@gmail.com

Jack Nakashima represents Ariel Ministries in Dayton, OH. Previously serving in Israel, he is now available to teach and disciple in the U.S.



Hungary

COVID-19 has made this springtime different from any other time, not only for us but for everyone. After the governmental decision to close workplaces, schools, and churches, we had to change our service practices too. We tried to find the advantages of this difficult time. Although Ivan lost every gig as a musician, he was able to continue his work as a teacher online.

The lockdown gave Ivan more time to prepare his Bible studies. We replaced our biweekly system of fellowship with a weekly Zoom meeting. Interestingly, this brought new “attendees” from the countryside as well as from abroad (Slovakia and Romania). We also held our traditional Passover service this way. Many people prepared the ingredients of the seder at home, and all of them prepared for communion with matza and red wine. We also had a family seder night.

Parallel to the meetings, Ivan has invested more time in our social media platforms. He wrote an article for our Facebook community, which has two separate groups: a public group and a private group. In the latter, we have nearly 300 members who read and study the biblical topics we present. Some of the more recent topics were the prophetic calling of every believer, spiritual discernment (test of the spirits), and the rule of Balaam and his three biggest mistakes.

As to our fellowship, you might remember Vera, one of the Jewish Holocaust survivors we have written about frequently. She attended every

meeting until the pandemic hit and has heard the gospel from a Jewish perspective several times. She is not a Messianic believer yet, but she is very interested in the topics we present during the fellowship meetings and in our practice. She sees that we are not a “regular” church. Our love for the Jewish people and our understanding of biblical truths certainly make a huge difference. You might also remember Tamas, who belongs to the group of Holocaust survivors to whom we are ministering. Our sister Paivi regularly calls him, and he confessed his faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. Praise God for this! Tamas lives in a Jewish elder home. Will you please keep Vera and Tamas in your prayers?



Italy

Ciao from Italy! After a spring that was trying but also full of spiritual blessings, here are some updates from our work in Italy:

The translation of *Jesus Was a Jew* is finished, and we are working on editing and proofreading the translation before publishing it. Many are waiting for this book and are encouraging us to speed up the process. We were able to translate four of the seven holy feasts published by Ariel Ministries in manuscript and book form. This

has given us the opportunity to share Dr. Fruchtenbaum's studies on a large scale and reach the Jewish community near us. We have passed on many copies of the translated texts to Jewish friends and are praying they will bear eternal fruit.

Paolo has begun teaching the book of James, using Ariel's commentary for the work. The study is bringing a lot of encouragement and important direction to our local congregation. We received beautiful messages of appreciation for Ariel's material.

The Footsteps of the Messiah has become a book known to people of various ages thanks to the different formats now available (print and eBook) and thanks to our social media pages. We are happy that brothers and sisters we don't even know are teaching the translated material in their churches!

We thank the Lord for everything we see happening around us. Jews and Gentiles alike have started contacting us through our social media pages asking for advice, material to study, and churches to attend in different parts of Italy.

After years of prayers, three young ladies to whom the gospel has been proclaimed for years finally decided to accept Yeshua as their personal Savior and to give Him space in their lives. It was a great joy for us to share



the wonderful news with their believing families. These young ladies follow us daily on social media and send us messages, meditations, questions, and hopes. The Lord is good!

The translation work of Ariel's material and videos will continue, and we pray the Lord will bless our nation and help us reach His faithful remnant



Ariel's Gone Social

One of the positive outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the increased interest of people around the world in browsing the internet and taking the time to find answers to life's most pressing questions. Our branch in Israel sent in this report:

"This past season has seen new highs and increases across the board. Some of the key areas of growth are as follows:

1. In May alone, we reached just under 50,000 Israelis through our social media platforms.
2. Website traffic grew another 53%.
3. Over 500 new Israelis are now following the page.
4. 743 individuals entered the website this past month.
5. Over 580 page-views were accomplished on Facebook.

What does this all lead to? With 90% of our website traffic being in Israel, as well as all of our content going out in Hebrew, the conclusion is this: More Israelis than ever before are being reached with the messages/content of Ariel Ministries Israel! They are engaging on social media, clicking onto webpages, viewing video content,

following the social media accounts, and going deeper into relationship with the ministry."

Ariel USA has been much more active on Facebook and Twitter as well with tremendous success. Dr. Fruchtenbaum recorded short video clips answering questions such as "Is the coronavirus a punishment by God?" or "How do we know we are living in the end times?"

Please feel free to visit us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to watch these videoclips and read some interesting posts.



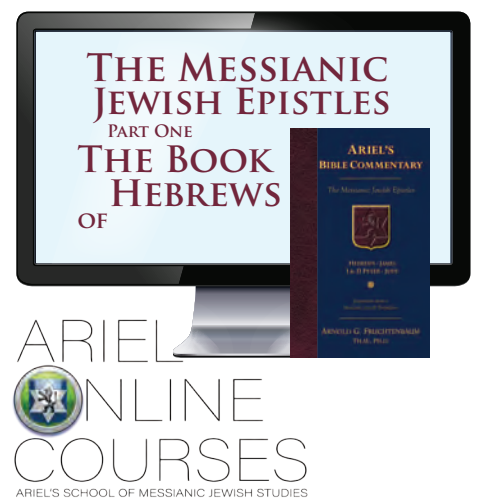
Dr. Fruchtenbaum Shares the Gospel

One video that has reached many people around the world is Dr. Fruchtenbaum's explanation of the gospel message. It is available in English, German, and Italian, and translation work is being done in Hebrew. Please make sure to take the time to watch the video and share it with your unsaved loved ones: <https://www.arielcourses.com/>.

Ariel Online School

When believers become psychologically discouraged, they often turn to an epistle like Philippians or perhaps to the Psalms. One Epistle/sermon few may turn to during such times is the book of Hebrews. Yet, one of the main reasons that Hebrews was written was to encourage first-century

Jewish believers who were losing heart. Hebrews 12:3 states: *For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* Dr. Fruchtenbaum wrote the following regarding this verse: "Now and then, believers need to review, point by point, in detail, every part of the sufferings that led up to Yeshua's death. They need to construct a mental analogy of the trials and sufferings of Yeshua. At that point, they will note that Yeshua endured vocal ridicule, *such hostility by sinners.* They need to remember what Yeshua endured because then they will not become weary, fainting in their souls. By contemplating the sufferings Yeshua endured—what He suffered and how much He suffered—they will realize their sufferings are quite mild. This will help to eliminate mental and psychological discouragement in the midst of suffering."¹ If you would like to study the book of Hebrews, here is the link to the newest online course on Hebrews with one free segment and lecture: <https://www.arielcourses.com>.



¹Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Jewish Epistles: Hebrews, James, First Peter, Second Peter, Jude*, 1st ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2005), p. 172.



JERUSALEM



The purpose of this article is to explore the biblical teaching of the nature of the kingdom from the four unconditional covenants established by God. As the doctrine of the kingdom unfolds, we will discover that each of the covenants answers one of these basic questions: *why*, *where*, *whose*, and *what kind*. By accepting a literal answer to these questions, readers should arrive at the normative dispensational conclusion that the kingdom and the church are not the same. Instead, the kingdom will be Yeshua's literal, future, earthly rule from Jerusalem, Israel.



Much has been written about the kingdom in recent years, and it is a common topic in sermons, books, and articles. Unfortunately, emphasis on the kingdom has replaced teaching about the church. Phrases like “doing kingdom work,” “advancing (or building) God’s kingdom,” and “bringing up there, down here” permeate evangelical writings and teachings.

Unfortunately, as these phrases have become part of the language of the modern church, so have the false teachings they promote. Misunderstandings about the church, Israel, future events, and even salvation have become commonplace as more and more graduates of both reformed and liberal seminaries become local church pastors. Frighteningly, this is

not limited to one denomination or segment of the church. While it is most common in the historically reformed groups (Presbyterians, some Baptists), the phenomenon has gained traction in most major denominations and non-denominational churches alike. At the same time, the dispensational understanding is acknowledged but tossed aside. For instance, after correctly explaining the dispensational view, Grudem essentially warns his readers:

But it must be said that behind this argument of pretribulationists is probably a more fundamental concern: the desire to preserve a distinction between *the church* (which they think will be taken up into heaven to be with Christ) and

Israel (which they think will constitute the people of God on earth during the tribulation and then during the millennial kingdom). But as we noted in an earlier chapter [44], the New Testament does not support a distinction of this kind between Israel and the church [*italics original*].¹

Notably, in this confusion between the church and the kingdom, there is little debate over the existence of the kingdom. Rather, as the old saying goes, “The devil is in the details,” and it certainly proves to be true in this case. As evidenced in his first interaction with humanity, Satan loves to exploit loopholes—real or perceived

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 1133.





—in God's revelation. Thus, it should surprise no one to discover that the primary attack against the doctrine of a literal, prophecy-fulfilling Messianic kingdom is built on the serpent's own question: "Did God really say...?" (Genesis 3:2). Consider the introductory questions (and their subsequent dismissal) in the chapter on eschatology in Olsen's systematic theology textbook:

Christians believe and have always believed that when Christ returns the kingdom of God will be established and revealed in a new way and that eventually God will create a new heaven and new earth that will last forever. But how should these revealed truths about the future be interpreted? How should the enigmatic New Testament book of Revelation and other biblical apocalyptic books and passages be understood? Do they refer to events that were already happening when they were written or to future events or to both? What will Christ's return be like? Is it imminent? Will it be visible and literal, surrounded by catastrophic events and figures such as the antichrist and the great beast? Will Christ personally and visibly rule and reign on the earth for a millennium? Will the new earth joined with the new heaven be somehow continuous with this world or an entirely new environment? These are just some of the questions that surround universal eschatology and sometimes obsess Christian futurists. Limitations of space will

preclude any thorough, detailed examination of these issues and problems. We must settle for brushing with broad strokes and attempting only to portray the general contours of the Christian eschatological landscape.²

The purpose of this article is to explore the biblical teaching of the nature of the kingdom from the four unconditional covenants established by God. As the doctrine of the kingdom unfolds, we will discover that each of the covenants answers one of these basic questions: *why*, *where*, *whose*, and *what kind*. By accepting a literal answer to these questions, readers should arrive at the normative dispensational conclusion that the kingdom and the church are not the same. Instead, the kingdom will be Yeshua's literal, future, earthly rule from Jerusalem, Israel.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

God's covenant with Abraham forms the basis for the very existence and purpose of the kingdom. Thus, it answers: *Why the kingdom?* Although the details of this covenant were presented to Abraham progressively in multiple conversations with God and God did not officially institute the covenant until Genesis 15, the basics are found in God's announcement in Genesis 12:1-3:

Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a

blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

In this statement, God gave one very specific promise: "I will make you a great nation." A nation is "a large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own."³ Even without the other details that God would provide later, surely these were the same basic assumptions that Abraham would have made based on the promise of "a great nation."

First, a nation requires people, and a "great nation" requires a great number of people. Abraham (c. 2165-1990 B.C.) was born between the end of the Akkadian Empire and the emergence of the Sumerian Empire, both of which had large urban centers. He would have understood a "great nation" to consist of at least hundreds of thousands of citizens.

This must mean more than Abraham becoming the "leader of a great nation." The Hebrew verb does not allow for God to simply make a great nation *for* Abraham but that God would make Abraham *himself* into that nation. In other words, this great nation—and all its people—would have to be connected biologically to Abraham.

Second, a nation needs a physical territory to call "home." Every civilization must have a place for its base of operations, a place for its citizens to live and work. Land ownership battles and border disputes are consistently

² Roger Olsen, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 333-334.

³ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nation>; accessed July 30, 2013.



among the leading causes of civil and multinational wars, and the search for more or certain land is often a key component.

Third, a nation needs a government to rule its people. In Abraham's experience, he would have understood this to be a dynastic monarchy with localized control at the city-state levels. It seems that a king sitting in a capital city, exercising sovereign power over his whole empire, was the only type of government the world of Abraham's day had truly known. Even our modern representative forms of government follow this pattern to an extent (with a few differences). A nation requires a cohesive government to operate successfully, and this has historically been accomplished by a strong ruler who can squelch those who would rebel against him.

A fourth characteristic a nation had in Abraham's world was a common religion. Although many people today have difficulty with the concept of a national religion, this was normal in every ancient civilization. The idea of a nation with no supernatural power was a foolish one indeed. How could such a nation survive against her enemies, each of which often had many gods to protect them? Even Abraham grew up worshiping the Akkadian moon god, Sin. Religious life was powerful in ancient cultures because kings would often promote themselves and their families either as deities or as priests and priestesses to the gods. Religion and government were often inseparable.

Thus, when God promised that He would make Abraham "a great nation," Abraham would have understood it to mean far more than a big family, but rather an organized monarchy over a

large number of citizens existing within relatively fixed geographical boundaries, all sharing a common form of worship. The other three kingdom covenants prove that Abraham's natural understanding is exactly what God intended, and still intends, to bring about.

LAND COVENANT

As noted above, a nation needs its own territory or land in which to settle. Within ten years after Abraham moved from Haran, God gave him this next piece of the puzzle. The Land Covenant (often wrongly called the "Palestinian" Covenant) answers the second basic question: *Where is the kingdom?* Unless the kingdom is viewed as a literal entity, this question does not even matter. Yeshua was clear that one day He would come "in His glory . . . and He will sit on the throne of His glory" (Matthew 25:31). Where will this throne be located?

In Genesis 15, God restated His promise to give Abraham many descendants, this time pointing to the stars as an illustration of their number. At this point, God had Abraham make preparations for the ceremony to confirm the covenant. During this ceremony, God revealed that Abraham's descendants would be enslaved and oppressed for 400 years (15:13), but afterward, God would personally rescue them and return them to the land He had promised to them (15:16). Specifically, God promised:

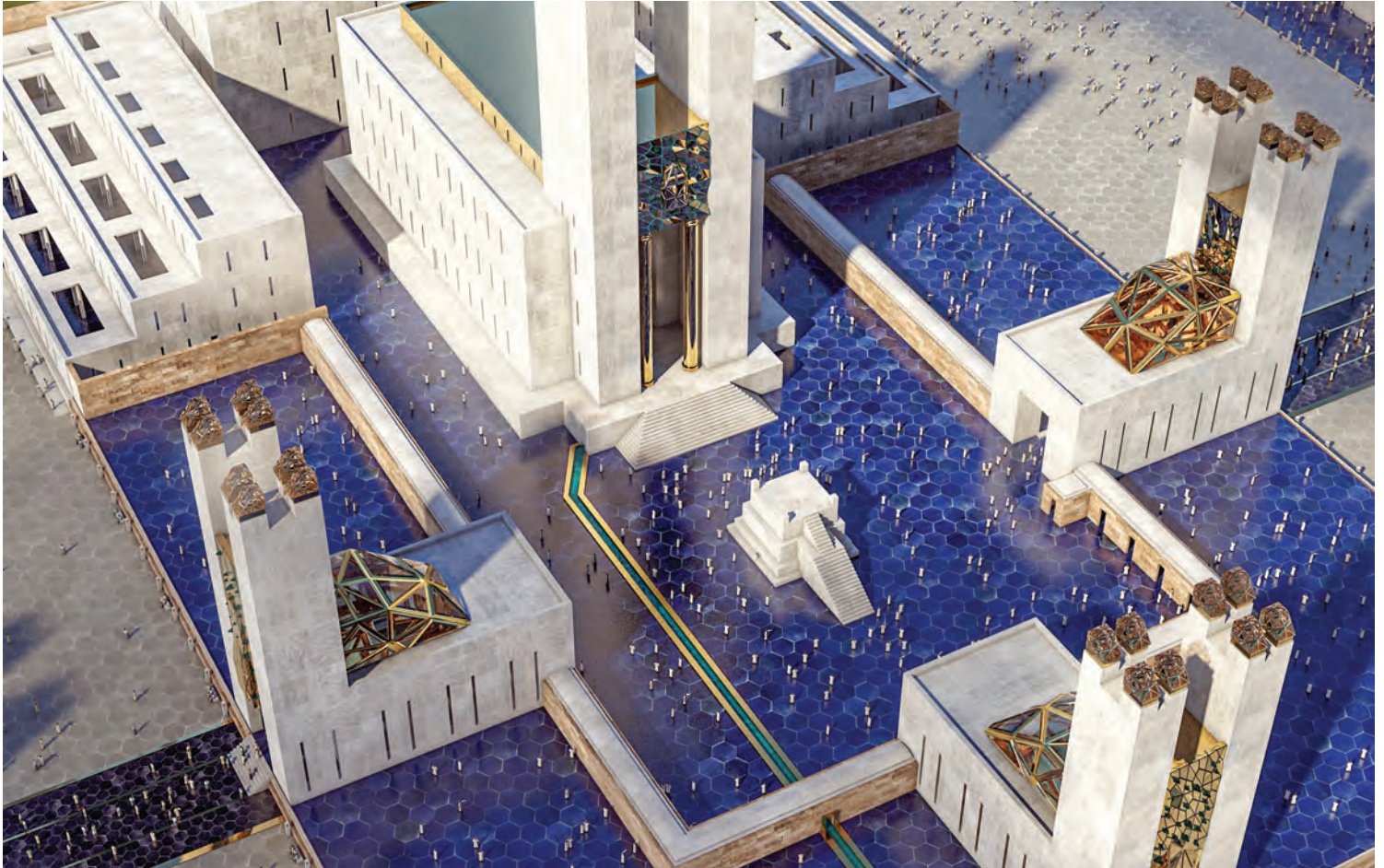
To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the

Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites (Genesis 15:18-21).

It seemed that their Exodus from Egypt had fulfilled this promise. However, God brought the infant nation of Israel to the border of their new home only to have them run in fear when they saw the land filled with warriors and fortified cities (Numbers 13-14). As punishment for their rebellion, God made them live as nomads for nearly 40 years until that entire generation of over 603,000 men (Numbers 1:46) had died. Upon bringing them back to the place where they would enter the land to conquer it, God promised the people great blessing if they would obey Him and great destruction if they disobeyed. Part of that destruction would be the temporary loss of their control over that land. However, couched within the conditional aspects of their well-being, God emphasized the unconditional nature of His covenant with Abraham:

If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers (Deuteronomy 30:4-5).

True to God's Word, Israel repeatedly rebelled and faced divine punishment, including her exile to Assyria and Babylon. Yet, throughout Israel's rebellion, the prophets continued to promise her future restoration. Most notable is the promise repeated in Jeremiah 16:14-15 and 23:7-8 in which God said the coming resto-



ration will be so amazing that people will stop using the miracle at the Red Sea as the celebration of God's power in favor of this dramatic restoration!

DAVIDIC COVENANT

The third of the four great covenants was not given to Abraham but to King David nearly 1,000 years later. Nevertheless, it builds on the promises given before, answering the third question: *Whose kingdom?* We find this covenant in 2 Samuel 7:8-16. Notice the four key provisions outlined here:

1. *"I have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth."* This is like the promise to Abraham that God would make his name great (Genesis 12:2).

2. *"I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them."* Like the first provision acknowledges the Abrahamic Covenant, this second promise summarizes the Land Covenant. God reminded David that there would come a time when the nation of Israel would have a territorial home and live there in peace with no disruption or oppression, but with relief from all who would try to harm them.

3. *"God himself will make you a house."* This is the first promise to David as an individual rather than to the nation. To Israel's second king, God promised what every king wants: a ruling dynasty attached to his name. This would be different, though.

Instead of David having to strategize, plan, create, and defend it, God promised that He would do it personally.

4. *"Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."* The problem with dynasties is that they eventually end. Sons are not born. Neighboring countries invade. Internal rivalries simmer. Assassination attempts succeed. There are countless ways for a dynasty to end, and David knew this. God's promise to make his dynasty permanent was far more than David could have imagined. It would take an act of God to accomplish something of this magnitude.



This last provision demands more attention. The question at hand is: “Whose kingdom is this?” Olsen, Grudem, and others insist that it is the “kingdom of God,” yet the wording does not allow that interpretation. The coming kingdom will be a continuation of David’s dynasty. God confirmed this truth a millennium later in Nazareth when Gabriel told young Mary: **“The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.** And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33, emphasis added).

Those who wish to see a “kingdom of God” rather than a “kingdom of David” cannot interpret this verse literally without damaging their own conclusions. In 1,200 pages, Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* does not even address this passage! At least Berkhof acknowledged this kingship passage, but he, too, refused to take it literally: “The spiritual kingship of Christ is His royal rule over the *regnum gratiae*, that is over His people of the Church . . . The eternal duration of the spiritual kingship of Christ would seem to be explicitly taught in the following passages: . . . II Sam. 7:13,16; Luke 1:33.”⁴

But is it a spiritual kingdom? Is Yeshua sitting on David’s throne right now, as many claim? At what point did God install Yeshua as “King on My holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6)? Has He broken the nations “with a rod of iron” (Psalm 2:9)? Is He ruling in the midst of His enemies from Zion (Psalm 110:2)? If this is true, if the nations have been given to Yeshua as His “inheritance” and as His “possession” (Psalm 2:8), how could

John say that “the whole world lies [currently, present indicative] *under the sway* of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19)? What else but demonic and blasphemous could we call Paul’s assertion that Satan is “the god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4) if Yeshua is the reigning king?

The answer is simply that the church is not the kingdom. Yeshua has not yet returned to sit on David’s throne. He is in heaven where He “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).

NEW COVENANT

This is the last of the four unconditional covenants given by God in the Old Testament, and it reveals *what kind of kingdom* this will be. The main passage with the details of the New Covenant is Jeremiah 31:31-34, where God describes with whom He made the covenant, when it will take place, and how it will function.

First, notice that three times God states that this covenant is “with the house of Israel . . . and Judah,” “I took them . . . out of the land of Egypt,” “the house of Israel.” He could not have been clearer. Those who apply the New Covenant to the church must have already combined the church and kingdom before approaching this text. There is no way to read this passage literally and find reference to the church. God will make the New Covenant with the ethnic nation of Israel, the nation of descendants promised to Abraham.

Second, this covenant will not take place until God restores Israel back to her land. This is the whole context of Jeremiah 31. Some historical background is necessary. Assyria had

taken captive the ten northern tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. When Jeremiah wrote this, Nebuchadnezzar had already executed the first of three captivities of Judah to Babylon in 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 29:1) and possibly the second in 598 B.C. as well. Even after the various Jewish returns to Israel in the 400s B.C., few would call that a complete restoration. The oppression of the Romans for centuries, the scattering of the Jewish apostles in Acts 8:1, and the Jewish dispersion referred to in James 1:1 and 1 Peter 1:1 all indicate that the restoration had not yet happened by the first decades of the church. Yet, because of Yeshua’s claim that His blood is the “blood of the new covenant” (Matthew 26:28), covenant scholars like Grudem claim: “This blessing finds fulfillment in the church, which is the people of God,”⁵ even though God’s promise to David to restore the Jewish people to their land where they will no longer be oppressed has not yet happened.

Third, the basis for this covenant is a new relationship with God. Yeshua promised that Israel would not see Him again until they say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” (Matthew 23:39). At that time, “They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; and each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God’” (Zechariah 13:9). Contrary to what Grudem and others teach, this has nothing to do with individuals believing in Messiah for salvation during the church age. When the Jewish

⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941), 406, 410.

⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 520.

people turn to their Messiah, God will rescue them, restore them to their land, and then put His law in their minds and write it on their hearts. The result will be that He will be their God and they shall be His people (Jeremiah 31:33). Paul explained why this has not yet happened: “Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Romans 11:25).

The coming kingdom will not be just a monarchy, as Abraham and David expected, but a theocracy where Yeshua, the God-Man, will rule supreme, both as David’s earthly heir and as God’s holy Servant. God will once again be a resident God, not hidden behind the curtains in the Tent of Meeting or the Temple but among the people—*Immanuel*, “God with us.” Everyone from the smallest to the greatest will know Him personally,

and He will offer forgiveness for sin nationally and individually. Thus, Israel will finally be renamed from *Lo-Ammi* (“not my people”) to *Ammi* (“my people”) as God promised in Hosea 1:10-11.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that a literal, normal understanding of the numerous passages written about the kingdom does not reveal an “intricate, complex, imaginative system [that] presents an interpretation that surely never would have been thought of except in defense of a theory.”⁶ Nor do we find a nebulous concept that must be rationalized and applied spiritually today. Instead, we see a series of promises, given in plain language, repeated over thousands of years to different people with no contradiction, resulting in one conclusion: a physical kingdom in a

physical territory promised to a specific, physical nation.

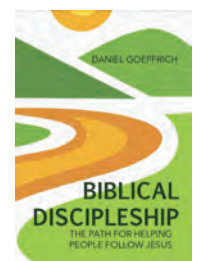
God revealed each of these four covenants before the existence of the church, and though individual salvation is made available in the church age through Yeshua’s blood, even the New Covenant will be made solely with Israel. Had God given Abraham all these details immediately, he would not have been surprised to find that the nation promised to him would have a specific land, a dynastic monarchy, and a religion she could call her own.

⁶ Boettner, *The Millennium*, 146.



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FREEDOM IN MESSIAH

By Richard Hill¹

The book of Galatians has become a battleground within the Messianic Jewish movement and in the universal body as well. The confusion over the themes of Galatians (law versus grace, bondage versus freedom, works versus faith, and flesh versus spirit) are central to this conflict. The primary theme of Galatians is derived from 5:1 and is the basis for the title of this article: “It was for freedom that Messiah set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (NASB). The major point that *Sha’ul* (the Apostle Paul) wanted the Galatians to know was that Yeshua set them free when they were saved. They were free indeed, but free from what? The context shows us that they were free from being “subject again to a yoke of slavery.” The yoke of slavery is equated with the Torah. The idea here was for the Galatian believers, Jew and Gentile alike, to not go back to the worship system of the Mosaic Law. They were to move forward in the *Ruach* (Spirit) under the authority of the Law of Messiah. So the application for today’s believers is the same. We should not put ourselves under the authority of the Mosaic Law of bondage but under Messiah’s Law of grace and freedom.

Torah Observant

The book of Galatians is perhaps one of the most important—if not THE most important—New Covenant

writings for the Messianic Jewish Movement (MJM); the other book would be Hebrews. There is a group within the current-day MJM that is not only attacking the very nature and essence of God’s plan of salvation and sanctification for all believers but also the very nature and essence of our God. The group is called “Torah Observant,” and its main teaching is that Jewish and Gentile believers of Yeshua must follow Torah to be sanctified and please God. Unfortunately, many from the universal body of Messiah (the church) are spiritually enticed to join this Torah-observant movement, unaware of the catastrophic personal consequences of this teaching.

Rabbi Sha’ul encountered this type of spirit and teaching in the first century just as we are engaged with it today. He wrote his letter to the Galatians sometime between 48-55 A.D. and addressed all of these Messianic concerns. By doing so, he already provided all of the answers to the very problems we face today. The body of Messiah only needs to appropriate what he has already written.

Who Were the Galatians?

The question that has sparked historical controversy is: “Who were the Galatians?” Let me share some Jewish history before I answer this question. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* states that at the end of the third

century B.C., Antiochus III transferred 2,000 Jewish families from Babylonia to Phrygia and Lydia (Galatia) in order to settle them in the fortified cities as garrisons. Josephus confirms this resettlement and tells us that in the generation prior to Sha’ul, Augustus directed a decree granting special privileges to these Jews. This little bit of history shows that there were many Jewish people living in southern Galatia with special government rights and privileges, beginning about 250 years prior to Sha’ul’s first missionary journey. By the time of the events in Acts, these communities had spread throughout the area and were thriving.

In Acts 13-14, we see Sha’ul and *Bar-nabba* (Barnabas) preaching and teaching the good news to Jews and God-fearing proselytes² living in southern Galatia. Many of these Jews and Gentiles believed in Yeshua. Sha’ul and Bar-nabba quickly set up local congregations for them before they were driven out of the cities and eventually out of the district.

So, who were the Galatians? They were Jewish and Gentile believers of Yeshua who were saved through Paul’s preaching in the synagogues and marketplaces of southern Galatian cities. This, in turn, reveals that when Sha’ul wrote the book to the Galatians, he was writing to a Jewish and Gentile audience that was heavily invested in Torah observance and was just learning about grace and freedom in the *Ruach* (Spirit). In Judaism, they were taught to follow and keep the



Torah, but now they were set free by believing and trusting in Yeshua as their Messiah. They were to be filled by the Ruach and not by the law.

Who Were the Judaizers?

The second question that sparks controversy is: “Who were the Judaizers?” The very word “Judaizer” may invoke an automatic negative reaction, as we have all been trained to believe that these people were the villains of the story. However, the Greek word for “to judaize” means “to live like Jews.” There is nothing in this word that shows a negative connotation; it is a neutral term. To understand this truth, the example I like to give is that I personally live a Jewish lifestyle, albeit Messianic, but it is still Jewish, and yet it is good, not bad! Therefore, I replaced the term “Judaizer” with “legalizer” in my book, *Freedom in Messiah, A Messianic Jewish Roots Commentary on the Book of Galatians*. It is a much better term to use to describe the actions of the villains.

So who are the legalizers? They were those Jews, saved and unsaved, who desired to put Messianic Jews and believing Gentiles back under the Torah through strict observance of the commandments of the Mosaic Law so that they could be saved and/or sancti-

fied by God. They followed Sha’ul to every city he travelled to, trying to destroy his ministry.

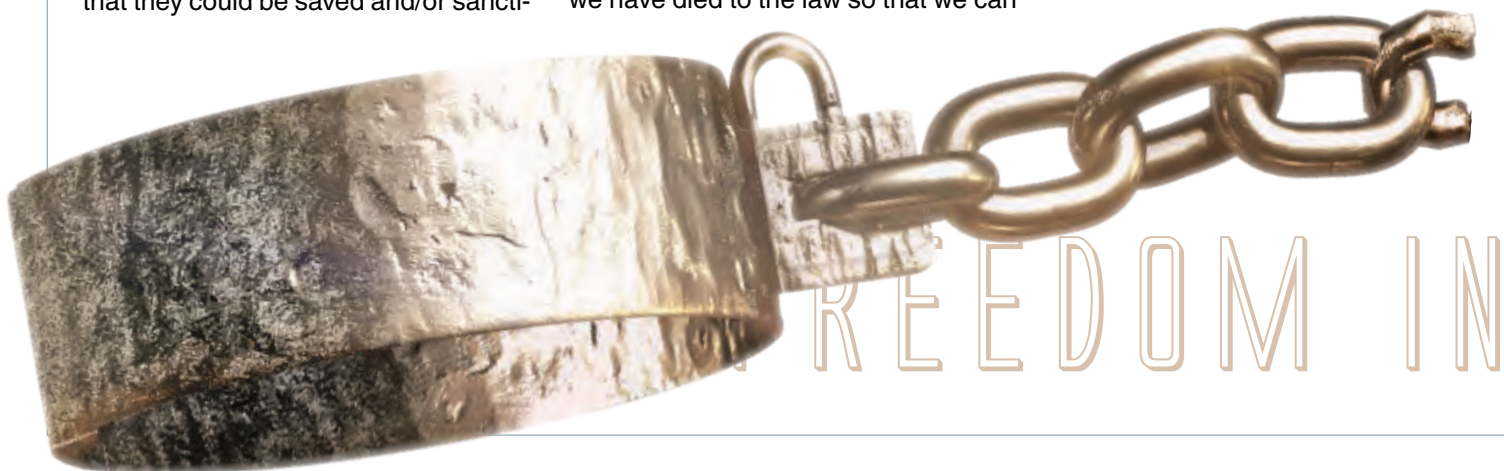
In Galatians 1:4, Sha’ul revealed a wonderful truth, stating that Yeshua delivered us out of this present evil age, which includes Torah observance. In 1:6, he claimed that keeping Torah for Torah’s sake was a different gospel than the gospel of grace and should not be followed. Those who preach Torah observance for sanctification are strictly warned of their cursing in 1:8-9, as Sha’ul proclaimed, “Let him be accursed.”

Sha’ul called these teachers of Torah observance “false brethren” who tried to guide the Galatian believers from their new-found liberty in Yeshua into the law’s bondage (2:4-5). Now, we know that not all of today’s teachers of Torah observance are false brethren. However, one does need to find out why they teach Torah observance for sanctification when this is clearly against the Scriptures. Sha’ul even corrected the Messianic Jews who acted hypocritically toward the Gentile believers by not eating and fellowshiping with them (2:11-14). He strongly proclaimed in 2:16 that all believers were not and cannot be justified by the works of the law but only by faith in Yeshua. In 2:19-20, Sha’ul taught us that through the law we have died to the law so that we can

live for God. We cannot spiritually live for God through the keeping of Torah. We no longer live, but Messiah (and not the law) lives in us.

In 3:1-3, Sha’ul called the Galatians “foolish” for being bewitched by the legalizers into keeping Torah. We cannot become perfect or mature through the law but only by following the Ruach. Sha’ul then boldly exclaimed that anyone who is of the works of the law is under God’s curse (3:10)! But when we believe and have faith in Yeshua, the curse of the law is lifted (3:13). In 3:19, Sha’ul explained why the Lord created the law in the first place. It was added to define and reveal personal sins until the Messiah came to die for all those sins. Before Messiah came, everyone was kept in custody under the law. But after He came, the law was no longer needed for this purpose (3:23-25). The law as a tutor showed that the way to Messiah is through faith because it is impossible to come to Him through good works (3:24).

According to 4:5-7, Yeshua redeemed everyone who was under the law and changed them from being slaves to the law to becoming sons and heirs of God. Since we have become personally known by God, why would we ever desire to be enslaved by the “weak and worthless





elemental things” of the law (4:9-10)? Following Torah cannot help us grow strong in our walk with the Lord. Sha’ul begged the Galatians to become like himself—free from the spiritual bondage of the law (4:12). He even wondered why those Galatians who wanted to be under the law did not truly listen to the law that actually condemned them (4:21).

Sha’ul boldly declared that Messiah has set us free from the law that is the yoke of slavery so that we should continue to stand firm in our freedom (5:1). In 5:3-4, he stated that anyone who tries to keep even one point of the law is obligated to keep all of it. Anyone who tries to keep the whole law fails and sins in the process. This then severs their fellowship with Messiah, and they fall from God’s grace. Since they continue trying to keep Torah and continue sinning against God, they squelch the *Ruach Kodesh* (Holy Spirit). So, the opposite result occurs than what they are trying to achieve, and eventually they become bankrupt in their faith.

According to 5:7-8, the legalizers were not called by God but instead hindered the Galatians’ walk in the truth through their false teaching. We are all called to freedom from the law so that we can fulfill the law through loving our neighbor as ourselves (5:13-14). We are to walk by the

Ruach and not by the flesh following the law (5:16-18). If we are truly born again, then we should live and walk by the *Ruach* and not by the law (5:24-25).

In 6:2, Sha’ul declared that if believers bear one another’s burdens, then they will actually fulfill the Law of Messiah. He said nothing of keeping the law to be able to fulfill the law. In 6:7-8, he stated that whatever a man sows, this he will reap. If believers sow to the law, then they will reap from their flesh, but if they sow to the *Ruach*, then of the *Ruach* they will reap. Sha’ul declared to the Galatians in 6:12-13 that the legalizers were hypocrites and did not even keep the law themselves. He even declared that circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing to the Lord. What is important to the Lord is the new creation and that we share the good news of Yeshua who died for our sins and was resurrected on the third day to free us from going to *Sheol* (hell), to free us from

the power of sin, to free us from the bondage of the law, and to free us from ourselves. With all these warnings and teachings of Sha’ul, it is surprising that anyone would want to be Torah observant.

Conclusion

The Torah-observant group within the MJM and the legalists within the body of Messiah must listen to Sha’ul’s plea and fervently heed the Lord’s warnings found in the book of Galatians. The major theme of Galatians is very simple: Messiah has set us free! Messianic Jews and Gentile believers are called to freedom from the bondage of law, the power of sin, and the strength of self. We have died to the law’s bondage, sin’s power over us, and self’s strength so that we can live a Spirit-led life for God. To be godly, we must live by faith, grace, and love and not by law, sin, and self.



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² Gentile converts to Judaism





Translation Errors and Flat Earth Theories

By Paul Miles

It was Tuesday morning on September 1, 2015, at Denny's Diner in Evansville, Indiana. The pastor was leading a Bible study on Genesis, and he proclaimed, "I don't know whether the earth is flat or not, but I'll tell you this much: I don't think the earth is spinning."

My jaw hit the floor. *Did he just say what I think he said?* Sure enough.

This pastor was a geocentrist; he thought that the earth was stationary and that the sun, moon, and stars flew around it, perhaps in a dome that covered a flat earth. In the following years, a countercultural flat earth movement would gain followers all across the globe, but it was still relatively unheard of in 2015.



Most people associate flat earth theology with internet trolls who post memes about the moon landing being staged, but a more serious danger is a notion that holds influence in academic circles: that Moses (or even a post-exilic editor) adapted pagan myths about a flat earth and simply rearranged ancient cosmologies to fit a monotheistic worldview. This view is perhaps one of the greatest current threats to the plain, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture.

Ever since I heard that pastor who had lost his faith in the round and spinning globe, I have had a passion for helping people better understand the biblical model of creationism. It is a nuanced topic, but perhaps the most fundamental error of the flat earth model is that it accuses the biblical authors of believing in a “firmament,” which was an alleged firm dome over the earth that contains the sun, moon, and stars. This article will serve as an introduction to the “firmament” (which in Hebrew is actually a different word, *râqîya'*), its history in Bible translations, and some effects of its mistranslation.

Râqîya' Defined

The JPS (1985) correctly translates *râqîya'* as “expanse” in Genesis 1:6:

God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water.”

Other English translations that render *râqîya'* as “expanse” include ESV, NASB, CSB, NET, DARBY, YLT, WEB, and NHEB. Translations that include a similar word are: NLT, “space”; Russian Hebrew Interlinear, “*pustota*” (Eng.

“emptiness”); German Schlachter 2000, “*Ausdehnung*” (Eng. “expansion”); Italian Nuova Riveduta, “*distsa*” (Eng. “expanse”); Korean Living Bible, “*gong-gan*” (Eng. “space”); Tagalog Ang Biblia 2001, “*kalawakan*” (Eng. “expanse,” “space,” or even “galaxy”); and many others.

The word *râqîya'* comes from the Hebrew root word *rêq*, which means “empty.” For example, Moses describes the pit that Joseph’s brothers threw him into with the following words: “The pit was empty [*rêq*]; there was no water in it” (Gen. 37:24b JPS 1985). Akkadian cognates include *riâqum*, “to become empty,” and *rêqum*, “to become distant.” So, it is interesting that the expanse in Genesis 1:6 makes the waters distant from each other and creates an emptiness between them.

In Genesis 1:6, God created a giant empty void, which we understand to be the vacuum of outer space. The Hebrew is clear on this point, but some translations have a particular quirk. For example, the NKJV has:

Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.”

The NKJV will typically include a footnote to denote that “firmament” actually means “expanse,” but where did this notion of a firmament come from? To get to the root of that question, we need to back up a few millennia.

Resorting to Paganism

The Greek Pagan Hesiod (ca. 750-650 BC) wrote of Aether, who was a primordial god¹ and the personifica-

tion of an upper sky where the gods dwelled.² Aether came to be thought of as a physical substance that existed beyond the sky in the place that we know as outer space.

By the time of Aristotle (385-323 BC), the universe had been incorrectly mapped into a mechanism of celestial spheres containing the sun, moon, and stars, and it was thought that these spheres moved the heavenly bodies around the earth. This was the world into which the translators of the Septuagint were born. The notion of aether had already been taught for hundreds of years—much longer than the theory of evolution has been taught today—and aether would not be debunked until the 1920’s (AD)! Imagine the pressure that the Septuagint translators felt as they translated the Bible, which claimed to be the authority on origins but did not align with the theories of aether and celestial spheres.

So, the translators compromised. Instead of keeping the *râqîya'* as an expanse, they rendered it into Greek as *stereōma*, which essentially means “a solid thing.” A related Greek word is the adjective *stereos*, which means “solid” as in “the solid food” (Gk. *hē stereā trophē*) in Hebrews 5:14. Another cognate word is the verb *stereoō*, which means “to solidify” or “to strengthen” as seen when Peter heals the lame man “and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened” (Acts 3:7b).

With a few strokes of a pen, Moses had been misinterpreted to fit pagan notions related to a distant sky god. This translation error certainly went unnoticed throughout the Septuagint

¹ Hesiod, *Theogony*, p. 124.

² Hesiod, *Works and Days*, p. 11.



translators' lifetimes, but while they did not live to see the extent of the damage, their mistranslation has been problematic for expositors and apologists ever since.

The Jewish Aftermath

The noun "aether" is related to the verb *aithō*, which means "to scorch." So, in Greek philosophy, aether was often related to fire. Some pagan ideas included the beliefs that fire was hot aether,³ that the celestial spheres were made of condensed aether-fire,⁴ that the sun receives its fiery nature from a distant aethereal fire,⁵ and a host of other wild ideas. None of this sounds anything like what Moses wrote in his description of creation, so perhaps it will come as a surprise that the rabbis of old occasionally turned to the strange fire of Greek cosmology to reinterpret biblical creation.

The Midrash ascribes a quote to Rabbi Chanina, that in creation "the fire went forth from above and scorched the face of the *râqîya*,"⁶

and the same passage has Rabbi Yudan saying, "the fire went forth from above and the face of the *râqîya* glowed."⁷ Josephus thought that the perished soul was to ascend and be received by the aether.⁸ The Talmud blatantly admits giving priority to the sages of the nations for knowledge of the physical universe.⁹ These sayings are nonsensical from a modern-day understanding of the vacuum of space, but they are also false from a Mosaic understanding of the *râqîya* as an expanse.

It is important to emphasize that it is indeed the sages, not the Tanakh, who were confused into following a false cosmology, and as our favorite Rabbi said, "If a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Mt. 15:14b). There was no need for the rabbis to fall for the worldly fables of old; there is no Aether god, there is no

aether substance, and there are no celestial spheres. Instead of seeking common ground with false gods, Genesis simply begins, "In the beginning, God created..." The monotheistic view was not the consensus then, nor is it now, nor will it be until Messiah returns.

The Christian Aftermath

The Septuagint was the preferred Old Testament in much of the Eastern church and served as the basis for translation into Coptic, Armenian, Old

³ Malcolm Schofield, *Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoreanism in the First Century BC: New Directions for Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 150-ff.

⁴ Thomas Heath, *Aristarchus of Samos, the Ancient Copernicus: A History of Greek Astronomy to Aristarchus, Together with Aristarchus's Treatise on the Sizes and Distances of the Sun and Moon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 66-68.

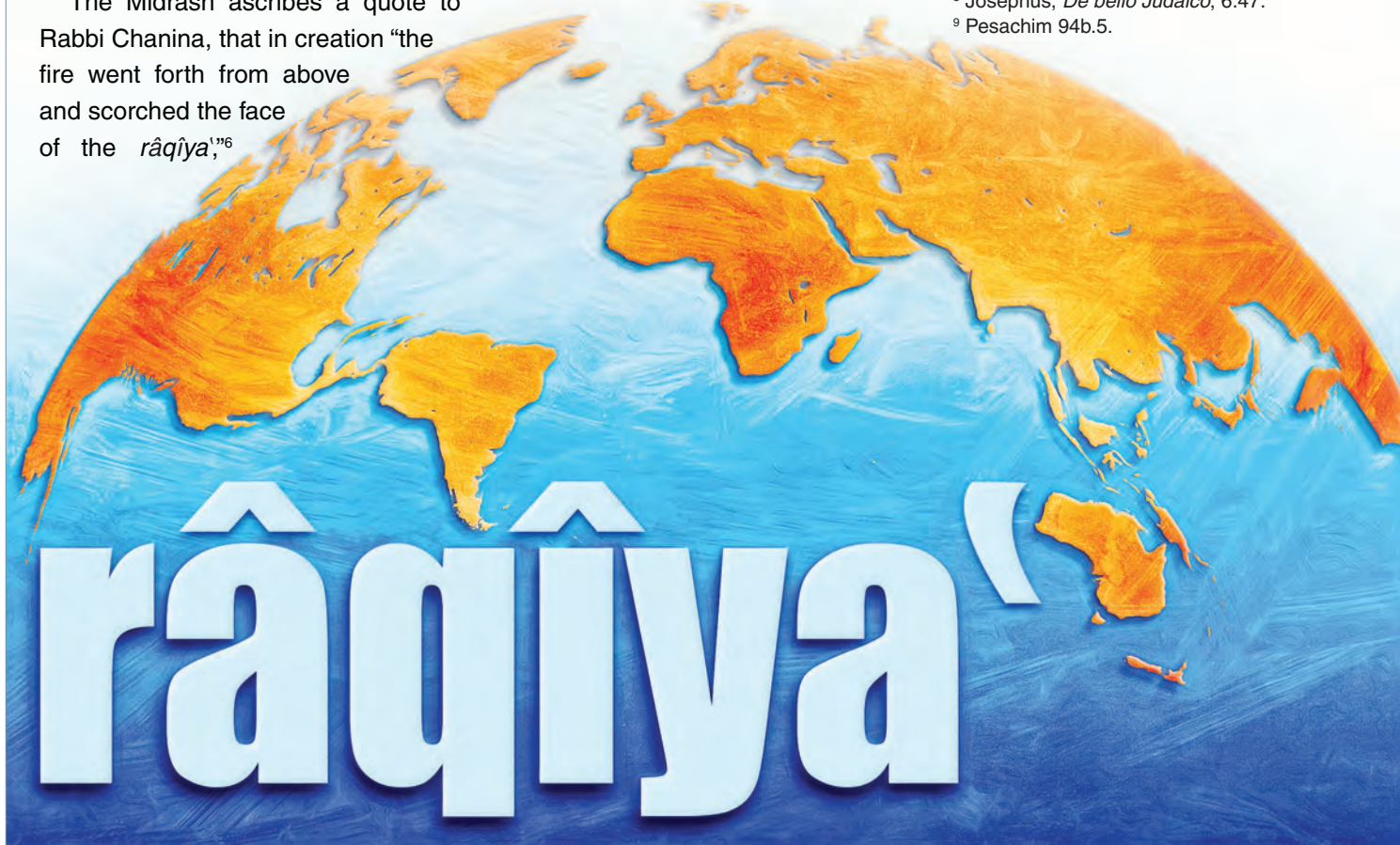
⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁶ נִצָּאת הָאֵשׁ מִלְּמַעְלָה וְלִסְכָּח אֶת פְּנֵי הָרָקִיעַ Bereishit Rabbah 4:2.

⁷ יִצָּאת הָאֵשׁ מִלְּמַעְלָה וְלִסְכָּח אֶת פְּנֵי הָרָקִיעַ *Ibid.*

⁸ Josephus, *De bello Judaico*, 6.47.

⁹ Pesachim 94b.5.



Church Slavonic, and other languages. Some of these early translations went on to influence later translations, and their impact can still be felt today. For example, a new Ukrainian Bible was released this year, and the word *râqîya'* occurs as *tverd'*, which means "firm." But *tverd'* is only a biblical word (you are unlikely to hear it on the streets), so where did it come from? This same word is in the Ohienko Ukrainian version from 1958 (*tverd'* was not a popular word back then either). It also happens to be the same in the Russian Synodal Version of 1876, which uses the same word from the Old Church Slavonic Bible that comes from the Greek Septuagint. Over 2,000 years later and with two languages in between, Ukrainian Bibles are being directly influenced by the Septuagint notion of *stereōma*!

A similar phenomenon has occurred in the West. As mentioned earlier, the New King James Bible has "firmament," which is the same as the King James Version. The King James traces back through William Tyndale, who probably borrowed the term from John Wycliffe, who translated from Jerome's Latin Vulgate instead of the Hebrew. What did Jerome do when he got to Genesis 1:6? He translated *râqîya'* as *firmamentum*, "a firm thing," following the Septuagint and popular thoughts on cosmology.

Fortunately, some translations are abolishing this word. Earlier mention was given to German Schlachter 2000, which has "*Ausdehnung*" (Eng. "expansion"). This is a correction of the Schlachter 1951, which has "*Feste*," the same word that is in Luther's 1545 translation. Keen readers may recognize the word "*Feste*" from Luther's song, "*Ein feste Burg ist*

unser Gott" or "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." With a background in Latin education and a theological history of Roman Catholicism, Luther was undoubtedly influenced by the Vulgate.

Surely the translators hoped to make the Bible more appealing, but what has the effect actually been? In the 19th century, as naturalism was gaining popularity, Christianity shifted away from biblical inerrancy due to a skepticism that was fueled in part by the presence of mistranslations such as *stereōma*, *Feste*, *tverd'*, and *firmament*. Even today, churches constantly suffer loss as their children go off to college and meet challenges for which they are unprepared. Such a catastrophic end to an attempt to reconcile the Bible with "science"!

Equipping Believers Today

We can look in hindsight and criticize the translators of the Septuagint and those who followed them, but our criticism will not change history. So, what are some lessons to learn from all of this?

First, let us avoid making the same mistakes as the translators of old. God did not intend the Bible to be a detailed science textbook, but when He does talk about science, He gets it right. We do not need to alter the Bible to make it fit the errant ideas of men.

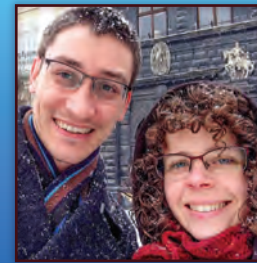
Second, we need to understand the errors of flat earth theology and be prepared to respond. While it is tempting to laugh away this discussion, we need to have answers lest our believing brothers and sisters be led astray or our nonbelieving loved ones be pushed further away from the Messiah.

Finally, we need to be prepared to give an account for the hope that is

within us (1 Pet. 3:15b). Believing that the Bible does not teach a flat earth is not the bottom line of evangelism. The flat earth discussion is a red herring that distracts evangelism from the most important facts in history: that Yeshua is the Messiah; that He died for the sins of humanity, was buried, and rose again; and that He gives eternal life to anyone who believes in Him.

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You can visit their blog at www.TheMileses.com.



In part one of this series, we examined how the Jewish people who settled in the Iberian Peninsula quickly became a people of influence, wealth, and vigor. By the late 14th century, the Catholic Church dominated the peninsula and began creating what became known as “The Jewish Problem.” The church forced the Spanish Jews to

convert or die in the great massacre of 1391. Part two explored how those who did convert, the *conversos*, were forced to abandon their ancient faith and strictly adhere to Catholic dogma. There were many, however, who did not abandon their traditions, which led to a larger problem for Spain: “The

Converso Problem.” In part three, we will delve into the mind of the most sinister anti-Semite of his time, Thomas de Torquemada, and observe his evil plan to punish any and all conversos who would not relinquish the remotest parts of their old faith.



1683-painting by Francisco Rizi depicting the *auto-da-fé* held in Madrid in 1680.

NO MERCY

In the year 1486, with the Inquisition in Castile well underway, several converso prisoners stood before a fully organized inquisitorial board in Medina del Campo, Spain, consisting of three inquisitors, an assessor, and other officials who were all assisted by the Abbot of Medina. During the tribunal, some of the accused conversos were reconciled to the Catholic Church after heavy fines were assessed; others, however, were burned at the stake for their “crime of heresy” by way of observing Jewish customs and the Mosaic Law. Some of the more fortunate were acquitted after a thorough examination found no grounds for punishment.

As was the custom, the account of the inquisition was documented and the papers sent to the Grand Inquisitor, Thomas de Torquemada, for his review. Torquemada had become the face of the Inquisition in Spain and was the final authority in all matters of guilt or innocence, the latter being more than rare, as we will see hereafter. Puzzled by the acquittal and mercy shown to the accused, Torquemada ordered that the acquitted be tried again at a time when Licentiate Villalpando, a man of “more competence,” could oversee the proceedings. The acquitted were rearrested, imprisoned, and several months later tried again under the supervision of Villalpando. After a review of the previous trial, Villalpando had the men tortured and then released, acquitting them again with the results being published as final.

Upon learning the outcome of the conversos’ acquittal for the second time, Torquemada became enraged, declaring that he would burn them all! He again had the two-time acquitted conversos arrested, this time sending them out of their district to the city of Valladolid, where the overfed and under-concerned judges would surely find them guilty. There is little doubt that Torquemada’s threat was carried out and that all the accused were burned at the stake.¹ After the events of 1486 in Medina del Campo, verdicts of acquittal were infrequent, if at all.

TORQUEMADA

How is it that such a sinister man was given the power of life and death over the Jewish conversos of Spain, whose



only “crime” was that of observing Jewish rites passed down from generation to generation? In part two of our study, I discussed how bringing the Roman Inquisition to Spain was a painstaking task reluctantly endorsed by Queen Isabella only after immense pressure was placed upon her by the anti-Semitic party of Spain that was led by a host of devilish men dating back a century. Beginning with the riots of 1391 (led by Ferrand Martinez, who gave the Jewish people of Spain the choice of converting to Catholicism

or death) to the constant lies and exaggerations of Alonzo de Espina and his successor, Alonzo de Hojeda, the torch had now passed to the deadliest anti-Semite of all, Thomas de Torquemada. Volumes have been written on the life of this villain against the Jewish people of Spain. This short article could not do justice to the effect he had on the world and Jewish-Christian relations, and no biographical attempt will be made. My aim in this third installment is to highlight his wickedness, which was eerily referred to in Rafael Sabatini’s 1913 book on the topic as a holocaust.² Torquemada was an evil genius who systematically brought order to the Inquisition that would not and could not allow any accused converso to escape without some penalty, be it monetary or his very life. Torquemada’s Inquisition centered on three main areas that I will examine in some detail: 1) a period of grace; 2) the *Auto de Fe* (an “act of faith” consisting of a ceremony of guilt before the carrying out of the sentence); and 3) punishment and burning at the stake.

THE INQUISITION BEGINS

On September 27, 1480, nearly two years after the Papal Bull of Sixtus IV authorized the Inquisition in Isabella’s Spanish kingdom of Castile, the details surrounding the *modus operandi* were established, making the sovereigns the sole beneficiaries of the Inquisition instead of Rome. Cardinal Mendoza, along with Isabella’s trusted Catholic advisor, Thomas de Torquemada, would carry out the task of appointing inquisitors beginning in the town of Seville, where

¹ Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, Vol. 1 (Forgotten Books Publishers, 2012), pp. 175, 551.

² Raphael Sabatini, *Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition* (McAllister Editions, 2015), p. 53.



converso “heresy” was most rampant. Two Dominican friars were selected: Juan de San Martino and Miguel Morillo. These men met the standard set by Torquemada. They were both “God-fearing priests” who were over forty years of age and held either a bachelor’s or master’s of divinity and a doctorate of canon law. To assist the inquisitors and to record all proceedings, two additional priests were appointed. Strict recordkeeping was vital to ensure that all proceeds from the guilty conversos would be entrusted to the sovereigns of Spain and not to Rome.

On October 9, 1480, the four entrusted priests set out for the city of Seville, where they were preceded with a command by the sovereigns that all citizens would assist the two inquisitors in carrying out their mission of rooting out all heresy from Spain. Upon arrival, the men were cordially greeted, but they were dismayed when no assistance was given to them. One colossal “oversight” of the Spanish Inquisition (which will become apparent in the closing article) was that converso prosperity benefited all of the citizens of Spain, and to turn over an esteemed member of society—who could also be a dear friend—to certain death would do nothing but hurt the town and nation.

Not only was little assistance given to the Dominican friars, but there was also a notable absence of the conversos of Seville. The knowledge of the Inquisition coming to their town frightened the conversos to the point of flight. The mere thought of the white-robed, black-hooded inquisitors in a procession led by barefoot friars carrying a white cross would put fear into any man. Many converso

refugees immigrated to neighboring towns, where they sought sanctuary with the nobles. This act of flight was a sure sign of “heretical guilt” in the eyes of the inquisitors, causing them to enact the first of three edicts that would pave the way for a flood of conversos to either be turned over to the inquisitors or to give themselves up voluntarily.

THE EDICT OF GRACE

On January 2, 1481, the inquisitors ordained an edict that all nobles of the kingdom of Castile, within fifteen days of the edict’s publication, must make an exact account of all conversos who had sought refuge in their land and return them to the prison in Seville. The nobles were also required to confiscate the property of the Jewish refugees, which was now subject to the inquisitors. No nobleman or citizen was to harbor a refugee under pain of excommunication and loss of position as well as punishment fitting an abet-

tor of a heretic. The severity of this edict, no doubt, brought keen awareness to the citizens of Spain of the iron-fist methods that would be employed by Thomas de Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition.

Following the severe edict of 1481, another edict soon arrived. It is unclear to scholars who exactly implemented the Edict of Grace, but some have argued that Queen Isabella, in her reluctance to support cruelty, insisted that the inquisitors adopt this mercy. The Edict of Grace was not new, as the Roman Inquisition had adopted the procedure in 1235,³ allowing those “guilty of apostasy” to voluntarily come forward within the appointed time of forty days and confess their “sins” and be reconciled to the church. This practice was once again granted to all conversos who would come forward and confess their acts of “heresy,” assuring them that if they did so, they would be reconciled and not suffer loss of life or property. If

³ Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Middle Ages* (Kindle Edition, Loc. 13271).



they did not take advantage of this period, however, they could be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The response to the edict was massive and immediate. An estimated 20,000 conversos voluntarily came forward to admit their “guilt” of practicing the laws of Moses with the understanding that they would receive amnesty and secure absolution. Unlike the Medieval Inquisition, this was Thomas de Torquemada’s inquisition. He was the leader of the anti-Semites of Spain, and no act of Judaism by a Catholic could go unpunished. Unbeknownst to the eager confessors, they had walked into a trap that not only endangered them, but also their friends and family.

Torquemada’s twist to the Edict of Grace was his own invented fine print to the edict. In order to be fully absolved of the “crime of Judaist behavior,” the contrition must be “sincere” (something that could only be subjectively rendered by the inquisitors). The second and more damaging fine print was that the confessor must prove his guilt by naming all of those who participated with him in his act of “heresy,” as well as by giving the names of those who taught him the acts.

Before proceeding, I would like you to take a moment and grasp the magnitude of what Torquemada had implemented. Many of God’s chosen people actually had openly embraced their new faith in Yeshua. Now, they were being asked to betray their race and members of their own families whom they knew to be participants in Jewish rites. To not do so would mean loss of property, destitution for their children, and an agonizing death by fire. The vast majority was left with no choice

but to betray mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and even children because withholding the name of any guilty participant meant instant guilt upon oneself. Those who fell into the edict’s trap had no choice but to comply in the hopes that all would receive acquittal. What was unknown at the time was that all of the accused were instantly guilty of the “crime” of “heresy”; there was no innocence. Many who were arrested had no idea what “crimes” they were accused of and often only learned of them on sentencing day. The Edict of Grace was nothing but a diabolical trap to ensure the confiscation of converso property, as well as to send many to life imprisonment or death at the stake.



The unchecked Torquemada furthered his plan, effectuated by the inquisitors Morillo and San Martin, with yet another talon, one that would create suspicion, betrayal, and turmoil throughout the city. The third edict decreed that any known converso practicing any form of Jewish rite must be turned into the inquisitorial board under pain of mortal sin and excommunication. To withhold any information against a converso heretic would mean the guilt of an abettor. For the convenience of all “good” Catholics, Morillo and San Martin composed a list of thirty-seven

articles⁴ in order to aid in the recognition of anyone who may be participating in Judaic rituals. These articles left no man safe from the clutches of the Inquisition. This final edict was a malicious opportunity for any and all anti-Semites in Spain. If there were a converso who was disliked for any reason, or if a converso were in a position of authority or in an occupation desired by an “Old Christian,” now was their chance to rid themselves of the competition or seek revenge against the envied. A sampling of the articles revealed rules pertaining to anyone who might keep the Sabbath; anyone who would recite the psalms of David without concluding with “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”; and any family who would give their children Hebrew names after baptism. Conceived through cleverness or fueled by paranoia, some would climb upon the roof of the Convent of St. Paul, the highest point in Seville, and seek to discover on Saturday mornings those whose chimneys were absent of smoke, a sure indicator of conversos observing the Sabbath.⁵

The flood of converso victims was so great that the number arrested by mid-January filled the dungeon of the Convent of St. Paul to capacity. Do not miss the irony here: A convent named after the Apostle Paul, imprisoned for his profession of Yeshua in the first century, had now become a prison for those who allegedly would not openly profess Yeshua in the 15th century. With the number of accused at a maximum, it was now time for the predetermined trials to begin.

⁴ Sabatini, pp. 54-55.

⁵ Ibid., p. 56.



AUTO DE FE

The *Auto de Fe*, or “act of faith,” was a public ceremony culminating from a multifaceted and multilayered process designed to humiliate the guilty and instill fear into the masses. The sentenced “heretic” would be paraded in a procession through the streets of the city leading to an open space where hundreds from the town would gather to watch the spectacle. However, between the Edict of Grace and the *Auto de Fe* ceremony lay many steps, including the arrest, trial, potential torture, sentencing, and penalty steps. In order to fully grasp the depth of suffering the victim of the Spanish Inquisition had to endure, it is incumbent upon the student of history to gain an understanding of each step in the charade.

Upon arrest, the accused would be housed in a prison where they would await trial. As mentioned above, no information was given to the accused as to the content of their crime. The due process given the accused was speedy and initially targeted the wealthier conversos, which demonstrated that the Inquisition would also financially benefit the sovereigns. In later decades, however, the accused would often spend years in prison awaiting trial. The trial itself was not one of prosecution and defense; it was only one of prosecution—the defendant was already guilty. The purpose of the trial was to obtain a confession of guilt by the accused. Counsel was given to the accused for this purpose, as attorneys would encourage their clients to confess and plead for mercy. If the accused would not confess to their crimes of heresy, torture would often be implemented to bring out the confession.

Once confession was obtained, the best the converso could hope for was to be reconciled to the Catholic Church. However, the church could not restore penitents without their “due penalty.” For some, reconciliation meant a sentence worse than death itself, as the humiliation and destitution would seemingly never end. In addition to the loss of all property and livelihood, the additional extent of mandatory penances included open confession of their “crimes” against the church as well as attending weekly sermons preached by Franciscan friars who would rail against the evils of heresy. For six years, the names of the guilty would appear in the parish, and the guilty—with their families present—would listen as their names were called out during Catholic festivals. The reconciled would also be subjected to remedial training of Catholic rituals, such as making the sign of the cross and reciting the Our Father and Hail Mary. Twice a year, the reconciled would reconfess their “sins of heresy”

to the congregation. They were also strictly forbidden to enter a synagogue or the home of a Jewish person. They could not converse with a Jewish person, nor could they do any business with one. If they became ill, they could by no means visit a Jewish physician. Any breach of the above conditions would mean they had relapsed into “heresy” and would suffer the consequence initially spared them: death by fire.

Some additional punishments, it seems, were meant more for humiliation and entrapment than for “restitution.” I am more inclined to believe that these restrictions were designed to create failure on the part of the conversos so they could be arrested again as *relapsos* and killed. Such oddities as the forbiddance of riding in carriages or carts as well as the inability to wear gold or jewels of any kind or wearing fine linens seemed excessive given the Sabbath requirements of dress. Just one breach of any restriction would mean certain



The Inquisition Tribunal, painted by Francisco Goya between 1812 and 1819.

death. Close watch was kept on the reconciled. The most humiliating punishment of all was reserved for the severest “crimes,” the wearing of the *sanbenito*, a head-to-toe garment that marked the guilt of the heretic for all to see. The duration of this rule ranged from the *Auto de Fe* ceremony to life.

THE STAKE

To the reconciled, a lifetime of misery and remembrance of their “guilt” awaited them. To others, however, a more torturous end was realized. For those conversos who would not “confess” or whose crimes of heresy were “blatant and excessive,” only one punishment was fitting for Torquemada’s Inquisition: death by burning. While the conditions of reconciliation were aimed at the humiliation of the accused, the burning at the stake was for the purpose of instilling fear and obedience into the Spanish Catholics. So frequent were the burnings that a permanent structure of stone was constructed in Seville for this purpose, known as the *Quemadero* or “burning place.”⁶ The sentenced were handed over to the secular arm of the government for their execution, as the Catholic Church could not be the final instrument of death. All the while, the priests would implore the “guilty” to confess their “crimes” in hopes of saving their souls from the eternal fire. Those who did confess while at the stake would receive a “merciful” strangulation prior to the flames’ consumption. This barbaric end would be witnessed by all of those attending the *Auto de Fe* ceremony, including the accused’s family. Imagine the horror of witnessing a loved one—whose “crime” was nothing more than observance of Judaism—being burned alive.

Burning the living was not the only means of instilling fear in the masses. For those who had fled and were not recovered, effigies were made and burned in absentia, their names being forever associated with “heresy” against the Catholic Church. Burning was not limited to those present or absent, however. Even those who had previously died were not immune to the punishment of burning. Those who had been accused of “heresy” dating back generations had their bones exhumed from Catholic cemeteries and cast onto a heap where they were burned until no bone was left. The radical nature of the Spanish Inquisition has often been used to separate the Catholic Church from the guilt of the atrocities unique to the Spanish Inquisition, and one would rightfully conclude that the exhumation of the bones of the accused was excessive. However, permission for this act was retroactively granted by Pope Innocent VIII on July 15, 1486, which not only demonstrated complicity on the part of Rome but also the out-of-control nature of the Spanish Inquisition. The very fact that permission was retroactively granted only proved that Torquemada acted on his own throughout his tenure.

BEFORE YOU GO

Queen Isabella of Castile had hoped that by bringing the Inquisition to her beloved land, she might create a “pure” Catholic nation and honor the religion she professed. Thomas de Torquemada, however, saw it as an opportunity to rid all of Spain of Jewishness—a religion and a people he found detestable and unworthy. In the fourth and final installment of this study, we will examine how Torquema-

da’s plan to rid Spain of Jewish influence upon the conversos was an unreachable goal. He was left with only one solution: the expulsion of Spanish Jews. This would not be easy, however, as he was keenly aware of the sovereign’s hesitancy to use this solution. A plan had to be created that would instill fear and hatred for the Jews of Spain, not only by the citizens of Spain but also by the royal court.

Before leaving, I pray that you might take a moment to contemplate all that has transpired up to this point. As a Gentile believer in Yeshua, I can only sympathize with the Jewish people and the injustices that they, as a people, have experienced throughout their history. My aim is to impart a greater understanding of what the Jewish people have endured at the hands of nominal Christians. On this topic, much more will be said in the final installment. Until then, be blessed and NEVER FORGET.

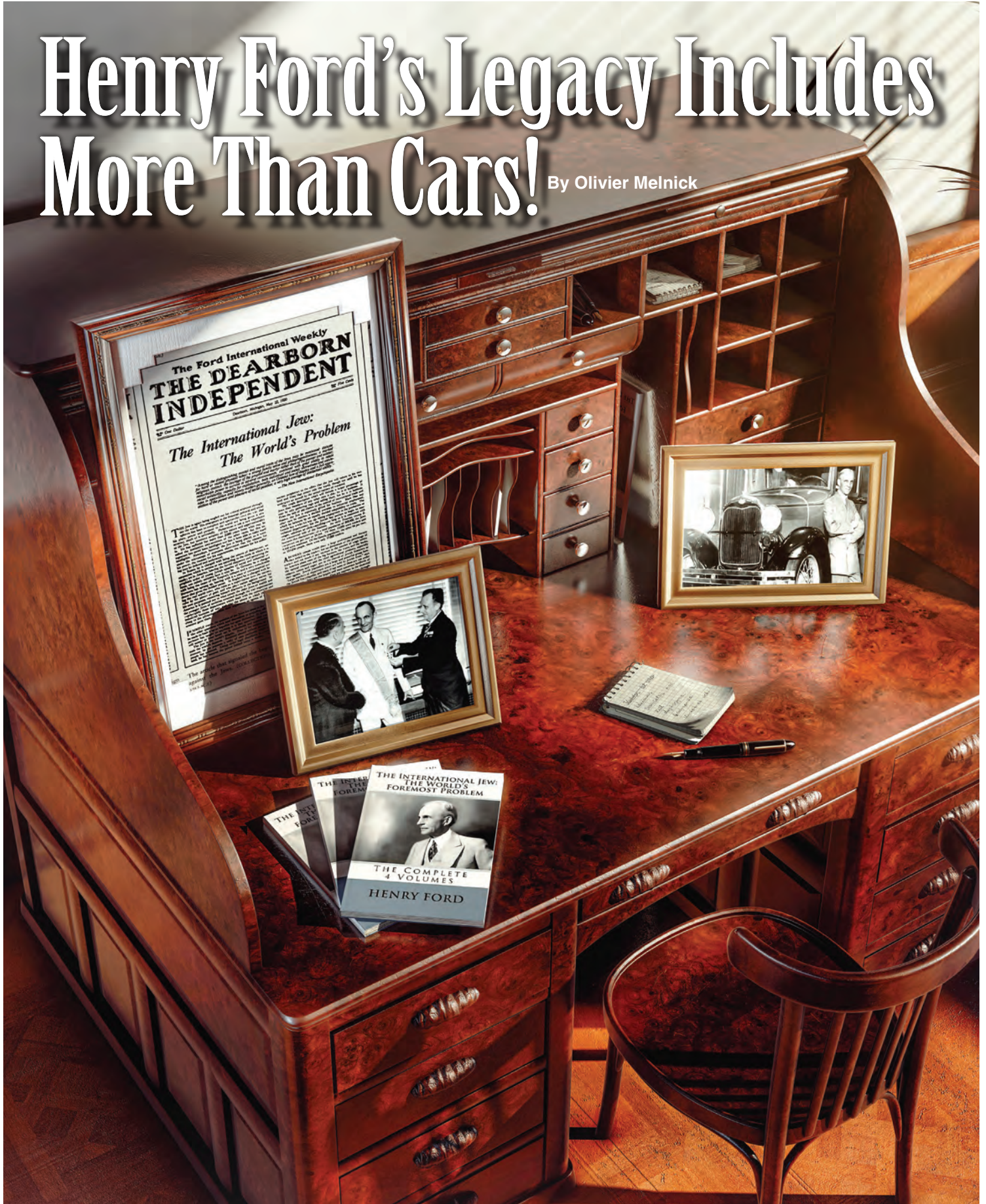
⁶ Sabatini, p. 57.





Henry Ford's Legacy Includes More Than Cars!

By Olivier Melnick



When people hear the name Henry Ford, most will think of the Ford Model-T or the invention of modern factory lines, and those are well worth recognizing and remembering. But there is another aspect of Henry Ford that is little known, and that is his anti-Semitic ideology. Regardless of one's tremendous legacy in the world, we ought to be extremely careful about how we put people on pedestals for some of their accomplishments while ignoring their less honorable feats.

There are some very dark details of history that have loomed over Henry Ford's head and have severely tainted his legacy. To be sure, today's Ford Motor Company is far removed from its original founder and his xenophobic worldview. The Ford Company of 2020 is not the same as the one from the 1920s. Still, a trip back to the beginnings is necessary to shed some light on this American figure. In fact, we need to go back even further to understand a piece of literature—if we dare call it by that name—that Ford heavily relied upon: *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.¹

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion

In the early 1900s, a Russian man named Sergei Nilus (1862-1929) wrote

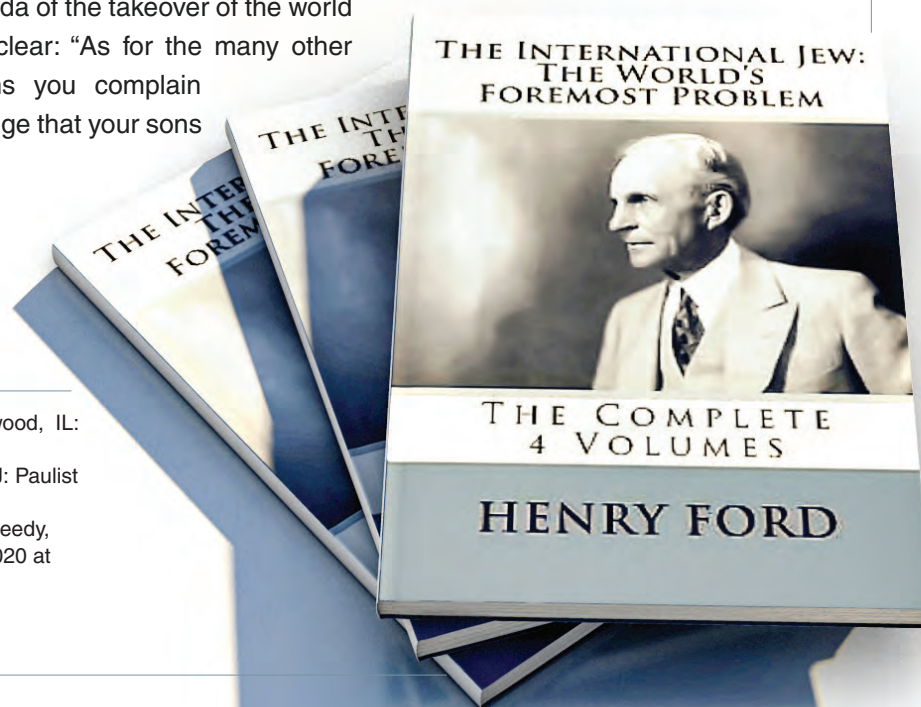
a book that included what he called *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. Nilus claimed that he had received these protocols in 1901 and that they were taken from the minutes of the First Jewish Congress of 1897 in Basel, Switzerland. In reality, he simply adapted an already existing work written by the French attorney Maurice Joly in 1864 as a satire against the regime of Napoleon III. The piece, titled *Dialogue in Hell between Montesquieu and Machiavelli*, became the foundation for *The Protocols*, which were printed by the Russian government to justify the pogroms against the Jews. Little did Nilus or the Russian government know how far *The Protocols* would carry their agenda.² *The Protocols* became the best-known example of a hoax. They are filled with ugly stereotypes about Jews taking over the world and subjugating the Gentiles. They were a compilation of anti-Semitic tropes that, for a while, fueled the fires of anti-Semites around the world.

While no names, places, or dates are ever mentioned in *The Protocols*, an agenda of the takeover of the world seems clear: “As for the many other vexations you complain of: arrange that your sons

become advocates and lawyers, and see that they always mix themselves up with the affairs of State, in order that by putting Christians under your yoke you may dominate the world and be avenged on them.”³ These words seem to indicate that the “elders” desire to establish a plan to control the world and rule the *goyim* (Gentiles): “The peoples of the goyim are bemused with alcoholic liquors; their youth has grown stupid on classicism and from early immorality, into which it has been inducted by our special agents—by tutors, lackeys, governesses in the houses of the wealthy, by clerks and others, by our women in the places of dissipation frequented by the goyim.”⁴

A Fabrication with Detrimental Consequences

Fortunately, in 1921, *The Protocols* were quickly exposed as a fabricated anti-Semitic text in London. But this never stopped people from using them as truth. Henry Ford was one of



¹ David J. Hogan, ed., *The Holocaust Chronicle* (Lincolnwood, IL: Legacy, 2007), pp. 27, 46, 125.

² Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965), pp. 192-193.

³ Sergei Nilus, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (Reedy, WV: Liberty Bell Publications), online. Accessed on June 1, 2020 at https://archive.org/stream/protocolsofthelearnedeldersofzion/protocolsofthelearnedeldersofzion_djvu.txt.

⁴ Ibid.



them. He used a lot of ink spewing the venom of *The Protocols* whichever way he could. One of his venues was the *Dearborn Independent*, a newspaper he owned. He reprinted *The Protocols* between 1920 and 1927 in this publication. Ford continued to be oblivious about the origins of the pamphlet and was quoted as saying, "The only statement I care to make about *The Protocols* is that they fit in with what is going on." It was his own way of saying, "Don't confuse me with the facts!" Ford continued to promote the fraudulent texts and was also responsible for the financing and distribution of 500,000 copies of *The Protocols*.

Many of the articles published in the *Dearborn Independent* were reprinted in a book titled *The International Jew: The World's Foremost*

Problem. In this compilation, Ford continued to build on the legacy started by *The Protocols*, stating: "The international Jew, as already defined, rules not because he is rich, but because in a most marked degree he possesses the commercial and masterful genius of his race, and avails himself of a racial loyalty and solidarity the like of which exists in no other human group." In other words, the Jewish people are only loyal to their own "race."

Ford further accused the Jews of being greedy parasites:

Going still further down the line, in shadier lanes, in semi-hidden offices, may be seen numerous members of the Jewish race who are identified with no established

market which deals with securities. These are the true parasites of the Wall Street environment; they are the camp followers without status. Their work is that of fraudulent stock promotion, and they enter upon it with a zeal and an energy which nothing can dismay. Their purpose is to make money without labor, to get money without giving value, and in this they are immensely successful. It is amazing the number of these men who make immense fortunes; it is equally amazing the continuous crop of unwary, poorly informed, and unsuspecting Gentiles who send their money from all parts of the United States for the worthless bits of paper in which these Jewish parasites deal.⁵

Ford prepared the way for Holocaust deniers and historical revisionists when he wrote that the accounts of the pogroms in Russia were fabrications: "This propaganda of pogroms – 'thousands upon thousands of Jews killed' – amounts to nothing except as it illustrates the gullibility of the Press, no one believes this propaganda and governments regularly disprove it."⁶

Hitler himself relied heavily on the 1919 German translation of *The Protocols* and even quoted them in *Mein Kampf*, praising and validating them:

To what an extent the whole existence of this people is based on a continuous lie is

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mitchell Bard, "Anti-Semitism in the U.S.: 'The International Jew' – Henry Ford Sr. (1920)," *Jewish Virtual Library*. Accessed on June 1, 2020 at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-the-international-jew-quot#2>.

shown incomparably by the Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion, so infinitely hated by the Jews . . . What many Jews may do unconsciously is here consciously exposed. And that is what matters. It is completely indifferent from what Jewish brain these disclosures originate; the important thing is that with positively terrifying certainty they reveal the nature and activity of the Jewish people and expose their inner contexts as well as their ultimate final aims.⁷

Hitler was greatly influenced by *The Protocols*, and it was part of his own anti-Semitic self-indoctrination that helped him to rationalize the destruction of European Jewry. In a sense, The Protocols were a catalyst for the Holocaust as they became part and parcel of “The Solution to the Jewish Question.” Additionally, Hitler had great admiration for Henry Ford and mentioned him in *Mein Kampf*. He even kept a photograph of the “Great American Heinrich Ford,” as he called him.⁸ Hitler decided to honor the man on his 75th birthday. Delegates from the Nazi Party made sure that Henry Ford received the Grand Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle, which is the highest honor that a foreigner could receive from Nazi Germany.⁹

In the 21st century, *The Protocols* continue to be published and distributed by Neo-Nazi fringe groups and radical Islamist groups around the

world. While classified under “controversial knowledge,” the text is still available on Amazon.

Lest We Become a Stumbling Block

Ford's anti-Semitism is charred in the annals of history. We cannot deny it, it should not be minimized, and it will not be forgotten. This could explain why, to this day, some Jewish people will not buy an automobile from the Ford Motor Company, even though it must be clearly stated that the Ford Motor Company of 2020 IS NOT the Ford Motor Company of 1920 by a long shot. Yet, this helps me to understand my own Holocaust-survivor mother who consistently and stubbornly refused to step foot on German soil for the rest of her life because of the day

she saw her father taken before her eyes by the Gestapo in her Paris home when she was only 15.

Henry Ford's legacy has a lot of positives, but they cannot eradicate the dark side of a man who seemed so passionate about painting a very anti-Semitic picture of the Jewish people. So, we must be careful about whom we praise and how we praise them lest we become a stumbling block to our unsaved friends and relatives.

When our Jewish friends respond negatively to our worldly uplifting of men such as Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, or even Martin Luther, let us think hard before we accuse them of misunderstanding or overreacting. It is our responsibility as believers to be educated about history and how it has affected and continues to affect the Jewish people. Henry Ford was an anti-Semite, and no amount of inno-

vation, entrepreneurship, or creativity can or should erase this truth from history, lest we allow others to reenact his words and deeds. Our duty as believers is to know the truth, trust the truth, and share the truth without ignoring history or culture.



Henry Ford receiving the Grand Cross of the German Eagle from Nazi officials in 1938.

Olivier Melnick serves as the Northwest Regional Director of Chosen People Ministries and is on the Board of Directors of Chosen People France. For additional articles on anti-Semitism, see his blog site: <https://www.oliviermelnick.com/>.

⁷ Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism 1917-1945* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 76.

⁸ Richard S. Levy, *Antisemitism in the Modern World: An Anthology of Texts* (New York City, NY: Heath and Company, 1991), pp. 166-167.

⁹ “Rare Historical Photos.” Accessed on June 1, 2020 at <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/henry-ford-grand-cross-1938/>.



HOW TO PRAY LIKE DANIEL



PRAYER

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS ONLY LIVED SUCCESSFULLY WHILE IN AN INTIMATE AND EXPECTANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THIS RELATIONSHIP CANNOT EXIST IN FULLNESS APART FROM TWO FUNDAMENTALLY IMPORTANT DISCIPLINES:

BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER.



In very simple terms, through Bible study God speaks His truths to us and through prayer we speak to God as a father. There is a direct relationship between the quality of the time we spend in these two essential disciplines and the eternal value of our lives and actions. Regardless of our circumstances, whether good or bad, we should never step away from the one relationship that will always be a blessing to us and to those around us: our relationship with our Abba in heaven.

One of the greatest examples of a successful spiritual life is that of Daniel the prophet. As a prophet, as a leader of his own people Israel and of others, and as a trusted counselor to many kings, Daniel never compromised his integrity and faithfulness to his God. He maintained this disciplined life while living in a pagan world surrounded by a false religious system and threats of evil. His integrity and faithfulness to God was rooted in the Law of Moses, in the words of the prophets, and in prayer.

The focus of those who study chapter 9 of the book of Daniel tends to rightfully rest on the prophetic portions, starting with the visitation of the angel Gabriel and the many profound revelations it contains, and also on Daniel's prayer preceding Gabriel's arrival. However, it is in verses 1-3 that we see the disciplined spiritual life Daniel lived that led to his prayer and the revelations that followed. In these introductory verses of this rich chapter, we see Daniel not as a prophet or a leader or a king's counselor, but as a man in an intimate

and expectant relationship with his God.

As a believer, I very much desire an intimate and expectant relationship with God, and I hope you do as well. But what if I am in a rut? What if I feel like God is far removed? What if I have allowed the cares and concerns of this world—and there are so many—to take my focus away from Him? What if I feel surrounded by evil, exiled far away from home, like Daniel? What if I see my prayers bouncing off the ceiling and accumulating under my feet in a heap of words? What if God's words in the Bible appear to lack the magnetic attraction they once had? What do I do? I PRAY LIKE DANIEL!

PRAYING
GOD'S WORDS

To pray like Daniel is to pray from within the Word of God, imbued with His truth, allowing it to motivate and guide us in everything that we do and everything that we are. As we engage in diligent study of God's Word by various means, gaining insight by His truth (Dan. 9:13), we become keenly aware of God's presence through His written Word, not in some esoteric way, but in a very real and practical sense as we observe the lives of those who have walked before us. This daily practice, in turn, drives us to pray, which simply means to ask God for something.

In 9:1, Daniel starts off by placing the timing of this particular event in his walk with God in historical context. In spite of the academic debate¹ surrounding the historical identity of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, I am on solid ground when I say that if Yeshua accepted Daniel as a prophet of God (Mt. 25:15), then I accept Yeshua's testimony and Daniel's inspired words for what they are: incontestable truth. Although this may be viewed by some as the easy way out, it is the way of faith in a big God who can and has revealed Himself through His Word. Maybe one day scholarship will catch up with the details of the identity of King Darius, but for now, the words of the Messiah of Israel are enough for me. The point here is that Daniel tells us when this event took place: between the years 538² and 539 B.C.³ However, more importantly, it took place during a time when this king was favorably inclined to the Jewish people, as evident in the book of Ezra (Ezr. 1:1).

In 9:2, Daniel shows us something amazingly instructional about him and his relationship with God. This relationship was not molded and rooted in dreams, visions, or visitations. Certainly, these things came to him as a prophet of God, and he faithfully recorded them for our benefit and instruction (Rom. 15:3-4). His relationship was in fact molded and rooted not in these very real and magnificent experiences, but in the Word of God. We can see this clearly as he states that he "perceived in the **books** the number of years that, according to

¹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Volume 21 of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), p. 182.

² Ibid.

³ L. F. Hartman, A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A New Translation With Notes and Commentary on Chapters 1-9* (Anchor Bible Commentary, Vol. 23; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 240.



the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years” (emphasis added). The word rendered here as “perceived” in the ESV carries the sense of “to take note” or “to observe with care or pay close attention to.”⁴ Daniel was not praying and asking God to show him by a dream, a visitation, or some other means what the future was to be for Jerusalem. Rather, he did his own homework. He took care and paid close attention to what the Lord had already revealed through his prophet Jeremiah, and the answer was right there: seventy years.⁵

I cannot overstate the importance of this for us in our own spiritual lives! Daniel—a man with the same nature you and I possess (Jas. 5:17) and yet one who had experienced events throughout his life in which God manifested His presence in supernatural ways—did not presume that the Lord would use these methods to communicate with him again. He instead went to the LORD through His Word, he went to what the LORD had already revealed, and the answer was there waiting for him.

Progressive revelation⁶ has given us greater insight into God’s truth today than what was available to Daniel even during his subsequent visit by the angel Gabriel, as recorded later in chapter 9, including all of his experiences before and after Gabriel’s visit. For example, we now know the identity of the One who was to be “cut off and have nothing” (Dan. 9:26). We now know that we are part of this

revealed mystery called “the church” where Jewish and Gentile believers are united as one new man under the headship of the Jewish Messiah (Eph. 2:15). We now know because we have the full counsel of God in this dispensation of grace, in this long break between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel.

SO, IF THE WORDS OF GOD LACK
THE MAGNETISM THEY ONCE HAD,
THIS IS NOT A FAULT OF THE
AUTHOR, BUT OF THE READER.

This knowledge should drive us to pray and to ask Him in faith to cause us to hunger for His Word. It should drive us to confession and repentance where we have failed. It should drive us to pray like Daniel: “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.” (Dan. 9:19).

In 9:3, Daniel turns his face to the Lord and seeks Him in prayer. The sure Word of God as recorded by Jeremiah assured Daniel that now was indeed the right time for the restoration of Jerusalem. His accurate historical placement of this event during the reign of a favorable king, coupled with the certainty that the end of the seventy years was quickly approaching, should have led to rejoicing in prayers of thanksgiving. Yet, Daniel seeks the LORD with pleas for mercy while fasting in sackcloth and ashes. Why?

COMFORT AND
DISOBEDIENCE

Daniel again shows us something of his relationship with God: It was guided by the knowledge and insights gained though the study of God’s Word. He knew well the Word of the Lord given through Moses; he knew well the history of sin and disobedience of his people as recorded in the Torah. He knew that the Jewish people, like all of us, had the tendency to become comfortable in their new home away from home (Ex. 14:12). This fact is evident in the relatively low number of returnees as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah. It is also seen in the extensive growth of the Jewish community in Iraq, which centuries later resulted in the development of the Babylonian Talmud and many other Jewish literary works. In certain respects, Babylon was a nice place—not unlike the United States—and now with a favorable king. Perhaps the impetus to return to Israel and leave the splendor of Babylon behind and venture to a place full of uncertainty and rubble was diminished. Daniel prayed not in a spirit of rejoicing, but in one of contrition and humility, knowing that failure on the part of the people with whom he intimately identified was a definite possibility. Daniel knew the times, his people, and himself; he also knew

⁴ Faithlife Corporation. (2020). Logos Bible Software Bible Sense Lexicon (Version 8.13) [Computer software]. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife Corporation.

⁵ H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet* (New York, NY: Loizeaux Bros., 1953; 2nd ed.), p. 156.

⁶ A. G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Bible Study Collection* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1983), mbs 023, p. 14.

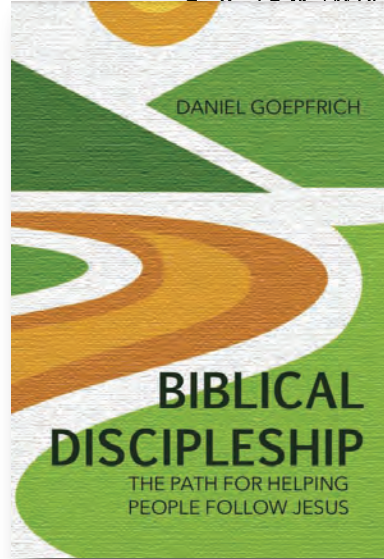
God's Word. This knowledge he put into action by praying with humility.

OUR CHALLENGE

My challenge for us is this: As we find ourselves far away from our true home, living in a pagan world that is bent on following false messiahs, or perhaps as we are getting a little too comfortable in our surroundings like the Jews in Babylon, are we praying like Daniel? If the answer is no, here is a simple way we can change this: Messiah Jesus promised us that the He will come and rapture us home. Unlike the 70-year timing of the return from Babylon prophesied by Jeremiah, we do not know the day or the hour of the rapture. But we have a knowledge that is greater than the knowledge Daniel had because the One who gives us that knowledge is not a mere prophet, but the Messiah Himself. Furthermore, our destination is not a pile of rubble, but a place prepared by Him in heaven's splendor (Jn. 14:1-4)! So, let's together pray like Daniel! Let's use our knowledge of the promised rapture obtained through the study of God's Word to guide our prayers of repentance for our nation and ourselves. Let's study the Word and pray for opportunities and boldness to share the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Yeshua with others so they too can "always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). And finally let's all pray, "Amen. Come, Lord Yeshua!" (Rev. 22:20).



Book Review



Review of Daniel Goepfrich's *Biblical Discipleship*

By Christiane Jurik

In II Timothy 3:16-17, God presents a clear goal for His people: They are meant to be *complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*. The believers' spiritual maturity is expressed in their practical abilities to fulfill all that God has called them to do. The means by which this maturing is to be accomplished is by *all Scripture*. Often, God's goals turn into the believers' tasks. *We* are to make disciples. *We* are to teach our brothers and sisters in the Lord all Scripture so that they may be equipped for every good work.

Unfortunately, there is a profound lack of understanding in the church today of what

solid discipleship training entails. Often, even deacons and elders have a difficult time explaining what a biblical disciple really is. The mark of a disciple is obedience and being a lifelong learner willing to sit at the feet of the Savior to study the Scriptures, to know Him better, to follow Him, and to serve Him. In his book *Biblical Discipleship*, Daniel Goepfrich offers an easy-to-follow roadmap that allows every believer to fulfill God's calling to make disciples (Mt. 28:19-20). The author holds a master's degree in theology and is the Teaching Pastor at Oak Tree Community Church in South Bend, Indiana. Quite obviously, he has been teaching on the topic of biblical discipleship for many years, and so his work reflects deep biblical insight into the topic at hand. From the outline of the book to the thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter, this work reads very well, addressing pastors, teachers, and laymen alike. The author's passionate appeal to the reader is felt in every chapter and makes this book a surprising page-turner.

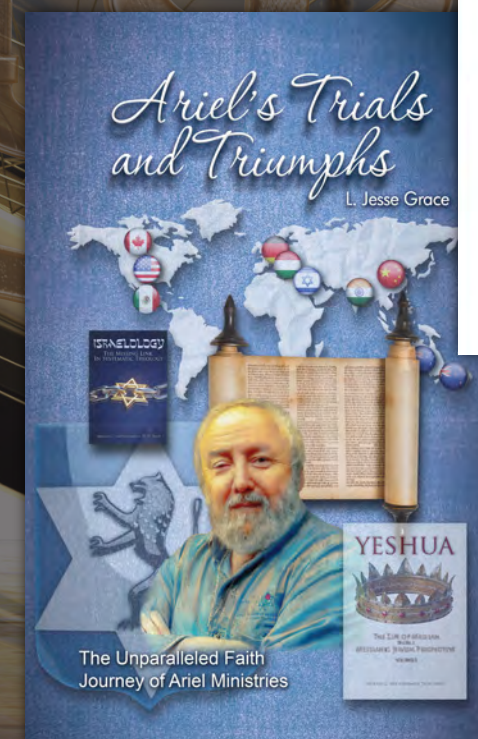
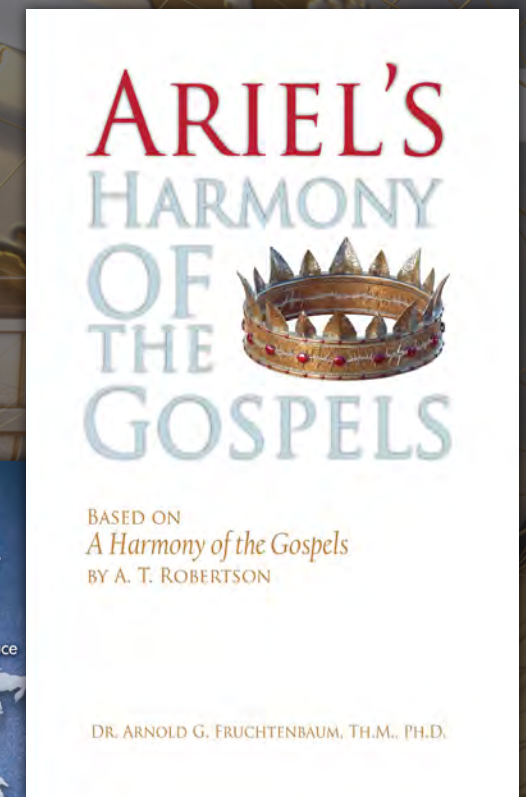
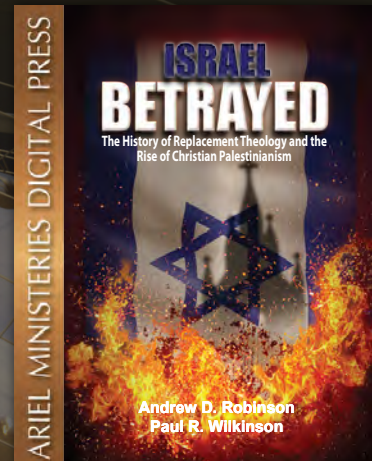
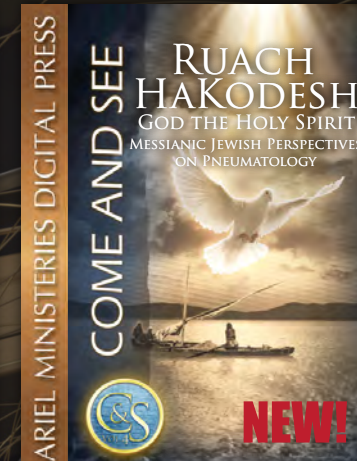
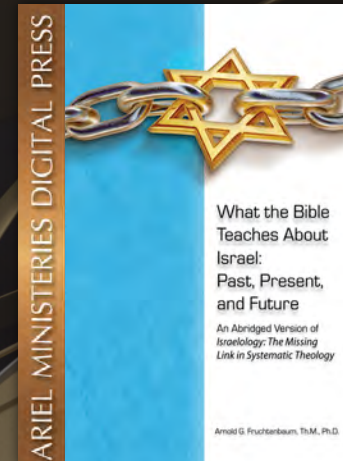
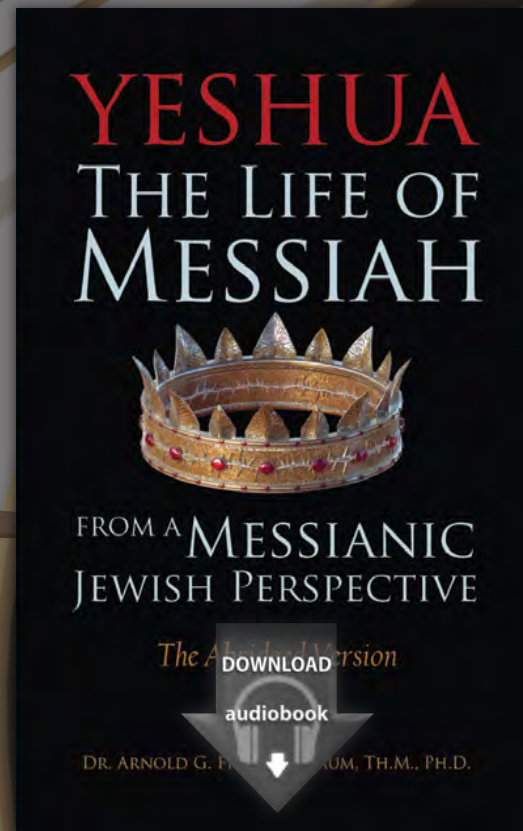
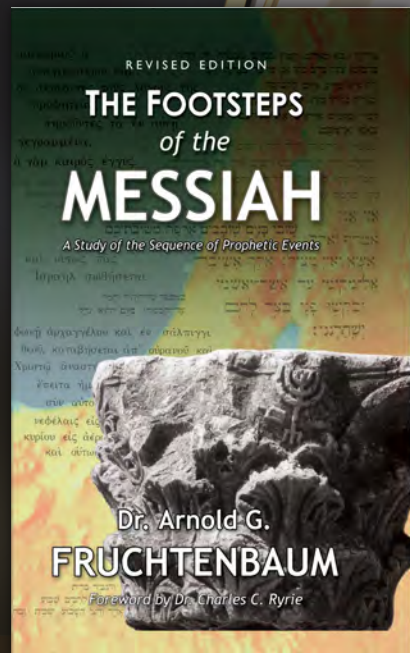
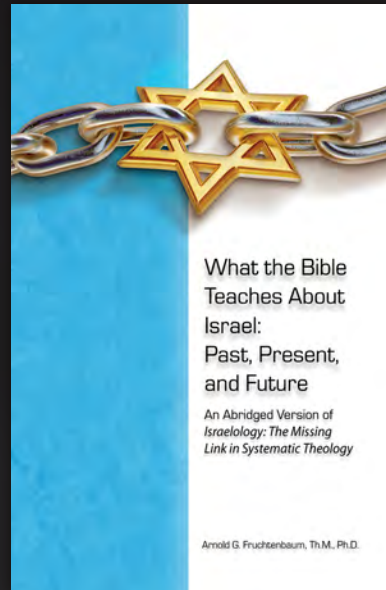
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