

Fall 2021 / Volume 1 / #40  
אריאל



ARIEL  
MINISTRIES

# THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

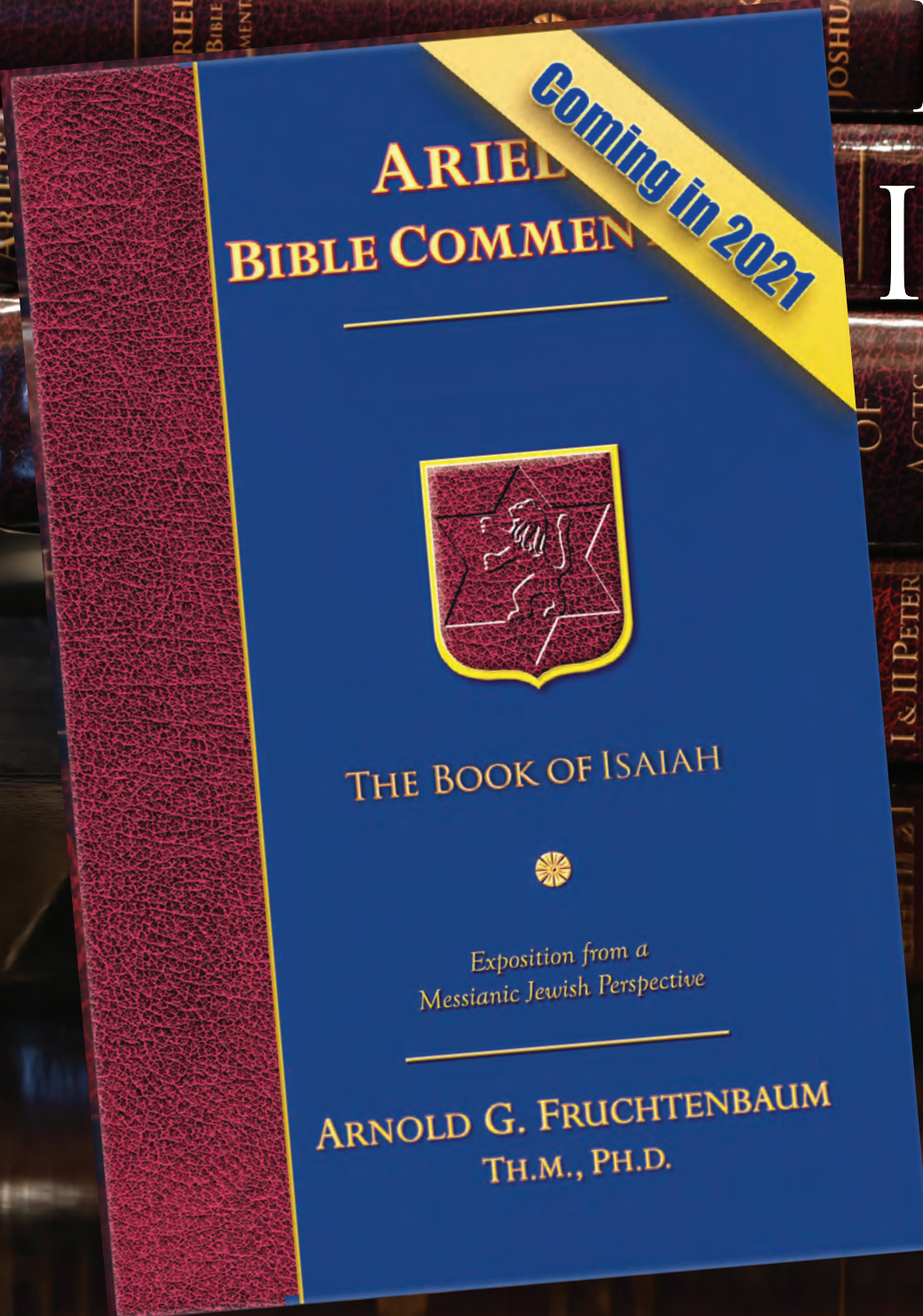
Plus:

Joel 2:28-32  
A New Bible Study  
by Dr. Fruchtenbaum

NAR A Modern-Day  
Apostasy

Loving Your Wife  
A Pep Talk

Faith Issues  
Orthodox Jews and Messianic Jews  
Can Agree On



# THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

“This commentary is highly recommended to our Messianic Jewish community and to the Christian world as a standard for a full, conservative interpretation of the book of Isaiah. Indeed, all who value God's Word will find it to be a true gem.”

— Mottel Baleston

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## Cover Story:

To most believers, the term “salvation” refers exclusively to the eternal, spiritual deliverance from God’s judgment of sin. Yet, according to the Scriptures, the term has additional meanings. In this cover story, Pastor Dennis Rokser elaborates on these meanings and shows that there are three time zones to salvation.



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## 14 Bible Study:

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Mottel Baleston elaborates on several key issues of faith that Orthodox Jews and Messianic Jews can agree on.

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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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# CANCEL CULTURE

The phrase “cancel culture” has become rather popular in recent years. In very general terms, this modern form of ostracism means that people are thrust out of social or professional circles because they hold to a different worldview than those who cancel them. One of the most striking examples of this social phenomenon can be seen in a Pew Research Center survey from 2020 whose purpose it was to identify what it means to be Jewish in America.<sup>1</sup> The survey covered a wide spectrum of Jews, including people who identify as religious and those who call themselves agnostics or atheists. However, there is one group the Pew Research Center omitted from this study, and that is the Messianic Jewish community.

I first heard about the survey at a conference that took place this year in Dallas, Texas, and was organized by the wonderful team of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism under the leadership of Jim Sibley. The results of the survey, presented in a paper by Susan Perlman from Jews for Jesus, struck me as bizarre. Who made the decision to remove Messianic Jews from this study? And why did they do it?

The answer to these questions came when I was editing Dr. Fruchtenbaum's commentary on Isaiah. Isaiah 63:16a quotes the believing and faithful remnant of Israel at the time of the tribulation as saying: *For you are our Father, though Abraham knows us not, and Israel does not acknowledge us: you, O LORD, are our Father.* As Dr. Fruchtenbaum points out in his commentary, the verse looks at the situation of the remnant in relation to God and in relation to Israel as a whole. In relation to God, the verse simply states that YHWH is the Father of the remnant. In relation to Israel, the situation is that Abraham did not know this remnant. This part of the verse is not surprising, since the patriarch lived far before the time in which this prayer is spoken. Therefore, he could not have known the people who will form the remnant of that future time. The surprising part is that Israel will not acknowledge the remnant. During the tribulation, two-thirds of Israel will be apostate (Zech. 13:8-9). The rest will make up the faithful remnant of the time, but they will not be recognized as Jews by Israel the whole. Looking at the Pew Research Center study, it is clear that the status of the remnant today is exactly the same. Today's larger Jewish community refuses to recognize the Messianic Jewish community as fellow Jews, let alone as the faithful remnant of Israel.

God's Word is precise and remarkable in that it has yet to leave any of my questions unanswered.

Yours in Messiah's service,

*Christiane Jurik*

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<sup>1</sup> The results of the study are found here:  
<https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>.



# Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives

## MEET THE TEAM



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### ARIEL BRANCHES



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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 Gujarati language.



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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 Italy** **Paolo & Martina Speciale**

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Paolo and Martina Speciale represent Ariel Ministries in Italy. The husband-and-wife team coordinates the translations of our manuscripts and books into Italian. Their goal is to share the Messianic Jewish perspective in Italy through live teaching, social media pages, and seminars.



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



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Wion and Shirley Wleh represent Ariel Ministries in Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa. The husband-and-wife team teaches the Scriptures from the Jewish perspective in workshops, seminars, and weekly classes designed for pastors and laypersons alike.



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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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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 – Field Representative** **(Rock Hill, SC.)**

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



## Ariel's Publishing Department



Life is very, very busy at Ariel's Publishing Department. By now, our work on the Isaiah commentary is done, and the book has been sent to the printing company. The editing of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's commentary on Romans is well underway, and the newest magazine—well, you are holding it in your hands right now! None of this work would be possible without the help of a team of very devoted

copyeditors and proofreaders who are volunteering their precious time and talents to the ministry. One such person is Debbie Byars, a long-term friend of the ministry. Here is her story:



Debbie Byars

When I was a child, my grandmother told me that the Jewish people were God's chosen people, and so, from early on, God was preparing me for a great love for the Jewish people.

I was blessed to meet Arnold and Mary Ann shortly after the birth of the ministry in 1979. I happily added my name to the mailing list and kept in close contact. I knew I'd love to be a real part of this ministry.

I was married to a Jewish man who became a believer in 1980 after hearing Arnold speak.

In 1986, Ariel moved to California, where I was living. I got a call one day, and after saying hello, I heard "Hi there." I said, "Hi Arnold!" He said, "Oh, you recognized my voice!" Considering he has the most recognizable voice on the planet, it was not hard. ☺ He asked if I would like to volunteer at the office and, well, of course!! Volunteering became a full-time paid position as the bookkeeper, a job I loved and was honored to perform until 1998.

Working with this ministry has been the greatest joy of my life. Meeting

donors who have sacrificially given to keep it afloat was humbling. Working with a great staff, especially the Demers, was awesome! Seeing Jewish people come to their Messiah was amazing. Since leaving the paid position, I have volunteered any time that I have been available.

Recently, while I was praying that the Lord would use me again, Christiane called and asked if I'd help proof the eBooks. I was delighted to be a part of Ariel in a tangible way again.

My grandmother went home to the Lord in the year Ariel was born. I wish she had lived to know I have been in Jewish missions most of my life.

Proverbs 16:9

Debbie Byars



Joel Hung is a brother who resides in New Zealand. We asked him to share what Ariel Ministries means to him, and he sent us this report:

I became familiar with Ariel Ministries and Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's work online years ago, backed up by meeting in person the representative of Ariel New Zealand in the mid-2000s. One thing Dr.

Fruchtenbaum has taught me is that the Jewish frame of reference in the Scriptures is the key to understanding God's Word. Yeshua came to this earth to be the Messiah of the Jews by fulfilling the Mosaic Law. He has also become the Savior of the whole world. However, this does not mean that the Jewishness of God's promises or His promises to physical Israel have been replaced by or fulfilled by or transferred to the church. These promises also cannot be spiritualized as finding fulfillment in the church or in humanity in general.

I fellowship at a church that is Augustinian and supersessionist. It holds to a theology on Israel and end-times prophecy that radically differs from that of Ariel Ministries, a ministry that stands firm on the position that God truly has kept and is keeping His promises. Ariel teaches that the promises revealed by the Law and the Prophets have been fulfilled and will be fulfilled by Messiah Yeshua. At His first coming, He atoned for the sins of Israel and the world at the cross. At the second coming, He will judge the nations, rescue His people Israel, and inaugurate the millennial kingdom on the earth. I am forever grateful to Dr. Fruchtenbaum and the team's commitment to God's Scriptures understood faithfully in their historical, grammatical, and literal sense.



Joel Hung

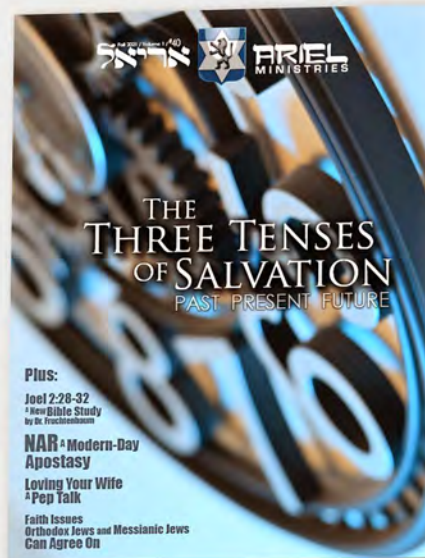
# Issue 40: A Decade of Teaching

It is hard to believe that the Ariel Magazine is turning ten this year! In the beginning, the quarterly publication was meant to reach our brothers and sisters in the Lord with testimonies and ministry updates. It was to be “green-slope” reading material, a metaphor taken from the sport of skiing where the different ski runs are labeled by colors and symbols to show the grade of difficulty. The concept was developed by the late Dr. Barg, one of Ariel’s Board members, and Emily Glisson, the magazine’s first editor. By Emily’s side was the current Editor-in-Chief of Ariel Ministries, Christiane Jurik, who served the ministry as a volunteer copyeditor. The team was completed by Jesse and Josh Gonzales, the graphic designers who, if we may say so ourselves, have made the publication visually extraordinarily appealing.

When Emily got married and resigned from her position, Christiane took over the magazine. Under her leadership, the publication moved in a more scholarly direction while maintaining the ministry’s mission statement to present the Scriptures from a Messianic Jewish perspective. Today, the magazine is replete with articles that address pastors, scholars, and lay people alike. Pauline Ilsen, Ariel Ministries’ much appreciated, longtime proofreader from California, came alongside Christiane as copyeditor, and two ladies who would rather serve the ministry in the background joined the editorial team as diligent proofreaders. Just recently, the team was completed by Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s previous secretary Roxanne Tretheway, who offered her proofreading skills to the ministry. As Ariel’s gatekeeper of good theology, Dr. Fruchtenbaum takes care of peer reviewing the texts.

The magazine is sent to the generous and faithful donors of Ariel Ministries free of charge. It is also available on our website ([www.ariel.org](http://www.ariel.org)) as a downloadable PDF. We are often asked why we do not charge for the publication, and the answer is that it fulfills one of our two mission statements: Ariel Ministries exists to reach Jewish people with the good news of the Jewish Messiah and to disciple both Jewish and Gentile believers from a Jewish frame of reference. The magazine is one of our tools to fulfill the goal of discipleship, and the articles are meant to equip the readers with Bible teachings that will allow them to fulfill their own callings. For this purpose, the magazine presents scholarly and devotional articles as well as testimonies of what God is doing through His children around the world.

Our prayer is that God will continue to use the Ariel Magazine to draw the reader closer to Yeshua the Messiah—for His honor and glory.





# THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION

By Dennis Rokser

Has anyone ever asked you, "Are you saved?" If you have trusted in Messiah Jesus and have received the gift of eternal life, you should be able to confidently reply with an emphatic "Yes" to this important question. But did you also realize that if you clearly understood the teaching of the Scriptures, you could answer this same question with the threefold answer: "*I have been saved; I am being saved; and I will be saved*"? Unfortunately, I regularly communicate with people who claim to be born again and yet are doctrinally confused or have never heard of the *three tenses of salvation*, which is one of the most critical and clarifying doctrines of the entire Bible.



## What Does “Salvation” Mean?

The biblical words “saved,” “save,” and “salvation” are English translations from the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) words that underscore the concepts of “deliverance, safety, rescue, help, preservation, release, and victory.” Thus, when asked, “Are you saved?” a legitimate question would be “What *kind* of salvation are you referring to?” The concept of salvation occurs over 600 times in the Bible, and the *context* determines the specific salvation targeted in each passage.

## Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

God wants you as a student of the Bible to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Careful observation and interpretation are needed to arrive at the divinely intended meaning of each text of Scripture as desired by the original author of each biblical book. It is also important to remember that the Bible—when correctly understood—never contradicts itself. This is important to remember since the exact meaning of “salvation” varies from passage to passage.

## Context & Usage

If you are going to arrive at the correct interpretation of the inspired Word of God, you must carefully study the *context* of the passage under examination. This involves studying the verses before and after the passage to ascertain the subject, flow of thought, meaning, and usage of the words being examined. In addition, the general context

looks at such things as *who* wrote the book being studied, *when* it was written, *who* is being addressed, and so forth. Recognizing the general and specific contexts of a verse is crucial to its proper interpretation. Furthermore, a word’s etymology and morphology may be significant in understanding the meaning of a word, though its *usage* in a particular *context* ultimately determines its exact meaning. A single word such as “trunk” may have a variety of meanings and usages, yet only a careful examination of its context clarifies which of those meanings is intended. This is true with the word “salvation.” Depending on the context, salvation may refer to either *physical*, *national*, or *spiritual* deliverance, with the latter being deliverance from either sin’s *penalty*, *power*, or *presence*.

## Physical Salvation

When the principle of usage and context is correctly applied to the term “salvation,” several significant features about salvation begin to surface. Regarding the *nature* of salvation, you will observe that there is a distinction between *physical* and *spiritual* salvation in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, salvation primarily refers to deliverance from *physical* danger, such as deliverance from one’s physical enemies (Ps. 7:1; 17:7; 37:40; 44:6; 59:2; 138:7), physical troubles (Isa. 37:35; 46:7), or even physical death (Dan. 3:17). While this emphasis on physical salvation in the Old Testament does not remain the primary emphasis in the New Testament, it still employs this usage of physical salvation in certain passages (Mt. 8:24-25; 27:40; Mk. 3:4; Acts 27:20, 31, 42-43; Jas. 5:15).

## National Salvation

Because of the covenantal promises of God to ethnic Israel via Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:15-17; 15:18; 2 Sam. 7:12-16) that have never been abrogated or cancelled, there is predicted a future fulfillment of *national salvation* when the Messiah returns to set up His eternal kingdom on earth (Isa. 45:17; Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 36:28-20; Rom. 10:1; 11:25-27). In the meantime, God on numerous occasions has “saved” or delivered His chosen earthly people from their enemies and destruction (Gen. 45:7; 50:20; Josh. 10:6; Judg. 6:14; 7:7; 1 Sam. 7:8; 14:23). Israel’s future national salvation will involve incredible physical and spiritual blessings with divine deliverance (Jer. 31) when they call in faith upon the name of the Lord to save them (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13).

## Spiritual Salvation

When examining the New Testament, the most common meaning and usage of “salvation” by far is that of *spiritual* deliverance. The reason for this change in emphasis from the Old Testament involves the coming of the Messiah, who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

## For the Unbeliever, God’s Promise of Eternal Salvation Is Future until He Believes in Messiah Alone

For unbelievers without Messiah Jesus as their Savior, God offers eternal salvation from a hell they deserve to a heaven they don’t. This must be a *future* salvation since they have never before



been saved. This is how the term “saved” is used in Messiah’s conversation with a religious man named Nicodemus when He declared to this self-righteous sinner, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3). Having explained that Nicodemus needed a spiritual birth from God the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:4-8), Messiah explains to him the *means* to a new birth. Relating Messiah’s pending crucifixion to the lifted-up brazen serpent (Jn. 3:14; Num. 21:6-9), John 3:15 goes on to explain *that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*. First, we observe the extent of the offer: “that

whoever.” Eternal life is available to all. Second, we consider the condition to receive the offer: “believes.” This refers to one’s willingness to rely on, depend on, or trust. Third, we examine the object of one’s faith: “in Him.” Your object of faith must be Messiah alone. Last, we observe the result of the offer: “should not perish but have eternal life.” The word “have” is a present tense verb, indicating a present possession, not a future attainment. Eternal life belongs to the believer now. The phrase “eternal life” occurs sixteen times in John, setting forth a right relationship with God that will last forever and can never be lost. To reinforce this truth, we read next in John 3:16:

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*For God so loved the world [God’s part] that He gave His only begotten Son [God’s provision], that whoever believes in Him [your part] should not perish [God’s promise] but have everlasting life [God’s promise].*

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To further emphasize God’s purpose in sending Messiah Jesus to earth, verse 17 says, *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*. The term “saved” refers to a spiritual and eternal deliverance from hell, since the terms “perish” and “everlasting life” both occur in verse 16.

As with physical birth, being “born again” (vv. 3, 7), receiving “eternal life” (vv. 15-16), and being “saved” (v. 17) all happen at one moment in time and are all one-time, non-repeatable, and unchangeable realities. Salvation is a work of God for man, not a work of man for God. Salvation is not an 80-percent God, 20-percent man proposition. Messiah’s finished work on the cross in payment for all your sins is not merely *needed* to save you; it is *enough* to save you! Now it is simply a matter of whether you as a helpless, hopeless, and hell-bound sinner will choose to rely on (“believe”) the finished cross-work of Messiah alone to save you. Does it really matter? Yes—eternally! For a failure to trust in Messiah alone means you will remain condemned before God (Jn. 3:18).

Other examples of a certain, future salvation from the *penalty of sin* offered to lost sinners are in Mark 10:24-26; Luke 8:12; 9:56; 18:26; John 3:17; 5:34; 10:9; 12:47; Acts 4:12; 11:14; 15:1, 11; 16:30-31; Romans 8:24; 11:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 9:22; 10:33; 1 Thessalo-





nians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; 2:4; and 2 Timothy 3:15.

## Salvation Past Tense — from the Penalty of Sin

While eternal salvation is always future for the unbeliever, the moment a sinner trusts in the all-sufficient work of Messiah to save him, he can then state with confidence, “I *have been saved* from sin’s penalty.” This is salvation from God’s righteous penalty for your sins, which is “death” (Mt. 25:46; Rom. 1:32; 6:23; Rev. 20:14-15). It was this *past* spiritual salvation that Paul had in mind when he wrote, *But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us* (Tit. 3:4-5). These believers in Messiah had been saved in the past by the undeserved kindness, love, and mercy of God when they had trusted in Messiah alone instead of their own works of

righteousness (e.g., repenting from one’s sins, water baptism, trying to keep the Ten Commandments, going to church, tithing, living a holy life).

The Apostle Paul also stated the same *past* reality and assurance about the Ephesian believers when he wrote, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast* (Eph. 2:8-9). Note how salvation is a “gift” for the guilty, not a reward for the righteous.

It is also helpful to recognize that past-tense salvation from sin’s penalty is connected theologically with the biblical doctrine of *justification*, which means to be *declared righteous* before God in His courtroom in heaven (Rom. 3:23-25, 28; 4:4-5; 5:1; Gal. 2:16). Every ungodly sinner who believes in Messiah Jesus and His finished work alone has been justified before God, and based upon the authority of God’s Word, he can know and state with absolute certainty, “I *have been saved* from sin’s penalty!” Other examples of first-tense

(or past-tense) salvation for the believer can be found in such verses as Luke 13:23; Acts 2:47; Romans 6:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 10:33; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 1:13; and Jude 3.

## Salvation Present Tense — from the Power of Sin

Having been saved from *sin’s penalty* forever by God’s grace, the child of God then enters the second phase of God’s salvation plan involving daily deliverance from *sin’s power*. This is needed because every believer has an internal foe (the sin nature), an external foe (the world system), and an infernal foe (the devil) that work in collusion to defeat him spiritually and thus hinder him from walking by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), growing in grace (2 Pet. 3:18), and impacting others for the Messiah (2 Cor. 5:17-21). The daily salvation that God now offers believers is from sin’s controlling power (Rom. 6:11-14) and its damaging effects in their walk and fellowship with Messiah (1 Jn. 1:5-7). This is needed because all believers still retain a sin nature (1 Jn. 1:8) and still *can* and *do* sin (1 Jn. 1:9-10), even though God does not desire this in their lives (1 Jn. 2:1).

The book of James was written to suffering believers who were clearly born again (Jas. 1:18) and were called “beloved” by God (Jas. 1:19) and members of the family of God (“brethren,” Jas. 1:19) regarding salvation from sin’s *power*.

So then, my **beloved brethren**, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not

### 3 TENSES OF SALVATION

TENSE:	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
FROM WHAT:	PENALTY of sin (in Hell)	POWER of sin (in your life)	PRESENCE of sin (in Heaven)
DIAGRAM:			
SCRIPTURE:	Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Corinthians 1:21, John 3:17	1 Timothy 4:16, James 1:21, Phil. 2:12-13, James 5:20	Romans 5:9-10, Romans 13:11, 1 Corinthians 3:15
THEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:	JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION	GLORIFICATION
TIME FACTOR:	POINT OF TIME (When you trust Messiah alone.)	PROCESS OF TIME (While you walk in the Spirit.)	POINT OF TIME (When you die or are raptured.)
CONDITION(S):	By God’s grace alone through faith alone in Messiah alone. (Acts 16:31)	By God’s grace through yielded and daily dependence on the Lord via the Holy Spirit. (Romans 6:1-14; 8:1-4)	By death (2 Cor. 5:10) or by Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

Above: The three tenses of salvation mean that the believer has been saved from sin, is being saved from the power of sin, and will be saved from the presence of sin.



produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to **save your souls**. (Jas. 1:19-21, emphasis added)

These early believers experienced the temptation to retaliate and do evil (Jas. 1:13-16), especially because they were persecuted, defrauded, and treated poorly by the rich (Jas. 1:2-11; 2:6; 5:1-6). But to avoid the damaging effects of sin in their lives, they needed to be *swift to hear God's Word, slow to speak, and slow to wrath* (Jas. 1:19). Instead of resorting to sin (*lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness* – Jas. 1:21), they needed to humbly welcome or *receive with meekness the implanted word which was able to save their souls*, or lives, from sin's damaging results. The entire book of James is written to believers ("brethren" – 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9-10, 12, 19), exhorting them to be saved from sin's power and to grow spiritually. However, Satan also wants to use this time in the believer's life to tempt him to sin and hinder his spiritual progress and testimony for Messiah Jesus. A failure to rightly divide the Word regarding the three tenses of salvation would lead to utter confusion in interpreting James and other passages like it, such as what Paul writes to the already redeemed Timothy: *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you* (1 Tim. 4:16).

Salvation from sin's power is connected theologically with the biblical doctrine of practical *sanctification*, which involves God progressively making righteous (not declaring

righteous, like at justification) the believer in his daily walk by reliance on the Lord and the provisions of God's grace (the Word of God and Spirit of God). Unfortunately, many believers do not enjoy ongoing spiritual growth and salvation from sin's power in their lives as believers. Instead, some are stuck in ongoing carnality by yielding to their sin natures (instead of yielding to Messiah via the Holy Spirit), and they operate daily under human wisdom (instead of the Word of God). This was true of the Corinthian believers (1 Cor. 3:1-4).

Other examples of the use of the word "salvation" in a phase-two sense can be found in Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33; and 1 Corinthians 15:2. In addition, there are numerous passages in the New Testament devoted to exhorting believers to live lives of victory over sin and fruitfulness to God as they walk worthy of their high and holy calling in Christ by His grace (Rom. 6-8; 12:1-2; Gal. 5-6; Eph. 4-6; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 2:6-3:17; 1 Pet. 1:13-2:3).

## Salvation Future Tense — from the Presence of Sin

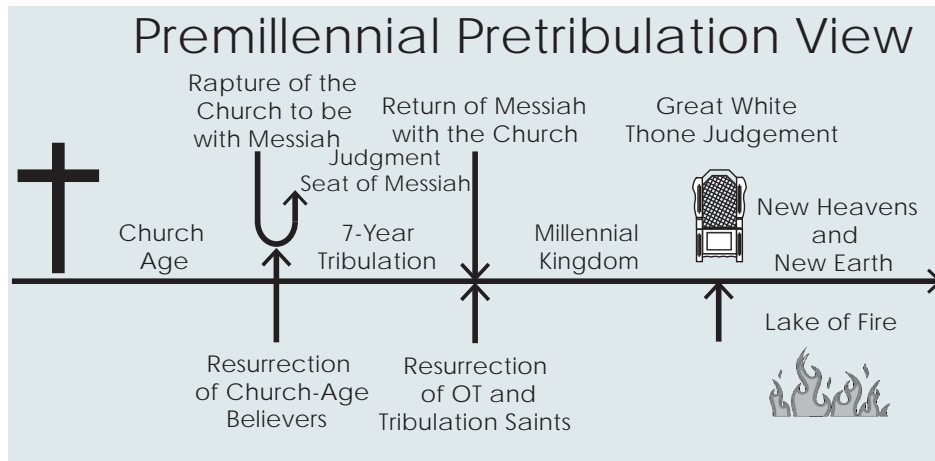
Having been saved forever from sin's penalty and having entered into the second phase in God's plan of salvation from sin's power, believers can also look forward to being delivered from *sin's presence* in the future. This third stage of salvation is needed because every believer still lives in a physical body that is under the curse of disease and death (Gen. 3) and lives in a world that has been corrupted by Adam's original sin (Rom. 5:12; 8:18-23).

Messiah Jesus not only came to save us from the *penalty* of sin (Rom. 6:23) and to deliver us from the legal reign

and *power* of the sin nature in our bodies (Rom. 6:6), but He also came to save us from the very *presence* of sin one day in the future. He will accomplish this future salvation in phases by first of all taking believers in Messiah to heaven either at the moment of physical death (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) or at the resurrection/rapture event (1 Thess. 4:13-18), when believers in Messiah will receive their glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-52). Later, He will return to earth to reign and ultimately create new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21-22).

In light of God's sure promises and grace, believers in Messiah can look forward with certain "hope" that one day they will be saved (future tense) from the very presence of sin: *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed* (Rom. 13:11, emphasis added).

If the believer has already been saved in the past, how could his salvation be nearer than when he first believed? This would be very confusing if one did not rightly divide the three tenses of salvation. For the believer, there is coming a future salvation from sin's presence that is nearer with each passing day. This divine guarantee of future glory is promised to all believers (whether spiritual or carnal) and should cause believers not to waste their earthly lives in a spiritual slumber (Rom. 13:11 – *wake out of sleep*) or lustful living (Rom. 13:12-14) but to live pure and holy lives that honor their coming Savior (1 Jn. 3:1-3). This future salvation is also what Paul had in mind when he confidently promised, *having now been justified by His blood, we*



Above: This chart shows the chronology of eschatology according to the dispensational, pretribulation perspective.

**shall be saved** from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we **shall be saved by His life** (Rom. 5:9-10, emphasis added).

Salvation from sin's presence is connected theologically with the biblical doctrine of *glorification*. Believers should now eagerly anticipate this future hope or divine guarantee of glorification: *For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance* (Rom. 8:24-25).

Other examples of third-tense (or future-tense) salvation from sin's presence can be found in Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthians 3:15; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; and Hebrews 7:25 and 9:27-28.

Can you see the utter confusion that results when a person fails to understand these three tenses of salvation? The painful result has been much false teaching that has either blinded the unsaved from believing the gospel of Messiah by mixing faith alone with works (2 Cor. 4:3-5) or has robbed the

believer of the absolute assurance of eternal salvation (1 Jn. 5:9-13) by making his final destiny depend upon his daily walk, fruit, faithfulness, or personal holiness.

I was reminded of this tragedy a while ago when a believer approached me at a Bible conference and sadly told me, "I have been a believer in Messiah for many years, but I had never heard of the three tenses of salvation until today. Why didn't someone teach me this earlier?"

### Observing All Three Stages of Salvation in One Passage

Now that we have derived from the Scriptures this important biblical distinction of the three stages of salva-

tion, we can sometimes observe all three tenses in the same passage.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared [in the past] to all men, teaching us [believers in the present] that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for [in the future] the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Messiah Jesus. (Tit. 2:11-13)

This can also be observed in Romans 5:1-2; 13:10-11; Philippians 3:7-11; Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; and 1 John 2:28 and 3:1-3.

So how  
would you  
answer if  
someone  
now asked  
you, "Are  
you saved?"



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# THE OUTPOURING OF GOD'S SPIRIT ON ISRAEL

By Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

## CONTEXT

The book of Joel divides nicely into two main sections that may be titled "The Day of YHWH, a Time of Invasions" (Joel 1:2-2:17) and "The Salvation and Restoration of Israel" (Joel 2:18-3:21). The first section describes a historical invasion that had just occurred in the prophet's own time. This was not an attack by foreign powers but rather a devastating invasion of locusts (Joel 1:2-14). This set the stage for a future and more detrimental invasion that will occur during the day of the Lord, or the day of YHWH, a term that is always used of the time of the tribulation before the setting up of the Messianic kingdom (Joel 1:15-2:17). This prophetic event is taken by some as being a human invasion, but it may also be a massive attack by demons (cf. Rev. 9).

This article is concerning a passage in the second main section of Joel. It is preceded by the promise to restore the land and all the material blessings (Joel 2:18-27). It is followed by a prophecy of judgment against the Gentiles for their anti-Semitism, and the timing of this judgment occurs with the final restoration of Israel (Joel 3:1-17). The section concludes with a short description of the Messianic kingdom (Joel 3:18-21).

In the Hebrew Bible, Joel 2:28-32 makes up the entire third chapter of the book, and the rest of Joel comprises chapter four. The fact that the rabbis considered these verses to be worthy of a separate chapter shows that they viewed this paragraph to be unique and a turning point in Israel's future history.





## EXPOSITION

Joel 2:28-32 describes a national outpouring of the *Ruach HaKodesh*, God's Holy Spirit, upon the whole nation of Israel. This event will result in Israel's national salvation in preparation for her final restoration and entry into the Messianic kingdom (Joel 3:1).

The outpouring is found in verses 28-29, with verse 28a providing the timing: *And it shall come to pass afterward, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.* The introductory term "afterward" raises the question, "After what?" The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel will come after what the preceding context has been dealing with: after the judgments of the day of YHWH, after Israel's repentance of her failure to recognize the Messiah, and after Israel's national salvation. The event is also described in Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; and Ezekiel 39:29. As Hosea 5:15-6:3 makes clear, it will occur during the last three days of the tribulation.

Verses 28b-29 emphasize the universality and results of this outpouring: *and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.* In the context of this passage, the phrase "all flesh" refers to the Jewish population. In other words, Joel is not dealing with the world population in general but specifically with Israel. The outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jewish people will fulfill the promise of a national salvation (cf. Lev. 26:40-42; Deut. 30:1-10; Jer. 30:1-10; Rom. 11:25-27). The frequent use of the pronoun "your" is a reference to what belongs to Israel. The Holy Spirit will fall on Israel's sons and daughters, on

Israel's old and young men, and on Israel's male and female slaves. This shows that there will not be any social distinction in this outpouring. As a result, there will be certain manifestations, as the people of Israel will prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions. Thus, the nation will indeed be born (or reborn) in one day (Isa. 66:8), and God will remove the iniquity of the land in one day (Zech. 3:9). Furthermore, Moses' desire that all God's people may be prophets (Num. 11:29) will be realized.

In verses 30-33, Joel points out certain signs that will lead to this outpouring. The passage begins in verse 30 with the description of some universal cataclysms: *And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.* The description of these events compares well with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verse 31 shows that there will also be a total blackout of the earth's sources of light: *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes.* This cataclysm will be comparable to the plague of darkness that fell upon Egypt.

Verse 32 concludes with a further elaboration on the salvation of Israel: *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of YHWH shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as YHWH has said, and among the remnant those whom YHWH does call.* The phrase "it shall come to pass" indicates that what is about to be described (Israel's national salvation) will someday indeed be fulfilled. The condition for this salvation is that everyone will call on the name of YHWH. The

context of Joel implies that Israel will be saved both spiritually and physically. While Joel is limiting this event to Israel, Paul uses it as an application to the Gentiles (Rom. 10:13). Then the prophet gets more specific by saying that there will be an escape for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem as God has promised. The phrase "those that escape" is used of the Jews who survive the tribulation and enter into the Messianic kingdom. Joel states that this is something God has already spoken about, and examples include Isaiah 4:2; 37:31-32; and Obadiah 17, which is the verse that Joel is quoting. The survivors whom the Lord calls make up the remnant of Israel. With the outpouring of the Spirit, all Israel and the remnant of Israel will become one and the same.

THE USE OF JOEL 2:28-32  
IN ACTS 2:16-21

In Acts 2:16-21, Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32, saying:

<sup>16</sup>*but this is that which has been spoken through the prophet Joel:*  
<sup>17</sup>*And it shall be in the last days, says God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams:* <sup>18</sup>*Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.* <sup>19</sup>*And I will show wonders in the heaven above, And signs on the earth beneath; Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:* <sup>20</sup>*The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the day of the Lord come, That great and notable day:*



<sup>21</sup>*And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

The question is, what was Peter trying to say by quoting the Joel passage? Was what happened in Acts 2 a fulfillment of the Joel passage? Was it a partial fulfillment? Was it a nonfulfillment since Peter was quoting the passage out of context?

Extensive reading of ancient rabbinic literature shows that the ways in which the rabbis quoted the Hebrew Scriptures fall into four different categories. The New Testament writers were Jews, and they followed the same procedure. The limitations of space will not permit the author to detail these four categories except for the one that this passage fits into.<sup>1</sup> But briefly, the first category of quotations comprises "literal prophecy plus literal fulfillment," where a direct simple prophecy is quoted as having been literally fulfilled. An example of this category is Micah 5:2, which was literally fulfilled in Matthew 2:5-6. A second category, "literal plus typical," is when a person, event, or thing mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures becomes a type of a person, event, or thing in the New Testament. One example is Hosea 11:1. This verse mentions Israel, God's national son, at the time of the Exodus. In Matthew 2:15, the prophecy becomes a type of the Messianic Son of God coming out of Egypt. A third category called "summation" is where the New Testament does not actually quote a specific statement from the Hebrew Bible but simply summarizes what the prophets (using the plural) taught. An example of this category is found in Matthew 2:23.

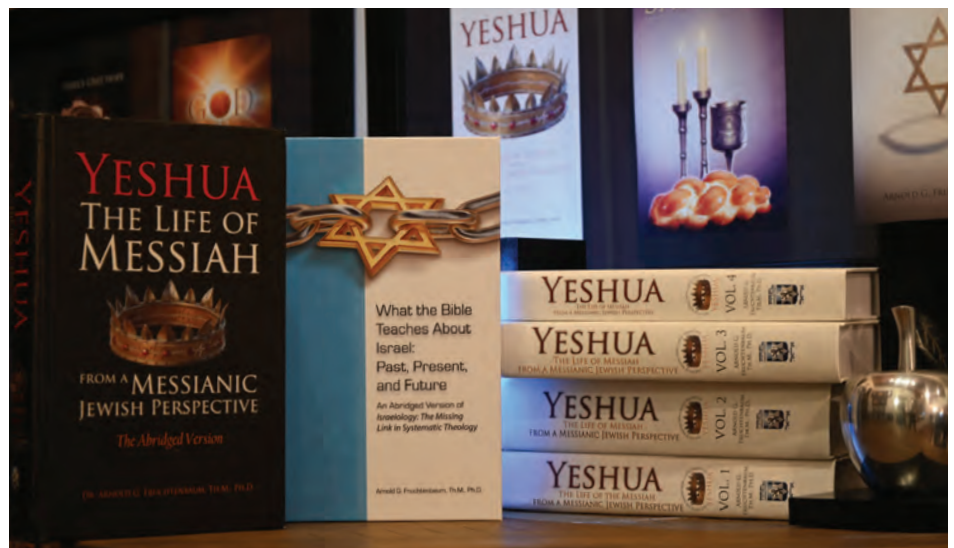
The fourth category is called "literal plus application based on one point of similarity." One example of this is

Matthew 2:17-18, which quotes Jeremiah 31:15. The events described in Jeremiah and Matthew are totally different, and they take place in two different historical and geographical localities. Still, there is one point of similarity: Jewish mothers weeping for sons they will never see again. Thus, Matthew quotes the Jeremiah passage as an application. The same thing happens in Acts 2:16-21. When Peter said in verse 16, *but this is that which has been spoken through the prophet Joel*, he did not even use the normal formula for fulfillment. Furthermore, Joel specifies a time when the Spirit falls on all Jewish flesh. But in Acts 2, it was at best 120 people who received the Holy Spirit. More likely, it was only the twelve apostles. Not one of the things that was prophesied in Joel actually happened in Acts. The one key element that did happen in Acts—the speaking in tongues—Joel never mentioned. But there was one point of similarity: The outpouring of the Spirit resulted in a supernatural phenomenon. Therefore, the passage is simply quoted as an application. Joel 2:18-32 will not be fulfilled until the time of Israel's national salvation.

<sup>1</sup> For further details, see the author's *What the Bible Teaches about Israel: Past, Present, and Future* or his book series titled *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*. These resources were published by Ariel Ministries and are available at [www.ariel.org](http://www.ariel.org). Also helpful is Dr. David L. Cooper's *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*.



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# The New Apostolic Reformation:

*A Modern-Day Apostasy*

G. Allen Gunn, D.Min., Ph.D.





A modern-day movement centered in Redding, California, is making a huge impact around the world through the ministries of Bethel Church, Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry, and Bethel Music.

## ARE THE LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE IDENTIFYING WITH THESE CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES A SIGN OF TRUE, HEAVEN-SENT REVIVAL? OR DO THEY INDICATE SOMETHING MORE DECEPTIVE AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS?

As Bible-believers, we are cautioned to *test the spirits to see whether they are from God* (1 John 4:1), and that in the last days the church will witness teachings that have *a form of godliness but deny its power* (2 Tim. 3:5) and are, in fact, *doctrines of demons* (1 Tim. 4:1).

Bethel Church and its attendant ministries are part of a broader movement known as the “New Apostolic Reformation” (NAR). The NAR is a twenty-first century revivalist movement within Christianity that is being felt worldwide. Its primary focus is on reestablishing the offices of apostle and prophet in the church and on instituting dominion theology. Leaders in the NAR believe that the church cannot flourish without functioning apostles and prophets and their accompanying signs and wonders.

## ORIGINS OF THE NAR

The NAR was the brainchild of C. Peter Wagner, former missionary to Bolivia

and then professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary. Wagner was seen as a leader in the Church Growth Movement of the late twentieth century. Initially enthusiastic about the Third Wave Movement of the 1980s (aka Vineyard Movement), Wagner felt that it had failed in its attempt to accomplish a worldwide revival. He concluded that what was lacking was a complete five-fold ministry as described in Ephesians 4:11 with the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Wagner believed that bringing back the lost offices of apostle and prophet would bring about a worldwide revival. He said, “We are now living in the midst of one of the most epochal changes in the structure of the church that has ever been recorded. I like to call it the ‘Second Apostolic Age.’”<sup>1</sup>

## BETHEL CHURCH AND THE JOHNSONS

Bethel Church in Redding, California, under the leadership of Pastor Bill Johnson, is a major focal point of the NAR. Founded in the 1950s, Bethel Church was a medium-sized Assemblies of God church for many years. In 1996 Bill Johnson came as the new senior pastor under one stipulation: that the church’s message would always be about revival. Johnson’s view of revival was strongly influenced by his attendance at a John Wimber signs and wonders conference in 1987 and through his involvement in the Toronto Blessing revival meetings of 1995. Around the same time, C. Peter Wagner recognized Bill Johnson as an apostle and endorsed his ministry. Bill’s wife, Beni, serves as a prophet. The church began to grow dramatically and

today boasts over 11,233 people who refer to Bethel as their home church.<sup>2</sup> The church opened the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM) in 1998, receiving students from all over the world and instructing them in revivalistic methods of healing, signs and wonders, and prophecy. In 2001, Johnson’s son, Brian, founded Bethel Music, which has since become a worldwide music ministry whose songs are featured not only in NAR churches but also in many non-NAR evangelical churches.

## APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

A controversial and highly publicized apostolic decree was made on June 23, 2008, when Todd Bentley was formally commissioned as an evangelist to lead the Lakeland Revival in Florida. Under Wagner’s leadership, prominent apostles gathered for the ceremony, which was broadcast worldwide by GOD TV. The purpose of the ceremony was to decree the apostolic alignment of Bentley with three apostles: Ché Ahn of Pasadena, California; Bill Johnson of Redding, California; and John Arnott of Toronto, Canada. By becoming apostolically aligned with these three apostles, who represent an apostolic network called Revival Alliance, Bentley was agreeing to come under their authority. This is in line with the NAR teaching that all offices of the church, including the office of evangelist, must submit to apostles. During the ceremony, Wagner referred to Ahn, Johnson, and Arnott as “apostolic pillars of today’s church.”<sup>3</sup>

These four—Bentley, Ahn, Johnson, and Arnott—are strategically placed roughly at four corners of the United

<sup>1</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles Today: Biblical Government for Biblical Power* (Regal Books, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Bethel Church’s 2018 annual report.

<sup>3</sup> R. Douglas Geivett and Holly Pivec, *A New Apostolic Reformation?: A Biblical Response to a Worldwide Movement* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 210.



States (Lakeland SE, Pasadena SW, Redding NW, Toronto NE). Each of these “apostolic centers” is responsible for planting NAR churches within their sphere of influence. Other apostles within the NAR movement today include Rodney Howard-Browne, Heidi Baker, Lou Engle, and Mike Bickle (International House of Prayer).

## FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NAR

Characteristics that truly distinguish the NAR are the following:

1. Restoring apostolic authority
2. Restoring prophetic authority
3. Dominion theology
4. Signs and wonders

## RESTORING APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

The term “apostle” occurs in Scripture in both a technical sense (the twelve apostles, as in Matt. 10:2-4; Acts 5:28-29; Rom 1:1) and a non-technical sense “an

emissary sent out” (Epaphroditus in Phil. 2:25; others in 2 Cor. 8:23). It is used in the NAR to signify an office with the same authority as the twelve. C. Peter Wagner sought to restore the apostolic office mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. The one difference acknowledged between the apostles of the NAR and the New Testament apostles is that the NAR apostles do not claim to write Scripture. However, they do carry authority, and both churches and prophets are to submit to their authority. Though these apostles do not claim to write Scripture, they do produce a great quantity of written material. A recent internet search found twenty-six books either authored or co-authored by Bill Johnson, and these books—not the Bible—are taught at BSSM. I teach at a small Bible college on the other side of town from BSSM, and I can honestly tell you that we have had more than one student come to us from BSSM saying they had come to Redding to prepare for ministry, but when they realized they were not being taught the Bible, they sought education somewhere else.

## TESTING APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

The Bible urges us to test those who call themselves “apostles” (see Rev. 2:2; 2 Cor. 11:13). But how can one test this? If we believe, as most in the church do, that the office of apostle was restricted to the original twelve, this question is moot. But let’s assume, for the sake of argument, that the office of apostle is still active today. How then would one test a claimant to that office? R. Douglas Geivett and Holly Pivec outlined five characteristics of a true apostle:<sup>4</sup>

- a. *An apostle must have literally seen the resurrected Lord* (1 Cor 9:1). The NAR apostles claim to have seen the Lord in a vision, like Paul on the road to Damascus. However, Paul’s vision was an exception. It was verifiable, being witnessed by those with him, and confirmed by the Damascus believers who witnessed his healing from blindness. The private visions of the NAR apostles are unverifiable and unconfirmed.

<sup>4</sup> Geivett and Pivec, 94.

The New Apostolic Reformation” (NAR) is a 21<sup>st</sup> century revivalist movement within Christianity that is being felt worldwide. Its primary focus is on reestablishing the offices of apostle and prophet in the church and on instituting dominion theology. Leaders in the NAR believe that the church cannot flourish without functioning apostles and prophets and their accompanying signs and wonders.



b. *An apostle must have received a specific commission by Messiah in the fashion of those first commissioned during the Apostolic Age* (Matt. 10:1-5; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:21-26). The NAR apostles receive their commissioning from men, whether C. Peter Wagner or one of the other apostles.

c. *An apostle must perform miracles that attest to his authority as an apostle of Messiah* (2 Cor. 12:12). Here is where the NAR apostles claim their strong point. Signs and wonders are a huge part of the NAR. However, the miracles performed by New Testament apostles were spectacular, verifiable, and without failure. Most of the reported so-called signs, wonders, and healings from the NAR apostles are second-hand reports, unverified, and unspectacular. Many NAR attempts at healings are unsuccessful and are simply blamed on the lack of faith of the recipient.

d. *Any new teachings or practices that an apostle promotes must be supported in Scripture* (Acts 17:11, Bereans). Johnson and other NAR apostles adopt the unscriptural kenotic view of Messiah.<sup>5</sup> The kenotic view holds that Messiah emptied Himself of His deity while on earth, performing His miracles as merely a Spirit-filled man. This doctrine is important to the NAR, since they teach that any Christian who is Spirit-filled can do the same things that Messiah did, such as raise the dead, cast out demons, and heal the sick. If Messiah did it, then we should be able to do it too. But Messiah's miracles fall into an

entirely different class of things than anything we could possibly do.

e. *An apostle must exhibit an exemplary quality of ministry and life of the highest level of virtue and integrity.* Genuine apostles of the Messiah are willing to endure great suffering in fulfillment of their commission, as did the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 1:5, 8-9; 11:23-28). They will not use methods that are deceitful or that "tamper" with Scripture (2 Cor. 4:2). They will be motivated by sincerity (2 Cor. 1:12) and marked by the character traits of self-sacrifice (1 Cor. 9:1-15, 19) and humility (2 Cor. 11:7). However, the NAR leaders are not known for self-sacrifice and humility. As one observer noted, "Many leaders in the movement are very wealthy (a blessing from God, in their view). They don't have any problems driving around in an Aston Martin (e.g., Bill Johnson) while accepting the first fruits of church members on social welfare."<sup>6</sup>

In each of these five tests, the NAR is judged to be "weighed in the balances and found wanting." Or, to use the words of the apostle Paul, *Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Messiah* (2 Cor. 11:13).

## RESTORING PROPHETIC AUTHORITY

Wagner also saw the necessity of restoring the office of prophet. The significant role of prophets in the early church is unquestionable. Prior to the completion of the New Testament, around the end of the first century, prophets were necessary in order to provide the infant church with the

revelation that would eventually become available in the New Testament. The apostle Paul recognized this work as being foundational to the church (Eph 2:20). Once this foundational work was complete, the offices of apostle and prophet passed off the scene. In attempting to restore these offices, the NAR is attempting to lay again a foundation that was already laid (1 Cor. 3:10-11). Throughout the history of the church, such attempts have been frequent but never long lasting. These attempts include Montanism in the second century, the Zwickau prophets in the sixteenth century, the Irvingites in the 1830s, the Kansas City prophets in the 1980s, and the International House of Prayer in the 1990s. There is really nothing "new" about the "New Apostolic Reformation."

## TESTING PROPHETIC AUTHORITY

While the prophetic office was still active in the church, there was always a problem with false prophets. The New Testament, therefore, urged believers to test those claiming to be prophets (1 John 4:1; 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:20-21; 2 Thess. 2:2; Rev. 2:20). The apostle John urged, *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world* (1 John 4:1). The two-fold test of a prophet is clearly established in Deuteronomy: the test of fulfillment and the test of doctrine.

*The Test of Fulfillment.* If a person claims to be a prophet and his prediction fails to come true, he is to be regarded as a false prophet (Deut. 18:20-22). NAR prophets sometimes

<sup>5</sup> Bill Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth* (Destiny Image, 2005), pp. 87-88.

<sup>6</sup> "New Apostolic Reformation," Be Watchful, September 19, 2015 (<https://bewatchful.org/new-apostolic-reformation/>). Accessed 5/19/2021.



make predictions that come true but have also made significant predictions that did *not* come true. For example, NAR prophets predicted that COVID-19 would not become a serious worldwide epidemic, that President Trump would not be impeached, and that President Trump would be reelected. It really doesn't matter how many times a false prophet guesses some future event successfully; if he fails in even one prediction, the verdict must be: false prophet.

*The Test of Doctrine.* Even if a prophet succeeds in making a successful prediction, his legitimacy is to be judged by the doctrine he teaches (Deut. 13:1-3). If the doctrine does not correspond to the teaching of the Bible, he is to be judged a false prophet. With NAR prophets, it has already been stated that they teach the kenotic doctrine that Messiah emptied Himself of deity while on earth. When NAR prophets insist that Messiah's miracles were done as a Spirit-filled man rather than as deity, they deny the clear teaching of Scripture that His miracles actually proved His deity (John 20:30-31; Luke 8:39). The very verse that kenotic theorists use to uphold their doctrine (Phil. 2:7) follows a verse that states that Jesus "existed in the form of God." If He was ever God, He could never cease to be God or alter any of His divine attributes, since one of

God's attributes is immutability (Heb. 13:8). The deity is eternal. Deity, by definition, cannot change!

Another significant doctrinal error of the NAR is the teaching of perfectionism. Bill Johnson asserts that the present-day believer can attain a status "completely free of the enemy's (i.e., the devil's) influence."<sup>7</sup> This teaching is linked to the NAR's dominion theology. Their "kingdom-now" approach views the believer as already living in God's kingdom in which Satan is bound. The Scripture is clear, however, in teaching that the believer will never be completely free from sin until the resurrection (1 John 1:8; Prov. 20:9).

Applying these two Old Testament tests to the prophets of the NAR, it is readily seen that they are false prophets whose teachings must be rejected.

## DOMINION THEOLOGY

Dominion theology is a form of postmillennialism that sees the church's mission as establishing the kingdom of God on earth by Christianizing all aspects of society. It takes the Great Commission's "make disciples of all nations" to mean that we need to make the nations into Christian nations. Postmillennialism was first popularized in Christianity in the fourth century by Augustine in his *City of God*. Much of Christian history is characterized by

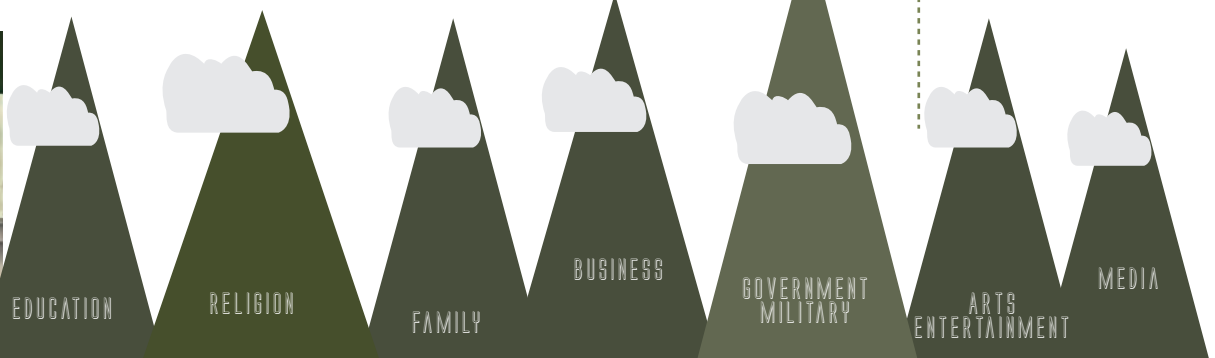
failed examples of such attempts (Byzantine Empire, Holy Roman Empire, Schmalkaldic League, Calvin's Geneva, Cromwellian church-state of Britain, etc.). The NAR bases its approach to dominionism on what is called "The 7 Mountain Mandate." This is outlined in Wallnau and Johnson's book *Invading Babylon: The 7 Mountain Mandate*, in which the church is called upon to "occupy the spiritual gates of our cities." These "gates represent the spiritual powers that rule over geographical areas."<sup>8</sup> The seven mountains that the NAR seeks to control are:

1. Education
2. Religion
3. Family
4. Business
5. Government/military
6. Arts/entertainment
7. Media

In April 2017, Bethel Church offered to donate \$500,000 to the city of Redding to assist in funding the salaries of police officers. Some community members thought that the church was trying to pay off the city for future building permits, an assertion that Pastor Kris Vallotton refuted at a city council meeting. The city ultimately voted to receive the donation. Seven months after receiving the donation, the city council in Redding unanimously approved a \$96 million new Bethel campus, despite

<sup>7</sup> Bill Johnson, *The Power that Changes the World* (Minneapolis: Chosen Books, 2015), pp. 167-168.

<sup>8</sup> Lance Wallnau and Bill Johnson, *Invading Babylon: The 7 Mountain Mandate* (Destiny Image, 2013), p.1.



dozens of formally submitted citizen concerns.<sup>9</sup> It probably was *not* an effort toward bribery but was likely designed to exert control over one of the seven mountains.

Contrary to the dominionism of the NAR, the Bible teaches that believers are to pray for and submit to government leaders while we continue proclaiming the gospel to the lost (1 Tim. 2:1-4; Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). Is it right to try to influence the “7 mountains” in a Christian way? Of course it’s right. It’s part of being salt and light in the world. But it should happen as a natural consequence of our lifestyle, not a focused campaign of the church. The church’s commission is not to establish the kingdom on earth but to invite sinners to salvation in Jesus. The church and human government are both institutions of God, but they operate in separate spheres (Matt. 22:21).

## SIGNS AND WONDERS

True to its background in the Third Wave Movement, the NAR focuses heavily on signs and wonders. BSSM teaches its students how to perform miraculous healings and sends its students out into the streets and shopping malls of Redding to find people who look like they are in need of healing. Then, these eager students attempt to practice their ability to pray for healing. Other extraordinary signs and wonders have been reported as occurring in services at Bethel Church, such as the Glory Cloud (a visual phenomenon appearing like sparkling gold dust floating in the air), angel feathers wafting down on worship-

pers from the ceiling, and diamonds and gems being discovered under the seats in the church auditorium. One generally hears of these things only by second-hand accounts. One of the most bizarre phenomena is referred to as “Grave Soaking” (sometimes called “Grave Sucking” or “Picking up a fallen mantle”). Though not officially taught at BSSM, Bill Johnson described the practice as visiting the graves of deceased evangelists and praying, “God do through us what You did through him.”<sup>10</sup> However, YouTube videos and Twitter photos posted by Beni Johnson show a more intense type of contact with these graves. Bill Johnson explained the rationale behind Grave Soaking in terms of picking up the fallen mantle of a deceased evangelist in his book *The Physics of Heaven*.<sup>11</sup>

“A group of students from Bethel’s School of Supernatural Ministry is willing to go (according to the website) ‘to the funeral home, morgue or family’s home where the deceased is being kept’. The team claims to have seen at least 12 resurrections of dead people through its prayers.”<sup>12</sup> I live in and am well connected to the Redding area and have never heard of a single resurrection taking place. There is no independent confirmation of any of these accounts that I am aware of.

On December 14, 2019, a talented young couple, Andrew and Kalley Heilingenthal, lost their two-year-old child, Olive. The girl simply stopped breathing early that morning, and when she arrived at the hospital, she

was declared dead and her body was taken to the morgue. The young grieving couple, members of Bethel Church in Redding, believed that God might perform a miracle and restore Olive’s life. The church supported them in this hope and organized a series of highly public prayer events seeking to raise the little girl back to life. Bill Johnson said during a sermon on December 20, “We have done this in accordance with the Bible.”

## CONCLUSION

The New Apostolic Reformation is not really “new.” It is another attempt to bring back foundational offices that are no longer functioning in the church. It is not “apostolic,” for its apostles fail the biblical tests of apostleship and prophecy. It is not a “reformation,” for it is offering unbiblical and unsound doctrine to young, gullible believers. Its false eschatology (dominionism) and focus on signs and wonders distracts believers from the Great Commission left to us by our Lord Jesus. Surely, this is part of what the New Testament describes as the apostasy of the end times. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!<sup>13</sup>



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by Tyndale Theological Seminary in 2015; and DMin by Corban University in 2019. Dr. Gunn served as church planter and pastor before focusing his attention on his ministry at Shasta Bible College where he now serves both as Vice President of Student Services and as Chair of the Department of Bible and Theology. Dr. Gunn is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Pre-Trib Study Group, and the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics.

<sup>9</sup> *Record Searchlight*, April 2017, December 2017.

<sup>10</sup> “The Line of Fire with Dr. Michael Brown,” May 11, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCes2PZVFC4>.

<sup>11</sup> Bill Johnson, *The Physics of Heaven* (Destiny Image, 2012), Chapter 4, “Recovering Our Spiritual Inheritance.”

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.premierchristianity.com/Past-Issues/2015/January-2015/Profile-Bill-Johnson>.

<sup>13</sup> This article was also published in a slightly different version in the 2021 summer edition of the *Baptist Bulletin* (<https://baptistbulletin.org/>).



# Can Orthodox Jews and Messianic Jews agree on anything?

by Mottel Baleston

Dear Reuben,

My name is Mottel Baleston, and your friend David asked me to write up a short note as to why I, as one who is Jewish and a long-time teacher of Jewish history, can believe that Yeshua (Jesus) is Moshiach. He said you can't believe you'd agree with anything that Messianic Jews like me believe.

Actually, I have had many chances to discuss issues of faith with people like you in the Observant Orthodox Jewish community in recent years, and we have agreed on some issues and disagreed on others. For the sake of Ahavat Yisrael, may I ask you to consider the following?





One of the many areas of agreement between those in the traditional rabbinic Jewish community and those who identify as Messianic Jews—believing in Yeshua—is the expectation that the world as we see it now is not the ultimate plan of HaShem. We both understand that the original design was seen in Gan Eden, a world in which there was peace between men and peace between God and mankind. We understand together that the goal is the achievement of the Malchut Moshiach, that time when the Messiah reigns and peace prevails. The Hebrew Scriptures give various accounts of that, perhaps none as famous as the text of Isaiah chapter 2: *they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.*

Both the traditional Torah-observant Jewish community as well as the Messianic Jewish community anticipate the reign and rule of Messiah from the holy city of Yerushalayim. We can both agree that the rebirth of Medinat Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael is surely a sign along the way, letting us know that these are not normal times and that the “ingredients” are coming together for the goal of the Geulah, which leads to the Messianic reign.

For example, just 120 years ago, if one had looked to our four holy cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed, one would have seen poor, struggling Jewish communities that were constantly in danger from hostile neighbors. In contrast, if one had looked to Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest, and Prague, those were the burgeoning cities bursting with Jewish life and activity. Hundreds of Yeshivot, Yiddish theaters and newspapers, and a prosperous

business community marked a Jewish community firmly anchored in Europe. People looking at the biblical prophets foretelling a nation of Jews in the Middle East would have labeled it as a fairytale; they would have cited it as evidence that the Torah could not be trusted. They would have told you that the future of the Jewish people is certainly in Europe.

Fast-forward just fifty years and the situation was totally, completely, and catastrophically the opposite: The cities of Europe were in ruins with six million Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust and survivors trying to escape the continent. In contrast, the Jewish community of Israel was now bursting forth with youth and life, having gained independence and recognition among the nations and about to launch into decades of progress and growth for our Jewish people. That is not something that happened by human activity alone. Rather, we both see the hand of HaShem in this. While many liberal Jews would imagine this could be explained merely by political and military activity, we both know differently—that the continued survival of our Jewish people is something that is totally contrary to the norms we see in every other society and is a direct result of the promise in the Torah.

We both see the Eternal to have been involved in the rebirth of Israel and believe the Holy Scriptures to be sacred and the inspired word of HaShem. That is a great starting point. Can we continue from there?



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## GLOSSARY

### *Ahavat Yisrael*

– Love and respect to fellow Jews

### *Eretz Yisrael*

– The land of Israel

### *Gan Eden*

– The Garden of Eden

### *Geulah*

– The future final redemption

### *HaShem*

– Lit. “The Name,” used as a respectful title for God

### *Malchut Moshiach*

– The future kingdom of Messiah

### *Medinat Yisrael*

– The current State of Israel

### *Moshiach - Messiah*

### *Yeshivot*

– Seminaries for rabbis

### *Yiddish*

– The language of most Jews whose ancestors spent the period between 1200 and 1900 A.D. in Europe. It is comprised of 80% medieval German, 10% Hebrew, and 10% mixed Slavic. It is written with Hebrew characters.



# Loving Your Wife

## A Pep Talk

By Jeff Pfeffer



I am **aiming** this message at you husbands and husbands-to-be out there, and my hope is that I am preaching to the choir. What I have to share does not imply my perfection in these matters. Even after forty-eight years of marriage, I can always do better, and I think that might be a helpful attitude as you read on. I will say, however, that with regard to the first section of my observations, there is no room for error or bad choices.

### Proverbs 5:15-21

<sup>15</sup>Drink water from your own cistern,  
And fresh water from your own well.

<sup>16</sup>Should your springs overflow into the street,  
Streams of water in the public squares?

<sup>17</sup>Let them be yours alone,  
And not for strangers with you.

<sup>18</sup>Let your fountain be blessed,  
And rejoice in the wife of your youth.

<sup>19</sup>*Like* a loving doe and a graceful mountain goat,  
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
Be exhilarated always with her love.

<sup>20</sup>For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress,  
And embrace the breasts of a foreigner?

<sup>21</sup>For the ways of everyone are before the eyes of the LORD,  
And He observes all his paths.



At a first glance, in Proverbs 5:15-17 Solomon seems to be talking about the well one owns, and he is advising us to keep our water to ourselves and not even share it with others. But in verses 18-20, we realize that he is referring to fidelity and infidelity.

In verse 15, Solomon said that you should enjoy your own wife. This is pure and clean. Drink of her only. Notice how he compares fidelity with fresh water.

In verse 16, Solomon asks: Should a man be promiscuous and degrade the fresh water of marriage? It is not what God intended. It is like pouring water into the street to be mixed with the mire. It degrades the relationship a man should have with his wife alone. And, brothers, infidelity *will* pollute your marriage. It will degrade and confuse your relationship. Would you be anxious to drink water that has been poured into the street? In Exodus 20:17, the Israelites were told in no uncertain terms, *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife*. Furthermore, in Leviticus 20:10, God had some serious standards for his chosen nation: *If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death*. This is a serious issue. Solomon seems to concur, though he is not just talking about adultery with another man's wife but about promiscuity with anyone.

In verse 17, he admonishes you to let the cistern, this special thing that God has given to you, be enjoyed by you and your wife alone. Do not share it promiscuously with others. Remember what Genesis 2:24-25 says: *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, but*

*they were not ashamed*. So marriage is it, guys; no one else is permitted in.

In verses 18-19, Solomon says to let this gift of marriage be blessed by God. Enjoy your wife's body alone! Let her alone be your exhilaration. Make her alone your joy and your satisfaction.

In verse 20, Solomon admonishes you not to be an adulterer. Your wife is your gift from God. Honor her as such. The best thing you have is at home! Paul, in less poetic terms, concurs with Solomon and stated in 1 Corinthians 7:2b-4 (KJV):

<sup>2b</sup>Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. <sup>3</sup>Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise, also the wife unto the husband. <sup>4</sup>The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise, also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.

In verse 21, the sin of adultery is not hidden from God. He sees us, whatever we do. Our actions should be within His will for us. We should want Him to be pleased with us in our fidelity to our wives.

### Practical Reasons for Fidelity

Staying within biblical guidelines, there are some very practical reasons for fidelity:

1. It is character building. We demonstrate strength rather than weakness to ourselves and to those around us.

2. It is the means by which we learn what true love really is. This is something that takes time and testing. It does not happen overnight.

3. Overcoming the difficulties of marriage in its early stages becomes less difficult with time if we do not run from our problems but instead face our

weaknesses and temptations and prevail over them.

4. You feel good about yourself. There is no shame when you display fidelity towards your wife. There is shame in infidelity.

5. You are an example to the next generation, preparing them to live lives of fidelity and character.

### Self-Centeredness

Men, sometimes we can be very self-centered when it comes to what we want out of life and what we expect of our wives. Paul said in Ephesians 5:25-30:

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup>for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Messiah also *does* the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are parts of His body.

The first thing we need to recognize is that Yeshua is our model. He put our needs before His own; He gave Himself up for you and me. He is our Husband, and we are His bride. And now, even at this moment, He has our best interests in mind.

### Eight Practical Pieces of Advice

With this mindset, there are eight pieces of advice I can give. My list is by



no means complete. You husbands may have some practical ideas of your own, and I applaud you. Let us stay on track for the sake of our marriages. I believe that this biblical precept of fidelity, with some personal effort, can be developed and appreciated in practical ways—again, remaining within biblical guidelines. I am by no means perfect even as I share these ideas, but God has given us common sense, and the suggestions I share with you today seem to bolster the relationship I have with Bonnie, my wife, when I practice them. They tend to draw us closer. They cause me to appreciate her more, and there are beneficial side effects as well.

First, let us put our wives' interests ahead of our own. In verse 28, Paul said that *he who loves his own wife loves himself*. In other words, the way you treat your wife is a reflection of what you think of yourself. This is only a difficult concept when not practiced regularly. So, it may require a different mindset—even if you hate to change. It may require effort—even though it is easier to be lazy—or selfishness may rear its ugly head, as in “I want what I want. Why doesn't she understand?” But if her back hurts and she needs you to massage her or help her in some other way while a great football game is on the tube that you would much rather watch, maybe it is time to turn your attention to your wife. If you believe you have something better to do, you are wrong! There is nothing more important, at the moment, than meeting your wife's needs.

Second, compliment your wife. Build her up. Make her feel good about herself. Criticism should be rare and measured. We should be seen by our wives as being positive toward them continually. Some women feel that they

must complain about their husbands. This is NOT GOOD! They should want to brag about us because of the way we treat them.

Third, talk to your wife. Confide in her. Treat her as if she is your best friend. She really should be. There should be no one who knows you as intimately and emotionally as your wife. If there is, then you are not giving her what she deserves. Except in a few rare instances when elder confidentiality comes into play, I will gladly share with Bonnie anything that someone else says to me. I have a best friend from childhood. I love him. But even he does not have the intimate knowledge of me that Bonnie does, and I like it that way. Bonnie and I love to go away together for two or three days at a time. Sometimes we just walk around the mall together or have dinner out. Why? Because when we spend time together, we relax and talk and realize how much we enjoy each other's company. We are reminded of what

attracted us to each other so strongly in the first place. Why then would I ever want to jeopardize what I have with “the wife of my youth”?

Fourth, be affectionate. Our wives crave affection. Be honest, guys; we all crave affection! Hug and kiss your wife ... a lot! Hug and kiss her in front of your kids. Show your kids how you *really* feel about their mother. These images will last a lifetime for your kids. It will encourage them to be the same way with their spouses. I believe something as simple as that, while enjoyed at the moment (of course), can have a profound effect on the next generation. But for now, your wife will know that you are hers alone and that you love her.

Fifth, speaking of love, tell your wife you love her every day ... a lot! Actions may speak louder than words, but words are still very powerful. There is nobody who does not need to hear those words. Tell me of any phrase that will bind you and your wife together more securely!

Sixth, avoid pornography at all costs. Never have it in your home. Your kids would find it. What would your kids subconsciously gather about your opinion of and relationship with their mother? What would they think a proper sexual relationship is all about? What would your wife imagine that you think of her? What kind of images do you want to live with in your imagination? Stay away from it. It is poison!

Seventh, pray for your wife regularly. It means that you are aware of her needs. She deserves no less from you.

Eighth, make your wife your Shulamit, as my friend Arnold Fruchtenbaum describes his wife, Mary Ann, in the dedication of his book *Biblical Love-making, A Study of the Song of Solomon*. I recommend this book especially



to young married couples or those contemplating marriage.

### The Song of Solomon

Shulamit is the feminine form of the name Solomon. So, the Song of Solomon is essentially about Mr. and Mrs. Solomon. The book is highly erotic in nature and suggests that whatever intimacy a married couple experiences is okay, but I will leave out the details. We will look at a few points Mr. Solomon makes from his perspective. In 1:9-10 and 15, he states:

<sup>9</sup>To me, my darling, you are like  
My mare among the chariots of  
Pharaoh.

<sup>10</sup>Your cheeks are delightful with  
jewelry, Your neck with strings of  
beads.

<sup>15</sup>How beautiful you are, my  
darling,  
How beautiful you are!  
Your eyes are *like* doves.

Solomon wooed his wife before he married her. It is easy to do this in the courtship stage of a relationship. After all, you are in love, and you are doing your best to win her over. If you read the rest of this chapter, it is clear that Shulamit did not mind.

In 2:14, Solomon went on to woo Shulamit, and he was being very romantic:

<sup>14</sup>My dove, in the clefts of the rock,  
In the hiding place of the mountain  
pathway,  
Let me see how you look,  
Let me hear your voice;  
For your voice is pleasant,  
And you look delightful.

In chapter 4, Solomon described their wedding night, and there is no shame in

his passionate description of his wife nor of her response. As 5:1 shows, Solomon fully appreciated his wife and was not ashamed to say it:

<sup>1</sup>I have come into my garden, my  
sister, *my* bride;  
I have gathered my myrrh along  
with my balsam.  
I have eaten my honeycomb with  
my honey;  
I have drunk my wine with my milk.  
Eat, friends;  
Drink and drink deeply, lovers.

In chapter 7, Solomon continued to express his desire for and appreciation of his wife beyond their wedding night. Guys, we should continue to do the same with our wives. This is God's design for our marriage, and it is a good design. It allows us to fully enjoy our wives throughout our lives. Then, in verse 10, Shulamit speaks, and I quite like this verse: *I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me.* Shulamit could clearly tell by her husband's behavior that he loved and desired her. She stated without reservation that she belongs to him. She was proud of it!

There are times when we may think, for one reason or another, rightly or wrongly, that we are not appreciated. This has never been a valid excuse to take your negative perceptions out on your wife. Imagine if Messiah had used that excuse on us! Again, as Ephesians 5:25 states, *Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.* This is not an empty command. It is a way of life that can strengthen a marriage. It can even transform a marriage and turn it around to its proper direction.

### On This and Every Other Day

So, brothers, on this and every other day:

1. Put your wife's needs ahead of your own.
2. Talk to her.
3. Find positive things to say to her.
4. Say "I love you" to her.
5. Pray for your wife.
6. And, by all means, treat her as your Shulamit!

*Then, brothers, watch the results!*



Jeff Pfeffer has been a believer since 1974. He attended the Fruchtenbaum's home Bible study when Arnold and Mary Ann lived in New York State. He first attended Ariel's Camp Shoshanah in 1975. He served as deacon and elder for a number of years at Leptondale Bible Church in Newburgh, NY. Jeff and his wife, Bonnie, now attend Calvary Chapel Church in Highland, NY. They are retired, have three children and seven grandchildren. Jeff is a musician and volunteers performances of



guitar and ukulele at various venues. His testimony was published in: Christiane Jurik, *What We Have Seen and Heard: Twenty-three Jews Speak about Their Faith in Messiah* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2014).

Ephesians 5:25-30





# It was a **dark** and **stormy** **night...**

...and Yeshua was asleep at the wheel! Not the best way to summarize what is described in three<sup>1</sup> of the four Gospels, but it is accurate. Yeshua was indeed asleep on a cushion<sup>2</sup> after a very long day of ministry and with a storm raging all around Him. This storm was of such fury and intensity that experienced fishermen who were accustomed to these waters and had certainly been in storms before were in fear for their lives. All three Gospels record how the disciples, in slightly different ways, reacted to their Lord, their teacher, and their Master being asleep in an hour of terror for them:

Matthew wrote,  
“Save us, Lord we are perishing.”

Mark (Peter) noted,  
“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

Luke recorded,  
“Master, master, we are perishing!”<sup>3</sup>

Of the three Gospels, the one I identify with the most in this instance is Mark, the amanuensis of Peter, as he did not simply state the obvious “we are perishing,” but seems to me to be calling Yeshua out on being asleep at such a time as this. The reason I identify with this statement is because looking around the stormy mess that the world is in today, I sometimes find myself asking Yeshua the same question: “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

We live in a world that is and has always been in opposition to God. However, it does appear to me that we are in an accelerated state of moral and theological decomposition. Up is down and down is up, right is wrong and wrong is right, and two plus two no longer make four. I have been in storms before, and I am sure you have too, but this storm seems different to me, and sometimes I find myself wondering: Why does my Master, my Teacher, and my Lord sleep? But when I ask this question, I am reminded of His answer, also in the form of a question: *Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?* (Mk. 4:40).

## Ouch!

Now we all know what happened next: Yeshua muzzles the storm, and there is a great, supernatural calm. Yeshua, who a moment earlier was asleep on the cushion, is now awake imparting spiritual insight into His very nature to His puzzled disciples. They can only ask themselves—and here all three Gospel accounts state essentially the same thing—“Who is this?” He is not only the tired man on the cushion, the Master, the Teacher, and the Lord. He is much, much more. His answer, in the form of a question, is indeed as the author of

Hebrews describes it: *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account* (Heb 4:12-13).

## So, who is He?

He is the God-Man Yeshua, who with His own authority calmed the storm, as faithfully recorded in the Gospels by men not much different than you and I. This God-Man eventually vanquished His disciples’ unbelief and challenged them to live a life of faith in Him, which for most of them resulted in their deaths. He was tired and slept; He was thirsty and drank; He was hungry and ate. He also stood up and calmed the storm, not with the delegated authority of a mere prophet, but with the authority of the One

- **Who** “... upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3)
- **In whom** “... all things hold together” (Col. 1:17)
- **Who** “... though he was in the form of God, did not count **equality with God** a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7, emphasis added)
- **Who** “... became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14)
- **Who** “... shall be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6, emphasis added)

- **Who** “... shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The **LORD is our righteousness.**’” (Jer. 23:5-6)

- **Who** answered another question with a question hours before His death as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world: “How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (Jn. 14:9)

This Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah! Wrestle with Him all night like Jacob if you dare, but then listen to His words and surrender to the fact that He is indeed fully God and fully man and is equal to the One of whom it is said: *Heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you* (1 Kgs. 8:27).

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, and Luke 8:22-25

<sup>2</sup> Mark 4:38a

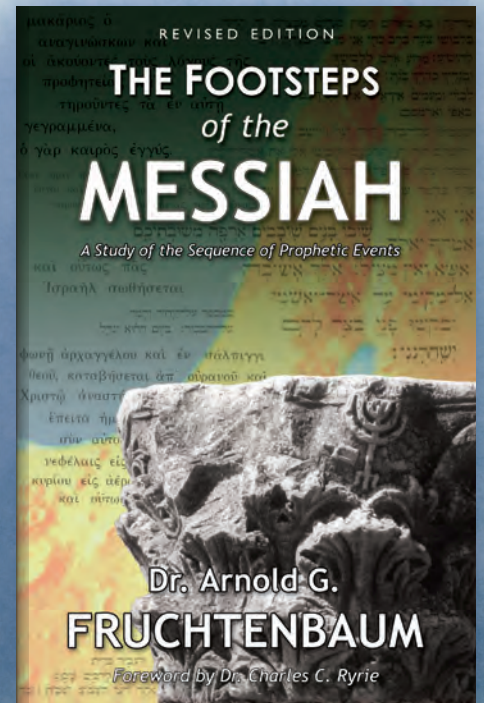
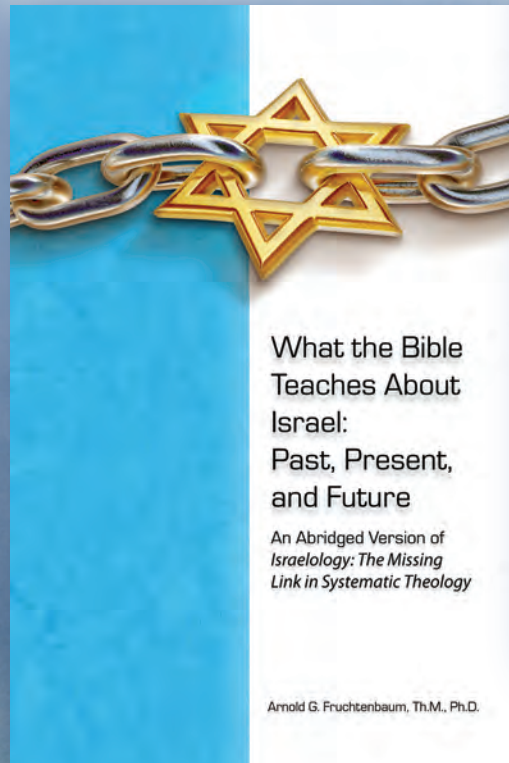
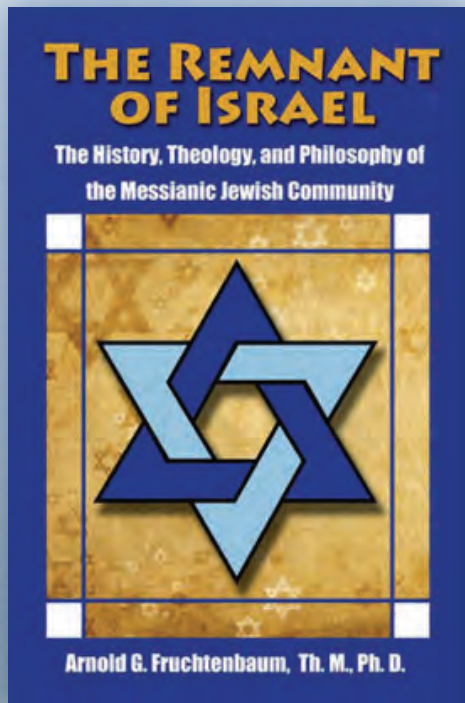
<sup>3</sup> Sean Boisen, Composite Gospel: Parallel Passages (Mt 8:23–Lk 8:25) (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2017).



Tim Velasco lives on the west side of the Jordan River in South Jordan, Utah. The husband, father, and Captain for a Major US Airline has been serving on the Board of Ariel Ministries since 2019. He combines a deep devotion to the Word of God with a keen interest in the history of the world at the time of Yeshua. Above all else, he wishes to share with Jews and Gentiles alike the saving love of the Messiah.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.  
Matthew 5:16