

David's Choice: The Plague

אֲרִיֵּל

Spring 2020 / Volume 1 / Number 34



ARIEL
MINISTRIES



Sheba the son of Bichri
"Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

The Threshing Floor of Araunah



The Census

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Faith



Prayer



Repentance



The Messiah in II Samuel 20-24

Plus:

Between
State and
Synagogue

The Converso
Problem:
The Inquisition
Comes to Spain

Time
is NOT on
Your Side

Dealing
with
Brokenness

שושנה 2020 SHOSHANAH

Program of Messianic
Jewish Studies

July 4 - August 28

Week 1 and 2

Ephesians

First John

Old and New Testament Surveys

Week 3-5

Galatians

Highlights of Jeremiah

Bible Study Methods

Spiritual Life

Zionism and Israel's History

Week 6

Life of Messiah

Weeks 7-8

Jewish People in the Book of Romans

The Doctrine of Humanity

The Doctrine of Sin

The Post-Mosaic Jewish Holy Days

Find out more at

www.ariel.org

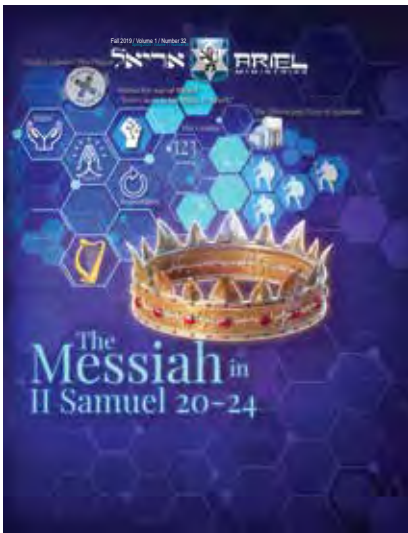


Every summer, Ariel Ministries welcomes people of all ages and nationalities to join Dr. Fruchtenbaum and other Bible teachers for the Messianic discipleship program held at the Shoshanah Campus. The program centers on establishing and growing believers in Yeshua through in-depth study of the Scriptures from a Messianic Jewish perspective. Learning modules are taught in 1, 2, and 3 week formats with plenty of free time included in the schedule. Whether you come for only 1 week or for the entire 8 week program, the Shoshanah Campus, beautifully nestled in the scenic Adirondack mountains, will provide the perfect environment for a fun and relaxing spiritual retreat for the whole family.

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14 Cover Story:

According to Jacques Isaac Gabizon, Samuel's second book deals with the coming of the Messiah. It tells the story of the many difficulties surrounding the life of Yeshua's ancestors and of what they endured for carrying the seed of Genesis 3:15. From the moment God promised that seed, the resistance to His Messianic plan and the attempts to stop the preparations for Messiah's coming have never subsided. The book of Samuel teaches us that the closer the world gets to the arrival of Messiah, the more the attacks increase. In this way, Samuel is like a prophecy for today, for Yeshua is coming soon.

09



09 Eye on Israel:

Post-1948 Israel is full of contradictions and ironies, yet it is the Israel of God, gathered for judgment, but awaiting a future blessing in which the Messiah will reign from Jerusalem. Tim Velasco presents a paper detailing the current divide in the State of Israel between secular and religious individuals as it relates to the issue of civil marriages and military service. The paper provides a historical background to the origins of this divide. It then explores its processes and consequences concluding with the author's personal opinions regarding a possible vision of the future.

20 Theology:

John B. Metzger continues his series on the Law of the Messiah, elaborating on its purpose.

22 History:

In the first part of this four-part series on the Spanish Inquisition, Stuart Wallis examined the "Jewish Problem" that had arisen in Spain after the Diaspora. As was seen, Spain's answer to this "problem" was to force the Jewish people in their country to convert to the Catholic faith and receive baptism or suffer death. In the second part of his series, the author reviews the tragic history of these Jewish converts to Catholicism.

29 Feature:

Marvin Kramer ponders on a commodity that we all share to the same extent: time. How we use the hours given to us by God reveals our eternal perspective. In line with that perspective, our lives are measured by their donation, not their duration.

32 Reflection:

In this very moving article, Mottel Baleston recounts the story of how God transformed his perspective on the German people that ultimately led to a changed heart.

37 Devotion:

Pastor Chris Partin elaborates on our brokenness, offering a new and healing perspective on God's work in suffering. The article also contains a text by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, in which he lists the seven facets of the believer's comforting position of being within "the much more care of God."

42 Book Review:

Dave James reviews Jonathan Cahn's *The Oracle: The Jubilean Mysteries Unveiled*.



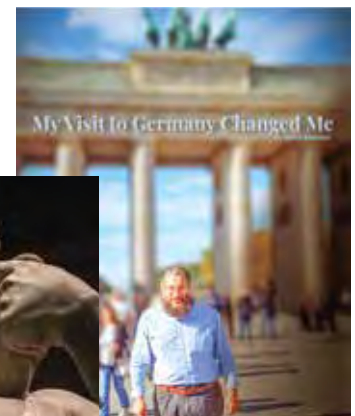
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Purpose Statement

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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Study Hard, Grow Strong

Each year, in December, a conference is held in Dallas, TX, during which Dr. Fruchtenbaum and many other illustrious speakers present new papers. Last year, these speakers shared the podium with Dr. Michael Rydelnik of Moody Bible Institute. Michael spoke about a topic he titled "Finding Messiah in Unexpected Places."¹ The lecture was based on a chapter he wrote for *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy*. The unexpected place where Dr. Rydelnik believes to have encountered Messiah is Joel 2:23. According to the scholar, the verse translated as "autumn rain for your vindication" could just as well be translated "the teacher for righteousness." The author maintains that the latter is the correct translation, stating that Joel 2:23

... reveals the great eschatological Teacher of Righteousness, the Messiah, who will usher in the Messianic Age, bringing rain and prosperity. This passage clearly indicates that the fulfillment of these words will take place at the end of days, when Israel turns to the Messiah to save the nation ... Nevertheless, Jesus of Nazareth clearly accepted the title of teacher ... [and] also practiced teaching with authority ... with great skill at interpretation, such as in the Sermon on the Mount ... and captured the interest of His listeners with true-to-life and intriguing stories ... These observations lead to the conclusion that Jesus saw Himself as the One who was the promised Teacher of Righteousness, who would also fulfill Joel 2:23 upon His return. Therefore, Jesus reminded all His disciples, 'You have one Teacher and ... you have one Master, the Messiah' (Mt 23:8, 10).²

Now, what does it matter to us when a scholar like Dr. Rydelnik comes across a "new" finding in the Word of God, something that excites him and blesses him on a personal level, as his presentation during the Pre-Trib Conference clearly showed? It matters because it proves that studying the Scriptures on a continuous basis with the deep desire to learn more about the God of the Bible will lead us to finding nuggets of truth that inspire and bless us. At a time when anti-intellectualism seems fashionable and churches are quickly falling away from the Word, it is even more important to be able to rightly divide the Word of God.

In *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, Dr. Fruchtenbaum expressed it this way: "It is the believer's obligation to study the Word and know God's program and God's way of doing things today. One will be able to recognize the counterfeit because of one's knowledge of the original."

Let's make it our goal to be good students of God's Word. That way, we will follow in the footsteps of our Messiah who *grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man* through His diligent study of the Scriptures (Lk. 2:52).

Your fellow student,

Christiane Jurik
Editor-in-Chief
Editorarielministries@gmail.com

¹ For the PowerPoint slides of Dr. Rydelnik's lecture, see: <https://www.pre-trib.org/2019-conference-papers>.

² Michael Rydelnik, Edwin Blum, gen. eds., *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2019), 1167-75.

Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives

MEET THE TEAM



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ARIEL BRANCHES



Ariel Australia **Chris & Lisa Savage**

Website: www.ariel.org.au
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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.



Ariel Canada **Jacques Isaac and Sharon Gabizon**

Website: www.arielcanada.com
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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.



Ariel India **Bakul N. Christian**

Email: bakulchristian@yahoo.co.in

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



Ariel Israel **Sasha & Lilian Granovsky**

Email: sashag@ariel.org

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



Ariel China

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



Ariel Germany

Website: www.cmv-duesseldorf.de
Email: cmv-cmv@t-online.de

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**

Email: hungary@ariel.org

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



Ariel New Zealand

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

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



Ariel Ministries Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

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

ARIEL REPRESENTATIVES



Michael & Hannah Gabizon – Students (Montreal)

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



John Metzger – Field Representative (North Carolina)

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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.



Gary & Missy Demers – Camp Representatives (New York)

CampShoshanah@ariel.org

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



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

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



Jack Nakashima (Ohio)

Email: jacknariel@gmail.com

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



Hungary

Marian, a Jewish friend of ours and a Holocaust survivor, who used to attend our Bible studies, started working on a book about the Jewish fate. She asked leading philosophers (among them the world-famous Agnes Geller, who died recently) and authors of Hungary to contribute chapters to this valuable work. She greatly honored Ivan by asking him to write a chapter on the biblical perspective of Jewish identity. It is a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity to give a biblical testimony about very important questions of the Jewish nation and the Jewish Messiah. We are praying that many will read this book and that Ivan's chapter will open the eyes of many Jewish people regarding their Messiah.

In November of last year, we organized a meeting with the topic: Is the Bible anti-Semitic or where does Christian anti-Semitism come from? Twelve Holocaust survivors attended the meeting. One of them told her story of how she survived this terrible



Two Hungarian Holocaust survivors and Paivi (right) at an outreach organized by Ariel Hungary

time in Budapest. Then Rita had a chance to teach and answer the above questions. The conversations that followed the teaching were very good. Earlier in the year, these precious people had visited Finland. They were invited by our dear sister Paivi, who is gifted at reaching the Jewish people with the good news of Messiah Yeshua. An evangelical church in Finland hosted the attendees. After the meeting in November, they were open to continue the discussion another time. Our plan is to organize and celebrate some of the Jewish feasts with an open invitation for the group.

Occasionally, the Lord blesses us with encouragements. We serve and counsel members of our small fellowship. Recently one of them wrote: "It is so encouraging to listen to your teaching. If this is Christianity, maybe I will stay alive in my faith." Another wrote us that she was encouraged to come to the origin, the Word of God. Our volunteer web designer said to Ivan: "I always listen to your teaching. I take many notes and use what you say to teach others. I also use Dr. Fruchtenbaum's teachings; I consider him and you my spiritual leaders." These highlights encourage us to keep ministering to others.



India



Other than reading the occasional prayer requests published in Ariel's bi-monthly prayer guide, most people do not know much about our branch in India. The reason is that the leader of that branch, Bakul Christian, is very busy teaching Bible studies from a Messianic Jewish perspective. He does so in the slums of India as well as in churches across his home state, Gujarat. L. Jesse Grace, the author of *Ariel's Trials and Triumphs*, a sequel to Dr. Fruchtenbaum's biography, published in November of last year, took the time to thoroughly research the history of Ariel India. Here is an excerpt of the chapter that she based on the results of her work:



Bakul and his wife Jenet surrounding Dr. Fruchtenbaum at Ariel's Shoshanah Campus

“Unless God was the one who opened the door, Arnold had always maintained that Ariel Ministries would not force its way into a new geographic region around the globe for ministry purposes. From witnessing how New Zealand and Australia had been opened to Ariel, Arnold knew that in God’s own way and timing, He would lead the ministry to those areas that the Lord Himself had prepared in advance for it to enter. Thus, when a gentleman visiting from India attended the Ariel Kiwi Camp in the spring of 2007 near the little town of Matamata in the central part of the North Island of New Zealand, Arnold did not have the remotest inkling what an enormous impact his participation would have upon the future mission of Ariel Ministries in India.

By the spring of 2007, Ariel New Zealand had been in operation for about four and a half years. During that time, the branch had evolved from essentially distributing Ariel books, manuscripts, and audiotapes to starting up study groups around Auckland and in a few other cities of the North Island. In the interim, God had raised up six leaders who were equipped and ready to teach various groups around the country.

One day, David Thomson, one of the group leaders, was visiting a church in Auckland and “happened” to literally bump into an Indian gentleman right outside the church doors. Bakul Kumar N. Christian, known as Bakul, was a believer from Ahmedabad, the economic hub of Gujarat, a state in the northwestern part of India—one among a total of twenty-nine states in the country. He was raised in the Presbyterian faith until the age of eighteen. In 1984, after understanding the gospel for the first time when some Americans led an evangelistic outreach in his area,



A group of Bakul's students at the Christian Missionary and Alliance Church



Group of Bible students in a slum in Gujarat



Bakul teaching at a church in Borsad, Gujarat



Whenever possible, Bakul and his wife support these orphans with lunches, clothes, sports equipment, and blankets

Bakul received Jesus as his Savior. In 1996, he married his wife, Jenet, and two years later, their daughter was born. After he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Bakul joined the Church of North India Gujarat Diocese as an associate pastor and served for two years, overseeing five congregations. In 2003, he traveled to New Zealand to gain some cross-cultural experience. He returned to New Zealand again in 2005, this time for a yearlong stay upon the invitation of the Gujarati Community Church in Auckland. It was during this sojourn that David Thomson just “happened” to be visiting the church on that day when they chanced upon each other.

David proceeded to introduce Bakul Christian to Ariel Ministries and Jewish ministry. Prior to this encounter, Bakul had never heard of Ariel Ministries and knew nothing about Jewish ministry. Bakul later also met Tony Wood, the head of Ariel New Zealand. Both David and Tony talked to Bakul a number of times and then arranged for him to attend the one-week Ariel Kiwi Camp in 2007, the sixth of its kind to be held. It was thus that Bakul found himself at the discipleship camp in New Zealand.

As English was not his first language, Bakul struggled to understand some of the teachings at the camp, especially due to Arnold’s peculiar mixture of accents and the Texan drawl of the co-teacher. However, he understood enough of the essentials by the end of the camp program. After further studies and particularly after witnessing a Passover Seder demonstration regarding the Messiah, he recognized the pressing need for such teachings at his home church in Gujarat. One thing led to another after Bakul returned home that year, which eventuated in an invitation from the leaders of Bakul’s home church to



Tony Wood and David Thomson to come to Gujarat to teach a seminar for a group of their pastors and leaders.

Thus, toward the end of 2007, Tony and David traveled to the state of Gujarat for two weeks to conduct a few one-day and three-day seminars and to visit several churches in the area. They taught “The Eight Covenants of the Bible,” “The Jewish Frame of Reference,” “God’s Plan for Israel,” “The Life of Messiah,” and much, much more. The seminars were conducted via interpreters from English to Gujarati, assisted by comprehensive notes prepared ahead of time in their local language.

The teachings were all enthusiastically received and created a hunger for the Ariel materials to be available in Gujarati. Amazingly, the leaders of Bakul’s home church agreed to arrange for all fifty of “The Messianic Bible Study” lessons in the Ariel “Come and See” series to be translated into Gujarati. This was indeed a marvelous work of the Lord in opening wide the door to such a receptive, far-flung field in the vast subcontinent of India. On its own, Ariel Ministries would never have been able to knock on doors and get an entry into a predominantly Hindu land where there existed a strong, ongoing opposition to the church. Since it was the Lord who had opened the door to India, Ariel Ministries firmly believed that through the availability of the Ariel study materials in the Gujarati language, God would bring a multitude of Gujarat Indians to faith in Jesus the Messiah. The ministry prayed that the number of believers in the state would increase manifold all to the glory of God Almighty.

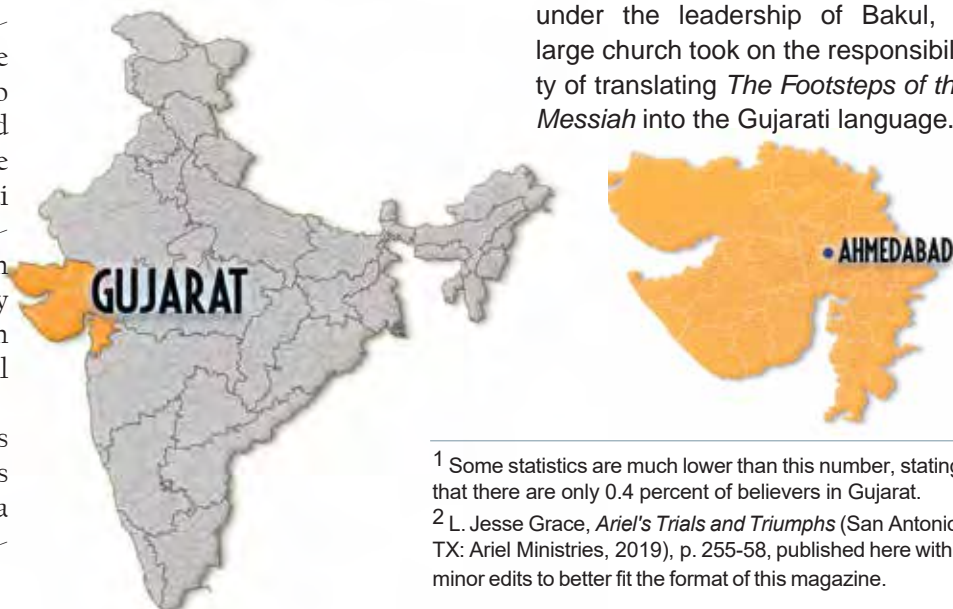
After nearly two hundred years under British rule, India gained its independence in August 1947. As a democratic, federal country consisting of twenty-nine states and seven

union territories, it operated from multiple levels of government—central, state, and local. Comparatively speaking, in such an ethnically diverse country where the total population was over 1.2 billion, the number of inhabitants in the state of Gujarat was a small fraction—around sixty million. Hinduism, the predominant religion, accounted for nearly ninety percent of the state’s populace, followed by Islam, Jainism, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and other minor groups. Believers in Gujarat made up less than two percent of the state’s population,¹ translating to approximately one million people. Bakul’s home church encompassed 360 parishes with around 235,000 members. The number of Jews in the entire country was minuscule with only about 5,000 scattered across the land in a few small communities.

Although there was freedom of religion, the Christians and other minority groups often found themselves undergoing persecution—victims of religiously motivated violence—including physical assaults, threats, and intimidation. The anti-conversion law, otherwise known as the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, was passed in 2003 and enacted in 2017. The purpose was to prohibit

conversion from one religion to another by use of force, allurements, or fraudulent means. Anyone found to contravene this Act would be punished by imprisonment for up to four years, if convicted. Under the law, if an individual, such as a Hindu, responded to the gospel, the missionary was expected to submit a form to the government with details of the person undergoing the change. Likewise, the person converting was also obligated to report to the authorities thirty days prior to the “conversion ceremony,” such as a baptismal event. If the Christian workers failed to comply with these rules, they would face criminal charges. However, those of the Hindu faith were exempt from these stipulations. For instance, when a group of tribal Christians reconverted to Hinduism, they were not required to submit to the law. Laboring in this type of environment, Christian missionaries and workers could become easy targets for accusations whenever they shared their faith and the gospel message with others . . .”²

In 2012, Ariel India officially opened its doors. Ever since, many more manuscripts have been published in the native tongue, and under the leadership of Bakul, a large church took on the responsibility of translating *The Footsteps of the Messiah* into the Gujarati language.



¹ Some statistics are much lower than this number, stating that there are only 0.4 percent of believers in Gujarat.

² L. Jesse Grace, *Ariel’s Trials and Triumphs* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2019), p. 255-58, published here with minor edits to better fit the format of this magazine.

SHOSHANAH

Ariel's School of Messianic Jewish Studies

"The very first time that Arnold had ever set foot on the grounds of the campsite in the Adirondacks was during the summer of 1959. He had just recently completed the ninth grade and graduated from junior high school. At age fifteen, going on sixteen in September, he was full of fervor about Yeshua Ha'Maschiach, whom he had received as his Jewish Messiah in October 1956, shortly after his thirteenth birthday. In the spring of the previous year, in 1958, his entire family had moved from New York City on the East Coast to live out West in Los Angeles, California. After a long year of eager anticipation, Arnold was finally able to return to New York for a few weeks in 1959. He could not wait to study God's Word in greater depth and enthusiastically looked forward to attending a two-week Bible study program called the Memory Camp, which his mentor, Mr. Burl Haynie, had recently launched that summer.

Based on a five-year model called Miracle Camps developed by another ministry, the program focused on a different biblical topic for each of the five years. Burl Haynie, a Gentile believer working for the American Board of Missions to the Jews (ABMJ)—later renamed Chosen People Ministries—had revised the material to encompass a Jewish orientation in order to make it relevant to the Messianic Jewish teenagers who would be taking part. Headquartered in New York City, the ABMJ had rented the property in the Adirondacks expressly for this new summer camp and would fund the entire cost of running the

program. Hence, the camp would be free for the participants. To motivate Jewish teenagers to attend, the ABMJ even offered the incentive of a free trip to those who could verifiably memorize the relevant one hundred and twenty assigned verses from the Bible prior to the start of the program. Any candidate could also win a prize at the camp for successfully reciting all the verses by heart in one go. Of course, Arnold not only attained a free roundtrip Greyhound bus ticket, he also won a great prize at the camp: a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

Nestled in the heartland of the beautiful Adirondack Mountains near Lake Champlain in upstate New York, the campsite was off the beaten track in a small clearing amid endless acres of forests. It was a pristine piece of land, located in the vicinity of the old stagecoach route between Albany and Montreal. A little lake called Trout Pond, where one could fish or swim, was situated across the main road on the far end of the property. Except for the actual campgrounds, dense woods covered the rest of the surroundings.

The camp facilities were extremely rustic, with only limited running spring water. Two old, run-down army barracks served as dormitories. The



one for the girls contained an interior shower stall, while a small outdoor bathhouse was designated for the boys who occupied the other structure. A separate, old wooden building comprising a kitchen and dining hall doubled as a classroom for the Bible study lessons. While very basic, the accommodations were adequate for the purposes of the Memory Camp. Arnold enjoyed every minute of his camp life among a group of approximately twenty Messianic Jewish teenage peers."¹

The Program

Thus begins the story of *Shoshanah's Legacy*, Ariel Ministries' newest publication. Authored by L. Jesse Grace, this sequel to Arnold Fruchtenbaum's biography recounts the breathtaking history of what became known to many simply as Camp Shoshanah. Today, the venue is more aptly called "Ariel's School of Messianic Jewish Studies at the Shoshanah Campus" (ASMJS). The name reflects the fact that time spent at the conference center is a time invested in one's spiritual growth. People from all over the world come to be taught the Bible from a Messianic Jewish, dispensational perspective during five periods a day. Throughout the years, the study program has been growing. The school now offers eight weeks of courses each summer. The curriculum is divided into four sections: a two-week, a three-week, a one-week, and another two-week set of courses. Not everyone can attend all eight weeks, and so they pick one of the above sets.





The Vision

At the end of her book, Jesse Grace summarized the ministry's vision for this school:

"Starting with the one small seed of desire for Jewish missions planted in the heart of Rose Burnham, a Gentile believer, her vision for the property has blossomed over the years into a full-blown, operational campus that can accommodate up to two hundred fifty people per season. A multitude of believers within the body of Messiah has contributed in countless ways to the outworking of Camp Shoshanah—from teaching, to studying, to digging wells, to cooking meals, to cleaning up, to constructing buildings, to planting and weeding, to donating funds, to praying, and much, much more—shaping its course. What a wonderful testimony to the truth of Yeshua's Word when He said: *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you* (Matthew 17:20b).

As the myriad of changed lives of the participants in the program could testify, upon their diligent study and application of their learning to their lives, the transformative power of God's Word was evident. It was thus all the more imperative for Ariel to forge ahead with its teaching ministry through all avenues available, including the continual expansion of its study resources and the teaching program at Camp Shoshanah. It has always been Arnold's longing and heartfelt prayer for God's Chosen People to come to a saving knowledge of Yeshua Ha'Mashiach, the true *Tikvah*, or hope, of Israel. With the next generation of young Messianic Jewish believers raised up to labor in the Jewish mission field, Arnold firmly believed that God would grant a plentiful harvest among His flock. At this point in history, it was indeed both a challenging and an exciting time for believers to be alive on earth and to be actively engaged in the Lord's service.

Arnold's deepest desire was for the future ASMJS to become a beacon of light for the Messianic world and for more people to come to know the saving grace of Yeshua Ha'Mashiach and grow to maturity in the Word. His strongest hope was that Shoshanah's legacy would be a worthy one to leave behind for posterity in the future.

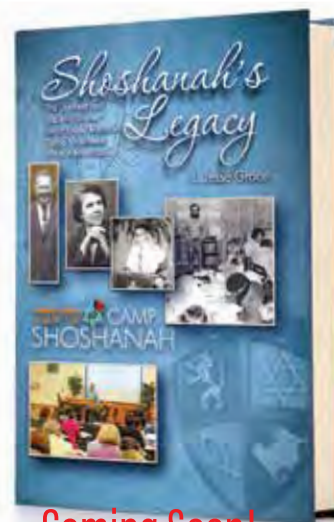
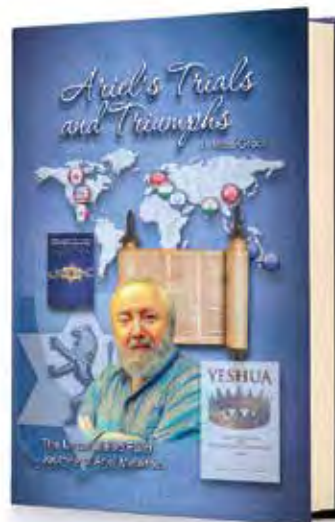
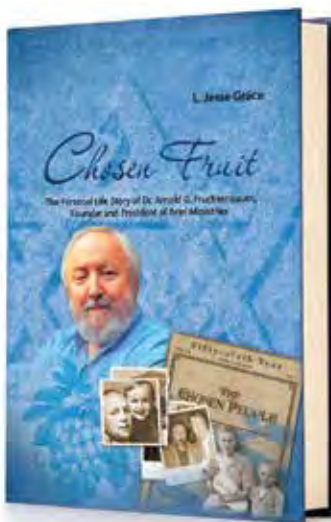
Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be the glory . . . in Messiah Yeshua unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:19b-20)

How glorious is the hope!"²

¹ L. Jesse Grace, *Shoshanah's Legacy* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2020), p. 3-4. The excerpt is published here with minor edits to better fit the format of this magazine.

² Ibid., p. 227-228.

The inspiring story of a unique journey of faith and service.



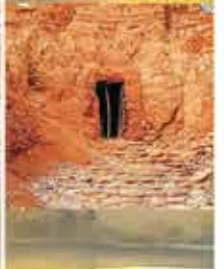
Coming Soon!

Follow the amazing story of God's faithful work through Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's humble beginnings in post-war Europe, eventually establishing Ariel Ministries and growing it into an international network of Messianic and Gentile believers who are focused on making the Jewish Messiah known.

Order your copies at **ariel.org** or by calling Ariel Ministries at 210-344-7707.



Between State and Synagogue



I love Israel. As you read these three simple words, I know that many, if not all of you, feel the same. Say it slowly and deliberately: “We—love—Israel.” But what Israel do we love? You see, there are many “Israels” out there. There is ancient Israel, there is biblical Israel, there is the modern State of Israel, and there may be many more variants in the

minds of people. However, there is only one Israel in the mind of God. I think it is easy sometimes to project a Messianic future or a biblical past into the current messy reality in Israel and miss the point that all that is going on now in the land of the Bible, both good and bad, is known to God and is flowing in the river of His will to a glorious future.



Today, I want to give you a little insight into the modern, post-1948 Israel, an Israel full of contradictions and ironies; yet, it is the Israel of God. It is gathered for judgment but is awaiting a future blessing in which Yeshua, our Messiah, will reign from Jerusalem. If you are like me, you follow the headlines from the land of the Bible and are sometimes perplexed by what you see and hear. Perhaps you have “survived” one of Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s trips to the land and there are still some nagging questions in your mind. Or maybe, this is all new to you and you simply want to know and understand more of what you see and read about the “apple of God’s eye.”

I wrote the following paper as a final assignment for a course I took a few years ago at Hebrew University.¹ I want to share this with you today, dear reader, because it gives insight into the current state of affairs in “The Eretz.” But more importantly, it will help *you* to be a more effective witness as you better understand the secular and religious Israelis God will bring into your life if you only ask Him. As a side benefit, you will also be able to more clearly understand and more intentionally pray for our Messianic brothers and sisters in the modern State of Israel.



¹ The slightly edited paper is reproduced here with the author’s permission. For a list of the author’s references, please write to editoriel-ministries@gmail.com.



Between State and Synagogue

A few years ago, a popular comedy series in Israel performed a skit in which a religious family—father, mother, and son—were at home around the table when a guest arrives. The guest, a secular Israeli Jew, came to deliver in person the taxes “owed” to the family. When the subject of how much the payment should be came up, the guest proceeded to explain that it would not be much because of the difficult year he had. He then explained that, among other things, lack of work and reserve military service had a negative effect on his income. These statements were interrupted several times by the boy, who asked his father, “What is work?” and “What is military reserve service?” only to be told by his father, “That is not for us.”

The idea of a secular Jew as depicted in the skit above is a relatively new concept and has its origins in the Enlightenment and the resultant Jewish emancipation in Europe and elsewhere. Up to that point in time, for most Jews, to be Jewish was to be attached to the Jewish community by strict religious ties regulated by Hala-

cha (Jewish law) and often governed by local and sometimes dynastical-ly-led rabbinical courts. This system was also remarkably similar among North African and Middle Eastern Jews. These rabbinical courts and their representatives governed all aspects of a Jew’s life inside the home, in the synagogue, and in his relations with the outside world through the interpretation, application, and enforcement of Halacha. To a Jew, there were only two modes of existence: one, to be a Jew in all traditional respects and subject to Halacha and, in turn, to be subject to those who interpret and enforce it; or two, to turn his back on the Jewish community by conversion, in what was many times a vain effort to escape one’s own “Jewishness.” For many Jews who chose the latter, full acceptance into the Gentile world—whether Christian or Muslim—was never a *fait accompli* at the moment of conversion, but simply the beginning of a generational struggle for full acceptance into the local community.



The Desire to Return to Israel

Beginning with the French Revolution, a wave of emancipation swept through Western Europe. Now there was available to a Jew a “third way” of



existence: Jewishness as an ethnic identity. This third way was apart from ties to the old religious core of the nation in exile and free from the perceived need for conversion. The encounter of this third way with the nascent nationalistic movements in various European countries gave rise to Zionism. The very core of Zionism was a yearning desire to return from the Exile that had its start in 136 A.D. Further, Zionism was the deeply held conviction of many Jews, both religious and now secular, to return to the land of their fathers and reconstitute the nation of Israel. Zionism, then, found its ultimate expression in the formation of the State of Israel consummated in the speech delivered by David Ben Gurion on 14 May 1948. This Declaration of Independence rested firmly on the solid ground of proto-state institutions accomplished through the hard work of Theodor Herzl and the World Zionist Organization.

Yet, the concern of the “ultra-Orthodox” and many religious Jews during the years leading to the formation of the new state was that this state, with its secular leadership and socialist leanings, would be a threat to them and their rights of religious expression and governance. In an effort to assuage the concerns of this large and vocal minority, a “status quo” agreement was reached between Ben Gurion and those in the ultra-religious camp to maintain certain practices deemed essential to Orthodox Judaism. As the new nation transitioned from the time of the British mandate, a snapshot regarding many facets of life, both in practices and institutions in Israel circa 1947, was made and is maintained to this day.



Israel Today

The status quo can be seen in practice with the availability of public transportation in Haifa during the Jewish Shabbat (Friday evening to Saturday evening), but its unavailability in Tel Aviv. This intrusion of religious practice into something as mundane and basic as public transportation is not a statement of faith on the part of the municipality of Tel Aviv, but simply a reflection of the religious reality on the ground at the time of the state's formation. This intrusion is not limited to the availability of buses in Tel Aviv on Saturday, but is further, and perhaps more personally, felt in the fact that marriages in Israel between Jews can only be performed under the auspices of the national and local rabbinic courts. This common practice, with its roots deep in Halacha, was the standard in pre-State Israel and also in the Diaspora. It was therefore preserved going forward. In other words, the only legal Jewish marriages in Israel were and are religious marriages. This practice finds its roots not only in Jewish law but also in the confessional system of the Ottomans and its continuation under the British mandate and its further preservation in the legal system now in force in modern Israel. It remains today primarily because it

was the status quo during the state's formation.

The status quo is exemplified institutionally in the work of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its support of exemptions from compulsory military service to religious scholars. The concept finds its roots in the idea of the nation supporting the rabbinic scholars that is found in Jewish history. These scholars, in turn, are to preserve Jewish traditions and religious culture through continuous Talmudic and biblical studies. Jewish culture has always prized education in general and religious education in particular. Among religious families, to have a son pursue Talmudic and, to a lesser extent, biblical studies is considered a blessing and honor. The idea of a small core group of “Pious Ones” (Hasidim) who preserve the essence of Jewishness and Jewish traditions for the rest of Jewry is as old as the Jewish nation itself. This idea was certainly the current reality at the time of the formation of the State of Israel and was preserved and institutionalized governmentally with the granting of exemption from military service for those who were engaged in rabbinic studies. In a sense, they would continue to pray, study, and learn for the nation as they had since times of old, but now they did so back in the Land of Israel as it fought for its own existence. Through the years, however, what was envisioned as a group of hundreds is now tens of thousands and growing, resulting in a separate “category” of citizenry portrayed with humor in the introduction to this paper.

The status quo “snapshot” taken in 1948 results in two realities in Israel today. First is the reality that the only



state in the world where two Jews who wish to have a civil marriage and cannot marry is in turn the only Jewish State in the world. Second is the reality that the only Jewish Army in the world contains very few "Ultra-Orthodox" Jews.



The issue of civil marriage was brought to the forefront with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the subsequent mass exodus of Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU). The Law of Return grants to any person who has at least one Jewish parent or grandparent the right to immigrate to Israel. With the Law of Return, many individuals from the FSU who had lived generationally under atheistic communism flooded into Israel. These immigrants did not have the more traditional connections to Judaism prevalent among European Jews and those from North Africa and the Middle East. With them came many cases of people who met in Israel and wished to get married yet were denied that opportunity because one spouse was not considered Jewish by Halacha. The issue is found also among those who are Jewish according to Halacha, but in protest refuse a religious marriage and in turn go overseas and have a foreign civil marriage that may be recognized in Israel. Yet, even these individuals if they wish to

divorce² must go through the traditional rabbinical process. The irony is not lost in that for most emigrants of the FSU, where secularism abounds, military service is compulsory, yet a civil marriage is denied. In other words, Jewish Orthodox men exempted from military service can get married and divorced without any issues, while those who could potentially die for the nation, die legally single unless they marry overseas or subject themselves to a religious wedding.



The Lack of a Constitution

As the status quo picture taken some 70 years ago begins to fade, the issues outlined above come to boil at the surface of Israeli society. Unlike many of the modern nations, particularly the USA, Israel lacks a constitutional document. What it has instead is a set of basic laws intended to grant and protect the rights of citizens. In a curious abrogation of its duty to legislate laws, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) has granted wide discretion to the judiciary branch. As the judiciary attempts to adapt and amend the current basic laws to the developing

reality of the nation, the potential for judicial overreach and outright judicial tyranny is very real. This further exacerbates the isolation many religious Jews feel toward the secular majority and the institutions they feel it represents. Further, it fails to protect the rights of secular Jews to marry apart from religious ceremony, yet it demands military service.

The State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state lives in constant tension between religious and secular voices. The tension has been increased in the last few decades due to the lack of a clear majority in the Knesset between left- and right-wing parties. There has been an almost even split between conservative parties, which generally tend to be more religious and right-leaning, and secular parties that tend to be less religious and left-leaning. In order to govern, the right-leaning parties that maintain a minimal majority have joined with relatively small ultra-religious and Arab parties in order to create the majority necessary to govern. This, in turn, gives a national voice that is disproportionate to the number of people these ultra-religious parties actually represent. A direct result of this current situation is that the status quo in the two areas outlined above is perpetuated.

In the practice of exemption from military service, the issue has come to a head with sometimes violent protests in certain religiously conservative areas of Jerusalem and other locations throughout Israel, followed by counter protests in more liberal areas of Tel Aviv and elsewhere. As Tel Aviv looks outside itself and

² This paper was originally written with a secular audience in mind. This author holds to biblical views on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

desires deeply to see Israel as a nation accepted by the outside world by fostering secular humanist and liberal ideologies, Jerusalem stands symbolically in the opposite camp as it turns to Jewish Halacha and tradition with disregard to world opinion and modern trends. This “self-ghettofication” of certain sections of Jerusalem and its residents inside the only Jewish State is extremely ironic. Yet, it is a reality that signals the deep divides within Jewish Israeli society that transcend any other cleavages this author has witnessed. In a perhaps oversimplified way, each segment has their own state capital: secular Tel Aviv and religious Jerusalem. In between the two ideological “capitals” live what this author considers to be the true majority of Israeli citizens: those who are torn between these sides.³

It is frustratingly difficult to see one's child go off to serve in the military and be exposed to the realities of war knowing that not very far geographically, yet far away ideologically, live those who benefit from the state yet do not have to put their children's lives on the line for the same state. Yet, as a retired military leader in the IDF (who prefers to remain anonymous) recently told me, “Do I really want to have soldiers

of an ultra-Orthodox background under my command? I am not sure. Am I the commander or is it the rabbi they follow?” The civil marriage issue is personal and deeply troubling for many in Israel. The idea that a Jewish couple in the only Jewish State in the world is not able to have a simple civil marriage ceremony is puzzling to the extreme.



Conclusion

Israel is a very young and modern state with an ancient heritage and very old problems. The divides exposed during the Enlightenment in Europe have now been manifested in fuller terms, as seen in the issues of civil marriage and compulsory military service. Can a state that lacks a constitution that protects basic rights and encourages fundamental obligations remain a state and unified? This author thinks it indeed can. This opinion in large part is due

to the high degree of representation found in the Israeli Knesset and the strength of the state's institutions and laws drawn from millennia of Jewish thought and discourse. The tension between state and synagogue, although real and painful to many, is a clear indication of a healthy society in which diverse thought and practice can and does coexist. The very idea of two ideologically separate “capitals” is, in this author's view, a uniquely Jewish answer to this tension. The deep divide between the secular and the religious in Israel is not unique and can be found in the USA, where this author resides. The key difference is in the fact that rights and obligations in the USA are defended and protected by a constitutional document that is enforced through a government that is representative and replete with checks and balances. It is this author's conviction that Israel would do well to go through the painful process of establishing a constitution that would protect the rights of all its citizens regardless of religious affiliation, a constitutional document that would widen the scope of Jewishness and from which would emerge a stronger and more just society.⁴



³ This author believes that many in the Messianic community feel that they fit here.

⁴ This author believes that for many in the Messianic community this is a “dream” that will result in greater national legitimacy. It is this author's personal conviction that there will be a “Messianic” party in the Knesset in the not so distant future.



The Messiah in II Samuel 20-24

By Jacques Isaac Gabizon

The second book of Samuel is ultimately about the coming of the Messiah. It tells the story of the many difficulties surrounding the life of His ancestors and of what they endured for carrying the seed of Genesis 3:15. From the moment God promised that the seed of the woman would come to crush the serpent's head until the second coming,

the resistance to God's Messianic plan and the attempts to stop the preparations for His coming have never subsided. The book of Samuel teaches us that the closer the world gets to the arrival of Messiah, the more the attacks increase. In this way, Samuel is like a prophecy for today, for Yeshua is coming soon.



Samuel's first book begins with Hannah's lament over the condition of the tabernacle. At the time, God's dwelling place was in the hands of the sons of Eli, whom the Bible called "sons of Belial," or "sons of the devil." Then God raised up Samuel to take over and cleanse the tabernacle and to anoint the true king of Israel, David. From the moment he was anointed, David's life was difficult because he became the ancestor of the Messiah. Yet, his name opens up the New Testament, and he carried the torch well. David conquered Jerusalem and moved the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant to the city.

Toward the end of the book of Samuel, one encounters a multitude of stories of uprisings and loyalties, of friendship and unfaithfulness—stories that seem unrelated to each other. Four new giants rise up against David, and one wonders why they all come out at this time and not before. Then there is a long list of choice men of war, with their names and their ranks. Yet, most of them have not been mentioned before, and again the question arises why the information is given now and not before. The book ends with a census, but no reason is given for it, nor does the reader learn why David was punished although he bitterly repented after God sent a plague that killed 70,000 people. Hence, the book seems to leave the reader with a few big question marks.

However, this is only a bird's eye view of the last chapters of 2 Samuel, an unfair surface browsing, for if one pays attention to the many scattered details, there is indeed a movement forward, an underlying story toward a specific goal; and at the end, one can lay back, fully satisfied because there

one realizes that God had the last word after all. The book ends in great victory with the building of the altar of sacrifice, the center and first element of the temple of God and the place which speaks of the Messiah Himself, the Lamb of God who opens the way to the presence of God. It is around the altar that Solomon built the temple. Hence, the book ends with the assurance that the temple will be built, and that the Messiah will come.



The Uprising of Sheba

This study of 2 Samuel begins with chapter 20 of the book and the revolt of Sheba. Verse 1 states: *And there happened to be there a rebel, whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said: "We have no share in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!"*

Sheba's name means "seven," the number of completeness and perfection. Yet, this man's "perfection" went in the wrong direction. In Hebrew, the verse states that Sheba was *beliyyal*, "worthless." The term was used in the context of the two sons of Eli. However, they were called "sons of beliyyal," while Sheba *is* beliyyal. In Jewish writings, beliyyal is another name for Satan. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, this is

the name of the leader of the forces of darkness. Its root is from a word meaning "to swallow," like the swallowing Sheol. David used the term in Psalm 22:5-6, comparing beliyyal with the cords of Sheol: *When the waves of death surrounded me, The torrents of destruction [beliyyal] overwhelmed me. The cords of Sheol surrounded me.* Paul asked in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15a: *For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Messiah with Belial?* Here, Paul spoke of Belial as the leader of lawlessness and darkness. Eventually, beliyyal became one of the titles of Antichrist. Who, then, was this man Sheba to merit such a name?

David realized Sheba's power when he said in 2 Samuel 20:6, *Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom.* Absalom was David's son who tried to kill him. Yet, Sheba was worse than Absalom because he attempted to divide Israel into Judah in the south and Samaria in the north. He appeared right before the temple was to be built, and ultimately, his successor, Rehoboam, one of Solomon's sons, succeeded in dividing Israel. Rehoboam used Sheba's words when he said, *We have no inheritance with the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel* (2 Chron. 10:16, 1 Kgs. 12:16). The worthless man's words became a slogan for other rebels.





Giants

After Sheba, a new threat arose when the giants made their appearances again. In 2 Samuel 21:15, we read: *When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint.* The Philistine uprising occurred toward the end of David's life, and he was weaker then. When he grew faint, his enemies took out their best weapons in an attempt to wipe out him and all of Israel. David had plans to build a temple for God, and soon he was to place its foundation with the altar. It seems that the forces of evil knew about it. In the next seven verses, four giants entered the battlefield in an attempt to kill David, the ancestor of the Messiah.

The first giant was Ishbi-Benob (v. 16), the second was Saph (v. 18), and the last one was not named, but described as a man of great stature (v. 20). The one giant that causes problems for some is the third one, mentioned in verse 19: *There was war with the Philistines again at Gob, and*

Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. Some have said that there are two mistakes in this verse. First, the giant's name is Goliath, but Goliath had been dead for a long time at this point. Second, David, not Elhanan, killed Goliath. First Chronicles 20:5 resolves the first part and explains that this was the brother of Goliath, not Goliath himself. The problem of Elhanan was resolved by a great grammarian and Bible commentator who knew his Hebrew well: Rabbi David Kimchi, known as "the Radak," from the Middle Ages. The scholar explained that the Hebrew *et Goliath* may be rendered as "with Goliath." Hence, the verse should read: "He struck down the one who was with Goliath."

The question arises why these giants were returning here, at this very time. The word for "giant" is *rapha*, or *rephaim* in the plural. If we follow their history, these were the ones who attempted to stop Israel from entering into the Promised Land. The ten spies saw and feared them, and because of them, Israel's entrance was delayed another 38 years. Even when the Israelites finally did enter the land, the giants attempted again to stop them, but this time they could not. The first three chapters of Deuteronomy concentrate on the battle against these giants until the Israelites succeeded in wiping out most of them. They resurfaced with Goliath, who came to the scene only after David was anointed king and thus entered into the history of Israel. In 2 Samuel, we are witnessing the last appearance of the giants at the moment the temple was to be built.

So the evil forces brought them forth at some crucial moments:

- ★ When Israel entered the land
- ★ When David, the ancestor of the Messiah, was anointed king
- ★ When the altar and the temple were to be built

Their demonic origin is seen in their attempt to destroy the Messianic seed. However, *These four were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.* (2 Sam. 21:22), never to be seen or heard of again.



The Census

Sheba's rebellion and the rising of the four giants demonstrate the underlying spiritual battle that was going on at the time of David. This battle is amplified in the last chapter of 2 Samuel, the story of the famous census. Verse 1 of chapter 24 sets the stage: *Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."* The specific reason for God's anger is not given. However, at this point, it is not hard to figure out. The storyline led from sin to sin, followed by grace over grace. The result of God's anger was that He moved David to number the people. While no reason is given why taking a census was a mistake, it immediately



becomes clear that it was wrong. Even David's commander Joab, who was not a spiritual man, tried to dissuade the king from performing the census (2 Sam. 24:3).

Commentators offer several theories as to why God punished David for numbering the people. The most popular is that at this point, the king relied on his own strength instead of relying on God. He should have known that God does not see the number, but the quality of the people, the character of each. It was not long before David that God had told Gideon that his army was too big and reduced it to 300 men. These 300 were enough to win over a powerful army of about 185,000 Midianites and Amalekites. Yet, the most amazing thing here is that they did not even fight. All they had to do is blow 300 trumpets and at the same time break 300 pitchers, enough noise to scare the Midianites and Amalekites, who ended up killing each other. This principle of a minority winning over a great and powerful majority is seen throughout the Bible. Even in more recent history, this principle has played itself out after Israel was reborn in 1948. Over and over again, the country has been attacked by numerous armies, but it won every time. No country could have withstood the military power and the sheer number of attackers, unless God had been with them. This is a miracle of recent history that is often forgotten.

First Chronicles 21:1 details the driving force behind David's action: *Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.* It was Satan himself, not a simple demon, who instigated the census.

Some have seen a contradiction between the account in 2 Samuel 24

and in 1 Chronicles 21. Was it God or Satan who moved David to number the people? Both verses are correct, as they present the story from two different sides. Satan has no power unless it is given to him by God; God allowed the temptation to take place. And so, after nine months and 20 days, the census was taken (2 Sam. 24:8).



David's Choice

It is after this time that God sent Gad the prophet to David, and what follows may be among the richest parts of Scripture. Here, we are going to see how faith and prayer can stop the harshest punishments and how the judgments are brought right to the foot of the *tav*, the cross.

The passage begins in 2 Samuel 24:11-13:

¹¹ Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹² "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you."'

¹³ So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall seven years of famine

come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

What a difficult choice David had to make! He had just experienced three years of famine (2 Sam. 21), so he knew what to expect. He had also been pursued by his enemies, one of whom was his own son. The third punishment seems to be the most severe, for a plague can wipe out a nation in three days. The Hebrew word for "plague" is *deber*. It comes from *dabar*, which means "destruction." This word is believed to refer to what we know as the bubonic plague or the Black Death, which decimated the population of about 100 to 200 million people in Europe in the mid-1300s. The Talmud orders a city that is ravaged by pestilence to fast and pray.

David chose the last of the three options. Verse 14 shows his reason: *I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.* While pestilence was the harshest punishment, it meant that God was going to be in full control. David proved to be wise when he chose this option. Famine would have made the Israelites dependent upon neighboring countries who were no friends of Israel. Falling into the hands of enemies would have meant abuse. But falling into the hands of God is falling into the hands of mercy and grace, even in times of judgment.

God did send the plague, but it was not for three days. He cut the punish-



ment short: *So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel* (2 Sam. 24:25). Prayer is what stopped the judgment, and David knew it. He knew God. He knew how to move Him. Prayer is the last weapon mentioned in the context of the armor of God; all other parts of the armor must be immersed in it (Eph. 6:18). Prayer is the one powerful means by which times and seasons are changed. But effective prayer has a long trail of hard work behind it. For prayer to work, we must believe; otherwise it becomes an incantation only.

In David's case, prayer was indeed accompanied by faith. The king had full confidence in God. He knew God could change His mind. After all, Israel was His people. David must have remembered the story of Moses when he argued with God and God relented from wiping out the nation (Num. 14). Faith changes the spirit of man and conforms it to the Spirit of God. A man of great faith is one whose will has been conformed to God's will.

The third element that is needed for prayer and faith to become effective is repentance. In fact, repentance is the beginning of the process, as is seen in verse 17: *Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."* David did not argue with God. He simply said, "I have sinned. It is no one else's fault but mine." That is the key to repentance. David could have found a million reasons for having done what he did, but he took full responsibility.

Faith, prayer, repentance is the formula here.



The Threshing Floor of Araunah

As the plague went through all of Israel, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south (2 Sam. 24:15), it came to Jerusalem and stopped by the threshing floor of the Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam. 14:16). Verse 18 then quotes the prophet Gad as saying: *Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite*. Hence, the plague stopped right at the future place of the altar of sacrifice of the temple, for this is where the judgment ends and where its power ceases. It is where God said to the destroying angel, *It is enough; now restrain your hand* (v. 16). According to 1 Chronicles 21:26, God marked this altar of sacrifice with a miracle, for when David offered the first sacrifice, he *called on the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering*. God sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice as a token of His acceptance. All of this is prophecy. It prepares the reader for the coming of the Messiah.

As if this was not enough grace already, one has to pay close attention to who else was by the threshing floor of Araunah. Verse 16 says it was *the Angel of the LORD*. The word "angel" does not only describe the nature of the individual, but also his mission: An angel is a messenger of God. So, verse 16 should read: "The ambassador of the LORD was by the threshing floor." Every time "the Angel of the LORD" is mentioned, the expression refers to the Messiah Himself, for men worshipped Him (Judg. 13:20; Num. 22:31). Here, the Messiah was confirming His soon coming, for it was in this place that, a few hundred years later, He died for the sins of the world. All sins and all judgment stop at the foot of Yeshua.

From Sheba who planned to divide and destroy Israel to the giants who wanted to extinguish the lamp of Israel (2 Sam. 21:17) to the pestilence which was about to wipe the people and the land, God rose from His throne to affirm that salvation will come, and it did.



The Symbolism of the Threshing Floor

It is significant that the temple was built on a threshing floor. There is a great symbolism here. After a harvest, the grains were brought to the threshing

floor, and they were repeatedly beaten there until the inner, softer part of the seed was separated from the hard layer and also from the chaff that was covering it. At the end of the day, when the winds rose, they took the seed and threw it in the air so that the wind would separate the last chaff from the grain. What remained was the good seed. This sorting happened on the threshing floor, a large area outside the city. The same process of threshing and winnowing is the picture that is used to show how Yeshua will come and sort out His church: *His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire* (Lk. 3:17). When the Lord

comes back, He will separate the good seed from the chaff, the wheat from the tare. Referring to the Angel of the Lord, Samuel speaks highly of Yeshua.

After His resurrection, Yeshua gave the two men He had met on the road to Emmaus a Bible study: *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself* (Lk. 24:27). Perhaps, when they came to this passage of Samuel, He showed them where He was standing, right next to the altar. In many ways, He is still standing there to make the final separation of the tare and the wheat. Recognizing Him in the Holy Scriptures opens up the understanding of God's Word to those who will listen.

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The Purpose of the Law of Messiah

By John B. Metzger



The rule of life for believers today is the Law of Messiah, a law that is comprised of many imperative commands given in the Gospels and the epistles. In this series, John Metzger expounds on this law. After shedding light on the participants in this law and what the law is, John Metzger now explains its purpose in a very concise manner.¹

The holiness of God has been revealed through the Law of Moses and fulfilled by Messiah. Now, there is a new standard of righteousness that God has given through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to empower the believer to walk in Messiah in holiness. That standard is the Law of Messiah. The believer can walk in Messiah by being submissive to the Holy Spirit, walking in the Spirit and in the light and not in carnality, the flesh, or darkness. Here, I list some of the things that the Law of Messiah does in the heart and life of a true believer:

- ✧ The Law of Messiah can fully empower believers through the Holy Spirit to instruct, correct, and guide us into all truth. It has no limitations.
- ✧ As a byproduct of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit through the new covenant and the blood of Messiah, the Law of Messiah gives life, which the Mosaic Law could not provide (John 3:2-3; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 3:7, 9).
- ✧ The Law of Messiah, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, gives believers the power to have victory over sin (Romans 8:1-17). The Mosaic Law could not produce victory (2 Corinthians 3:7-9).
- ✧ The Law of Messiah gives new direction on being obedient to government authorities (Romans 13:1-7).
- ✧ The Law of Messiah gives the New Testament believer instruction—a new rule of conduct—on how to live and walk in the Spirit and in Messiah. Under this law, both Jew and Gentile walk together as one new man in Messiah (Galatians 2:15; Ephesians 2:14-15, 4:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
- ✧ The Law of Messiah provides regeneration through the Holy Spirit because of the finished work of Messiah on the cross (John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God as the instrument for imparting life and regenerating us (1 Peter 1:23).
- ✧ The Law of Messiah provides instruction to fathers, wives, children, employees, and employers on how to live righteously in a godless world (Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1).

¹ This series is based on John Metzger's excellent and important book *The Law, Then and Now: What About Grace* (Larkspur, CO: Grace Acres Press, 2019), available through Ariel Ministries at www.ariel.org. The text is published here with permission and with minor edits to better fit the format of this magazine.

✧ The Law of Messiah provides the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

✧ The Law of Messiah gives instruction to the leadership of the church (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1:5-9).

✧ The Law of Messiah gives instruction to the local church (Ephesians 4:17-6:17).

✧ Under the Law of Messiah, we now confess our sins to restore fellowship with God (1 John 1:9), rather than offer sacrifices (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 10:10-12; 1 Peter 3:18).

✧ The Law of Messiah teaches cheerful giving to the Lord (2 Corinthians 9:7); there is no prescribed amount or tithe.

✧ The Law of Messiah tells us only to meet regularly for Bible study and worship; there are no prescribed days (Hebrews 10:25), in contrast to the three periods of corporate worship set out in the Law of Moses (Exodus 23:14-17).

✧ The Law of Messiah teaches believers to live distinctly from the world (1 John 2:15), not by adopting specific modes of dress, outward appearance, or actions (as under the old law), but by living from the inner motivations of a Spirit-filled heart, separate from the evil world system (Romans 8:12-13; Colossians 3:5-9; 1 John 2:15-17).

✧ We obey the Law of Messiah because we have already been blessed (Ephesians 1:3-14).

✧ Under the Law of Messiah, we are given the indwelling (John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 3:16), the filling (Ephesians 5:18), the sealing (Ephesians 1:13-14), and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13) to help us in our walk.

✧ The Law of Messiah gives spiritual empowerment and gifts to function for Him in our lives (Romans 12:3-16; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:7-12).

✧ The Law of Messiah is the law of our King and High Priest (Hebrews 3:1).

✧ The Law of Messiah establishes better promises than the old Law of Moses (Hebrews 8:6).

✧ It establishes holiness in the lives of believers.

✧ The Law of Messiah credits righteousness to the believer's account (Romans 4-5).

✧ Because of the new covenant, the law gives us, as Messiah's bride, the power to live out a new lifestyle that was impossible before.

✧ The Law of Messiah gives believers a new motivation to live for Him.



In addition to these actions, effects, and purposes of the Law of Messiah, we also need to understand two key things about our relationship to the Law of Messiah, which are set out in the epistles to the churches. We must recognize these things as we study the Law of Messiah, our response to Him, and our submission to the Holy Spirit. First is the Law of Messiah itself, which includes more than 600 imperatives by the apostles as to how we are to live and walk before our God and fellow-believers. An "imperative" is a command to be obeyed. This is very simple. Second are the many admonitions also given by the apostles. An "admonition" is a gentle or friendly reproof, counsel, or warning

against a fault or oversight. Put another way, the apostles gave primary commands (instructions) to the churches and secondarily issued admonitions based on those commands. We should obey both the imperative commands and the admonitions; we accomplish this by renewing our minds in and with the Word of God and by submitting to the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and direct us into all truth (which is part of His ministry to us).

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

(Romans 8:14)

Thus, as we submit to the Holy Spirit and His ministry in our lives, He gives us victory over sin, the flesh, and

the devil. When we submit to Him, He enables us to submit to the Law of Messiah (both imperative commands and admonitions) so that we can know what the abundant life really is on a daily basis.



John Metzger's excellent and important book *The Law, Then and Now: What About Grace* is available through Ariel Ministries at www.ariel.org.



THE CONVERSO PROBLEM: THE INQUISITION COMES TO SPAIN, PART 2

By Stuart Wallis

In the first part of this four-part series on the Spanish Inquisition, Stuart Wallis examined "The Jewish Problem" that had arisen in Spain after the Diaspora. At the heart of the "problem" is the question: What do we do with all the Jews in our land who are growing so rapidly in number and power? Spain's answer to this question was to force the Jewish people in their country to convert to the Catholic faith and receive baptism or suffer death. Thousands died in the massacre of 1391, but still more chose to abandon their ancestral faith and receive baptism, becoming "conversos." In the second part of his series, Stuart Wallis reviews the tragic history of these Jewish converts to Catholicism.

Queen Isabella I of Castile, painted by Luis de Madrazo (1825-1897)



On November 29, 1483, three years after the Inquisition began in Castile,¹ Spain, Juan Gonzalez Pintado, a Jewish convert to the Catholic faith, stood before the inquisitorial tribunal with his son, Gonzdo, in his defense. Pintado, whose ancestors were forced to convert to the Catholic faith during the massacre of 1391, received baptism, making him a member of the Catholic Church, liable to its laws and customs.² Juan lived an exemplary life in his Catholic faith serving as secretary to two kings in addition to serving on the City Council of Ciudad Real, Castile. Why was such a loyal converso standing before the judging eyes of the inquisitors? Was he a rebel looking to overthrow the Catholic Church? No! Juan's "high-crime" amounted to practicing Jewish traditions observed freely by his ancestors. As a consequence for this "heinous" act, Juan, on February 23, 1484, was led to a stake where he would burn until dead.³ This is how the Inquisition in Spain dealt with those they deemed to be heretics.

Of all the New Testament passages that give instruction regarding heresy in the church (and there are many), not one is to be found that demands the heretic be tortured or killed. To the contrary, warning, teaching, and forgiveness are the remedies to such people. If these do not satisfy, then shunning is to be employed, but only after all else has failed. Somewhere between the early church and the medieval Catholic Church, these

biblical instructions became grossly distorted. The inescapable truth is that the Spanish Inquisition, as run by the anti-Semite party, was never about teaching and forgiveness; it became a weaponized anti-Semitic faction that aspired to rid the Catholic Church in Spain of any Jewish intrusion and create a Spain pure of "heresy." Furthermore, it was used as a means to fleece the wealthy Jewish converts who had once again risen to prosperous heights in the land. How did such a sinister institution make its way to this proud Spanish nation and earn a title of its own forever ingrained in the mind of history?

The First Conversos

In the previous article, we examined "The Jewish Question" or "Jewish Problem" that had arisen in Spain as it had in times after the Diaspora. At the heart of the "problem" is the question: What do we do with all of these Jews in our land who are growing so rapidly in number and power? Spain's answer to this question was to force the Jewish people in their country to convert to the Catholic faith and receive baptism or suffer death. Thousands died in the massacre of 1391, but still more chose to abandon their ancestral faith and receive baptism, becoming "conversos" or "New Christians." The anti-Semitic party under its leader, Ferrand Martinez, had seemingly rid their great nation of the

"Jewish Problem," establishing a "pure" church.

Over the next few decades, however, an unforeseen and unprecedented problem arose—"The Converso Problem." Living as a Jewish person in Spain meant confinement to segregated Jewish areas called "Jewries," as well as heavy prohibitions on possible careers and livelihood. As baptized members of the Catholic Church, however, all doors were now open, including serving in any capacity in the state or church. Some conversos did little to follow their new faith and openly lived under their old religion, but many others embraced the new opportunities afforded them in their new religion and soon entered the monastic orders, local parishes, and even rose to the honored and influential position of bishop. At the state level, many conversos rose to the ranks of royal council and confessors to hierarchy. Throughout their ascension, instruction was greatly lacking for many conversos in this new complicated Catholic faith. The result was that many continued to observe Jewish rites, never contemplating that doing so was viewed as heretical.

Jealousy and resentment of these religious observant conversos naturally flowed out of the old "Christians" of Spain who were often overlooked for positions in favor of aspiring conversos. This consequence rekindled the anti-Jewish sentiment, and the new generation demanded that corrective

¹ Although the official Papal Bull authorizing the Inquisition in Castile, Spain, was signed November 7th, 1478, it was not formally acted upon until September 27th, 1480.

² Based on the ruling of the Fourth Council of Toledo (AD 633), which allowed forcible baptism, Pope Innocent III in 1201 determined the following: In the condition where a person is threatened with death unless he consents to baptism, that person is regarded to have an element of free choice. If he submits to baptism, he is compelled to observe the Catholic faith. See Nadia Zeldes, "Legal Status of Jewish Converts to Christianity in Southern Italy and Provence." <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/91z342hv>.

³ Haim Beinart, *Records of the Trials of the Spanish Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Bilingual edition: December 31, 1974), pg. 92.



Fortalitium Fidei by Alonso de Espina

action be taken. However, nothing happened, which infuriated the people even more. Eventually, a proactive solution to this growing problem was proposed at the 1429 Council of Tortosa held in Catalonia, Spain. It resolved to order conversos to bring their children to be baptized within eight days of birth, utilizing the secular arm of the state if necessary, to rid future generations from Jewish “contamination.”⁴

Nominal adherence to the Catholic faith by the conversos continued,

however, and they consistently rose to prominence due to their ambition and intellect. In 1449, attempts were made in Ciudad Real to prevent all conversos, and those descended from conversos, from holding any municipal office that gave them authority over those of “pure Christian blood.”⁵ That summer, rumors of riots were spreading throughout the city as angry masses were organizing. The conversos, this time, were not to sit idly by as their helpless ancestors had in previous generations. The Converso Resistance—many of whom could trace

their proud ancestry to the 3rd century—amounted to 300 and was quickly thrust into action. Rioting raged between “Old Christians” and “New Christians” between July 7th and 20th. Twenty-two people died, including some prominent conversos.

The Rise of Alonso de Espina

In the years following, further riots broke out throughout cities in the Spanish kingdom of Castile as life progressively worsened for the conversos. Many saw no future of peace in the land and fled their latest taste of “Egyptian bondage” to seek a new beginning in distant lands. As converso persecution steadily increased, the unorganized yet determined anti-Semitic party of this new century lacked a leader who could bring focus and structure to their quest of ridding all signs of Judaism from Spain. This vacancy lay at the feet of a man who willingly took up the mantle of 1391’s Ferrand Martinez: Alonso de Espina.

The institutional hatred this newest villain displayed toward Judaism and the Jewish people is little known to modern-day believers but just as substantial as any in history. Espina was a Franciscan monk who was rumored to have Jewish blood in his veins, although no proof of this claim has ever been seriously considered. He gained a reputation for his high learning but was a feeble preacher of the Scriptures; his talent lay elsewhere. The most successful sermons were those in which he raged against

⁴ Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, Vol. 1 (Forgotten Books Publishers, 2012), p. 146.

⁵ Haim Beinart, *Conversos on Trial* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1981), p. 55.

the Jewish people and Judaizing conversos in Spain, railing against their wealth and infiltration in the lives of “pure” Catholics, which easily aroused the public. For the first time, he openly discussed the banishment of Jewish people from the peninsula, following the example of expulsion set by England and France—a foreshadowing of things to come.

Seething sermons were one matter, but if Espina was to bring an end to Judaism in Spain, he needed to elevate his rhetoric. As his popularity increased, so did his deceitfulness, reviving what was a tested and timeless false allegation against the Jews: the killing of Christian children. He enjoyed retelling the story of how, in 1454, a child of Valladolid was robbed and murdered, and how the Jews were suspected of killing the child and subsequently ripping out his heart, burning it, and mixing the ashes in the wine, creating an unholy sacrament.⁶ His denunciation had the desired effect of stirring the crowds to hysteria.

Encouraged by the reception, he continued his tirade against the Spanish Jews and any converso who only pretended to be Catholic, claiming that they poisoned wells, started fires, and were guilty of any wrong committed in Castile. He asserted that Jewish law commanded all Jews to slay Christians, steal from them whenever possible, and pray three times a day for the destruction of all heretics who speak against the Jewish race to quench their appetite for revenge.⁷ Like his predecessor, Espina endorsed killing and the forced conversion of Jewish people, including the baptism of their children without their consent. His hatred was not only for the Jewish people of Spain, but also for the continued observance of Judaism by the conversos; his lust to bring the Inquisition to Spain and rid the land of “impurity” was insatiable.

To further his pursuit, he completed his manifesto against religious impurity in 1459, titling it *Fortress of the Faith for the Comfort of Believers and in Defense of the Holy Faith*. Its short-

ened form, *Fortalitium Fidei* , was his catechism of hatred against the Jews;⁸ it is nothing but hatred from beginning to end. The longer, four-volume version provided practical solutions to the perceived problems. Its key purpose was to alert those who were most influential in church and state to the urgency of the “Converso Problem” and the gravity of it, arguing that conversos were neither Christians nor Jews; they were only heretics.

In his declaration, Espina stated 15 challenges to the hierarchy of Spain, following the lead set by the 14th century inquisitor Nicholas Eymerich, who wrote inquisitorial instruction to the medieval inquisitors.⁹ He called for organized legal action to be taken against any converso who should revert to Judaism, the greatest of “crimes.” Espina was not completely merciless, however, as he “only”

⁶ Lea, p. 149.

⁷ Ibid, p. 150.

⁸ Beinart, p. 10.

⁹ Nicholas Eymerich, *Directorium Inquisitorium*.





justified burning at the stake any converso guilty of “heresy” for the third offense, claiming that after three chances they were beyond all hope. The Catholic Church would have no part in the execution, as those who did relapse were to be handed over to the secular arm of the state for punishment, i.e. death.

Espina’s instructions were detailed and, in many ways, paved the way for what was to become the jurisprudence to the Spanish Inquisition. However, he was a man before his time, as the weak leadership of Juan II (Isabella’s father) and the corrupt and lawless reign of Henry IV (Isabella’s brother) left no one to implement his plan.

Alonso de Espina was a man of bizarre contradictions. Despite all his relentless hatred for Jewish people and “heretical” conversos, he was strongly in favor of baptizing the Jews of Spain in an obsessed attempt to bring about “purity” in the Catholic Church. Needless to say, his conversion method was anything but biblical. His understanding of conversion consisted of baptism (coerced or otherwise) followed by personal instruction in the Catholic faith for eight months, including the study of the Articles of Faith. A potential convert would only then be admitted to the Catholic Church after lengthy consideration. None of these conditions comprises the gospel of Yeshua.

The Role of Queen Isabella of Castile



With the lack of leadership temporarily sidelining Espina’s mission, the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469 not only reunited the main kingdoms of the



16th century Jewish ghetto by unknown artist

Iberian Peninsula that had become divided earlier in the fifteenth century, but also brought new hope to solving the “Converso Problem.” Although their marriage united most of the peninsula, they each retained control over their respective kingdoms, which Isabella guarded tenaciously.

The state of affairs in Castile upon her ascension to the throne in 1474 was one of neglect and corruption in need of immediate reform. She was purely devoted and obedient to her Catholic faith and sought to bring strict order and morality to her kingdom. Her ambition was relentless, and she even acted as a judge to dispose of the backlog of trials which were often open to bribery, thus achieving in only a few months what would normally have taken years. She also addressed the rampant laxity with regards to currency by reducing the number of mints from 150 to five. With the court’s immorality along with the treasury issues resolved, she now turned her attention to the next glaring problem in her kingdom: Rome’s continued usur-

pation of the clerical rights due to the crown.

It is well documented that the Catholic sovereigns demanded complete control of all activities in Spain and would not relinquish any of it to Pope Sixtus IV and his church in matters of government or religion. A battle of wills ensued between the young Isabella and the seasoned Pope Sixtus IV over the appointment of the Pope’s nephew to the vacant bishopric of Cuenca, dismissing Isabella’s choice. Isabella refused to ratify the appointment in defiance of the papal declaration and threatened to withdraw Spain’s ambassador to the Papal Court. Witnessing her fortitude, Pope Sixtus IV repealed his nominee, stating that in the future he would make no appointments in Spain unless they were first designated by the Catholic sovereigns.¹⁰ The repercussions of this unprecedented event would set the stage for Isabella and

¹⁰ Raphael Sabatini, *Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition* (McAllister Editions, 2015), p. 29.

Ferdinand to have complete control over the Inquisition once it came to Spain.

With all matters of jurisprudence, treasury, and relations with Rome now settled, Isabella's attention was turned to the last pressing impurity in her kingdom: the conversos. The torch of Alonso de Espina was now passed to another in the anti-Semitic party devoted to the destruction of Judaism. With unyielding determination, Alonso de Hojeda (the Prior of the Dominicans in Seville) desired to bring the Inquisition to Castile. Taking advantage of her zeal to bring domestic order and Catholic purity to her kingdom, Hojeda directed the queen's attention to the rampant Judaizing occurring in Seville and the "hypocrisy" blatantly displayed against the Holy Catholic Church. This proposal was reluctantly considered by Queen Isabella, who detested the cruelty exhibited by the Inquisition that was already occurring in Ferdinand's

kingdom of Aragon. Moreover, many of Isabella's council were made up of faithful conversos and descendants of conversos, including her renowned secretary and chronicler, Hernando de Pulgar.

Another concern of Isabella's, and more specifically Ferdinand's, was how she could be assured that the Roman Inquisition would not again seize her authority and thereby cause them to relinquish royal control. An even more pressing concern for the sovereigns was the issue of securing the spoils from the resulting confiscations of heretics, which would be plentiful. This consideration was valid, given that the Inquisition's plunder in Italy and France was wholly divided between Rome and the Inquisition and that all authority stemmed from the papacy. As king of Aragon, Ferdinand saw firsthand what it meant to employ the

Inquisition without securing the benefit of the spoils. If the Inquisition were to come to Spain, Isabella and Ferdinand intended to be the sole beneficiaries and be the ones to appoint inquisitors of their choosing. Hojeda's insistence was relentless. However, Isabella resisted his persistence and instead proposed a compromise, taking upon herself the role that should have been initiated by clergy, much to Hojeda's dissatisfaction.

The Involvement of Cardinal Mendoza

Isabella's merciful and measured proposition to the "Converso Problem"—so widespread in Castile—was to call for Cardinal Mendoza of Spain to educate conversos of Catholic dogmas and likewise enforce observance to the Catholic faith. This was



King Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella kneeling before priest



not the solution Hojeda nor Ferdinand were looking for. Ferdinand's piety was likely overridden by his greed, which looked more at the financial benefits the Inquisition would bring to the treasury of Spain. The confiscated goods would greatly aid in his continued war with the Moors remaining in Granada. Although Ferdinand was joint-heir and very influential over Isabella, Castile was her kingdom and all authority rested with her.

Cardinal Mendoza was willing and eager to fulfill his task, and his work resulted in a compilation of a catechism of instructions for the duties of a Catholic from the day of his birth until the day of his death. His work was to be taught in all parishes, preached from the pulpits, and taught in the schools. This work continued for some time, yet according to the church, with insufficient results.

The remarkable unverifiable event that occurred next can be found in nearly every historical account of the Spanish Inquisition, which amounts to the turning point in its history. The story is told of a young Catholic man

who in 1478 sneakily entered into the home of his converso mistress for a rendezvous. Upon hearing a conversation coming their way, the young man hid in a closet to escape detection, where he inadvertently overheard their discussion. He heard the men of the house vehemently denying the divinity of Yeshua as well as blaspheming His name and the Holy Catholic Faith. The faithful Castilian felt it his duty to report this flagrant crime to Hojeda, the Dominican monk. The matter was investigated thoroughly, resulting in the arrest of six Judaizers. The men confessed their guilt and begged to be reconciled to the Catholic Church. Without the laws of the Inquisition available in Castile, the men were granted reinstatement after their fulfillment of the penance imposed.¹¹

This occurrence was doubtlessly what the opportunist Hojeda needed to re-plead his case to Isabella. He wasted no time in traveling to Cordova, where Ferdinand and Isabella retreated after leaving Seville. He relayed the story to the king and queen while exaggerating that the Judaizing in Seville nearly caused another riot, potentially worse than the one of 1391. He additionally insisted that the problem was more rampant than first understood. Still unsure of what to do, Isabella was receiving influence from all directions. She knew Ferdinand was in favor of bringing the Inquisition to Castile as long as certain financial accommodations were met. She further knew Hojeda's position on the matter. What ultimately convinced Isabella was Cardinal Mendoza's capitulation, conceding his catechism of instruction was not as effective as hoped, plus the counsel of

her trusted advisor and confessor, Thomas de Torquemada, who once swore her to rid her land of the "Judaizing poison."

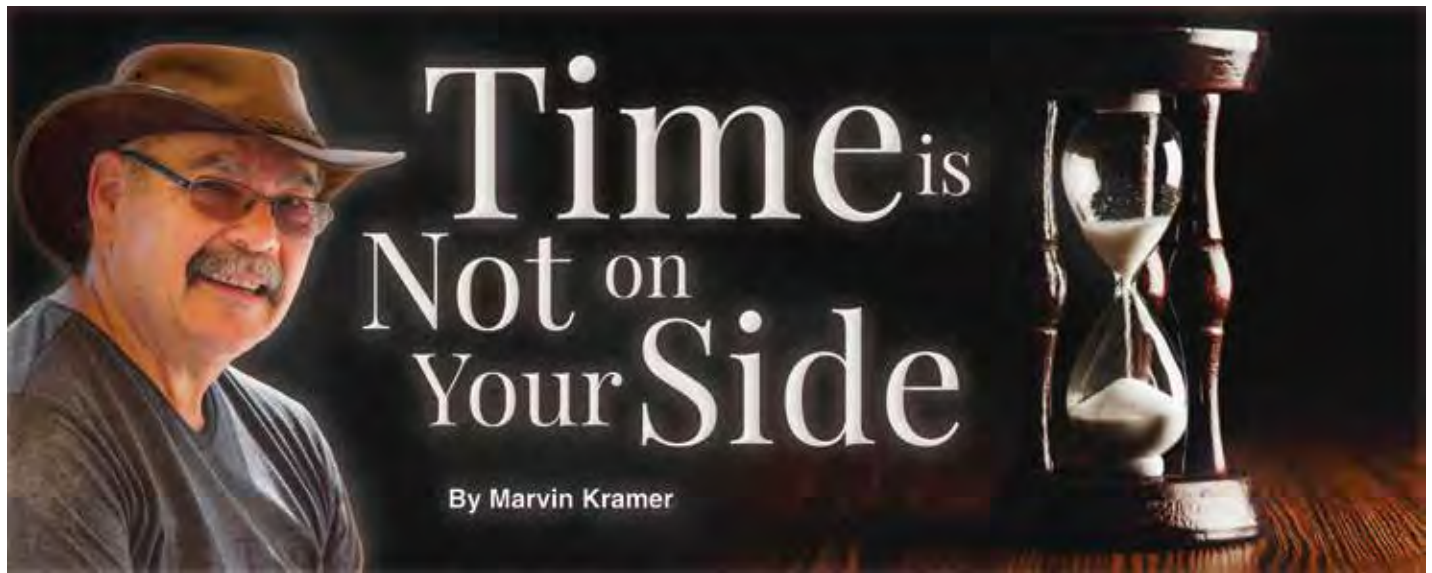
Isabella finally succumbed to the pressure and ordered the necessary paperwork be drawn and petition made to Sixtus IV to grant a Papal Bull authorizing the Inquisition in Castile, Spain. Much to the delight of Hojeda and the whole of the anti-Semitic party, who could not wait to hijack the Inquisition, Pope Sixtus IV duly authorized the Inquisition in Castile on November 7th, 1478.

Behind the Scenes

Throughout this painful time in the history of the church, we find Satan hard at work in his never-ending quest to exterminate the Jewish race from the earth and tarnish the name of Yeshua. What is more troubling than the spiritual war that rages is the willingness of evil men to assist in Satan's ineffectual plan. Ferrand Martinez and Alonso de Espina eagerly sought the goal. In the third and final installment of this history of the Inquisition of Spain, I will examine how the willing evil-worker, Thomas de Torquemada, adequately played the pawn, with his ingenious evil leading to what became "The Final Solution" to the Converso Problem.

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¹¹ Sabatini, p. 45-46.



Our perspectives in life so often tend to focus around something that is common to us all: time. We are individually unique, different from one another in a multitude of ways. But we share in what God has given to us all, namely, the same number of hours in a day. How we use that time also reveals our eternal perspective. In line with that perspective, our lives are measured by their donation, not their duration.

When we think of the Psalms, King David, *the sweet psalmist of Israel* (2 Sam. 23:1), always comes to mind. Yet, probably the oldest psalm is the ninetieth, which is a prayer of Moses. The Scriptures reveal: *There has not arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses whom the LORD knew face to face* (Deut. 34:10). God's measurement of Moses was placed around his heart, not his head. A common blessing in Israel is, "May you live to 120." This blessing is not only a reference to the age of Moses when he died, but also to the fact that he could still see well, and his strength was not diminished.

Moses' life can easily be divided into three periods of forty years each.

His first forty years were spent as a prince in Egypt, learning to be something. His next forty years were spent on the backside of the desert, learning to be nothing. During the last forty years of his life, he led the children of Israel and learned that God can make something out of nothing.

MOSES' PRAYER IN PSALM 90

Psalm 90 presents contrasts between that which is temporal and passing and that which is eternal and remaining. It reveals differences between human and divine viewpoints.

The oft-quoted prayer of Moses is expressed in verse 12, as it presents his petition: *So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.* From the perspective of the Old Testament, wisdom is more than simply understanding a matter. It includes applying that understanding to our lives. In short, biblical wisdom is to know how to live skillfully.

The end result, the desired product of Moses' prayer, is found in the last verse of the psalm: *Let the favor* ["love-liness"] *of the Lord our God be upon*

us; And confirm for us the work of our hands (v. 17). God's favor and His confirmation are the twofold results of living skillfully. In his request for a heart of wisdom, Moses prayed that God would shine His face upon us and cause the things that we do to last.

But how does acquiring a heart of wisdom help us to accomplish the end result? What is the process by which this can be done? The first thing is to understand that our days on planet Earth are limited: *You turn man back into dust and say, "Return, O children of men."* (v. 3). In other words, death, the final frontier, is a reality and a certainty.

Moses was speaking from experience. The last forty years of his life saw about two million funerals, an average of 50,000 per year, 137 per day, 5.7 per hour. This celestial ball is one giant cemetery. Death is a subject that people love to not talk about. Most people have the perspective that we are in the land of the living on the way to the land of the dying when, in fact, the opposite is true. We are in the land of the dying on our way to the land of the living! So, the first step in acquiring



a heart of wisdom is to recognize that our time of life is limited.

In addition, we need to recognize that life is short. It is, in scriptural terms, fleeting and like a vapor (James 4:14). Because it is gone so quickly, we need to treat it as being precious. How often do those who have attained to many years of life look back on them and ask,

“Where has it gone? It seems like only yesterday when...”?

All we need to do is ask our children, who want us to give them a first-hand account of “life on the Ark.” They have difficulty refraining from laughter when they see photos of our teenage years and marvel at the fact that we were once active in sports.

In order to appreciate this fact, Moses gives us word pictures that capture the thought and help us to measure our existence compared to eternity. The first is found in the beginning of verse 4: *For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by.* Moses says that from God’s perspective, a thousand years of a man’s life are like twenty-four hours. This is a difficult concept to grasp for the simple reason that while we can relate to a passing day, we cannot relate to a thousand years. If we keep the equation, but reduce the numbers, it could make the comparison more practical for us. For example, we can relate to the increasing reality of a person living a hundred years. But if we change the number of years from God’s perspective, we also need to change it equally from man’s

perspective. Basic mathematics require an adjustment to both sides of the equation. If we divide by 10 and change 1,000 to 100, we also need to divide 24 by 10, which gives us 2.4 hours. For the sake of discussion only, we can see that from a divine perspective, our lives come and go in less than the amount of time we have between breakfast and lunch.

If that is not enough to convince us that our lives are like a vapor, Moses continues, as if he was saying that 24 hours is way too long. So, on reflection, he adds in the second part of verse 4: *or [a thousand years is] as a watch in the night.* People who have been in the military can readily relate to the expression. They know that a watch in the night is a period of only three hours, a total of 180 minutes. Using the same method to make the period of time relevant to us, if we consider 100 years of life, or one-tenth of the time mentioned in the verse, then we need to divide the three hours by 10 as well, giving us only 18 minutes or a little over a quarter of an hour. And if we consider that Moses gives us a time frame for our lives of 70 to 80 years (v. 10), we see that from

an eternal perspective, our lives are indeed but a vapor.

However, Moses doesn’t stop there. He continues with another word picture in the next verse: *You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep* (v. 5). He was not speaking about the flooding of a basement or sewer system, but of occurrences from bodies of sea water. At the seashore, we see waves coming in and tides going out—a perfect picture of the flow of life. Just as we get used to one generation, it moves out to be replaced by the next one. We all experience it. No generation is exempt. This is true even of cell phone technology. Just as we learn how to use a certain model, it is replaced by the next generation of cell phones.

In the latter part of verse 5 and in verse 6, Moses then gives another familiar illustration from nature: *In the morning, they are like grass which sprouts anew; In the morning, it flourishes and sprouts anew; Toward evening it fades and withers away.* This observation is easy to understand, and we experience it regularly, even if we don’t pay attention to it. For example, we buy some flowers, bring



Marvin Kramer teaching at Ariel’s Shoshanah Campus

them home, and put them into a vase. Their fragrance fills the room. But in a few days, the flowers fade, and we have to throw them away. Through these word pictures, Moses is telling us that we only have a small slice of time in which to impact our world.

However, there is something eternal and, therefore, meaningful, in life, and Moses knew it. If the message of his prayer was only that death is certain and life is short, then we would succumb to an attitude of despair and conclude that life is not worth living, so why not end it and be done with it? Such a perspective is not only unscriptural, it is contrary to our experience. We yearn for that which will last, for that which will give permanence to our names and to our works. We all have a “built in” need for significance, for meaning, and for purpose.

Moses, being a godly man, knew where to find such meaning and purpose, and he framed his prayer with God, who is eternal: *LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God* (vv. 1-2).

The shortness of time in which we live our lives takes on significance only when we measure it in the light of eternity. What we do is not as important as the way in which and the attitude and motive with which we do it. If we view our lives from an eternal perspective, it will make all the difference in the things we do. The Apostle Paul expressed it this way: *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the LORD rather than for men* (Col. 3:23). This work is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). Having an eternal perspective

will keep us from being infected with the mania of mediocrity that plagues society today.

THIS ONE THING I DO

The Lord Yeshua had a short period of time to accomplish the Father's will, but He also had priorities in the midst of pressure. He had a goal and pressed on to accomplish it. The Apostle Paul repeated this truth when he said: *This one thing I do* (Phil. 3:13), not “these dozens of things I mess with.”

When we think about Moses, we can't avoid thinking about the children of Israel whom he led. They missed out on the blessings that God intended for them, because they failed to trust God and take Him at His Word. God gave them instructions, but they wanted a delegation to decide if God was right or wrong. The delegation checked out what God said and returned with two reports, a majority report and a minority report. The minority reported that the people should do what God said. The majority said, “We can't, and we won't.” The decision of the majority won out. In that situation, not only was the majority wrong, they were dead wrong!

As a result of their lack of faith, the Israelites spent a total of forty years wandering in circles in the desert—one year for every day they spied out the land—before they were finally allowed to enter it. After verifying that God's description of the land was true, the people still acted in unbelief. From the time between their first arrival at Kadesh Barnea to their later return to it, an entire generation died off. During that time, nothing special was recorded about their lives.

Nothing eternal was recorded about their work. As a result of their failure to take God at His Word, they were assigned to killing time until they died.

What about us? God gave us the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20). Will we draw back like the children of Israel in unbelief and say, “We can't do it”? May it never be! May our prayer be like that of Moses: *So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom* (v. 12).

May the favor of the Lord be upon us and may He grant permanence to our work, so that it stands the test of time and eternity. May our faith always be sufficient to take God at His Word and act upon it, so that we would avoid the curse of killing time and so that in eternity, we would hear the words, *Well done, good and faithful servant* (Mt. 25:23). Indeed, may it be!



Marvin Kramer with his daughter Hanni (middle) and his wife Orit (right)

Marvin Kramer is a Messianic Jewish lawyer in Haifa, Israel. In addition to his legal work, he serves as General Manager of *A Future and A Hope*, a pro-life organization, which he founded together with his wife, Orit, who is a sex education counselor in the organization. He is also a Bible teacher and serves as an elder in their local fellowship. Marvin and Orit have three children, the youngest of whom still serves as an officer in the Israel Defense Forces.



My Visit to Germany Changed Me

By Mottel Baleston

My understanding of evil in the world took a disturbing leap forward in kindergarten, in the early 1960s. World War II and the Holocaust had ended less than 20 years earlier. My neighborhood in Brooklyn was 90%

Jewish, and a significant number of adults there had been in Europe during those years and were Holocaust survivors. A child in kindergarten is often unaware of the disturbing realities of history, but I came face-to-face with it while sitting in the chair in Engel's Barber Shop.



Looking over at Isaac Engel as he moved around me, I noticed a number in blue ink tattooed on his forearm. As Jews, we had always been raised with the understanding that any tattoo was a violation of the Torah. So, it was a mystery why this traditional Jewish man, Isaac, who spoke mostly Yiddish, would have a tattoo.

That was the question I asked my father as we left the barber shop. My father explained to me that Isaac was born in Poland and was forced into a concentration camp during “The War,” along with all the other Jews of his village. He had to work all day long breaking rocks and building roads. My father explained it in terms I could understand. “He only got one piece of bread and one bowl of soup each day. The Nazis took away his name and gave him a number instead, but don’t ask him about it; we don’t talk about the war.” Case closed.

In the next few years, I noticed many other adults in my neighborhood with numbers tattooed on their arms. There was the couple that ran the laundry in one of the buildings in the housing project. The husband and wife had accents just like Isaac’s, and they both had numbers on their arms. I would go across the street to the new shopping center to buy parts for the crystal radio I was building, and the man who ran the shop had a number on his arm. A new store opened when I was 10, a dry cleaner, and the couple who owned it both had numbers on their arms. Slowly, I began to understand the hold the war had on my community,

Most of the Jewish children in our neighborhood attended public school. In those years, New York City schools had an arrangement whereby two days

a week, we would be released early for religious education in a parochial school of the family’s choice. On those two days, I and several friends would leave the public school and walk across the street to where a Jewish school was located in a small brick building. Our teacher was Mr. B, and like a number of middle-aged adults in our neighborhood, he also was a Holocaust survivor with a number tattooed on his arm.

Lasting Impressions

While Mr. B generally had a positive attitude in pushing Jewish knowledge and language into our young heads, his experience during the Holocaust was a very difficult one, and he was not shy about communicating his dislike for the German people generally as a result of the horrors he had endured at the hands of the Nazis. As impressionable 12-year-olds, we absorbed his view of the German people. Of course, we didn’t actually know any German people in our neighborhood, but his intensity about the evil he had personally experienced from Germans made a lasting impression upon us.

Fast forward eight years and I found myself becoming very interested in the message of the gospel. In fact, many young Jewish people were coming to saving faith in Messiah Jesus during the late 1970s. I had come to understand that Jesus was a Jew, and that He was born into a Jewish home in the land of Israel, just as the Jewish prophets had predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures. I came to personal saving faith in Him as my Messiah and Savior, not in an effort to leave my Jewish identity behind, but rather because faith in the Jewish

Messiah would be the most Jewish thing I could do.

That act of coming to saving faith would change many things in my life. My career path was dramatically altered, and my circle of acquaintances would become far more diverse from what I was used to. For the first time, I found myself in situations where I was the only Jewish person in the room, but yet, I was among fellow believers in my Messiah who had come to faith in Him from every tongue, skin color, and nation. I began to see that there was far more that we had in common than I could have imagined previously. I began to feel comfortable in those settings.

Within five years of coming to faith, I was in a Bible institute and beginning a career in Messianic Jewish ministry, had married a Jewish believer, and each year was attending the Ariel Ministries’ summer Bible school at Camp Shoshanah as a student. In addition to the many Jewish traditions, one of the general traditions at that Bible school is to have a group photo taken in the middle of each week. Then, students from outside the United States would take additional photos with the flags of their respective nations. In those early years, the most common visiting students were from Canada, New Zealand, and England, and they would pose with those flags. A few years after I started attending the school, there was a single lady from Europe who was a student, and I thought she was from England. We took the full group photo, then the Canadians posed with their flag. Then, the lady came forward with a box that contained a flag. When it was unfurled, I froze. It was the flag of Germany.



Up until that time, I never had to revise what I thought about Germany. I continued to carry forward the knowledge that the most technologically advanced nation on the face of the globe used that technology to systematically murder six million Jewish men, women, and children, plus many millions of other innocents. Now I would be attending class for the next two weeks with this German woman and eating meals at an adjacent table. I began to recognize the hold that my early education had on me as I admitted to myself the discomfort I felt from this perfectly harmless, pleasant, mature believing woman.

Over the coming years, I would meet many more believers who were born and raised in Germany. They came to the summer Bible school to better understand the Jewish roots of their faith in Yeshua. The irony was not lost on me. These people came from a nation whose state church embraced the idea that God was permanently finished with the Jewish people, that the Jews were cast aside to be perpetually punished, and that it was understandable if

Christians persecuted them. That is what Martin Luther, the founder of that state church, had written in his later years. The contempt toward the Jewish people that poured out from his pen would be acted out in the most violent ways 400 years later by his nation. In various places in Europe, many large institutional churches continued a false "theology of contempt" toward the Jewish people, imagining that the church had totally replaced them. That was a major factor in allowing the Holocaust to happen. But now, a full generation after the Holocaust, I was witnessing a steady trickle of German believers intentionally making their way to Ariel Ministries' summer Bible school in America, where they would be taught by Jewish men who were believers in Yeshua. I saw how they recognized God's continuing relationship with the Jewish people through the unbreakable Abrahamic Covenant.

After a decade of attending the Bible school as a student, I became one of those men who was called upon to teach the Scriptures to those German believers. As I began to know

them as individuals, as friends, all of us letting down our guard, I could see that there was one sentiment they all shared, in varying degrees. That sentiment was very recently voiced by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in December 2019, as she spoke during her official visit to the death camp Auschwitz. She made a passionate speech while standing in front of portraits of Jewish people imprisoned and killed there. She said:

"I feel a deep sense of shame for the barbaric crimes that were here committed by Germans – crimes that are unfathomable."

Merkel was born years after the Holocaust ended. Yet, she carries within her, as the German leader, a sense that somehow the guilt of what a previous generation did is still felt as a heavy weight by many within modern Germany.

In 2018, I was invited to come to Germany to teach the Scriptures in ten locations over a 20-day period. Those arranging the trip, translating my messages, and driving the many miles between locations were two men who had been students in my





The Jewish cemetery in Dornum was opened in 1723. Following the Kristallnacht in 1938, the cemetery was vandalized, and its entire history, including the interment records, were burned.

classes at the Ariel Bible School. They volunteered many days of time so that my teaching would reach the largest number of people. While I had an intellectual understanding that the Germany that I was visiting was a changed nation, spending time there brought that understanding to a very real level.

Holocaust Education

In German public schools, Holocaust education is part of the curriculum for teenagers. Additionally, some German school groups will go to visit the various concentration camp sites to further understand. During my time in Europe, I had occasion to go to Auschwitz and spend an entire day there. I saw two different groups from German high schools, quiet and respectful. I also saw a group of very well-dressed German adults, perhaps from a corporation or municipality, receiving a guided tour through the remaining barracks, where emaciated prisoners had starved to death. Every-

one was deeply affected by what they saw and heard.

One unforgettable experience was teaching at a Bible church in Mönchengladbach. The attendees were enthusiastic and receptive to understand the Jewish roots of their faith. After my presentation, they continued to ask questions for nearly an hour. At the conclusion, one church elder said, "Do you realize that you've been teaching the Jewish roots of our Christian faith just 200 meters from where the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, was born and raised?" It was particularly satisfying to hear that.

While in Germany, I had occasion to speak with believers about the war years. They clearly were uncomfortable but did not back away from the discussion. I noticed several would pause, look sober, and choose their words carefully. In two different places when speaking of that period, I heard the phrase "our time of national insanity."

One of the largest Bible colleges in Germany had me come for an entire day, setting aside their normal classes so that I could teach the entire student body about the theological roots of anti-Semitism that still continue within some branches of Christendom. The students came to understand how that was one of the causes of the Holocaust.

The gracious hospitality I received from believing families in Germany while staying in their homes was far greater than anything I had experienced anywhere else. Many rearranged their schedules to ensure that my travels and overnights would be comfortable. In two locations, teenagers gave up their room for me and slept in the rooms of younger siblings. In many instances, believers there told me passionately of their interest in Israel and personal conviction that believers need to be supportive of the Jewish people.

I met a family in one church that has a tradition of every single member of



the family spending at least one summer in Israel, living and volunteering in a geriatric care facility for Holocaust survivors. There are many similar programs sponsored by German Christian organizations that seek to assist the elderly and poor in Israel.

Civilian Suffering

A very moving experience was staying in the home of an older couple who were children during World War II. With my traveling companion translating, I asked them of their experiences. Hesitantly, they told me that what they most remembered was frequently being hungry and fearful, especially toward the latter part of the war. I had not realized how greatly many civilians suffered during that time, and that was emphasized in a tour of a small bomb shelter in Düsseldorf, where hundreds had huddled together during weeks of bombing.

Yes, I realize that in recent years in Germany there has been a resurgence of anti-Semitism among some young uneducated fascists, and some recent migrants from Muslim nations harbor anti-Semitism, but for the majority of the German people, the period during the Holocaust is one they look upon as shameful.

In 2019, I was asked to return to teach again in Germany, and one particular incident there was the spark that prompted me to write this very article. My faithful German translator and traveling companion (who for modesty prefers that his name not be used) navigated us to the small town of Dornum, where there is a Jewish cemetery. The informational plaque said that the last burial there was on November 10, 1938. We both fell

silent. We knew that was the day after Kristallnacht, the two-day rioting and pillaging by mobs throughout Austria and Germany as they ransacked Jewish neighborhoods and destroyed synagogues, killing many during the process. That last burial was a Jewish victim of the Kristallnacht.

My normally composed friend, a strong believer in Messiah and lover of the Jewish people, became emotional. After a moment he said, “You know, there are some who say that anti-Semitism is somehow in the DNA of the German people, that it is something we will never shake off. But I know that this is not true; we are just like any other people group.”

The truth of my friend’s statement is illustrated in an incident that happened in Jerusalem, Israel, in 1961. Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi SS officer and chief overseer of the Holocaust, was on trial in a courtroom after being kidnapped by Israeli agents from his hiding place in Argentina. It was just 16 years after the end of the war, and tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors were living in Israel. Those who had witnessed Eichmann’s activities were called to testify in the courtroom, where the defendant sat in a bullet-proof glass enclosure. As the witnesses were called forward to give their testimony, they had to pass right by where Eichmann sat in his glass booth. As one man, a Holocaust survivor, was called forward, he suddenly began to shake as he passed by Eichmann and then collapsed to the floor. He quickly revived and was able to give his testimony. Afterward, he was asked why he had collapsed. Was he overcome with fear? Did he recall an instance of brutality? Was he remembering some horror from Eichmann? –

No, none of those things. When he came to the courtroom, he expected to see a monster of a man, someone who had to be restrained, someone capable of the brutal murder of millions. That is what he was prepared for. But as he passed the glass enclosure, inside sat a small, pale, ordinary, quiet man who looked like a clerk. The sudden realization that there exists within every ordinary person the capability for monstrous evil is what shocked the witness and caused his momentary collapse.

Romans 5:12 confirms this recognition of the sin nature within every person: *Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned.* Yes, all have sinned in that they—and you and I—have all fallen short of God’s standard. The monstrous sins of the Nazis stand out, as they should, not only for their scale and horrific nature, but also because there was satanic involvement in the actions of the Third Reich. If we compare ourselves to the Nazis we imagine that we are OK. But God’s standard is far higher.

No one on earth is totally without sin. So, that same chapter, Romans 5, verse 8 gives the solution:

*But God demonstrates
His own love toward
us, in that while we
were yet sinners,
Messiah died for us.*

It is the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua that allows us, if we exercise saving faith in Him, to have forgiveness of our sin—atonement—so that we become sons and daughters of God.

Take Me Broken and Make Me One (Isaiah 61:1-3)

By Chris Partin¹

Have you ever broken anything that was valuable or sentimental? I think we all have. More seriously, we all have been or felt broken before. The American rock band Switchfoot released a song they titled "Live it well." One line says, "Take me broken and make me one. Take the silence and make it a song."

Because we live in a fallen, a broken world, we all have to deal with broken hearts, broken bodies, broken relationships, broken promises, broken spirits, and broken dreams. We live in a world where depression and anxiety disorders are rampant and financial struggles are real. Every family seems to be touched by health issues of some kind. Addiction to alcohol, drugs, or pornography are destroying lives and families. We all know people who have overdosed or who have committed suicide.

¹ Dr. Chris Partin is the Pastor of Plymouth Church in Raleigh, NC.



Sackcloth and Ashes

Brokenness is not new to us. Grief and struggle have been a part of human existence since the fall. In biblical times, people did not use social media platforms or some form of telecommunications to deal with their trials. Still, they had outer signs to show their grief. The most common one was to sit in ashes. As strange as this practice may sound, it really is a great metaphor for brokenness. It was a way for people to show externally what they felt and were experiencing on the inside. So, people would sit in or even lay in ashes. Sometimes, they even covered their heads with ashes. Numerous biblical characters did this when they were broken. Some examples are Tamar after she was raped (2 Sam. 13:19), Job after his calamities (Job 2:8), Daniel when he was exiled (Dan. 9:3), Mordecai and the Jews in the book of Esther (Esther 4:1), and many more. The LORD Himself mentioned this practice when He said to Israel: *O daughter of my people, put on sackcloth and roll in ashes; mourn as for an only son, a lamentation most bitter. For suddenly the destroyer will come* (Jer. 6:26a).

Ashes are the emblem and symbol of death. The Romans began the practice of placing ashes of the dead in urns. A common phrase at funerals is, “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes.” While the expression does not occur in the Bible, it is based on Genesis 3:19, which reads: *By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

However, the one Scripture that came to mind when thinking about grief and ashes is Isaiah 61:1-3:

*‘ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And freedom to prisoners;
² To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
³ To grant those who mourn in Zion,
Giving them a garland [or crown] instead of ashes,
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,
The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.
So they will be called oaks of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.*

In Luke 4:17-21, Yeshua read the first two verses of Isaiah 61 and said He was the fulfillment of those prophecies. The passage promises that we are going to make it—not because of some self-help book or prosperity gospel sermon or “you can do it” feel-good message. We will also not make it because the solution is inside of us, and we just have to tap into it. We are going to make it because God promises it, and—even better—He will personally see to it! We may be broken,

but we are not finished yet. As long as we are still breathing, we can be made one, be made whole again. Hence, the good news is *God* is not finished with us yet.

There are a lot of things the world promises that can fill that emptiness and brokenness we may feel. Yet, it is only a temporary fix. Exercise improves the body. Therapy may help the mind. Friends may lift one's spirits. Good fortune may improve one's circumstances. But only God can make us one, make us whole. He is the author and source of all spiritual progress. As the theologian John Calvin put it, God intends “the entire renovation of the man.”² If you watch any of those renovation shows on TV, you understand what he meant. All those shows follow the same format: The hosts find a distressed property and start renovating it. If all goes well, they end up selling it for a profit. But things never go well. Usually, the project gets started with a bang. The show hosts begin ripping out the old walls, tearing out the electrical wires, digging into the foundation, and knocking out the windows so they can replace them with French doors. But then trouble hits. The foundation is cracked, or the roof has to be replaced. There is mold in the bathroom, and suddenly, it looks like the renovation project has turned into a disaster. The producers always put the trouble just before a commercial break, so you'll stay tuned to see the outcome. Once the crisis has passed, the hosts can finish the renovation.

Here is what I have learned from watching those shows (and is probably the reason why many preachers

² John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Calvin Translation Society, 1851), p. 303.

love to use this illustration): Renovation always takes longer than you estimated, and it always costs more than you expected. Nothing is ever as easy as it looks. If you think houses are hard, try renovating a broken human life! But God... He can do it. He can take you broken and make you whole.

Trading Beauty for Ashes

Someone sitting in ashes represents silence or mourning. However, not only will God heal our brokenness, He will make it a song. Look at verse 3: God promises to give His people *a garland*, a crown *instead of ashes*. The natural contrast would be joy, which He also gives (Isa. 9:3; Rom. 15:3; et al.). But what He promises here for the broken, those who are seated in ashes, is even better: God is willing to trade beauty for ashes. What an incredible exchange!

Beauty not only gives joy to us, but to others as well. It attracts people to God. Ultimately, as Isaiah 61:3 points out, it brings glory to Him.

He does so out of love. The relationship between Him and His creation was broken. How would it be made one again? He came to His people. He experienced the vulnerabilities of birth and of childhood. He experienced the pain of disappointment. His human spirit was broken by the lack of faith people displayed and by the betrayal from one of His closest friends. His body was utterly disfigured when He was beaten and mocked and crucified for us. And about that terrible, tragic, blood-soaked event, we sing! He made it a song when He rose from the grave and showed His power over

death. If He has power over the grave, then certainly He has power over our brokenness.

Pieces of Marble

Sometimes we have to be broken before God can shape us to be all that He wants us to be. Another illustration we Bible teachers like to use is this



one, expressed perfectly by DTS graduate, author, and pastor, Dr. Ray Pritchard:

"In the year 1464, a sculptor named Agostino di Duccio began working on a massive piece of flawed marble. Intending to produce a magnificent sculpture of an Old Testament prophet for a cathedral in Florence, Italy, he labored for two years and then stopped. In 1476 Antonio Rossellino started to work on the same piece of marble, and in time abandoned it also.

In 1501, a 26-year-old sculptor named Michelangelo was offered a considerable sum of money to produce something worthwhile from that enormous block of marble called "the giant." As he began his work, he saw a major flaw near the bottom that had stymied other sculptors, including (it is said) Leonardo da Vinci. He decided to turn that part of the stone into a broken tree stump that would support the right leg. He worked on the project for four years until he had produced the incomparable "David." Today the seventeen-foot-tall statue stands on display at the Accademia Gallery in Florence where people come from around the world to view it. More than a masterpiece, it is one of the greatest works of art ever produced. It has been said there is no statue more perfect."³



³ Ray Pritchard, "The Promise of Transformation." *Crosswalk.com*, Salem Web Network, 30 Nov. 2018, www.crosswalk.com/blogs/dr-ray-pritchard/the-promise-of-transformation.html. Accessed 12/4/19.



How was the sculptor able to create this wonderful statue? Here is the answer in his own words: "In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it."⁴ Michelangelo removed anything that didn't look like the David he saw in his mind.

All of us are such pieces of marble, such works-in-progress. We are not perfected, not glorified, not completed, as James 1:4 says, God wants us to be. We are all "under construction." If you've ever visited a construction zone, you know it is noisy and messy. While the hammering and sawing continues, it is hard to imagine what the final result will be. But God knows the final result. In my mind's eye, I picture Him as a sculptor working with

a rough piece of marble. He is working on a big chunk named "Chris Partin." It is a hard job because the chunk is badly marred, misshapen, discolored, and cracked in odd places. In fact, it is about the worst piece of marble a sculptor could ever find. But God is undeterred, and He works patiently at His job, chipping away the bad parts, chiseling an image into the hard stone, stopping occasionally to polish here and there. One day, He finally finishes one section of the statue. The next morning, when He returns to the studio, that section has changed. Who has been messing with God's statue? It turns out that I am the culprit. I am my own worst enemy. What I thought would improve things has only messed them up. But God is faithful. He patiently picks up His chisel and goes back to work. He is chipping away everything that doesn't look like His Son (Rom. 8:29).

At the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, North Carolina, at the spot where Ruth Graham is buried, engraved on her tombstone are these words: "End of construction. Thank you for your patience."

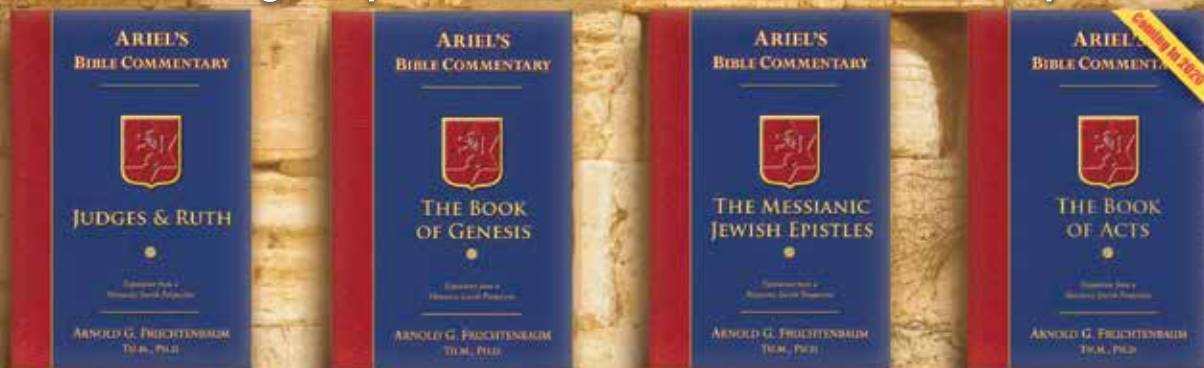
In my case, it is evident that God has a long way to go. But I am encouraged by the certain knowledge He won't quit halfway through a project. What God starts, He finishes (Phil. 1:6); what is broken, He makes whole.

If you read this article today and you feel broken, take heart. God cares. He loves you. He is not finished with you. He has not abandoned you. He will lift you up from that ash pile and give you a garland (or crown) of beauty. More than that: He wants to put a song in your heart! He loves us enough to take us just as we are: broken. But He loves us too much to leave us that way. So, He trades us beauty for ashes. He makes us whole. He breaks the silence and makes it a song.

⁴ Stephen Houlgate, Michael Baur, eds., *A Companion to Hegel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), p. 63.

"END OF CONSTRUCTION.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE."

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Within the *Much More* Care of God

By Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

In his devotion, Pastor Partin reminded us of God's great love for His children. Especially in the realm of spiritual attacks and suffering, it is helpful to remember God's ultimate purpose for our lives: to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). He promises that all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28). The "all" would include painful experiences and trials.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum wrote an excellent manuscript about the believer's positional truth.⁵ In it, he comments on what he calls "the *much more* care of God." The list contains many important verses that will help the afflicted to remember God's promises of love and care even in the darkest of times. Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes:

"According to Luke 12:24, the believer is within the *much more* care of God. This position has seven facets.

First, the believer is the object of God's divine love (Jn. 17:23; Rom. 5:8; 8:35-39; Eph. 2:4; 5:2; II Thess. 2:16; I Jn. 3:1, 16; 4:10).

Second, the believer does not only have access to God's grace, but is also the object of His grace: By His grace, God has saved the believer (Jn. 5:24; 6:27, 39, 40, 47; Eph. 2:7-9; I Jn. 5:11-13); by His grace, He will keep the believer safe (Rom. 5:2; Phil. 1:6); by His grace, the believer can serve God (Jn. 17:18; Eph. 4:7); and by His grace, God teaches the believer and instructs him concerning spiritual truths (Titus 2:11-13).

The third facet of being within the *much more* care of God is that the believer is the object of God's power in that His power is often manifested through the saints (Eph. 1:19).

The fourth facet of this position is that the believer is also the object of God's faithfulness. The believer receives unbroken, divine faithfulness (I Cor. 1:9; 10:13; Phil. 1:6; I Thess. 5:24; II Thess. 3:3; Heb. 13:5).

The fifth facet of being within the *much more* care of God is that the believer is the object of God's peace. Because the wrath of God has been appeased, He is no longer angry with the believer; the believer has the peace of God dwelling within him (Jn. 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15).

The sixth facet of this position is that the believer is the object of God's consolation and comfort. When a believer undergoes a period of grief because of the loss of a relative, a friend, or a close associate, he has the comfort of God (II Cor. 1:3-4; 7:6; II Thess. 2:16-17).

The seventh facet is that the believer is the object of God's intercession. It is because of this position that the Messiah is continually interceding on behalf of the believer (Rom. 8:27, 34; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; I Jn. 2:1)."

⁵ The manuscript is titled *Thirty-Three Things: A Study of Positional Truth*. It is available at www.ari-el.org as mbs 110. The excerpt is published here with minor edits to better fit the format of this magazine.



Book Review



Review of Jonathan Cahn's *The Oracle*

By Dave James

The Oracle: The Jubilean Mysteries Unveiled (published in October 2019 by Charisma Media) is the latest book by Messianic pastor Jonathan Cahn. Cahn rose to prominence in 2012 with his first novel, *The Harbinger*. The author debuted his book on the Jim Bakker Show on January 2 and then on The 700 Club the following day. Cahn's blended fact/fiction novel quickly sold hundreds of thousands of copies, eventually reaching over one million copies by the end of the year, making it the number one Christian book of 2012.

In that book, Cahn purported to have found nine signs in Isaiah 9:10 that were the keys to “an ancient mystery that explains everything from 9/11 to the collapse of the global economy.” The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were said to be a precursor to God’s impending judgment on America because of its departure from the Christian values of the Founding Fathers. Cahn argued that the “harbingers” of Isaiah and recent events in the United States align so precisely that the only explanation can be the hand of God at work.

Cahn has since published four other major books, including his most recent one, *The Oracle*. In this work, Cahn presents his theories through a series of visions experienced by the protagonist and explained by “the Oracle.” The novel focuses on the establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948, with the storyline structured around a series of events occurring in 1867, 1917, 1967, and 2017—Jubilee years according to the modern Hebrew calendar.

In Exodus 12, God established a new religious calendar based on seven-year cycles. Every seventh year was considered to be a Sabbath. After seven of these Sabbath-year cycles



came the Jubilee Year—the 50th year. After traveling to what was then known as Palestine in 1867, Mark Twain wrote a best-selling book about his adventures. Cahn claims that this travelogue fulfilled a prophecy in Deuteronomy 29:22-23 concerning a foreigner describing the desolation of Israel—some 1800 years after God’s judgment of Israel through the Romans in AD 70. The beginnings of Zionism are also tied to this same year.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration first recognized that the Jewish people needed to have a homeland. Cahn points out that it was also in 1917 when the Promised Land was liberated from the Ottoman Empire by British General Edmund Allenby.

Cahn then jumps forward to the Six-Day War of 1967, when Jerusalem was liberated from Jordan, and then to 2017, when Congress passed a resolution recognizing Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel. Consequently, President Trump moved the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv the following year.



All of these events are supposedly the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. However, Cahn goes beyond these to argue that our personal redemption, the millennial kingdom, and even the eternal state are also Jubilean mysteries.

Troubling Literary Devices

In such a brief review, only a few of the more glaring problems can be addressed to any degree. First, Cahn uses troubling literary devices to convey his ideas—namely, visions from God and the interpretation of those visions by the Oracle. Just as with *The Harbinger*, he claims that God has revealed these things to him personally—something that he has referred to as “downloads” from God.

Cahn tends to mix just enough biblical truth in the narrative that the unsuspecting reader is left unprepared for the aberrant teaching and theories he introduces with ease. Unfortunately, there are times when the author just “goes off the rails” biblically—especially when it comes to eschatology. As just one of the many prophecies that Cahn claims to have been fulfilled over the last 200 years, he contends that the “times of the Gentiles” came to an end in 1967—and that “David’s fallen tent” was also restored at that time. However, most Bible teachers agree that these prophecies will only be fulfilled at the time of Messiah’s return to the earth.

Cahn’s eschatology is further confused by his refusal to take a public position concerning the timing of the rapture relative to Daniel’s 70th week. Cahn adds to this confusion through his regular appearances on The Jim Bakker Show, because Bakker holds to

a post-tribulational view. This view claims that the church will experience the horrors of the Tribulation period. Meanwhile, Bakker unashamedly sells his survival food and gear throughout his television shows, and Cahn serves as little more than a prop in this latest get-rich scheme.

Unfortunately, for someone who is esteemed by many as a great prophecy teacher, Cahn is frequently confused about almost everything when it comes to the end times. His plethora of claims makes it difficult to fact-check all of his assertions. However, if history is any guide, Cahn, has a long track record of manipulating data and misrepresenting historical truths to suit his purposes.

Furthermore, he has frequently positioned himself as a “revealer of mysteries”—things that no Bible scholar has ever seen before. With *The Oracle*, Cahn has again successfully persuaded many that he has discovered yet another ancient mystery. In this case, the mystery is related to Israel’s Jubilee. However, there’s nothing mysterious about the Jubilee in any sense.

Each Sabbath year, the Israelites were commanded to allow the land to “rest” with no planting or harvesting. In order for the nation to survive a year with no crops, God provided a double harvest in the sixth year. Another aspect of the Sabbath year was that all debts were to be forgiven, and slaves and indentured servants were to be set free.

Similarly, in the Jubilee year, again there was to be no sowing or reaping. Furthermore, all land was to be returned to its original owners, with the result that land was effectively only leased for up to 50 years at a time,

with no permanent sales of ancestral land. There is simply nothing mysterious about any of this.

In addition, Jonathan Cahn has supposedly found a template, or a “paradigm” as he calls it, according to which events of history must play out. This proposed paradigm essentially dictates an inevitable outcome such that the Jubilee now applies to Israel returning to its ancestral home as a nation—a concept that is found nowhere in Scripture. This process supposedly began in 1867 and continued at 50-year intervals to 2017. Of course, there is the problem of 1948 when Israel became a nation again, since it doesn’t fit the Jubilee pattern.

Such a mystical paradigm is not a biblical concept—with no biblical precedent, no description, no prescription, nor any support of any kind. It is a made-up idea. Yet, Cahn even extrapolates this paradigm such that he sees it as a driving force that impacts both the world and the church—now and into the future.

The Church's Jubilee

Cahn also insists that the church’s Jubilee is underway as it experiences a long overdue return to its Jewish roots. This development supposedly provides believers with special long-hidden Jewish mystical gems of wisdom embedded into the Word of God. Such claims are not just unbiblical, they are irresponsible.

As if the far-reaching speculation concerning Israel’s Jubilee were not enough, Cahn has introduced the concept of a “Dark Jubilee”—an opposing Satanic counterpart to God’s Jubilee. Cahn’s theory is that just as Israel is returning to its ances-



tral possession, so, too, the world is reverting to the state it was in when Israel was dispersed in AD 70 by the Romans. Just as God continues to work in history on Israel's behalf according to the Jubilean calendar, under Satan's influence, the world

supposedly is becoming more pagan due to this so-called Dark Jubilee. There is nothing in Scripture that remotely resembles a Dark Jubilee. Furthermore, the vast majority of the world has always been totally pagan.

Unfortunately, Jonathan Cahn has

proven himself to be a poor Bible teacher over the years. At best, he has shown himself to be an end-times sensationalist who isn't afraid to twist things to fit his latest theories, and at worst he is a false teacher—and in some cases, arguably a false prophet.

Dave James is the Executive Director of the Alliance for Biblical Integrity (ABI), an apologetics and discernment ministry which he co-founded in 2009. Dave and his family were on staff with Word of Life Fellowship for 21 years, with 16 of those as missionaries in Hungary, where he was the Founding Director of the Word of Life Bible Institute. Dave graduated with an MABS from Dallas Theological Seminary and is the author of *The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction?* and *Biblical Guide to the Shemitah and the Blood Moons*, as well as a contributor to *What is Dispensationalism*. His ministry with ABI includes teaching in schools, churches, and conferences both nationally and internationally, as well as extensive research and writing on current theological issues. In addition, he does a segment on current issues as part of Prophecy Today's weekly radio program.

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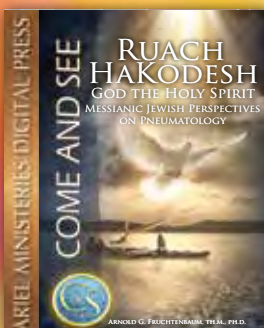
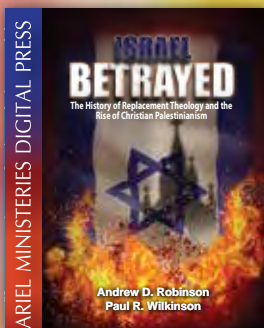
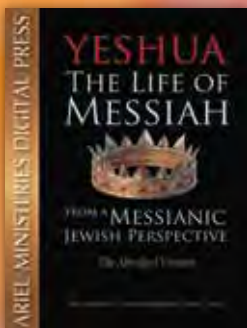
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