



October 2018



Tony and Jane Derrick

Dear Ministry Partner,

Last month, we began our study in the Book of James with the first twelve verses in chapter one. James reminded us that trials in life arrive from all directions and in surprising ways. I referenced some key trials that Israel has endured from the time when God chose them up through these 70 years of existence in their homeland as the Jewish State.

Those Jews who have come to believe in Yeshua as Messiah face additional hostility from their Jewish brethren because they are Christian (our modern Greek expression for all who believe in Jesus/Yeshua as their Messiah). What is the remedy for when major life traumas pile on top of typical daily trials? Glad you asked!

THE BOOK OF JAMES — part 2

In the second part of chapter one, James talks about trials that often come inwardly — he calls them “temptations.” Looking again at the Jewish State, one might think that they have things figured out as the only true democracy in the Middle East; yet, nothing could be further from the truth! Israelis encounter the same challenges in their democratic setting as Americans do in the United States: the secular Jews blame the religious Jews; the conservatives blame the liberals, the government blames its citizens, and the citizens blame the government. And some even blame God for their internal troubles.

Where does temptation originate? Let’s go back to the beginning — Genesis. The story of original sin by Adam and Eve stands out as a good example. An amusing saying that preachers and teachers sometime use when speaking of the problem in the Garden goes like this: *Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. The serpent was left without a leg to stand on.*

I believe you will concur that James 1:14 answers the question of temptation’s origin: *“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.”* It certainly fits the case for Adam and Eve.

(over please)



Detail of *The Origin of Sin*, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1872), *Bibel in Bildern*, between 1851 and 1860

Two points about temptation are indisputable:

1. It never comes from God, and
2. Its prevalence is a certainty.

James tells us in 1:13, *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'..."* Notice that James did not say **if** you are tempted, but **when** you are tempted.

The next couple of verses inform us that temptation has a process, and that process puts the blame fully in our laps! Humans cannot excuse ourselves from our own decisions.

The "desire" that James mentions doesn't necessarily point to sexual lust. It can be the hunger to be noticed — put on a pedestal, catapulted to fame or earthly riches, just to name a few ambitions. Is it wrong to want to be noticed? No. Is it wrong to seek fame and fortune? Not as long as they don't take the place of *"seeking first the Kingdom of God"* (Matthew 6:33).

In my opinion, James is not speaking of physical or spiritual death when he explains in verse 15 that desire births sin, and *"sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."* I believe he is talking about the constant, inward struggle with temptation that we mortals face in this earthly body, which eventually will die. It harkens to Paul's anguish in Romans 7:24, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"*

So, how are Believers* delivered in our time of temptation?

Just in case you wondered, temptation is not a sin. **The sin is acting on the temptation against the purposes of God.**

James offers sound advice in verses 17–19 when he tells us that we need to focus on the good gifts of God. You and I live in a negative, judgmental world. And yet, the Bible instructs us to dwell on the good things in life. That message is especially true in Philippians 4:8, where Paul encourages his fellow-Believers in Philippi. *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."* This verse should be etched in the halls of the U.S. Congress and Israel's Knesset (parliament)!

* "Believers" is short for "believers in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah."



The Temptation of Christ, Ary Scheffer (1795–1858), Walker Art Gallery

Next, verses 22–25 instruct Bible readers to do something. “... *be doers of the Word, and not hearers only...*” (vs. 22). That may seem simple, but applying the truth we hear is how we make progress in holding off temptation and living the life of a true Believer. How many people have observed Christians in action and said the same thing as King Agrippa: “*You almost persuade me to become a Christian*” (Acts 26:28). Paul had reasoned convincingly with Agrippa, but perhaps Agrippa’s memory of Paul being a persecutor of the Church kept Agrippa from believing. We’ll never know.

Remember: Our actions always color our witness to others!

1. The individual who only *hears* the Word will soon forget and not become an influential person in a world that needs the Gospel. For example (and we’ve all done it): A student memorizes all the facts necessary to pass a test; then, once he gets the grade, relaxes and forgets.
2. The Believer who *acts* on the Word will be blessed in what he does. For example: Someone studies a particular subject daily, then applies all the various components of that particular discipline, because he or she has chosen the field as a calling or vocation.

I don’t know about you, but I’d prefer a surgeon who remembers 20 years after medical school exactly where to make the incision to remove my appendix, rather than a surgeon who quickly memorized the information just to pass the final exam. [Note: I’m not picking on the medical profession; this is just an illustration.]

A.W. Tozer noted,

*“There is an evil which I have seen under the sun. ... It is the glaring disparity between theology and practice among professing Christians. **So wide is the gulf that separates theory from practice in the church** that an inquiring stranger who chances upon both would scarcely dream that there was any relation between them. An intelligent observer of our human scene who heard the Sunday morning sermon and later watched the Sunday afternoon conduct of those who had heard it would conclude that he had been examining two distinct and contrary religions. ...*

It appears that too many Christians want to enjoy the thrill of feeling right but are not willing to endure the inconveniences of being right. So the divorce between theory and practice becomes permanent in fact, though in word the union is declared to be eternal. Truth sits forsaken and grieves till her professed followers come home for a brief visit, but she sees them depart again when the bills come due.”

— A.W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous*, 1955;
Camp Hill, Pa.: Christian Publications 1986, pp 51–53.



A. W. Tozer (1897–1963)

Conclusion

As you and I reach the end of this first chapter in James, we find two very significant lessons in the final two verses:

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1. Every believer in Yeshua should learn to bridle his tongue. A church goer can keep all the rules and rituals of religion — outwardly appearing very “religious.” And yet that same person can spout some of the most useless things an unbeliever has ever heard. For example: You may understand the concept of “kenosis” (a Greek word that describes Yeshua emptying Himself of all His Godly attributes) in Philippians chapter 2, but esoterica is not the best place to start when explaining the Gospel to an unbeliever.

From time to time while on tour in Israel, I would hear Zola paraphrase Francis of Assisi, “Preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary.” Good advice! Effective witnessing!

2. Verse 27 teaches itself. *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

James’s statements bring us to a simple conclusion. Inward temptation can be minimized when the Believer is uninfluenced by the world and busy in ministry.

The Apostle Paul expressed it like this:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” —Romans 12:1–2

Standing firm with Israel and ZLM,



Tony
Tony

P.S. Our ministry’s workers are committed to maintaining the highly regarded influence of this outreach. Watching Zola on the recently refreshed series *Thy Kingdom Come* has re-energized everyone at Zola Levitt Ministries to maintain the standard of teaching and ministry that unbelievers and Believers alike need in these Last Days. Please join us prayerfully and financially in our ongoing Gospel mission. ★

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



THE FALL & THE BLAME GAME Gen 3:12-13
Leaving the serpent without a ‘leg’ to stand on.



Did you know that Zola Levitt Ministries is ECFA approved?

A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

Shalom, Dear Friends —

Thank you, Tony, for this ongoing study of James. Kirsten's and my favorite "take away" statement this month is the one Zola attributed to Francis of Assisi: "Preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary." On *Zola Levitt Presents*, Zola is teaching about the future for Believers. Don't we ZLMers want to bring as many souls with us as possible?

Our actions truly should match our words. This month, may we all commit to mirroring the *actions* of Messiah — His patience, understanding, and unwavering love. That's easy to do with those we like. Not so easy when interacting with folks whose viewpoints differ from ours! Many of us grew up singing "*They will know we are Christians by our love.*" And yes, we're speaking to ourselves when we remind you of this aphorism.

Another *action* Believers should adopt is gratitude ... and we want to thank ZLM supporters, like you. This ministry could not mail our "free" *Levitt Letters* nor broadcast our weekly television programs around the world without your financial assistance. You may question whether faithful monthly donations make a difference, but your generosity puts the Gospel into homes and hearts of people everywhere. *Todah!* (Thanks!) ★

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*Fall Tour dates are tentative and prices are pending.
Our prices include tips, taxes, & fuel surcharge (subject to change).*

Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim! — pray for
the peace of Jerusalem! — Psalm 122:6.

David & Kirsten
David & Kirsten

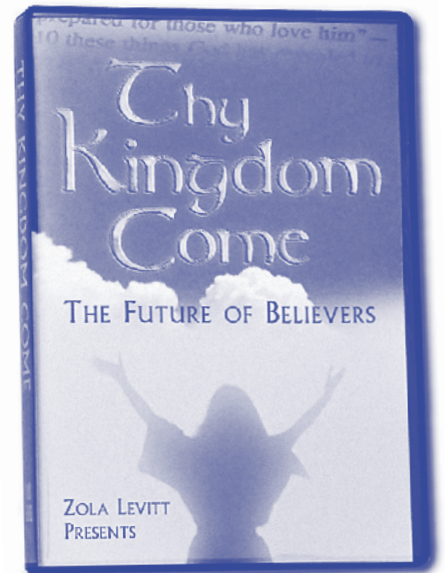


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Zola Levitt Presents Programs in October

Kirsten and I hope that you're getting as many blessings out of Zola's timeless Bible teaching as we are from the encore presentation of ***Thy Kingdom Come***. Dr. Jeffrey Seif joins us to apply the wisdom gleaned from the classic series that Zola filmed more than a decade ago. Now two wonderful Messianic teachers bring you insight regarding Believers' joyous future. Tune in and see if you agree that this teaching has improved with time.

Originally produced in 2001 and now refreshed with improved sound and picture quality, the twelve 30-minute programs of ***Thy Kingdom Come*** reveal the glorious future that the Bible prophesies for all Believers. In the studio, David and Kirsten Hart introduce Zola's classic, on-location teachings and his original music, with cutting-edge analysis from **Dr. Jeffrey Seif**.



Note from Kirsten: Sunday School and small-group leaders could benefit from using this series. Zola's inexpensive study booklet ***Glory: The Future of the Believers*** could serve as your study guide for the three-DVD series' visual lessons and Zola's inspirational music CD by the same title. Please contact our office at staff@levitt.com, (214) 696-8844, or via our online chat feature at www.levitt.com. They'll be happy to set you up with the DVDs, study booklet, and music CD.

The Music New songs and melodies from the past showcase the beautiful scenes of Israel from the music portions of this series. Zola's music is also available separately on CD.

Then, a new television series begins, with Jeff Seif teaching from the Mount of Olives.

To honor Israel's 70th birthday as a modern nation, *Return to Eden* tells the Bible's story from Genesis to Revelation. The Lord bridged the gap caused by mankind's sin via a special relationship with a people and a land that led to the Messiah. David and Kirsten Hart present this 10-part TV series featuring teaching from **Dr. Jeffrey Seif**, varied interviews, insights and Hebrew lessons from worship leader Sarah Liberman, and music by Zola Levitt.

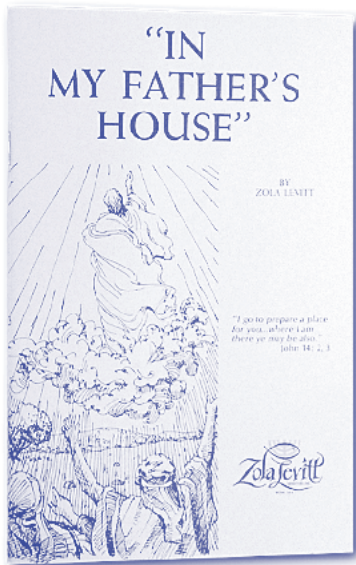


Jeff Seif

Out of Eden The sin of Adam and Eve led not only to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, but, more importantly, to the loss of personal fellowship with the Lord. To bridge this gap, God instituted the sacrificial system.

Back to Eden The journey to restoring a relationship with God has no shortcuts. Abram was tested as he traveled over harsh territory to the Promised Land. Later, the Tabernacle provided the setting for sacrifice necessary to access God.

Recreating Paradise For 369 years, at the Tabernacle in Shiloh, the winged creatures that had blocked the entrance to Eden invited people to enter the Tabernacle. The Menorah symbolizes not only the Jewish people but also the Tree of Life.



In My Father's House study booklet

A unique and very important Bible study. Most people plan more carefully for a two-week vacation than for the seven years we Believers will spend as guests in our Messiah's Father's house. What will we do during our time among the "many mansions," and how do we prepare for it?

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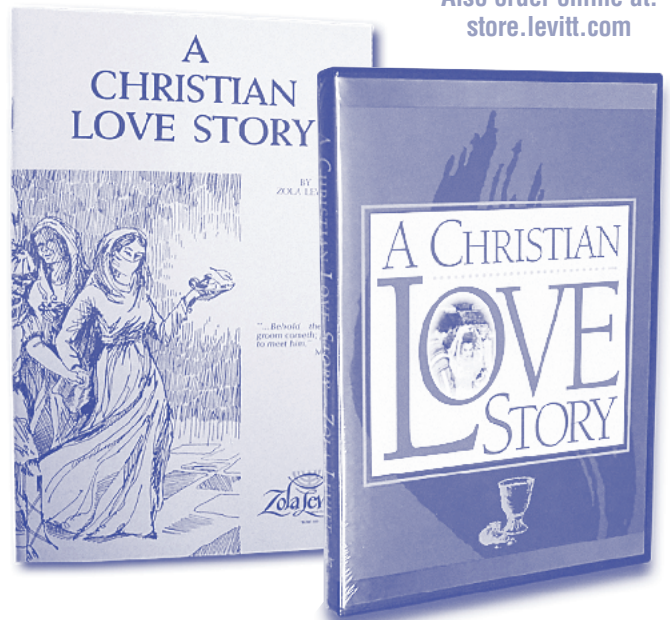
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Covenant and Prophecy The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31) was made with Israel. Gentiles have been grafted into the olive tree.

Birth Pains In Isaiah 66, we see the Last Days labor pains of Israel that bring the Jewish people as a nation to "new birth." In the birthing room, Yeshua — the Great Physician — attends Israel, whose labor pains shake the entire Earth.

Days of Noah The Days of Noah portend the appearance of Messiah Yeshua in the clouds to gather His people and set up His Kingdom on Earth. Three primary signs of Genesis 6 include global explosions of population, violence, and rampaging evil.

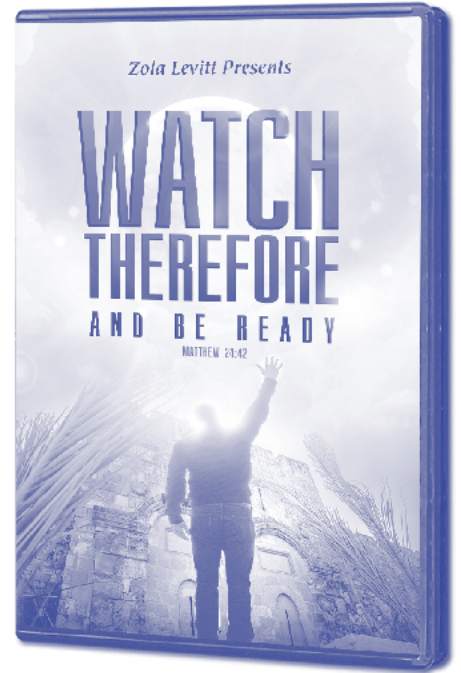
Fig Tree Generation Israel officially "put forth leaves" on May 14, 1948. Studying Abraham reveals what Yeshua meant about the final generation of this Age.

Curse-for-Curse Principle Genesis 12:3 promises both blessing and cursing in the covenant with Abraham and his descendants.

The Jewish Wedding In Matthew 25:1–13, Messiah uses Jewish wedding customs, including a midnight cry and marriage feast, and advises us to mimic the five wise virgins: Watch therefore and be ready.

Refuge in Tribulation End Times events portend a place that is prepared for the wrath of the Lamb, Messiah Yeshua. Yet, we see His hand outstretched in mercy.

Faithful and Wicked Servants Yeshua repeated the theme of faithful and wicked servants in the signs of His coming (Matthew 24:45–51 and Mark 13:32–37). The faithful servant watches for the Master's arrival, obeying His commands; the wicked servant watches not and becomes ungodly, facing eternal damnation.



Watch Therefore and Be Ready

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Dear Tony,

(please check appropriate boxes)

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