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Tony and Jane Derrick

Dear Ministry Partner,

Zola Levitt Ministries receives notes and questions each month, and we try to respond either in the *Levitt Letter* or in a brief note. The letters vary in nature, but recently one asked, "Why did God choose the Jews?" My initial reaction was, "because He is sovereign and that was His choice." The asker wasn't being sarcastic or mean, only inquisitive.

I reconsidered my "knee jerk" answer, and then remembered a verse in the Bible in Acts 13:17, *"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it."* Apparently, my "knee jerk" reaction was spot on — God's choice was His sovereign will.



God's Promise to Abraham, by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1860), woodcut for *Die Bibel in Bildern*, between 1851 and 1860

THE BOOK OF JAMES — part 3

You may ask how this exchange relates to our ongoing study of the Bible's Book of James. As we consider the second chapter of James, the theme of the first thirteen verses deals with favoritism.

Was God showing favoritism when He chose the Jews as His own special people? The answer, to me, is simply this: He is God and He can do whatever pleases Him. (And if it was indeed a blessing,

then explain the common Jewish feeling that Tevye expressed in *Fiddler on the Roof* when he implored God, "I know; I know — we are your chosen people. But, once in while, can't You choose someone else?!")

The centuries-old problem developed when many parishioners concluded that

God has turned His back on the Jews (because they would not accept Yeshua as Messiah) and is concerned only with His bride — the Church.

(over please)



"I know; I know — we are your chosen people. But, once in while, can't You choose someone else?!"

Tevye — Fiddler on the Roof

NO PARTIALITY

James is quick to point out that the Gospel is for everyone. James 2:1, *"My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality."* What James states in that verse connects very closely with the teachings of Paul in Galatians 3:28:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

James continues in verses 2–4 with an illustration of a well-dressed, wealthy man who enters a worship meeting. The worshipers fawn over him and invite him to use the best seat to display his presence among them. The next man who enters wears ragged, dirty clothes. He is directed to a place on the floor where he cannot be seen by others — shamefully stowed away out of sight. James points out the evil — yes, he called it "evil" — of making judgments based on outward appearances.

Yeshua addressed this hypocrisy in Matthew 23:1–3:

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.'"

The Pharisees wanted places of authority and recognition while counterfeiting the law with their personal interpretations. Sound familiar?



Dr. W.A. Criswell (1909–2002)

Dr. W.A. Criswell, the famed pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, described how a homeless person was found lying on the sanctuary steps. Unfortunately, the person was also deceased. Dr. Criswell was so disturbed in his spirit that he charged the church to begin a ministry to provide food and shelter for the homeless. That ministry continues to this day.

The Bible does not offer Believers* the option to show partiality!

There should never be a difference in the faith that a Believer professes and the action that he takes in life. We all look different, talk, dress, and eat differently, and respond in life differently. Our existence would be dull and boring if we were all alike!



In *The Pharisees Question Jesus*, the rich Pharisees stand and oppose Yeshua while the poor and the disciples sit and humbly listen. Watercolor by James Tissot (1836–1902), The Brooklyn Museum

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

RICH AND POOR ALIKE

Next, James challenges his readers with God's purposes in verses 5–7. Verse 5 sets the tone for his reasoning:

"Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"

Luke's Gospel records Yeshua reading from Isaiah 61,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor: He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed: To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

There is no partiality — no selection process. Yeshua came *"to seek and save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). God has chosen rich and poor alike to be heirs of His Kingdom. What does an heir of the Kingdom look like? If you know Yeshua as your Lord and Savior, look in the mirror! Then, look at your neighbor. He could also be an heir!

Unfortunately, the rich (people in authority) were not content with oppressing the poor, but condemned a person because of his or her relationship with Yeshua. Because of their identification with Christ/Yeshua, those known as "Christians" were scorned as contemptible. Acts 5:31 tells us:

"Him [Yeshua] God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

To follow Yeshua and live out His teachings in the first century meant putting your life in danger.

Yeshua had very strong words for the rich/Pharisees (people in authority) in His day.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation."

LESSON

In conclusion, James verifies that bias — favorable and otherwise — violates what some have called "the royal law" (2:8–11). The royal law is stated in Leviticus 19:18:

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."

Yeshua taught that anyone who needs our help is our neighbor. The royal law governs all human relationships.

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Saint James Major, James Tissot (1836–1902), The Brooklyn Museum

The Jews looked at the Mosaic Law as numerous but disconnected requirements. In doing so, they set some aside and followed others “to the letter of the law.” James dealt with the entire Law of divine authority. If any part of the Mosaic Law was broken, all of the Law was broken. Thank God that mercy and grace appease the Law in Yeshua!

James sternly warns that people who show no mercy will find no mercy when God judges them. We are God’s children, and we bear His image. We are challenged to share His mercy and compassion.



Standing firm with Israel and ZLM,

Tony
Tony

P.S. Remember, Jesus grew up in a carpenter’s home, and the apostles were mostly everyday men who worked with their hands and got dirty. We all—everyday people, presidents, and kings—come before God the same way: by grace and through His mercy! ★



My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism. ---James 2:1

Zola Tours to the Holy Land



November is a fine time to book your March 2019 study tour of the Holy Land. With Christmas and Hanukkah only weeks away, how about “gifting” yourself, your family, or your pastor with a trip to Israel? Sandra, our Zola Tours manager, can help you choose the tour of a lifetime. If you’d like to know more, please contact her at **214-696-9760**, email her at travel@levitt.com, or visit levitt.com/tours.

Making a refundable deposit for next Fall’s Tour would give you ample time to make arrangements, update your passport, and prepare your travel wardrobe.

Spring Tour 2019 options

Deluxe (Israel only)	Mar 10–19	\$4,888
Grand Petra (Israel & Petra)	Mar 10–22	\$5,999

Prices include tips, taxes, & fuel surcharge (subject to change).

Fall Tour 2019 options

Deluxe (Israel only)	Sep 16–26
Grand Petra (Israel & Petra)	Sep 16–29
Grand Athens (Greece & Israel)	Sep 10–26
Ultra Grand (Greece & Israel & Petra)	Sep 10–29

Fall Tour dates are tentative and prices are pending.

A Note from David and Kirsten

Shalom, dear friend,

Tony, thank you for your wonderful, ongoing study on the Book of James. God is not partial. Unfortunately, we humans tend toward jealousy and compartmentalizing others. "Can't we all just *get along*?" We *can* get along and love our neighbor. Believers just have to make that choice and then put our faith into practice.

We thank our ministry partners, who are examples of Paul's teaching to the Galatians in chapter three. You understand that we are all working together — gentile and Jew — proclaiming the same good news! We are *one* in Christ. Your faithful, steady support and giving these past few months lets us see a light at the end of our financial tunnel. After we discussed the looming prospect of cutting back air times, you spoke with your "wallets," and we acted on your collective decision to persevere. We are very thankful!

Our ministry workers forge on, knowing that we have much more Gospel to share as we gear up for new studio tapings, brand new television series, and broadcasting everywhere possible. Our far-reaching endeavors are all because of you and God's hand of blessing.

ZLP Programs in November

Have you enjoyed seeing Zola's teaching segments and having **Dr. Jeffrey Seif** back in the studio? Both of them offer such instructive Messianic perspective and insight! Kirsten and I really enjoy listening to Zola's lesson and then getting "round table" time with Dr. Seif at the end of every program. Please tell your friends and family to tune in each week to see what's new on *Zola Levitt Presents*.



Jeff Seif

Kirsten and I expected ***Return to Eden*** to be an Indiana Jones-style series. While there is some possibility that Eden was located in the area of modern-day Jerusalem, Jeff explores what Eden means in our hearts. We think it's some of the best teaching he's ever brought to *Zola Levitt Presents* viewers.

In November, we continue our celebration of Israel's 70th anniversary as a modern nation with ***Return to Eden***, the story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Lord wanted to bridge the relationship gap caused by mankind's sin in the Garden of Eden, so He created a special relationship with a people and a land that eventually led



Jeff Seif with the crew working on "Return to Eden"

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to the Messiah. This series features teaching and analysis from Dr. Seif, interviews from experts, and music written by Zola Levitt.

Eden and Old Testament History The Lord wants to restore fellowship with His creation. Even though He allows for times of correction, He is in the process of rebuilding us and making us a testimony to His faithfulness.

Eden and New Testament Prophecy Sin leads to loss, and rebuilding can take generations. Blessings from Heaven come down like rain to a dry and thirsty land. In the end, the Lord will restore the relationship with His people and dwell with them forever.

Eden and Israel Solomon's Temple was a reconstitution of the Garden of Eden. Today the Lord is bringing the Jewish people back to their ancestral homeland. He promises to dwell among people in the future, when there will be no more tears.

Jesus and the Return to Eden When Messiah returns and the New Jerusalem descends, living water will flow eastward. The city itself will be the Temple of God. However, the water of redemption is available now.

Paradise Restored Adam and Eve started in the paradise of the Garden of Eden. Believers will spend eternity in an Eden-like paradise where the Divine presence is restored and Satan crushed. People's choices made now dictate where they will spend eternity.

Remember, all of *ZLP* programs are available for viewing 24/7 on demand at www.levitt.tv. Even those with a busy schedule can catch every episode whether or not they have cable and a DVR.

Please do consider joining us for the trip of a lifetime! *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!* — Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! — Psalm 122:6,

David & Kirsten

In His service,
David & Kirsten ★



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Zion Forever

Nine programs on two DVDs

This series looks back at Israel's history and forward into prophecy while remembering the present status of the Temple Mount, the most contested real estate on Earth. Throughout the series, we hear from Eitan "Our Man in Haifa" Shishkoff, archaeologists Eli Shukron, Dan Bahat, and Shimon Gibson; tour guide Hannah Ben Haim, and Israel expert Shahar Shilo. Zola Levitt's music complements the narrative and scenes of Israel.

THE PLACE The Holy of Holies stood on a foundation stone called in Hebrew *HaMakom* (The Place). In exploring the ancient City of David, we hear from knowledgeable archaeologists and tour guides.

WESTERN WALL The Western Wall is the closest that Jewish people can get to the site of the Holy of Holies. We see a Bar Mitzvah celebration at the Wall and hear how King David purchased the threshing floor atop Mount Zion.

SOUTHERN STEPS Myles and Katharine Weiss walk along the southern edge of the Temple Mount where Messiah and other worshipers would have entered.

KIDRON VALLEY From the Kidron Valley, which lies between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives, we hear the history of Jerusalem. Messiah will enter through the Golden Gate when He comes again.

VALLEY OF ELAH Young shepherd boy David slew the giant Goliath here. We discuss the walls of ancient Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring where David's forces invaded the city, and the tunnels at the southern end — possibly the final resting place for Judean kings.

EIN GEDI David hid from King Saul in a cave near the spring at Ein Gedi oasis. We hear about the discovery of the Pool of Siloam and that the current King of Israel is Yeshua Himself.

TEMPLE MOUNT The Temple Mount is the earthly center of spiritual warfare. We see thousands of artifacts from Bible times that have been discovered in the debris discarded over a decade ago from unauthorized Moslem excavations. Guest archaeologist Zachy Dvira was first to note the "rubble's" importance.

MOUNT OF OLIVES From the Mount of Olives, we look to the future of the Temple Mount. Archaeological finds continue to surface on Mount Zion, confirming Jewish heritage as recorded in the Bible.

IN THE MEANTIME The Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque currently sit atop the Temple Mount. A representative of Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, which governs the area, gives us the Moslem perspective.

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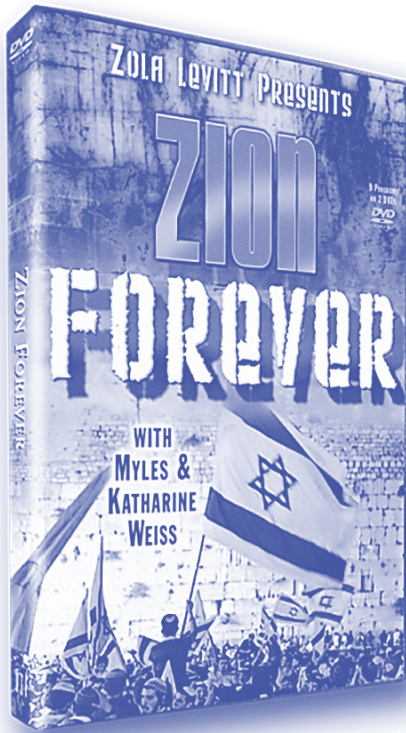
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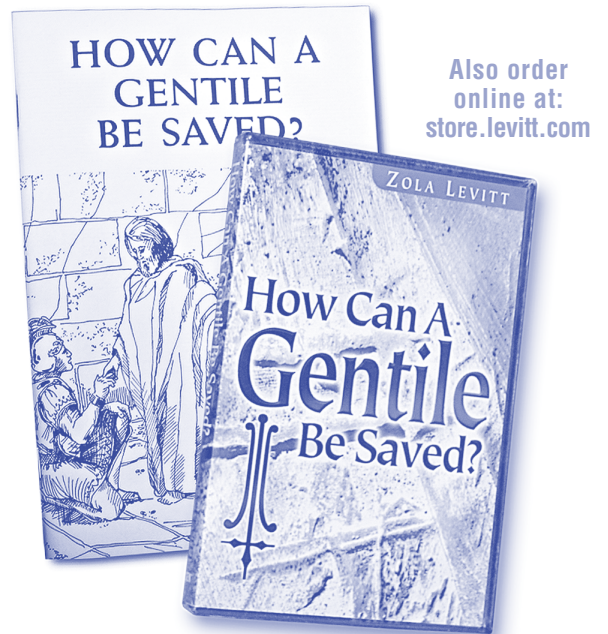
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Dear Tony,

(please check appropriate boxes)

- Our first impressions of other people, particularly the weak and poor, can lead to evil if we forget to let our faith in Yeshua guide our actions. ___ Agree
___ Disagree
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