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Tony and Jane Derrick

Dear Ministry Partner,

You must be aware that our world is rapidly changing — and mostly not for the good! The political atmosphere in the Middle East becomes more anti-Israel by the day. Even powerful American politicians disdain Israel.

IS GOD FINISHED WITH ISRAEL?

With all the current negativity regarding Israel, a 2,000-year-old question needs to be addressed today: Is God finished with Israel? Has He turned His back on His Chosen People? Or is Israel still relevant in our day and, for that matter, in the future? The unfortunate answer from most of Christendom over the centuries is that, yes, God is finished with Israel. Too many believe and teach that all the promises God made to Israel have been transferred to the Church.

This ministry has always championed the underdog, Israel, and rejected the idea that Israel has been replaced by the Church. Zola actively confronted this Replacement Theology, and the Bible supports Israel remaining God's chosen people to this day.

PAUL'S ANSWER

That 2,000-year-old question is asked and answered in Paul's letter to the church in Rome where he writes: *"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not!"* (Romans 11:1a). Paul confirms that even though Israel nationally rejected Yeshua as the Messiah, God did not reject the nation of Israel. The following verses provide evidence to support Paul's adamant answer.

Paul begins by presenting his own credentials. In Romans 11:1b, He writes: *"For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."* If God had rejected Israel, how could Paul address himself as an Israelite?

Paul's Damascus road encounter proved that God was not finished with the Jewish people. Note how precisely Paul identifies himself in order to authentically answer the question: as an Israelite from the seed of Abraham — you couldn't get more Jewish than that!

Paul also identifies with the Tribe of Benjamin. Why is that important? The 12 tribes of Israel

(over please)



The Apostle Paul (1514) engraving by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (flag of Israel added 😊)

divided after the death of King Solomon. The northern Kingdom of Israel comprised ten tribes that were infamous idolaters. Only Benjamin was faithful to join Judah in the southern Kingdom of Judah. What other respected Jews belonged to Benjamin's tribe? Names that you would recognize are Esther and Mordecai, King Saul, and Jonathan.

A number of years ago, Zola authored the book *Jesus, the Jew's Jew* (now an eBook at levitt.com) about Jewish followers of Christ and Zola's own testimony. We can apply the same description to Paul — he was a Jew's Jew based on his credentials just mentioned. God did not reject Paul, the Jew, based on his defiant days against Yeshua. (Paul had been a violent persecutor of the early Church — Galatians 1:13). Paul admitted to Timothy the bountiful mercy of God:

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).



Elijah Is Nourished by an Angel, 1866, etching for *Doré's English Bible* by Gustave Doré (1832–1883)

THE REMNANT: GOD'S AFFECTION

In verse two of Romans 11, Paul begins discussing the remnant, or elect. *"God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew."* God knew before the foundation of the world the people through whom He would choose to bring salvation to the world. When we look back at Genesis 12:2–3, we find the eternal promise God made to Abram: *"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Paul's point is that when God makes a promise, that promise is never broken.

To show God's affection and devotion to His people, Paul refers (in 11:2–4) to Elijah's plea to punish Israel because of their idolatry. Elijah lived during a period of darkness for Israel with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. The nation had rejected God to worship the false god Baal. Elijah believed that in all of Israel, he was the only person left who followed the true and living God — and he asked God to punish Israel for abandoning God and seeking to kill His last prophet!

How did God answer Elijah? Remember the story from 1 Kings 19:11–12?

Then He said [to Elijah], "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rock to pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the

wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

The Lord showed Elijah all these destructive forces that could easily wipe out the idolatrous people of Israel. Yet, God was pointing out to Elijah that, though He could destroy the people, His mercy caused Him to come to them in a “still small voice.” God told Elijah that He had reserved for Himself seven thousand men who had not bowed their knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). There has always been a faithful remnant of Jews among God’s chosen people. Keep this story in mind when you believe that you are the only one standing up with God’s truth.

THE REMNANT: GOD’S ELECTION

Now in 11:5, Paul notes that even in his day (or as he writes, “at this present time”), *“there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”* Bible students are sometimes afraid of the word “election.” Simply put: God is the Creator of the Universe and can choose to do whatever He wishes. He “elected” to choose Israel as His very own people, and He did so because of His grace. There can be no other explanation!

Paul clarifies what that grace means: *“And if by grace, then it is no longer works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work”* (Romans 11:6). In other words, the remnant (the elect) has chosen to accept God’s grace and believe in Yeshua as the Messiah instead of trying to gain God’s favor by works.

THE REMNANT: GOD’S HARDENING

In the final verses of our study, 11:7–10, Paul turns our attention to the main reason for there being only a remnant that believes in Yeshua as the Messiah: The Jewish people were hardened to the Gospel because God hardened them. That action may seem unfair; but remember, God has given these Hebrews numerous opportunities to turn from their idolatrous ways and seek their true Messiah. Paul quotes Moses and David to illustrate the history of Israel’s stubbornness.

First Paul quotes the words Moses spoke to Israel at the covenant renewal in Moab. After reminding the people about all that God had done for them in bringing them out of Egypt, and the continuing evidences of God’s grace, Moses told them: *“Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day”* (Deuteronomy 29:4).



The engraved Passion series: *Crucifixion* (No. 11) from *Die Passion Christi*, 1511, by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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Then Paul quotes David: *"Let their table become a snare before them, and their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; and make their loins shake continually"* (Psalm 69:22–23). That doesn't seem very kind of David to say, but he is addressing the spiritual blindness of Israel in his day.

We can conclude that there has always been a remnant of Jewish Believers in Yeshua as their Messiah. Its existence proves positively that God has not rejected His people and that Israel's place in His blueprint for eternity has not been replaced by the Church.



Standing firm with ZLM and Israel,

Tony Derrick

P.S. Aren't you thankful that God didn't reject *you* in your days of rebellion? I, for one, am thankful that He continued to pursue me in *my* unbelief! ★

Zola Tours



As you are reading this *Personal Bible Study Letter*, we are traveling to the Holy Land with our Zola Tours pilgrims. It's not too early to reserve a spot (or *spots* for you and your *family*) on next year's spring or fall tours. Kirsten and I would enjoy being your hosts and look forward to seeing you on an eye-opening study tour. These informative and luxurious life-changing excursions spiritually energize and revitalize at the same time!

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Did you know that Zola Levitt Ministries is ECFA approved?

A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

Kirsten and I will always stand with Israel. We are thankful that our parents understood the importance of the nation of Israel and the continuing significance of the Jewish people.

Unfortunately, we run into churches across the country that believe Christians — and, in particular, *American* Christians — have officially become God’s people of choice.

This ministry will always stand behind the Biblical truth presented by Tony in this Bible study. Thank you for understanding the vital need to financially support Zola Levitt Ministries as we continue battling widespread misconceptions about Israel. More than ever, we Believers* must stand up for the underdog (as Tony put it).

On Zola Levitt Presents this month

Kirsten and I thoroughly enjoyed working on the refreshed presentation of *The First Christians*, a classic series with teaching by **Zola Levitt**. Many viewers have asked us to bring back Zola’s videos and his astute insights. While Zola’s teachings are timeless, technology’s advancements since his “going home” have required us to refresh the series while keeping the best of Zola’s original teaching.

The First Christians

The First Christians programs, originally produced in 1995, explore the customs and manners of Jesus’ day, unearthing the roots of Christianity in the Jewish culture of daily life and worship practices. God chose this one people to speak to all humanity for all time. Our nine-program series seeks to better understand the people with whom our Lord chose to dwell on Earth. In the updated series, David and Kirsten Hart talk in the studio with **Dr. Jeffrey Seif** about the modern applications of each program’s lesson.

The Family — The first-century family was knit together by and depended on ... olives! From picking to pressing to their use as lamp fuel, olives served as an integral part of Jewish family life. Zola presents the spiritual significance of oil, using the Lord’s parables.

Agriculture — Israelites considered themselves in partnership with God—they worked the field, and God provided the rain and sunshine. When we follow the process from harvesting and threshing to making the bread, we appreciate the significance of agriculture as used in the Lord’s parables and Apostle Paul’s example of grafting olive trees.

Government — First-century Jewish people were free to attend the Temple in Jerusalem, but the adjacent Antonia Fortress cast a forbidding shadow upon the worshipers. From an original room of the Fortress, Zola talks about a new kind of kingdom which, despite the Roman authorities, was being introduced by a Jewish rabbi named Yeshua.

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS



Zola Levitt



Jeffrey Seif

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

(continued p. 6)

Religion — At archaeological excavations in Qumran, the remains of a *mikvah* (ceremonial bath) exemplify the importance played by that ritual. To prepare for worship, a person would step daily into the cleansing *mikvah* water. At the Jordan River, Zola explains how the First Christians' baptism closely paralleled this Jewish *mikvah* practice. Indeed, the synagogue remained a vital part of life to those who first believed in Yeshua.

Messiah — Recent archaeological excavations have unearthed indications that the traditional site of King David's Tomb on Mount Zion was, instead, a Messianic synagogue. Ray Pritz, author of *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, examines the history of Messianic Believers (Jews who accept Yeshua as the Messiah). After 2,000 years, Messianic Believers continue to share their faith. Zola joins them in their inspirational music, sung unto the Lord.

Your dedication to ensuring that ZLM survives financially puts you on the front-line of proclaiming truth. That's exciting! I have been a worship leader for over forty years. The frontline of leading worship correlates directly to the frontlines of spiritual battle. (Did you read Sarah Liberman's account on the cover of our August 2019 *Levitt Letter*?)

Don't get weary in fighting to get the truth out. Pushing onward means that we will reap a bountiful harvest — like the one we are seeing in Israel right now as the Jewish people make *aliyah* (come home) to their ancestral homeland.



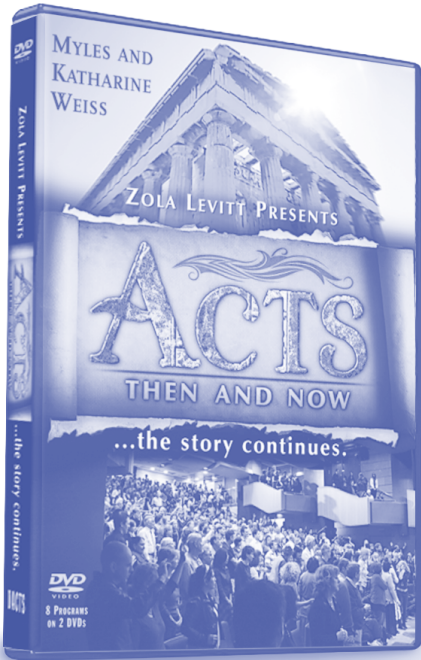
Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim! —

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! — Psalm 122:6

David & Kirsten

David & Kirsten

P.S. By the way, when you support this ministry with your giving, you also uphold the importance of *aliyah* through our sister ministries and agencies in *Israel* that we promote, such as **Bridges for Peace** and the **Jewish National Fund**. So, a hearty Hebrew *toda* (thank you) to you! ★



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The Good News The Gospel traveled west with a positive impact on Europe and the Americas. Rita Tsukahira leads a Mount Carmel ministry for troubled Israeli Arabs and Jews and for refugees from Africa.

To Hear Something New From Mars Hill in Athens, we learn what Paul encountered while bringing the Jewish Gospel to the Greek world. Dr. Dan Juster explains the theological connection between Jewish and Greek thought.

The Word Goes Forth from Zion Paul's Corinthian letters offer timeless instructions on living in a vibrant faith community. Asher Intrater and his son discuss the faith life of the modern Messianic community.

The One New Man In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul immortalizes the unity of the Spirit between Jews and Greeks (gentiles) in Messiah.

The Price He Paid for You The blood of the sacrificed Lamb. Interviews with local Believers underscore the price of following Jesus in Israel today.

Upon This Rock Matthew 16 proclaims the identity of Messiah. Tents of Mercy ministry provides humanitarian aid and "living water" to immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

The First and the Last We get a "God's eye" view of the role Messianic Believers play in these Last Days.

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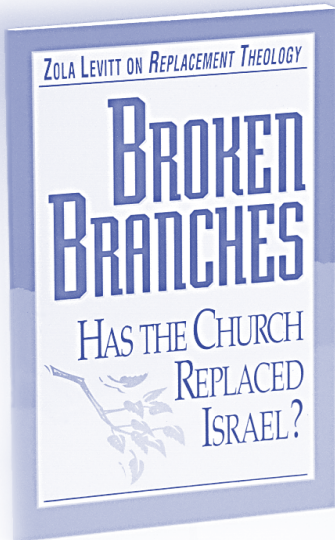
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Broken Branches — Has the Church Replaced Israel?

Study Booklet by Zola Levitt on Replacement Theology

What can replace Israel and the Jews in God's plan? Not America and not the Church. Nonetheless, well-intentioned denominations seem to have sprouted blinders to their heritage, the very roots of their Christianity. Let's restore the foundation to Christianity and quit using Grace as an excuse to cast away the Jews and the Promised Land. A must-read booklet for Believers, seminaries, churches, and everyone willing to celebrate the Promised Land and the Chosen People.

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Jewish Heritage Calendar 5780 (2019–2020)

With the Seven Feasts of Israel in mind, imagine the usefulness of our delightful and inexpensive Jewish Heritage Calendar. This beautiful calendar begins in September and spans 13 months, through September 2020. It provides the dates of all the Biblical feasts and Sabbaths plus the names of the months, the Holy Days, and all the rest through English phonetics like those in our monthly Hebrew Lesson in the *Levitt Letter*. Enjoy Biblical feast graphics, Hebraic regalia pictures, and inspiration.

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Dear Tony,

(please check appropriate boxes)

- Disagreeing with Replacement Theology, I concur with Paul that God has not rejected Israel or transferred His eternal promises to the Church.
- Here is my contribution for September to help your ministry continue to reach the vast audience that needs to be reminded of the truth about Israel.
- I am ordering teaching materials on the enclosed pages totaling:

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