

THE LEVITT LETTER

ZOLA LEVITT MINISTRIES Vol.3, No. 12

P.O. Box 12268

DALLAS, TEXAS 75225

"HAPPY CHANUKAH"



Your Jewish friends will be celebrating Chanukah as you receive this newsletter and we should say something about that great festival at this time. Our Lord Himself celebrated it faithfully (John 10:22).

Chanukah, or the Feast of Dedication, dates back to 165 B.C. when a victorious Jewish army routed the occupying Antiochus, who had entered the Temple and desecrated it. The Maccabee brothers, who defeated the occupiers, issued a pronouncement that this day was "to be celebrated annually with mirth and joy as a memorial of the dedication of the altar and the purification of the sanctuary".

A great miracle had occurred when the Jewish people retook the Temple. There was only a single day's supply of the consecrated oil with which to keep the eternal light burning, and it would take seven days to prepare and purify more oil. The light was to be eternal and never be extinguished, and so the priest made fervent prayers, asking God what was to be done. As the days passed, the one day's supply continued to burn until the new oil was ready! Thus for eight

days the fire burned brightly without adequate fuel.

These 8 days, then, are the days of Chanukah, and the Jewish people today light a candle in an eight-branch menorah on each day. You can tell just which day of Chanukah it is by looking in the window of your Jewish neighbor's home and seeing how many candles are lit.

The menorah itself is something special, having a ninth or "servant" candle with which the others are lit each day. That servant candle is obviously symbolic of the Messiah, who supplies the light to each believer.

Jesus spoke on the subject of eternal life when He was at the Temple for Chanukah:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

I and my Father are one (John 10:27-31).

The events leading up to the miracle of Chanukah are prophesied clearly in Daniel 8, and in that passage Antiochus is likened to the Antichrist (see 8:23-25). Clearly we have seen one time before in history a desecration of the Temple of Jerusalem by a fierce dictator for a period of 7 years. This prediction of things to come has stood as a word to the wise for more than 2,000 years.

It is quite proper for you to wish your Jewish friends, "Happy Chanukah" just as you would say "Merry Christmas." The eight days this year are Dec. 21-29.

Happy Chanukah!

"FOR PEOPLE WHO HATE THE BIBLE"

We have a very special book offer for you at the moment. Christian Herald, one of the very fine publishers, has supplied us with the beautiful hard cover edition of "Once Through the New Testament", by Dr. Tom McCall and myself. This very elegant, white leatherette book, with a colorful dust cover, sold for \$10.95 in a Christian book club offering. We can now provide it for \$10.00.

Dr. McCall and I wrote this book as the continuing volume to our Old Testament commentary, "The Bible Jesus Read is Exciting".

The New Testament version covers all of the Gospels, Epistles, Acts and Revelation in detail. It was designed to be a "good reader" and a fireside commentary on the New Testament. My original title for this series of two survey books was, "The Bible for People who Hate the Bible," but the publishers wouldn't touch it. My intention, of course, was to tell the reader that for once he could study the Bible while reading pleasant and entertaining writing. Bible study doesn't always have to be sad and sober; the scriptures are actually very lively and interesting.

We can supply this special book as long as the supply lasts and we ask you to place your order without delay. Thanks very much.

A Note From Ken . . .

Ken Berg, the Producer of ZOLA LEVITT LIVE, has many fine memories of our sojourn in the Middle East, during the making of our "Holy Places" series. He submitted the following recollection and I thought you'd enjoy his view of things.

I remember thinking to myself, "I hope when we get back to the States we have the pictures to prove it." At the time the situation was most amusing. It was late in the afternoon on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and I wanted so much, in the short time we had before the sun set, to have Zola present his next teaching in a small fishing boat. In Tiberias, during the summer season, there are plenty of highpowered speed boats, water skiers and sun bathers, but ancient fishing boats are hard to come by. Once we found one we didn't have time to ask Zola if he knew how to start the motor. We simply pushed him away from the shore and started our countdown, 5-4-3-2-1 ACTION!

Zola was wearing a wireless microphone, so there were no cables or cords between us and the boat. The wind was whipping up considerably and the sound man indicated that Zola's voice was breaking up. My concern for the technical quality of the sound was growing. The telephoto lens showed an ever decreasing image of Zola, his robe billowing in the wind, his note sheets one by one blowing out of his Bible. The boat was going around in circles, hopelessly at the mercy of the sea. CUT! BRING BACK THE BOAT!

Easy for me to say. The picture of Zola trying unsuccessfully to start the motor and unable to control the huge oars was classic. He was halfway across the Sea of Galilee, well on his way to the Golan Heights, when the owner of the boat finally made the rescue after a marathon

swim. A few adjustments to the motor and the boat was soon on its way back to shore. Zola was somehow able to gather his composure and present an excellent teaching about the disciples and their encounter with the sea. The boat this time was anchored and held by two men, five feet from shore.

Our efforts to present "The Holy Places" as a fresh approach to Christian television left Zola in other precarious situations as well. In Egypt, he took on one of the seven wonders of the world, the Great Pyramid. The desert heat in August is enough to contend with, but Zola climbed up the side of this majestic monument (well, at least part way up). After each step I would hear, "Is this far enough?" To the negative reply he would turn and continue climbing. As in the show at the Sea of Galilee, the one we did at the Great Pyramid proved successful because of some extra effort and attention given to authenticity.

For years I've watched, with great interest, TV evangelists present specials from the Holy Land. Usually they are nattily attired in three-piece suits, accompanied by equally fashionable musical groups. I've admired them for their creative programming, but for me the final production has, more often than not, been little more than a successful effort in using Israel as picturesque backdrop. The significance of the Jewish feasts is rarely mentioned. The message of pain, the blood, the agony of Calvary and the Garden Tomb, is lost in the efforts to impress the viewers with the beauty of it all.

It was our intention in producing "The Holy Places" to present the Word through an honest relationship between Zola and the location. Such shows as the one at the Wailing Wall would never have been effective if Zola

30 AND COUNTING

I just had a birthday and I turned 43. This wouldn't be a landmark in most peoples' lives, but as I was reflecting on it I realized that it is an anniversary of sorts. In December of 1951 I had turned 13 and on Jan. 12 I had my Bar Mitzvah. On that day, then, I became a man.

The Bar Mitzvah service, of course, makes the Jewish youngster a "Son of the Commandments." The Jewish people consider that the male has reached his maturity, or at least his responsibility under the law, at age 13. During each Jewish youngster's 12th year he studies the Torah (the Pentateuch) very assiduously and prepares to do his first public reading from it shortly after his 13th birthday. Thus we see Jesus in the Temple, in the Book of Luke, being cited as a particularly brilliant student at the age of 12. It was perfectly logical for him to be studying Bible during that particular year in order to fulfill this custom.

Therefore on Jan. 12, 1982, I will have been a man for thirty years. Frankly it feels longer than that at this point, but they have been very interesting years.

If there was one thing I could change, it would have been to bring the church around sooner in my life. I didn't meet the Messiah until I was 32 because there really was so little witnessing to the Jews. I knew many Christian people but no one ever "offended" me by telling me about the Messiah. Well, I would change all that and I hope it will be changed in your lifetime. Witness to your Jewish friends now so that they won't have to wait 32 years to find the truth.

The fact is, they might not have that much time left.

SEPARATE CHECKS, PLEASE

A special word of thanks to all of you who remembered to make separate checks for your book offers (non-deductible) and donations (deductible). Actually it makes your own record keeping easier as well. Good stewardship requires that we all treat Caesar as fairly as we treat God.

If you have moved or plan to move, **PLEASE** send us your **NEW** and **OLD** addresses.

This helps the post office and us in keeping the **LL** coming to your home.

A Note From Ken...

Continued from Page 2

had been immaculately wardrobed or heavily scripted. Wearing a simple prayer shawl and unpretentiously mingling with Jewish worshippers at the Wall, Zola was able to present a refreshing look at the history of that area and of its importance to the Christian. I believe to effectively communicate the essence of the land you've got to get some of the dirt under your fingernails. Yes, the Children of Israel must have sweated and thirsted in the Egyptian desert -- we did. We know from experience at Tiberias that the disciples had good reason to fear the sudden wind on the sea. Christ must have been a man of enduring strength to have walked the valleys and hills of Jerusalem. Climbing the hill to the East Gate just once nearly wore me out.

In making "The Holy Places", I guess we were much like the Children of Israel. Zola and his crew wandering from one location to another, without script, not knowing what lay before us, exhausted and sometimes complaining. The letters so far have assured us that our sacrifices were not in vain. As the series continues, your letters of encouragement are most important.

On the last leg of our tour Zola had arrived in Cairo early. He had felt the heat, seen the immense desert and, I think knew what lay before him in the steps of the Great Pyramid. When the camera crew arrived the next day he was most anxious to inform me of a "fantastic" location from which to shoot a teaching of the pyramid. "On top of the hotel," he said hopefully. "There's a terrific view of the desert and the Great Pyramid. I can do my entire teaching without leaving the (air-conditioned) building!"

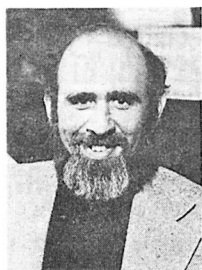
"Wrong" I said. Looking at each other honestly we knew in an instant it was just too easy.

Now that we're home we're glad for 3 things: We're glad we served the Lord; we're glad you'll get to see the marvelous "Holy Places" scenes; and we're glad to be back!

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