



ZOLA LEVITT MINISTRIES, Vol. 10, No. 1

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“Hated of All Nations”

As 1988 dawns, the Promised Land is in conflict again. The constant hostility between the Israelites and the Canaanites, which was brewing some 4,000 years ago when Abraham had to rescue his nephew Lot, is still going strong, as it will until Armageddon. I feel that our viewers, people deeply interested in Israel, might profit by some commentary on the latest events in Gaza and the West Bank. We have all seen the television coverage which made the Israeli soldiers look like South African police.

First of all, without going into the entire history of how displaced peoples are victimized by wars, occupation is never comfortable for either the occupied or the occupiers. In a nutshell, Israel, attacked again and again by larger forces on every border, finally had to hold some territories as buffer zones against her many enemies. With the territories came people, and obviously those people don't like living under an outside regime. Among those people are a new generation of youngsters who grew up since 1967 and never knew any other government than that of the occupation. Their fathers and mothers came to accommodation with Israel and in many cases lived prosperous and peaceful lives — better than the vast majority of citizens in the Arab nations.

But the new generation resents the situation and they don't have the perspective of their parents. They have been taught that Israel is their land and they want it. And that's the long and short of it. They recently rose up in huge mobs to try to throw off those they think of as their oppressors.

Now what we saw on television was very dramatic. Mob control is never pretty, after all, and the Israeli soldiers, armed with rifles, not riot gear, did what they had to do. At the time of this writing things are quiet again but Israel has suffered a public relations black eye. There were casualties, not as many as in the rash of holiday multiple murders in this country, but Israel looked very bad.

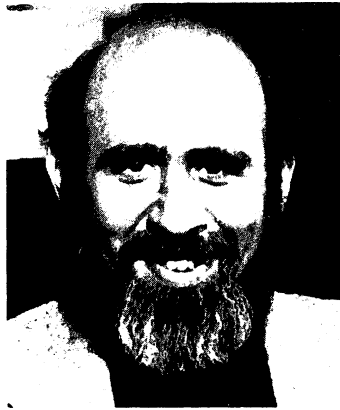
Nobody wants to see anyone hurt, least of all the Israelis, who really can't afford to provoke their enemies.

On the other hand, what else could happen when mobs of hundreds attack young soldiers who travel by twos and fours through dangerous streets? American riot control is relatively more sanitary, with trained policemen, not soldiers, wearing protective masks and carrying shields, using water cannons and the like to control the crowds. The Israeli boys, some barely out of high school, have little experience with being stampeded by hundreds of angry zealots throwing bottles and rocks. Some of them used their weapons, if only to protect life and limb.

Believe me, I'm not excusing anyone and I was very disappointed that things came to this. On the other hand, it's hard to sit still for a rampage of criticism. Israel is not South Africa. Everyone arrested gets a trial, and the news moves freely, including the most condemning television pictures. We are talking about a democracy in which foreign reporters gather their stories from freely operating news services on both sides of the dispute. No film was confiscated, no camera was broken and no reporter was jailed. The comparisons with dictatorial regimes are ridiculous.

We should also realize that the Middle East is quite different from our own land in military terms. We use diplomacy and we don't like shooting. We try to

A NOTE FROM ZOLA



Dear Friends,

The expanded version of our newsletter that you are holding in your hands represents one of our New Year's ideas. Since the beginning of the ministry we have never changed the format of this letter but we have grown by leaps and bounds. So from here on we'll be able to express ourselves at somewhat more length and cover more subjects for you.

Please let us know what you think of this change. As a matter of fact, times of changes are good times to give us your opinions. Feel free to send in your ideas on how we can most effectively utilize the increased space. What would you like to see in this letter? Thanks.

We had a tour group in the Holy Land at just the time of the recent difficulties in Gaza and the West Bank. Our Christmas in Bethlehem tour did just fine, however, and our pilgrims saw nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, they reported having a beautiful and inspiring experience. Please know that we are fully informed about goings-on in Israel

at all times and in nearly 15 years of pilgrimages we have had no problems. Those of you who have been to the Holy Land realize that it is a secure and peaceful place regardless of how it is portrayed in the news. The fact still remains that you are safer in Jerusalem than in almost any other big city in the world.

Before I close I wanted to thank all of you for your generous year-end suport. It looks as though we can plan for new programming before too long and we can get our bills caught up for the new series. Thank you also for all of your commendations on our "Beginning of the End" programs. I was especially inspired about this series when I began composing the music last summer and believe me, I'm just as inspired today. Your compliments were wonderful. I love hearing from you.

This is a good time to send suggestions for new program ideas, by the way. You are the true owners of this outreach and we take your thoughts very seriously. Tell us what you'd like to see.

And please keep in mind that the number and quality of new programs is always dependent on your support. I think you can tell by our present series that we are willing and capable of using your gifts for His glory. Together I think we have taught some important Bible lessons far and wide. Thank you again for doing your part, and may the Lord continue to bless you.

Your messenger,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Zola". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ISRAEL!

We are planning ahead this year for our Israel tours. We anticipate a very busy year.

We will have three tours in 1988, named for the three festival seasons:

Feast of Passover Tour:

March 19 through 28

Feast of Pentecost Tour:

June 4 through 13

Feast of Tabernacles Tour:

September 28 through October 7

The tours don't always coincide with the festivals, but 1988 will be a tremendous year in every season because it marks the 40th anniversary of modern Israel. Since the great restoration of 1948, the world has watched the resurrection of the Promised Land, and there will be celebrations virtually daily throughout 1988. We will certainly be taking part.

This year all three tours will follow the same itinerary, and will be priced equally (\$1999). We will be using our most deluxe program on all three tours, including our much appreciated "extras".

As of this date I plan to personally lead all three tours, along with my valued assistant, Reverend Jeffrey Seif. I will be watching the March tour, which is generally a little

smaller, to see if two leaders are really needed. If enough of you opt for March I'll certainly be very glad to go along. Stewardship and ministry considerations require that I make that decision around February 15th. I will definitely go on the June and September tours.

Your \$200 deposit will reserve your place in any of the tours and it is refundable if you can't go for any reason. This will be a busy year for Israel tours and I recommend you send your deposit to us as early as possible.

Write for a brochure and we will send it immediately. Thanks.



HEBREW LESSON

Some of our friends have expressed an interest in learning some Hebrew expressions. You asked for it and now you have it. Here's lesson number one, the biblical saying that Zola uses at the close of every show:

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

Sha-alū Shalom Yē-rū-sha-lī'im
"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem"
(Psalm 122:6a)

HOW TO MAKE UNLEAVENED BREAD (MATZAH)

Using 2 pounds of unbleached all-purpose flour and 1 ½ cups of water:

- 1) Preheat oven to 500°
- 2) Place the flour on a board and slowly add the water, kneading the dough with your hands until it's firm. Take a handful of dough and roll it into a circle, using a long rolling pin. Prick one side with a fork.
- 3) Place in the oven on a cookie sheet for about 10-15 minutes, or until light brown.

Makes 8 8" Matzot ("Matzahs")

(Matzah is also available in delicatessens and supermarkets in neighborhoods where Jewish people shop.)

The Hardest 40 Years

On April 2nd this year modern Israel will observe its 40th Passover. The 40 years of the Promised Land we now see haven't been easy. Since 1948 there has been almost constant conflict in the Holy Land and this anniversary year is certainly no different.

When we think back to the Exodus, that first great Passover when the angel of death spared the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, we realize that a 40-year period was involved then, too. And those 40 years weren't easy either. Back then, some 3,500 years ago, it took the children of Israel 40 years of wandering in the wilderness to just get into a position to fight for the land.

God was with them and He made it very clear that they were to take the land. Through Moses He told them to "possess the land," as they stood gathered across the Jordan from Jericho. To quote the Lord exactly, He said, "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them" (Deut. 1:8).

It was God Himself who reminded His chosen ones that He had a promise to keep. There had been four centuries of silence from heaven during the slavery but the Almighty now spoke up, and powerfully, recalling to their minds the great covenant He had made with their fathers. He had Moses appoint Joshua to "...give them as an inheritance the land which you will see..." (Deut. 3:28).

The series of battles that followed are still going on, in a sense. It's not much land, not very rich, not very favored, but no generation since the Exodus has really been content to let the chosen people have it.

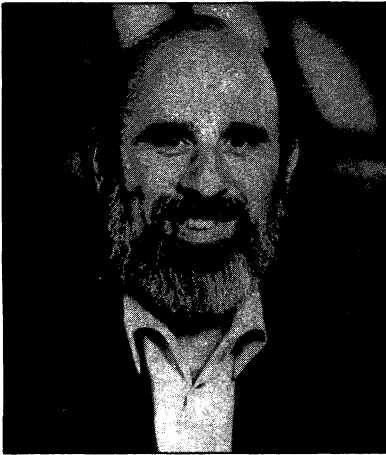
There are many thought-provoking parallels between the 40 years of wandering and the 40 years of present day Israel. Both began with the legal establishment of a nation. God's law given on Mount Sinai began the period of wandering and consolidated two million slaves into a functioning theocracy. In 1948, Israel's Declaration of Independence consolidated some 1/2 million immigrants into a democracy. There then followed for both generations of Israelites, who lived so far apart in time, a difficult period of adjustment. The people in the wilderness had real privation. Without God's gift of manna from heaven and the quail that were made to fly over the desert, they might well have perished. Likewise, in the barren Israel the pioneers returned to in 1948, there was great difficulty with everyday life. The land had been denuded of trees and there were swamps and unplantable wilderness areas everywhere. Malaria was rife. Both groups of Israelites had to contend with enemies on all sides who were not mere political foes but religious foes as well. The special relationship the chosen people enjoyed with God was anathema to the pagans of the wilderness and likewise to the Islam factions of today.

And on that point it is fair to say that both of those generations of Israelites pursued an up and down relationship with God. The people of the Exodus were worshipping a golden calf early on and lacked confidence to enter the land during their sojourn at Kadesh-barnea. Modern Israel, established as a religious state for Jewish people, has been criticized for a highly secular viewpoint on the part of the majority of its population. But, it would be fair to say this about any modern nation today. The Scripture quote "no man seeketh after God..." has been all too true in every age.

Perhaps the most striking parallels of these two so distant generations have to do with the beginning and ending of each story. In both cases it took a miracle, a real act of God, to begin the process. And in both cases a kingdom was the ultimate result. In the Exodus, the parting of the Red Sea, of course, is one of the great biblical moments. The acts of God in Egypt, such as the plagues, would not have been enough. But the final heavenly act of liberation was the miracle that started it all. In the modern generation, the re-establishment of the land after the 1900-year absence of its people is without historical precedent and is miraculous as well. No one gave the Jewish people much of a chance of ever returning to Israel after so long an absence. The persecution and suffering, climaxed by the peerless Holocaust, had most historians thinking that the Jewish people would perish and be forgotten. But when God made His original covenant with Abraham and his descendants to give them the land, He said it was "everlasting." He fulfilled His promise some 4,000 years later!

And then looking at the ending of the story, the Exodus did lead to the establishment of a kingdom for the posterity of the generation who endured it. Battling all the way and with many stops and starts, they did establish a nation that in the glorious days of King David and King Solomon dominated the Middle East and made its mark on world history. And in the modern case, Bible readers know that whether the Lord tarries or comes now, the ultimate ending for the land of Israel is the Kingdom to come, for which we pray, "...Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done..."

A NOTE FROM ZOLA



Dear Friends,

In the midst of all of the war and all of the famine and all of the pestilence and all the rest of the signs of the end which surround us today I couldn't help feeling good about the 100th birthday of Irving Berlin. This gentle soul, to whom we are all indebted, spent his long life composing beautiful songs. If the Lord tarries, his music will be remembered long after all of our politics and all of our wars are forgotten.

At 100 years old, Irving Berlin still doesn't really know how to play the piano or the names of the notes. He began as a singing waiter in Chinatown in New York, in 1907. He was a penniless product of an immigrant Jewish family, but within his soul was music that simply will never die. Christians are beholden to him for "White Christmas" and "Easter Parade", and Americans in general have always loved to sing his "God Bless America". In a fitting tribute to this wonderful composer who wrote more than 1,000 songs, Jerome Kern said, "Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He is American music."

Also having an anniversary this year is Israel, of course. What a difficult 40th birthday she is having! Through all the bad publicity, much of it designed to ruin this important birthday year, the Israelis looked back over a difficult generation. The three-day holiday marking the 40th year of independence began with a commemoration to those who have fallen in battles to secure this land. The Israelis remembered 16,450 war dead. That's a tremendous toll on a small nation. Proportionally to our own nation, it represents more

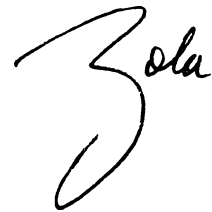
deaths than America has suffered in all of the wars of all of her history. Every family has been touched. The tribute, corresponding to our own Memorial Day, is called Remembrance Day. Wreaths were laid on soldiers graves and, in a unique tradition, the citizens went back to their old high schools to hear a reading of the lists of graduates who had fallen in Israel's wars against the Arabs. It is significant that Remembrance Day always immediately precedes Independence Day in Israel. This tribute and special gratitude is given those who built the nation before the happy celebration begins.

Why am I saying all this? Well, someday in the Kingdom to come, this will be the common heritage of all those who live in Israel; and among those who will live there in those great days of the Kingdom will certainly be the wife of the King. And that's us, the believers in the Messiah of Israel, His Bride.

Thank you for all of the generous help and support you have given us right along. You will see that our new programs will surpass those we've done before and the credit goes to you. We are also improving airtimes right along. Those served by KXTX Dallas can now see us an hour earlier on Sundays. New stations are being added. Please know that your gifts go to work for the Kingdom immediately as we receive them.

God knows your good works. May He bless you accordingly.

Your messenger,



ROM. 10:1

“Bogart and the News”

by Zola Levitt

Now that I have personally stayed in Israel for some three weeks, I can give you a first-hand report of what's really going on. I wish our secular media would do the same. I certainly didn't see what they saw, but then again, my purpose isn't to sell my stories and video images.

First of all, the “Intifadah”, the uprising, has deteriorated to sporadic hooliganism that never did amount to anything close to what was made of it on television and in the newspapers. I've just returned from our third tour since the whole thing began and as usual we saw nothing at all. Naturally, we don't travel in rough neighborhoods, but that's my practice in Dallas, and ours in your city, too. If the foreign press and television crews were to come to America and simply film the gang violence in Los Angeles every night (or any other of our own “uprisings”) I suppose the United States would shortly be considered a war zone. Actually, all I could see in Israel was what I have seen for 25 tours over some 15 years: a peaceful and lovely country run very efficiently by some of the most enthusiastic people in the world.

I learned some of the inside story of the bad publicity of the last six months by talking directly to people on the scene. It seems that the news people are frantic to send in stories from Jerusalem because news story competition is ferocious there. I believe I have reported it before, but it bears repeating that the western press has less than half a dozen correspondents at any one time at such notoriously hot spots as Tehran, Baghdad or Beirut. Totalitarian regimes don't tolerate the free press, of course, and those countries are simply too dangerous. If I were a reporter, I would rather make a big deal out of stone and bottle throwers than I would like to cover car bomb explosions and poison gas attacks. The news we do receive from those war torn areas is the product of truly courageous reporters who face real shooting. It doesn't take a lot of courage for the 400 or so American reporters staying in Jerusalem's most luxurious hotels to exaggerate typical ghetto problems into what looks like World War III. Four hundred reporters have to produce something, after all.

To be specific I learned that the American press, and other western newspeople as well, prefer to stay at the American Colony Hotel in Arab East Jerusalem. This traditional looking Middle-Eastern hostel satisfies an immature urge in our people to look like the heroes of the movie, “Casablanca”. Indeed, there are stone archways and Persian-style decor in the place, and our fellows swagger around trying to look like Humphrey Bogart in the mysterious East.

The American Colony is staffed by courteous and experienced hosts, Arabs all. They are very good at seeing to the comforts of their guests, even if it's necessary for them to “help” find some news to report. If stories get filed and if video tape is shot, then our reporters and cameramen can spend another day by the pool and in the restaurants.

What I understand that happens is this: It only takes a phone call to a nearby village to work up a photogenic group of young stone throwers, outraged women, indignant old men, etc. Then our press is taken to the scene. Please believe me, I do not lack compassion for people who are really persecuted; surely no Jew would lack such compassion. On the other hand, what I was told was simply that, “This is a war staged for the press.” An Israeli crewman of ours made that telling observation. He is a very experienced man, good in his work. Ted Koppel used him for Nightline when it was filmed in Israel. All of our crewmen, Daniel, Elijah, Joram, and the rest, know their business. The irresponsibility of our reporters and cameramen actually embarrass them.

If staging demonstrations helps make hundreds of American newsmen industrious and profitable, it can be arranged. But the courteous folks who operate the five-star American Colony Hotel have duped their easy-money guests with more than the name of the place. Far from standing with their brethren of the uprising, they are making a fat profit out of the whole thing.

Naturally, I'm not singling out the hotel or its staff because the practice is nearly universal; in all countries, at all times, media people are manipulated for the benefit of the locals. I had a stint as a newspaper man and I can tell you that I certainly like what I'm doing now a lot better.

I can give you an alternative, eyewitness report to balance what you've been seeing in our media. The fact is that the uprising is dying out for want of local interest and clear goals. It is being orchestrated from the outside by the PLO, who make marvelous pronouncements indeed but are seldom seen on the actual battlefield. Rather like the media itself, they stand at a safe distance and stir up other peoples' troubles. Arafat and the other murderers never do choose military targets but specialize in just what their own accusations contain: women, children, unarmed civilians. But any of us can see that the people of the villages, whom they are manipulating, have certainly a better chance than those innocents machine-gunned at the European airports, shot in the back of the head during airplane hijackings or thrown into the Mediterranean from wheelchairs on cruise ships.

The Palestinians in Israel have a very raw deal, as have all conquered peoples. But I dare say they're in better hands than were the Jews of the Holocaust, the Vietnamese of the pathetic boats or the Central Americans who live and die by our own arcane foreign policies. Most of the Palestinians in Israel have gone back to work now and stopped attacking anyone. As a matter of fact, Israeli fire officials have detected arson in several of the recent forest fires and it now seems that the trees, rather than the people, are under siege. This is a shame in a country where the trees had to be replaced one by one after 1900 years of Palestinian occupation.

If I don't sound as patient as usual it's simply because now I have the facts, and to tell you the truth, they are even more bizarre than I suggested before. Jeffrey Seif came back with our tour groups with reports of a peaceful climate and business as usual, but when I saw

it for myself, I was amazed at what we have been making of the situation.

Some of our tourists purchased T-shirts in Jerusalem stores. The big seller this year is, "Don't worry America. Israel is behind you."

Please believe me: there is nothing to worry about in Israel. To paraphrase Jack Kennedy, who, when he came into the White House, said, "Things were as bad as we had been saying they were," I can only say that things are as good as I have been telling you they were. We should no more worry about Israel today than the prophet Amos did when he quoted the Lord: "... when I place them back in their own land... I shall not remove them again." (Amos 9:14,15)

“Sing Unto the Lord A New Song”

by Zola Levitt

It's time to give our most reliable supplier the credit He richly deserves. In this ministry we use a great variety of goods and services to accomplish our mission. Our books we receive from a publisher, our audio tapes from a local duplicator, our video tapes from Berg Productions, and our computers, paper, envelopes, copies, stamps, etc., etc., from various office supply houses.

But the songs we get from God.

It occurred to me as I began to dictate this letter that this is the one area of our ministry in which we have no "middle man". The music comes from heaven and arrives in finished form. It is necessary only to get together with Robert, our new arranger, and record the music. Rob gets us our instrumentalists and singers, books our studio time, arranges the scores and conducts the orchestra. But the product that he works with is already made and he is really operating a packaging service. It's as if the Lord sends a message to His people coded in musical notes and it is up to this ministry to merely deliver it to the intended audience. Everyone knows the expression "heart to heart"; that's how songs come from God.

Furthermore, it should be said that the Lord is the one who knows just which music to send for which series of programs. In the foreboding prophecy songs of "The Beginning of the End", there was a message of hope and of love; He sent music that sounded very dramatic and yet has a feeling of great times to come. The music was full of "longing". The queen, who waits for the King, was encouraged, and yet, our large audience of unbelievers could hear the urgency in the musical message. The Lord uses the Lord's creations.

And now, for our lovely and very beautifully pictured series, "Return to Galilee", He has again delivered, at the eleventh hour, the absolutely right music. These songs are full of sweet memories. Anyone who has read the great lessons of our Lord at the Sea of Galilee, seen the Mount of the Sermon, the golden wheat fields or the Jordan River, can almost relive those one-of-a-kind experiences in the songs. Please know that I am not speaking here of the composer, the arranger, the instrumentalists or the singers; I am most sincerely speaking of the gifts of God. I was a professional musician before my salvation experience and I know how to evaluate music. Before God Himself I would say, "You sent this music."

And while thanking the Lord for His help in the heavenly sphere, I need to most emphatically thank all of you for your generosity in the earthly matters. In this day of high-priced recording studios and very expensive talent, it is very difficult for any ministry to create original music. But you have given in a measure that allows us to not only bring you television programs but to also accompany them with these wonderful contributions from heaven.

“When You See These Things . . .”

by Zola Levitt

As we go to press this month, the situation in Israel has quieted down dramatically. The relentless publicity about the West Bank and Gaza has given way to reports from Beirut, Lebanon instead. In that war-torn city Moslem is fighting Moslem at a level of ferocity that dwarfs the problems in Israel.

As a matter of fact, the casualties in Beirut surpassed those in Israel in just the first four days of fighting. The uprising in Israel has gone on for some five months and Israel has received quite a bit of criticism, but as I have remarked several times in this newsletter, by Middle Eastern rules the Israelis have been as gentle as humanly possible. Now the facts bear me out. The Israelis have mainly used crowd control measures and very little firepower. The warring militias of Beirut have used tanks and missiles and howitzers on crowded city streets, slaughtering soldiers and civilians alike. And this butchery cannot be passed off grandly as some kind of “holy war”, since the gunmen on both sides are Shiite Moslems.

It is undeniable that Arab has fought Arab practically since the beginning of time. The casualty figures in the endless Iran-Iraq war are measured in the millions, not hundreds, and again we see Moslem killing Moslem. If you like that war, and you like Beirut, then you'd love an independent Arab-Moslem state in Israel.

In any case, by the time you read this article our television crew and our Feast of Pentecost Tour will have seen Israel first-hand and in upcoming issues I will give our eye-witness conclusions.

Strife in Israel is almost a requirement of prophecy since the Tribulation Period is begun by the Antichrist offering a peace covenant to that beleaguered nation. Even now, we can see the efforts at peacemaking, including those of our own government, and the stage is definitely set for the entrance of that final world dictator. It is horrifying to think that the bloodshed and the terror of that seven-year period will be infinitely greater than anything we are seeing now. If you've never witnessed before in your life, this is the time to tell your friends to avoid the coming catastrophes. We are watching a preview of the Tribulation Period right now. But this is only an exhibition game. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

At the same time as the scene is being set for the Antichrist's peace covenant, another very important development has come out of Switzerland. In the May 18 New York Times, a small article very deep in the financial section tells of a master computer which completes business transactions entirely electronically, with no people present. To quote the Times:

ALL ELECTRONIC SWISS TRADING

“ZURICH, May 18 (Reuters) — Switzerland's financial markets will take a technological leap forward Thursday, with the opening of the world's first fully automated options and futures exchange.

Unlike similar exchanges in London, New York and Chicago, the Swiss Options and Financial Futures Exchange will be completely electronic. Soffex will have no exchange building. All transactions will be conducted on computer screens in members' offices throughout Switzerland.

Fifty-two banks and financial institutions will begin trading in options for 11 Swiss stocks. After a few months, an options contract based on the Swiss share index will be introduced.”

It has been rumored for some years that there were all-powerful computers just waiting to be programmed for the Antichrist's worldwide financial system. A few years ago there was supposed to be one called “The Beast”, which always sounded a little bit fanciful to me. Now, however, the machine is a reality and those who have been fascinated by the computer possibilities can watch the promulgation of this technological leap. Scripture about the number 666 has always tempted people to imagine that the world will someday be wired into a single computer and that all trading will be done as explained above in the article.

We should be cautious not to assume evil intentions on the part of the Swiss or their machine. Computers are neutral. It's the programmers who are good or evil. Perhaps the scenario is that the Swiss system will be found extremely successful and rapidly adopted throughout the world. And then the Antichrist will somehow take over this very efficient mechanism for buying and selling.

I leave the details to prophecy speculators but I did want to point out the inception of this remarkable system. It really does seem that we have all the components in place to satisfy prophecy. Whether we consider famines or wars or earthquakes or economic systems or unrest in the Holy Land or betrayal or pestilences, we seem to have them all.

A few months ago I referred to world events as justifying our series, “The Beginning of the End”. I'm beginning to think that we are now at the end of the beginning!

Prophecy Marches On

We have predicted right along that an alliance would be formed between Iran and Russia preceding the invasion of Israel predicted by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 38-39). The prophecy tells of a major assault on the Holy Land from the north and gives the biblical equivalent names of Russia and a number of allies as the invaders. In the past decade or so, we have watched the shifting alliances of the Middle Eastern nations in view of Ezekiel's predictions. Libya and Ethiopia have certainly come into line as allies of Russia and arch-enemies of Israel (Ezek. 38:5). The missing piece of the puzzle is Persia, comprising modern Iran.

At the time of this writing the Persian Gulf is practically going up in smoke. Recently real shooting developed between the United States and Iran and an escalation of the conflict seems quite likely. (When writing about political events we need to specify that our publication goes to press a matter of weeks before you receive it. Our view of things is necessarily more dated than your newspaper or television news, of course.)

Iran has no friend anywhere. The Ayatollah's fanatic regime has pitted his nation seemingly against the whole wide world. As we go to press Iran is lashing out at ships of many nations and exchanging real blows with Iraq and the U.S. It's difficult to think of an ally of Iran's anywhere in the world, and even the Moslem countries regard that nation with revulsion and embarrassment.

But Iran is very important in today's world. Some two-thirds of the world's oil supplies are in the Persian Gulf region. And Iran is, of course, a major producer. Even the super powers have to cultivate a strategic area like the Gulf. And Iran really needs a friend among the super powers. It's difficult to see how the Ayatollah's forces can go on and on, alone against a multitude.

The United States might well have made a powerful ally of Iran's since historically that has been the case. Only 10 years ago the U.S. was on friendly terms under the Shah, and even Israel and Iran got along and traded fairly and peaceably. But now Iran has rebuffed her former friends and stands alone. The mining of the Gulf and the firing on U.S. ships has made any relationship foreseeable in the near future impossible.

And so this may be the time that Iran turns to Russia. It doesn't seem likely but given the tremendous geopolitical forces in the world today, those two may find that they need each other. Russia has been disappointed lately in Afghanistan and is pulling out, having failed to consolidate that nation and occupy it. And yet Communism needs constant expansion, and particularly expansion into the Middle East, with its oil supplies, warm-water ports and strategic location. A map of the contested area shows that Russian purposes in the Middle East would be even better served by a relationship with Iran than by the occupation of Afghanistan. Iran is closer to the oil supplies and closer to Israel.

Although they don't see eye to eye on very many subjects, the Russians and the Iranians have in common a fierce animosity toward Israel and its faithful ally, the United States. And, of course, they share a border. It's difficult to see an alliance happening at this point between Russia and Iran but "birds of a feather flock together" and mutual political interests have historically made strange bedfellows.

I always recommend that believers have a working knowledge of prophecy. There are many recent books on the subject of end-times events but none that I can recommend more at this point than our own The Coming Russian Invasion of Israel. It was updated in the last year or so to include the dramatic outworkings of events leading to this cataclysmic upcoming war.

That book, your newspaper, and the Book of Ezekiel should bring you right up to date on the fastest breaking prophecy fulfillment in the world today.

Jeff's Journal

UP, UP & AWAY... OOPS: STILL HERE...

by Rev. Jeffrey L. Seif

The anonymous author of the Epistle to the Hebrews warned: "Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. . . which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Heb. 13:9). The expression he used, "carried about", comes from the Greek word "periphero"; meaning, "transported away". An expert on the Greek language, Dr. Marcus Dods, points out the same expression was used by another famous first century biographer, Plutarch, in a manner which sheds light on its biblical usage. Plutarch used "periphero" as follows: "being swept away by a river in a flood" (Nicol, W.R., The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. IV., Eerdmans Pub., Grand Rapids, 1974, pg. 377).

In recent days, many sincere Christians have been "swept away" by a book claiming to know the day when Christ would return to literally "carry away" the Church. In no uncertain terms author Edgar Whisenant asserted that Christ would return to Rapture His Church between September 11th-13th, 1988. Let's see now. . . those dates have come and gone. But, has the Lord come? Are we gone? Is this heaven? What happened to Whisenant's rapture?

Daniel Webster's secular dictionary defines the word "rapture" as "a state or experience of being carried away by overwhelming emotion." With this definition it can truly be said that a rapture did take place in the late summer and early fall of 1988. After all, many have been enraptured; carried away, overwhelmed, swept up in a tide of emotion as a result of his theories.

However, the Apostle Paul spoke of another kind of rapture when writing to the Church assembled at Thessalonica. Here's what he wrote:

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so we shall ever be with the Lord" (I Thes.4:16 & 17).

In his exhaustive concordance on the Scriptures, Dr. James Strong, one of the world's most renowned linguists, delves into the origin of the expression "caught up", saying:

"(It's derived from the Greek word) 'harpazo' (meaning) to seize; catch away (or catch up), pluck, pull, take (by force)" (Strong, J., Concordance, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, #726).

Though "harpazo" is not directly mentioned in the biblical text, the term "rapture" is derived from it. Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Director of the Lay Institute at Dallas Theological Seminary, explains:

"In Latin the word for "caught up" is "rapturso", from which comes the term "Rapture." This is the (real) Rapture of the Church, when Christians are caught up (transported) to meet Christ in the clouds (Acts 1:9)" (Walvoord and Zuck, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Victor Books, Wheaton, Il., 1984, pg. 704).

Instead of being "caught up" to Christ, Whisenant's believers were "carried away", swept down river by his torrential flow of teachings. Realizing this, many dear saints are now swimming to shore, pulling themselves out of the water and trying to figure out exactly what went wrong. Those who strongly advocated the book are likely a bit embarrassed at present. Do be gracious to those who have been caught up in Whisenant's hype and his errors. After all, it's a believer's privilege to seek out the mysteries of God's Word (Prov.25:2): it's a case of the right track but the wrong train.

A popular composer and singer once made an album entitled, "Slow Train Coming," which urged Christians to get ready for Messiah's return. And, indeed, one day the whistle will blow, and the train will approach the terminal to pick up the passengers waiting on the platform (Heb.9:28). I know that Christ is coming, but I don't know when He'll arrive. Mr. Whisenant thought he had His itinerary, but apparently he was mistaken. Be that as it may, he nonetheless caused many folks to head for the tracks and listen for the tooting horn.

Of course, the sound isn't that of a train at all. It's the Trump of God (I Thes.4:16), which, according to the New Testament, when sounded, will inaugurate a new era - the transporting away of the Saints and the beginning of the Tribulation period which will follow.

New Testament doctrines are flowers planted in Old Testament soil. Should one study the plant only, and not the soil that birthed and nourished it? Trumpets were used frequently in ancient Israel for a variety of purposes. Moses outlined some of the reasons in Numbers 10:1-10, wherein we see that they were used to: convene a general assembly (vs. 3); gather together Israel's leadership (vs. 4); convey marching instructions to the general population while enroute to the Holy Land (vss. 5 & 6); call regular convocations (vs. 7), accompany the armed forces while engaged in battle (vs. 9); remind Israel of God's presence in times of peace and prosperity; notify the people when sacred holidays had arrived; inform them of new months; and, finally, to accompany the peoples' offerings and sacrifices (vs. 10). In a world devoid of telephones, radios and public address systems, the ancient Israelites learned to send and receive messages through trumpet blasts. In addition to the trumpet's general usages, there was/is also one day in particular that is designated by God as the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25).

The Feast of Trumpets falls on the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. Man was to rest on the seventh day (Gen.2:1-2, Ex.20:11) and the land on each seventh year (Lev.25:3,4). The commencement of the seventh month is marked with a thundering announcement by means of the loud reverberations of the blasting trumpets. Why? It's the sabbath month - a time of spiritual reflection and repentance in view of the approaching Judgment (the Day of Atonement 10 days afterward. See Q/A page in this letter).

Observant Jews wear white clothing on Rosh Hashana as a sign of wanting to appear spotless before God. Many religious Jews visit rivers and there empty their pockets of their crumbs. Why? It's a symbolic gesture: as the crumbs fall into the water, they reflect on the Scripture which speaks of throwing our sins into the sea (Micah 7:18-20). According to Judaism's sages, this is the day when the Sons of God presented themselves before God, and Satan was there as well (Job 1:6ff). Furthermore, the sages teach that this is the day when God began to destroy the world with the

flood in Noah's day (Gen.7). The day smacks of judgment coming, and Israel's sages took it quite seriously.

The rabbis also taught that this is the day when God made the world (Gen.1). He made it on Rosh Hashana and He destroyed it on that day as well, they say. Could it be that on this very day He'll redeem those buried in it along with those who dwell on it? Well, an Orthodox Jewish rabbi who came to faith in Jesus, the Apostle Paul, spoke of a coming day when, following the trumpet blasts, there will be a whole new world.

Keep in mind that it was against this backdrop of understanding that the Apostles taught. When speaking of the great Trumpet sounding, what imagery would appear in their thinking? They'd likely be thinking about Rosh Hashana. Given the New Testament references to the Rapture, and the Old Testament Feast of Trumpets, I'm amazed by the following statement which I picked out of a book entitled, Is The End Near? Read what the author, Father Edwin G. Daschbach says about the Rapture:

"We do not accept the Rapture. It corresponds to nothing in Scripture or Tradition. The Tribulation period, Armageddon, and the Final (or Second) Coming of Christ for the purpose of stopping that Armageddon conflict, again belong to the realm of creative imagination, not divine Revelation as properly understood. Indeed, not one single event as described in the fundamentalist end-times scenario can find valid support within the pages of Scripture." (Daschbach, E., Is The End Near?, Our Sunday Visitor Pub., Huntigton, IN, 1970, pg. 25)

On the one hand, we have some telling us that there is no Rapture; on the other hand, we have those who claim to be privy to information as to the exact moment when it'll take place! To me, both of these schools represent unbiblical doctrines: one denies the teaching of the Bible, while the other claims to have some special inside information on it.

I would only remind you that there will be a night when He comes. It could even be tonight!

The Night of Broken Glass

by Zola Levitt

November 9 marked the 50th anniversary of one of the most horrible assaults on God's people of this century. On what is called in the German language "Kristallnacht", the Nazis formally began their assault on Jewish culture in Europe. It was to finally result in the awful Holocaust, and I think it was a time that will be eternally remembered as one of Satan's real victories.

On that night the ordinary citizens of Germany were somehow inspired to begin smashing stained glass windows in the ornate synagogues and Jewish shops, and beating and arresting thousands of Jewish people. No one spoke out against this blatant anti-Semitism, and I'm afraid we're getting much the same around the world, including in our nation, 50 years later!

We have just seen in the news that a peace march group was awarded a million dollars from the Ku Klux Klan because of much the same behavior. The Klan's lawyers intend to appeal the verdict. What will they say in their appeal? Was the Klan right? Is there a "superior race" which should attack and burn the institutions and persecute the members of some "inferior race" in this world? We have neo-Nazi groups throughout America, usually in pockets of ignorance where Christian truth, as well as secular common sense, has not penetrated. This ministry itself has received threats from such groups and is occasionally the recipient of one of those disgusting tabloid newspapers that advocate the superiority of the white race or the downright overthrow of our democracy.

God made many kinds of people, as He made many kinds of fish and many kinds of flowers. He apparently likes variety. He did not appoint any group superior to any other; nor was any inferior. As a matter of fact, when He finished His creation He said that all of it was "very good". The Scripture tells us "Be not deceived, God is not mocked". An attack on any creature of God's making is an attack on God, and an attack on the Jewish people in particular is an attack on those whom God loves.

Many nations were guilty of turning their eyes away when the Nazis made their initial assault. On July 8,

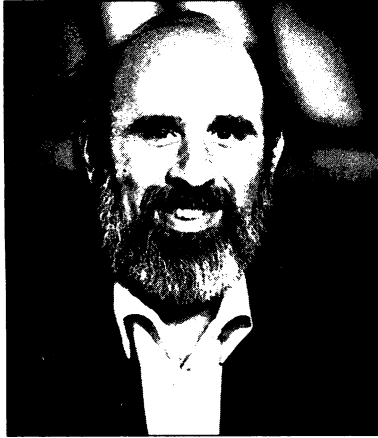
1938 the New York Herald Tribune reported: "Through their representatives at the Evian conference on refugees, the principle countries capable of receiving immigrants banged and bolted their doors today against the 650,000 Jews of Germany whose eyes are turned on this international gathering as a last hope of escape from Nazi persecution." In a way the world presented the Nazis a license to do what they wished with an abandoned people.

As the New York Times stated in October, in a purchased space on the editorial page, "Not to act is just as profound as acting. Forgetting is as decisive as remembering. How can we learn - and how can we teach - if we turn our backs not only on the countless victims but on their memory as well?"

Obviously we can't go back and correct the wrongs that happened before most of us were born, but we certainly can stand up and be counted when purveyors of the same murderous philosophies make themselves known among us. It is a Christian thing to protect the needy, to help the underdog and to care about each human soul. If we are not visiting those in prison, helping the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, at the very least we can prevent the purposeful deaths of the helpless. As someone unknown to me once said, "Evil can only win when good men do nothing."

When you change your calendar be sure to mark November 9, 1989 as an excellent day of prayer for those everywhere who are oppressed. The millions upon millions of innocents, Jews and otherwise, who died helplessly in Europe would want it that way.

A NOTE FROM ZOLA



Dear Friends,

I want to comment briefly on the situation in Israel and the PLO declaration of independence. Some folks are taking this public relations move seriously and certain politicians in other countries have even “recognized” a country that does not exist.

It should be remembered, however one feels about the Palestinian people, and I personally deal with them all the time and have very positive feelings, that the PLO is not their real representative. In Israeli and American thinking, that organization is now what it always was, simply a gang of terrorists. What the PLO has not been able to accomplish by shooting down civilians, throwing wheelchair victims from ship decks into the ocean, or blowing up airport waiting rooms, it is now trying to get done by borrowing on a grand democratic theme. Who could say no to a “declaration of independence,” after all.

We should define our terms. The Palestinian people are the Arabs who live in Israel and have been displaced by several wars. They have suffered, and *are* suffering, because their land is occupied by Israeli soldiers who hold it as a buffer zone against attacks from the Arab nations that surround Israel. Those attacks are frequent and merciless, and Israel’s very survival hangs in the balance. The PLO is something else again. In my mind they are merely a group of thugs who at present are holed up in Tunisia. They no more speak for the Palestinian people I know than does the Mafia for the American people. After the PLO proudly claimed responsibility for hijackings, bombings, assassinations, attacks on schools and unarmed civilians along Israel’s borders, I am astonished that the world pays them any recognition whatever, or that the Palestinians in Israel look to them for any sort of leadership or policy. It’s a world of Alice in Wonderland in which murderers call out for peace and terrorists issue heroic declarations of independence. Obviously, most of

the world isn’t being fooled by this latest PR technique.

With all that said, the Palestinian people do have legitimate rights and ought to be able to exercise them. They simply need to elect a leadership that right thinking people would consider authoritative and worthy to convene with. Most Israelis would favor negotiating with Palestinians as long as the PLO is not involved; they have been living together in the same land for a generation, for better or worse. The PLO has not been in Israel at all and barely knows the situation there. The Palestinian people in Israel are the ones with the problem and the ones who need to *solve* the problem. Far-flung declarations by self-serving would-be dictators won’t solve their problems. If the Palestinians want to reach an accommodation with Israel, then *they* must do it, not call in bullies that the whole world recognizes as the very inventors of the term “terrorism”.

I feel I know the Israelites, and to some degree I know the Palestinians. When the Palestinian Arabs of Israel choose legitimate spokesmen, the government of Israel will talk to those spokesmen, and accommodations will be made insofar as the security of all the people can be guaranteed. I think that’s the long and short of it. The PLO simply doesn’t count.

Well, I don’t want to end the year on a negative note. It has been a very interesting year and, on the whole, maybe better in some ways than the few years before it. The world is not getting to be a finer place, by any means, but it somehow feels as though the Kingdom is ever closer. Although the Rapture didn’t come when certain “prophets” promised that it would, it is coming some time soon, and perhaps a little more consciousness of that climactic event was raised. Also, it seems that the faith is growing; everywhere that I look, I see the numbers of believers increasing. Jewish Christian congregations, with which I am very familiar, are proliferating. The good churches are growing and the non-biblical churches falling away or wandering off into pointless modernisms.

I think that more people are being saved and that this revival may herald the coming of the King. This is not based on any theological analysis but only a certain positive feeling I have about what’s going on. I’m certainly not a prophet myself, and I don’t mean to say that I know anything special about the approaching end times, but to put it in a biblical way, I don’t feel like I’ll be caught asleep, and I hope you won’t either.

Pray for His soon coming, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Your messenger,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zola". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "Z" and a small flourish at the end.

“The Talking Head”

Out of a great many letters that congratulate us on our production values and location programming, we once in a while get a complaint, and I wanted to ask your advice.

Some folks think that our filming in Israel is beside the point; they want to hear Bible teaching, and they prefer it served up simply, without the location scenery and the attendant expenses. Of course it's no secret that it costs more money to take a crew thousands of miles away than to film in a Dallas studio. We began as a studio staff and crew with programs made in the format known as “The Talking Head”. This kind of basic program, which we still sometimes make, involves mostly my facing the camera and explaining something. We utilize the format usually when there is some news break or a situation in Israel that requires immediate commentary. Obviously this kind of program is made quickly and cheaply and does not require the sort of support that the location efforts do.

On the other hand, if that's all we did we wouldn't be able to come to you at reasonably good airtimes on quality stations and networks. I should explain, as we are about to close ten years of ministry, that location programming – filming in Israel on the biblical sites where the lessons actually happened – has become our trademark, and the format has worked very well for this outreach. Talking head shows are associated with small local programs, which we once were, and simply have not proven effective on a national level. Our purpose is to broadcast to unbelievers, of course, and not merely continue to refine the knowledge of those already saved. If this is indeed the generation “upon whom the ends of the age are come”, then our first responsibility is to get the truth out in a form that will attract the unbeliever and persuade him to listen and think. We gather a lot of unbelieving viewers by attracting “channel hoppers”, the folks who flip from channel to channel with a remote control, stopping only when they see something visually provocative. Our robes and Middle Eastern scenery stop the channel hopper's finger before it hits the next button and, for the moment at least, we have his attention.

The relatively good airtimes we do get are based on the fact that a good-looking program is a compliment to its station or network. The program directors, who must choose from a vast array of offerings, lean toward programs that make the extra effort at production value. This is how we have managed to come from 2:00 in the morning, in some cases, to more convenient times.

And finally, we have to consider the medium itself. If we are going to use television, and you are going to pay for television exposure, we might as well have a good-looking visual presentation. If we are going to take advantage only of the voice of the speaker and the contents of the lesson, we could do as well on radio with far less expense.

With all that said, we really do as the Lord directs and as you advise. Each time we go on location it is because there is an auspicious situation, or funds on hand or some great idea to film. As far as funding goes we always assume that, if it's the Lord's inspiration, then the funds will arrive, and, as a matter of fact, they always have. Though we get into binds, and we occasionally have to be late paying bills, we have made nearly 200 programs over these ten years and aired them to an audience that numbers in the millions, and we are still solvent and still growing. So although I may have to remind you from time to time that support is critically necessary, the overall format of high production values and location filming has justified itself over time. Believe me, if it would work just as well to make simpler programs, we would do that. Personally, after leading 26 tours to Israel it's no novelty to have extra duties so far from home (although I must say that one never tires of visiting the Promised Land, and in the Kingdom we will all do so for a minimum of 1,000 times, see Zech. 14:16).

I'm not going to try to capture the events of ten years in an article like this, but I am beginning a book on the ministry's progress, and my personal testimony, to be released in 1989. Since it's our ten year anniversary, the theme will be the wonderful verse, John 10:10:

... I am come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Other 1989 plans include expanding our pilgrimages to include the cruise of the Greek Islands and, in the fall, to Egypt. We used to do this every summer, and our pilgrims loved it. We are informed by our people overseas that travellers are coming and going normally, and security is up to par. While there's plenty of news of unrest from the area (and from all of the rest of the world as well), tourists have not been targeted, and it's in no one's interest to do that. During 1988 we took four tours through Israel and had no incident or consciousness of any problems. Our Greek and Egyptian contacts are satisfied that 1989 is going to be a better-than-average year, and, as a matter of fact, one Greek cruise that we sought is completely sold out even at this point. We'll keep you apprised of our progress.

Television plans for 1989 depend as usual on our support, but I can say that we have footage on hand in which we discuss the possible rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. Those of you informed on this subject will certainly recognize that this is a key piece of the prophetic puzzle. We have facts and footage to demonstrate it now. We can show, for instance, that there exists a priesthood in training in at least one Jerusalem Yeshiva (the college of Jewish studies) to officiate at a new Temple of God on Mount Moriah. Of course, teaching the priests and constructing the Temple are entirely different things. I can't say how a new Temple would appear, things being as they are, but we have a great deal of interesting material to look at on this important subject and enough video tape to make several programs. We haven't been able to start studio production and editing on them as yet for lack of funding to finish the Return to Galilee series, but we are catching up.

Thank you, by the way, for responding to my television appeals. I know that you like "Return to Galilee", and I am very impressed by your letters. I do appreciate the support. Your vote of confidence is always very heartening in this rather risky kind of outreach. New programs will be forthcoming throughout the year as we can make them.

As we look back over the ten years we have made more new programs than most network shows that have lasted that long. I was surprised to realize it, but, although we seem to be showing a lot of re-runs, we have made more programs in our time than even a good number of prize-winning network offerings. And many of our viewers have commented that re-runs aren't so bad on a teaching program; they appreciate the chance to review the material.

We will be producing more and more video tapes as we go along, and many of you are utilizing those to watch our programs. Naturally, this is the wave of the future in television, and we will be right with it. Broadcast times are difficult to buy, and there are only so many good airtimes available. Video tapes, however, are relatively inexpensive, last "forever", can be watched at the convenience of the viewer, can be stopped or rewound for review, etc., etc. Ultimately, we will be offering a tremendous library of our videos which will comprise a very complete course in the Bible. I would encourage you to obtain a video cassette recorder if you don't already have one; and, if you have one, please write for our video brochures so that we can serve you in this.

This is the last newsletter of ten years of newsletters, and I really want to say most of all, "Thank you." We really do appreciate all of the help and all of the support. Only the Lord and you could build such an outreach from nothing in ten years time, and He, and you, are to be commended and thanked from the bottom of my heart.