VOLUME 24, NUMBER 3



"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." – Romans 10:1

David Dolan, recently fired by CBS according to the wishes of the PLO, has been featured on our TV program several times – Zola

The Courage to Tell the Truth

By David Dolan, WorldNetDaily

Attorney General John Ashcroft is coming under intense fire from U.S. Arab groups for a recently noticed statement he reportedly made on a Cal Thomas radio broadcast in November.

If he

Ashcroft reportedly said that, "Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him." If he actually uttered these words –

and he has not denied that he did, but only maintained that they "do not accurately reflect what I believe I said" — he hit



Islamic extremists rally to protest U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan and support terrorist leader Osama bin Laden after Friday prayers in Quetta, Pakistan.

But the knee-jerk verbal barrage from the likes of Arab-American Institute head James Zogby demonstrates afresh the apparent unwillingness of most Arab officials, even those based in the West, to admit that the atrocities committed by a band of terrorists on Sept. 11 may have had something to do with the Islamic faith they all professed. the nail smack on the head.

As the attorney general obviously knows, and presumably Zogby as well, the supreme being featured in the Koran clearly commands his followers to wage jihad, or holy struggle, until Islam reigns supreme over all the earth. The widely heard Arab contention — put forth with under-

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Revival of the Roman Empire?

By Hal Lindsey, WorldNetDaily

Foreign ministers from 72 European and Organization of Islamic Conference nations met to discuss global terrorism and



the Middle East conflict. Among the nations invited to express their views on terrorism were recognized experts Iran and Iraq.

Turkey's foreign minister, Ismail Cem, offered the opening remarks. "One of the first temptations that developed after Sept. 11 was to identify terrorism on cultural and religious lines, pitting one part of humanity against the other."

Thus, the latest Arab-European conference began the way most do — opening on the working premise that the problem before them belongs to someone else. Cem's comments suggested the problem was with the Western nations associating terrorism with Arabs and Islam.

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THE FIRST CHRISTIANS

The life and times of those who first believed in Jesus. Produced on location in Israel, this ten-program series explores the background of the customs and manners of Jesus' day, unearthing the Jewish roots of Christianity. God chose this one people to speak to all humanity for all time. This series seeks to better understand the people with whom He chose to reside on earth.

Birth - In first century-Israel, a newborn was cleansed, rubbed with salt and olive oil, then wrapped in swaddling clothes (linen bandages). This birth brought with it the fullness of the covenant and redemption.

The Home - By today's standards the first-century house was small, dark and, in the winter, very cold. But in this meeting place for the family, the meals were prepared and they sat down to break bread and partake of such meaningful feasts as Passover.

Livelihood - In the Galilee region in the first century, fishing was the main source of livelihood. See how Peter, James and John went about it and learn about the disciples, twelve imperfect, ordinary Jewish tradesmen chosen to witness firsthand the beginning of the redemption of all mankind.

The Family - The first century-family was knit together and dependent upon - olives! From picking to pressing, to use as fuel in lamps, olives served as an integral part of family life. Zola presents the spiritual significance of oil, using the Lord's parables.

Agriculture - Follow the process from harvesting and threshing to the making of bread, and appreciate the significance of agriculture as evidenced in the Lord's parables and the Apostle Paul's application to the grafting of olive trees.

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

Religion - From the archaeological digs in Qumran, we consider many religious voices of the first century. The remains of a mikvah (ceremonial bath) exemplify the importance that ritual played. To prepare for worship, a person would cleanse himself daily in the mikvah water. From the Jordan River, Zola explains how the First Christians' baptism closely paralleled this Jewish practice. Indeed, the synagogue remained a vital part of life to those who first believed in Yeshua.

Messiah - Recent archaeological digs have unearthed fascinating indications that the traditional site of King David's Tomb on Mount Zion was in fact a Messianic synagogue.



Transcript - The transcript of this television series explores the background of the customs and manners of Jesus' day, unearthing the Jewish roots of Christianity.



Music Tape - This lovely instrumental music was crafted to resemble primitive first-century music. Zola's melodies were designed as a perfect backdrop to our study of the life most likely experienced by the first Christians. You can relax as the music takes you back in time to the Israel that Jesus knew.

Please see page 15 to order.



Death - In the first-century one both entered and exited the world with bandages. We witness this wrapping procedure and the accompanying burial ritual in an authentic tomb

COVER ARTICLE continued

standably renewed vigor in the wake of September's ugly attacks — that such "struggle" is not usually a violent or military one is easily disproved. Just get a copy of Islam's second revered book, the *Hadith*. It adds to the loftier accounts in the Koran by recording graphic details of Mohammed's blood-soaked efforts to spread the word that he was Allah's anointed prophet.

While it is certainly true that most contemporary Muslims are not actively seeking an opportunity to obey the Koranic injunction by waging armed struggle against "the infidels" today, some obviously are. Just visit the massive wreckage at Ground Zero in Manhattan, as I did a few weeks ago, if you have any doubts.

Continuing this week with my U.S. speaking tour, I just went through another round of intense security checks as I boarded my flight from Florida to Texas. Having long endured such inspections while traveling to and from my home in Israel, I am well aware the main reason for stepped-up scrutiny is that many trained Muslims take the Koran's call to wage jihad quite literally. To deny that this is so, as Zogby apparently wants to do, is to add to the problem by pretending it does not exist. One can only be thankful that America's attorney general at least does not have his important head stuck in the murky mud.

In his November interview, John Ashcroft reportedly went on to note that unlike Islam, "Christianity is a faith where God sent his Son to die for you." This comment reminded me of the time I spoke to a group of students at a university in Tampa. A Muslim professor in the audience (since dismissed because of his alleged ties to Mideast Islamic extremist groups) strongly objected to my statement that Islam's roots are quite violent, in contrast to Christianity's origins. I noted that unlike Mohammed, Jesus rebuked the Apostle Peter for using a sword against one of his opponents.

At that point the agitated professor rose to his feet to announce with finger wagging that many bloody wars had been waged over the centuries in the name of Christ. While agreeing that this was sadly the case, I noted that none of those battles were even remotely sanctioned by anything Jesus said or did. The reverse cannot be said for Islam, I contended, backing my statement up by direct quotes from the Koran and the Hadith. With the heat rising in the hall, the now irate Mideast-born professor dramatically stormed out of the nearest door, closely followed by a dozen or so of his Arabic-speaking pupils.



Demonstrators carry placards and flags at Tehran's Azadi Square February 11, 2002 in Tehran, Iran. Tens of thousands of Iranians rallied to mark the 23rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, using the occasion to condemn continued U.S. verbal attacks on their country.

Until Arab leaders and lay people acknowledge that 9-11 did not happen in a vacuum but, in fact, reflected widely-held Islamic beliefs and practices, we have little hope of ever beginning a process that might eventually lead to the eradication of violence as a major component of Islamic extremism. Having had the privilege of receiving an honorary doctorate with Sen. Ashcroft at Louisiana Baptist University a few years ago, I am happy that he is among the few politicians who have the courage to call a spade a spade. Whether the Zogby's of America like it or not, anti-Arab feelings around this vast country will not be lessened by people who verbally assault the few brave leaders who demonstrate the courage to tell the truth, however politically incorrect it might be.

But it was the terrorists *themselves* who chose to identify themselves along "cultural and religious" lines. The terrorists at war with the West identified *themselves* with Islam. It is the Arab states that give these groups aid and succor. And it was the terrorists who chose to pit themselves against non-Islamic humanity, and not the other way around.

The Islamic nations appealed to the Europeans to take a more active involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Taking the lead was Iran, who said Europe "can and must play a greater role" in solving the region's problems and in putting a stop to the "savage and unprovoked" attacks by the Israelis against the Palestinians. Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi urged the EU to bring "a semblance of fairness, justice and pragmatism to the dynamics of the Middle East." In other words, a Jewfree Middle East.

Europe was only too ready to oblige, having a plan already hammered out to solve the 4,000-year-old war between the sons of Abraham.

The European plan is simple, concluded the European foreign ministers. The creation of a Palestinian state must be the "starting point of a negotiating process," according to the French initiative outlined by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine. The Palestinians would have an election — a state would be declared, recognized by Israel and admitted to the United Nations. Negotiations for a Middle East settlement would follow.

Settlement? If that's the starting point, what's left to settle? Spain's foreign minister, Josep Pique, said the details, like the borders of a Palestinian state, would be developed further at the next foreign ministers' meeting.

European security chief Javier Solana said there would be no peace in the

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Dig The Holy Land

How about vacationing at a kibbutz, a cooperative farm in Israel? Our Kibbutz Tour, June 1 - 10, priced lower than our standard tours, will give you a chance to experience digging for archaeological treasures (tools provided). If you are as much a historian as a tourist, then this could be your cup of tea. For those who want to experience Israel's high holidays of 2002, there will be no better opportunity than our Fall Festival Tours. Please request your color tour folder from Tony at (214) 696-9760, during office hours, or 1-800-WONDERS anytime.

No More Dropouts!

The authors of Removing Barriers to High School Completion say the term "high school dropout" victimizes dropouts and causes selfesteem problems. In Alberta, Canada at least, the preferred term is "early school leavers," according to a recent government report. "The [committee] views the descriptor 'dropout' as a negative term.

Zola's Summer Itinerary

This summer please consider having your church invite Zola to your community from late July through early September. Zola will begin in Colorado and travel over to the West Coast speaking at churches. Because of last year's high demand, you are urged to book as early as possible to secure

the best date for your congregation. As before, churches will save considerably on travel expenses since Zola will be "in the neighborhood." Please call Cynthia at (214) 696-8844 for scheduling information.

Orlando and Eureka Springs

Zola is hosting periodic tours to The Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida, a smash hit with our viewers and readers. Would you prefer the weekend of May 10 or May 17, Mother's Day or Pentecost? For the weekdays May 13-17, we are providing a series of other sites and attractions in the area. We also plan a Father's Day weekend tour (June 14-16) of the Passion Play and Israel sites at Eureka Springs, Arkansas. For more information, please call Tony at (214) 696-9760 during office hours. You may also call 1-800-WONDERS (966-3377) anytime.

Subscribe to Our TV Program

You can have every Zola Levitt Presents program that we will broadcast during 2002 for only \$499, including shipping. Beyond our new and rerun television series, which will come to you as sets in beautifully designed packaging, you'll receive the inbetween programs that other viewers have to special order. We plan to ship quarterly or at the end of each series, so you should receive four to five shipments during the year. Why not make this subscription a taxdeductible gift to your church and share Zola with your entire congregation? To order call 214-696-8844 or 1-800-Wonders

Dear Friends,

ust when you think the U.S. is waking up to the truth about Israel's rights and Arafat's wrongs, somebody comes along and muddles the waters of effective Middle East strategy.

In the midst of continued terrorist atrocities by Palestinian murderers against Israeli citizens comes the knee-jerk reaction of the U.S., Secretary of State Colin Powell in particular, to throw its support behind Saudi Arabia's "innovative" plan to broker peace in the Middle East. This plan, offered by Crown Prince Abdullah, seeks to reduce the size of Israel. increase the territory of the Palestinians, and all without bothering to deal with the continued murder of Israelis by Arafat's forces. Oh, and it would insist that Arafat warn Israel about impending attacks. Hasn't he already announced that more attacks would be forthcoming?

In just over a month after the interception of missiles purchased by Arafat, the United States returns to its mantra of "peace, peace, peace," fully knowing that Arafat can never be a legitimate partner for peace. But this is American diplomacy. When it comes to the oil-rich Arab states, we continue to bow down in the throne rooms of Saudi Arabian despots in exchange for an uninterrupted flow of oil at reasonable prices. We call them "allies" and "friends," but do we really know the Saudis?

A February *New York Times* article reported on the rise of rebellion in Saudi youth, men in particular, who run wild in the streets of Riyadh, abusing Saudi women, coax police into high-speed chases, and involve their wealthy parents in hosting wild parties of mixed company (illegal under Islamic law), often without prosecution because of royal VIP status. One Saudi journalist stated, "Perhaps some of that is due to their parents who failed to teach their children respect for authority." Wasn't Osama

A Note From Zola

bin Laden raised in Saudi Arabia, too? Recently, a court in Saudi Arabia concluded a case involving rape. The victim received 65 lashes and six months of jail time. That's right. The *victim* was punished. The attacker, her brother-in-law, received 4,750 lashes plus six years in prison *not* for rape, but for simply having relations with his sister-in-law.

Why do I bring up this heinous injustice? Because for all the years Washington has called Saudi Arabia our ally, we've been telling you that it is our worst enemy. Think of it. After September 11. President Bush was quick to reiterate our position of "cooperation" and "friendship" with the Saudis, but the fact is that we have nothing in common with this backward, feudalistic dictatorship. They are not democratic. They openly violate the most basic of human rights, disallow any religious expression except Islam, and foster a culture of hate which, in fact, gave

us 15 of the 19 terrorists who attacked us on September 11.

We came to their defense against Iraq, putting our

lives on the line for their citizens (and oil), but they visit New York with a bit of cash and tell us, "How tragic, but it is your fault." They'll sign their names to the list of coalition partners, but don't expect them to offer any real support against al Qaida (reminds me of seminary professors and doctrinal statements). Bin Laden is one of ours, they tell us, and even though he's been bad, most of our



people adore him. What can we do? Besides, America is getting too chummy with Israel and we give millions to Arafat's fight against the Zionists. Don't expect much help from our "friends." But don't ruffle their feathers too much; we wouldn't want gas prices to go up.

Sulaiman Al-Hattlan, a Saudi journalist based at Harvard University, said in a USA Today article that U.S. criticism against Saudi culture, our policies in support of Israel, and our war on terrorists who happen to be Muslim are factors that enrage the Saudi people against America. Admitting that Osama bin Laden holds popularity in his country, Al-Hattlan recounts the story of a Saudi man who lived in the U.S. for seven years and "following the Arabic tradition of naming newborns after people their parents admire" named his newborn son Osa-

ma. He continues:

And you know what? My friend chose the best name for his baby. Look at the siege that Israel is imposing on the

Palestinians. See how the Americans treat our prisoners in Guantanamo. And you tell me this is not a crusade?

Saudi Arabia is

our friend and

ally?

And you tell me that Saudi Arabia is our friend and ally?

But what of our president's promise to the nation:

We will starve terrorists of funding

NewsBriefs

Lawsuit Details Mandatory Islamic Instruction in CA Schools

Recently, national attention was brought on the appalling revelation that CA public schools required seventh-graders to participate in religious instruction in Islam. *Assist News Service* and *WorldNetDaily* first broke the story that now has resulted in lawsuits against the school districts. Houghton Mifflin Company, who supplies the state-approved textbook *Across the Centuries*, adamantly defends the book as completely factual.

As first reported, students in this mandatory class were told to pretend to be Muslim, dress in Arab clothing, adopt Muslim names, memorize verses from the Koran, learn the five pillars of the Islam faith, participate in Islamic worship, and act out a simulated *jihad* or holy war (and this after Sept. 11!).

Despite the school district's insistence that these courses were simply fact-based history lessons approved by the state board of education, parents objected strongly. And no wonder. It is unimaginable that any public school would ever allow students to dress up like Jesus' 12 disciples, memorize and recite the Lord's prayer, and play simulated missionary games.

Legal actions by the Pacific Justice Institute and American Center for Law and Justice seek to have the courses stopped and the textbook discontinued.

By no means is this story over. Islam's anti-Christian and anti-Semitic attacks upon our nation, whether through overt terrorist campaigns or through subtle influences in the education of our children, should not be taken lightly or forgotten easily.

Take charge of your children's education, bring them up in the truth, and guard them from those who would seek to snatch away their minds. ■

Sources: WorldNetDaily, CBN, Assist News Service, New York Post

Korans Found to be Anti-Semitic

About 300 copies of a translation of the Koran donated to Los Angeles schools by a local Muslim group to promote religious understanding after Sept. 11 have been removed from shelves because of accompanying anti-Semitic footnotes, school officials said. *The Meaning of the Holy Koran* is a 1934 translation of the Muslim holy text. It includes footnotes that describe Jews as "arrogant," "illiterate" and "men without faith." The books were donated by the Omar Ibn Khattab Foundation. Foundation official Dafer Dakhil apologized for any inappropriate language. A judge has denied an Israeli woman permission to take her 2-year-old daughter to live in Israel, saying the country is too dangerous. Circuit Judge R. A. Ferguson, Jr. awarded shared custody of the girl to her parents, Katrina Lurie and Michael Korn, as part of a divorce order. But he barred Ms. Lurie from taking the girl to Israel, citing the day-to-day dangers of the "military and suicide bombings." Ms. Lurie, 28, is appealing the ruling.

Apparently, this judge is not aware of the violence in his own backyard. The state of Alabama, with a population 2 million less than the entire nation of Israel, suffered the following violent crimes in 2000: 329 murders, 1,482 rapes, 5,702 robberies, and 14,107 aggravated assaults. In contrast, as we've demonstrated to you ad infinitum, Israel's police reported only 2 murders for the year 2,000. Even if you add the terrorist-related deaths in Israel, Alabama is still a more dangerous place to live. Besides, what if this mother wanted to live in New York City where over 3,000 citizens lost their lives on 9-11? This would be permissible to Judge Ferguson? Give me a break! — Zola

Source: Dallas Morning News, FBI



In Israel Today

The Israeli Mayflower

Israel Today

Israel Cabinet Minister Rubi Rivlin visited Florida as the guest of Governor Jeb Bush, brother of the President. In a discussion about Israeli politics, Rivlin mentioned that many Jews had immigrated to the country before the establishment of the State.

"And where were you born?" Bush asked him. "My grandfather, father and I were all born in Israel. My family came to the country 200 years ago. We are the Israeli Mayflower," answered Rivlin proudly.

"And what was the name of your ship?" asked the Governor with interest.

"We came by donkey!"

True Intentions

A A

Our friend in Israel, Gerald Schroeder, has informed us that before every Israeli campaign launched against a town in retaliation for a Palestinian terrorist incident, the Air Force will overfly the town at a very low altitude with two F-16 fighter jets two hours before the attack in order to warn the civilian population. Thus, the casualty rate in such operations is quite low. In contrast, the aim of the Palestinians is to kill and maim as many innocent civilians as possible with their suicide bombs.

Einstein was a Zionist!



Albert Einstein, the most well-known

physicist of the 20th century, famous for his theory of relativity, was also a strong Zionist. In fact, he became deeply involved in the development of Jerusalem's Hebrew University. Just before his death in 1955, he bequeathed exclusive rights to his original writings, his teachings on physics and his name and portrait (for marketing purposes) to the university. He must have realized that these gifts were his best way to provide ongoing income for his beloved university. And he was right!

Hebrew University has made the most of this privilege, which produces about \$1 million of annual revenue. Walt Disney paid more than \$1 million to the university for its newest cartoon, *Little Einstein*, and Coca Cola paid the same amount for its new advertisement. But, the university turned down a vodka advertisement it felt would dishonor the institution. Einstein himself set limits on his involvement with the Jewish state. For instance, he modestly declined an offer to become Israel's president! But his generosity and foresight continue to benefit the nation.

An Egg for an Egg

Israel Today

Next time the settlers' children throw eggs at the Hebron police, they'll get a sweet surprise. Chocolate eggs, made by the German company Kinder (German for "kids"), will be thrown back at them. The Hebron police have been "equipped" for this special deployment. The hope is the chocolate treats, a favorite among Israeli kids, will win over the hearts of the children. With tension running high between the settlers and the Palestinians, police and soldiers who get involved often get hit with eggs and sometimes also with stones. Maybe this unconventional idea will bring a *kinder* response!

Arafat Must Go

By Karin Laub and Dan Perry, Associated Press

[Benjamin] Netanyahu...has been speaking throughout the United States and Israel, and has criticized [Israeli Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon for stopping short of what Netanyahu believes is the only way to end terror attacks against Israelis — the removal of Arafat.

"The goal is to defeat the terror regime, to effectively bring it down...and that goal is easily attainable."

Netanyahu said he wasn't suggesting Israel physically harm Arafat. But instead of restricting Arafat to his compound in the West Bank town of Ramallah as Sharon has done, the Palestinian leader should be allowed to leave — but not to return.

"He keeps wanting to go abroad — I think we should not hinder him from doing so," Netanyahu said. "I would very much like to see him have a happy retirement with his friends from Tripoli...with his friends from Baghdad."

Israel also should eliminate the terrorist infrastructure that has been established in the West Bank and Gaza, which would be "a very simple thing to do, not very complicated and not very costly," Netanyahu said.

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Dear Zola and staff:

I have been wanting to write because I feel...that the Zola newsletter has become too "Political Newsy." As a Gentile I would like to see more articles on how to

share your life with a Jew, the history of Christian Zionism, the Old Testament, timelines.... All we want are some more crumbs off the table. — BR

Dear BR:

I commend your desire for deeper Bible study. For 30 years I've devoted my life to teaching the Scriptures through writing, radio, television, and conference ministry. Please avail yourself of our many hundreds of Bible-teaching resources, including videos, books, etc., which you can find through our free catalog or on page 15 of this newsletter. However, please understand that the Levitt Letter is designed to be a *news*letter that will allow believers to see how current events in the world affect our daily walk with Christ, as well as hint at upcoming End Times prophecies to be fulfilled. We want you to be informed of attacks not only against our nation by Arab terrorists, but also against your ability to exercise your faith freely. Read our books on Bible doctrine, maintain a disciplined devotional time with the Lord, but keep yourself informed about the world in which you live, because, frankly, this world is no friend to the believer. — Zola

To Whom It May Concern:

"This we must accept."

I'm tired of Zola pointing fingers of blame and name calling. I think those of us who receive the *Levitt Letter* know how he feels about anchor Peter Jennings, ABC News and CNN. Plus his scathing remarks of our born-again president, George W. Bush.

So much will happen and indeed "must" during these End Times. Yet, God will protect and bless His people. So events will be out of our control. This we must accept. A failure to do so shows a lack of understanding and peace.

Time is short. The Rapture could easily happen in less than five years. I am throwing my support behind Pat Robertson and CBN. When the situation looks bleak, his reaction is to take action. To fight the enemy any way possible. — KR

Dear KR:

Thank you for your letter and concern. I was intrigued by your decision to throw your support behind Pat Robertson and CBN (sold years ago to unbelievers and now known as ABC-FAM). Pat will, I'm sure, appreciate Some letters have been edited for space.

your support. However, you must be aware that your statements regarding Zola were contradictory in nature.

You don't like Zola's criticisms of mainstream media, the president, etc., but you appreciate Pat Roberston's "fight the enemy any way possible" attitude. You state that "his reaction is to take action." Pat criticizes the mainstream media for their bias, as Zola does. Pat often criticizes politicians for their errors in judgment, as Zola does. You will recall that Pat himself jumped into the political ring in a bid to become president (Zola has not become political). And I recall that Pat was taken to task after September 11 when he and Jerry Falwell pointed fingers at homosexuals, abortionists and others as the cause for the attacks against our nation; Zola has kept the focus of the attacks on Islamic fundamentalists.

Finally, your "this we must accept" attitude is curiously at odds with Jesus' attitude that motivates us to be in the world, but not of the world, and yet have an impact upon the world. Jesus did not advocate a "whatever will be, will be" mindset. He wants us to know up front that we will have tribulation, that the world hates us, that we should fight the good fight, that all who desire to live godly will suffer persecution, and on and on.

Zola and all of us here at the ministry seek to follow Jesus, making ourselves aware of the world system, fighting the good fight, sharing our resources with the disadvantaged, and evangelizing the lost. We thank you for the sincere support you sent our way on behalf of the work we do for our Lord. — Lawrence Ford, *Levitt Letter* editor (P.S. Please see KB's letter below)

Dear Zola:

I have been receiving the *Levitt Letter* for several months and have really been blessed by it. I especially appreciate your honesty and willingness to speak out for Israel. Many people in this country have been so brainwashed by our media's constant spin on the facts. Maybe the truth can hurt sometimes, but that is not the time to "kill the messenger," so to speak. I am so disgusted at these people who write to your ministry and bash it for being bold enough to speak the truth! We need people like you! If it weren't for you and Hal Lindsey, I doubt many people would have a clue as to what is really going on and how it fits into prophecy. I just wanted to thank you for your continued stand on God's Word and for His people! May God continue to richly bless your ministry. — KB



The Smoke Screen of Progressive Dispensationalism

A Dallas Theological Seminary student shares his view anonymously, fearing a faculty backlash.

Can you imagine what it is like to attend one of America's leading and most respected schools of theology? You arrive on campus and walk down the same hallowed halls where great men of God like Chafer, Walvoord and Pentecost shaped the school into a world-renowned seminary, one that stands on Biblical truth and the literal interpretation of the Word of God, classic in its dispensational theology.

This was exactly my experience in the fall of 1999 when I began my studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. Having

come out of a strong background of Bible teaching at an eastern Bible college that stood for the fundamentals of the faith, as well as against liberalism and the compromising of theological truths, I was eager to dig deeper into the Scriptures at the school I had respected for years.

My first day was rather slow so I wandered over to the DTS book center. As I browsed the aisles, I saw great books such as *Things* to Come by J. Dwight Pentecost, probably the most profound and extensive theological text ever written concerning the End Times. I saw other classics like *Things Which Be*come Sound Doctrine by Pentecost and John Walvoord's *The Rapture Question*, along with

his commentary *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*. I was pleased to see that DTS had remained steadfast and uncompromising, unlike so many seminaries I had heard about.

But then I turned the corner and found a sign that read "Authors Who are Faculty." Was I in for a surprise! *Progressive Dispensationalism* was the title of a book by Drs. Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock that was prominently displayed on the shelves. I started thumbing through it and could not believe some of the stuff I was reading. A companion volume entitled *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* by the same authors was just as unsettling. I read statements such as "Jesus is sitting on the Throne of David." Really? When did this happen? The Bible is clear that the Kingdom is "to come" (future tense), or "at hand," meaning it "will happen." But in this book Blaising and Bock teach that "at hand" means that the kingdom has arrived, or some such nonsense (pg. 60).

As I read on, it was clear to me that Progressive Dispensationalism is teaching that the kingdom is ALREADY come in one sense, but that it has NOT YET come in another sense. This is theological double talk. Hebrews 10 makes it clear that Jesus Christ, after He offered one sacrifice for our sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.

The Progressive Dispensationalist position is that the coming of the "Davidic Kingdom" is not literal, but that it is really just an offer of salvation. This interpretation borders on the views held by Covenant theology, which spiritualizes Scripture.

As I studied the issue at seminary, I observed that Progressive Dispensationalism avoids Israel in literal terms. It amazed me that all the prophecies related to the first coming of Christ in the Old Testament were fulfilled literally, yet the theological smoke screen of Progressive Dispensationalism spiritualizes Israel in regard to future events with statements like, "Not all prophecies of Israel

> are literal Israel." Did God not make it very clear that Abraham and his descendants would be given the land — ALL the land — as an everlasting possession? Did God not make an oath to Abraham in Genesis 26? The promises of Israel's return to the land are further repeated in Jeremiah, Amos, Ezekiel, and the Psalms, among other places. Scripture declares that when Christ returns physically to the earth He will occupy the throne of David and reign for a thousand years (the millennial kingdom).

I was heartsick that this kind of deviation from Scripture was happening in such a great American seminary. Many professors there espoused and, as I found out later,

were the authors of Progressive Dispensationalism. These men seemingly came together with Covenant theologians to formulate a theology that would put the two camps in closer harmony.

My purpose here is not to discredit Dallas Theological Seminary as a whole, as there are some great professors and excellent academics in many areas. The danger here, I feel, is that Progressive Dispensationalism is being taught to our future pastors and Christian leaders. What happens when the John Walvoords and Dwight Pentecosts are gone? I have noticed since I started researching this that more and more churches fail to preach or teach End Times proph-ecy because a growing number of pastors are critical of Classical Dispensational scholarship. What will be the next move? To get rid of the Scofield and Ryrie study Bibles? Unfortunately, this is a movement — a smoke screen — to move away from traditional Dispensational teaching which was the bedrock foundation of this great school.

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"The danger here, I feel, is that Progressive Dispensationalism is being taught to our future pastors and Christian leaders."

MinistryOutreach

Good News from a Far Country

Zvi Rivai, our chief guide in Israel, recently sent a note of thanks for those who have contributed to our special fund that blesses the Chosen People in this difficult time. Your contributions have blessed Zvi and many others with whom we work when taking tour groups to the Holy Land. Although Zvi is a fellow believer in Christ, other Israeli friends are not, and your loving assistance through this fund opens doors for evangelism whose value cannot be measured. — Zola

Shalom dear Zola and Sandra,

Today Sarah and I got the checks from "Good News From a Far Country" fund. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. It's very kind and very generous of you to remember your brothers and sisters from Israel in this hard time, when tourism dropped 80-90%. I appreciate it even more that I know that also America has big problems in the economy (but not as big as in Israel).

God bless you in Jesus' (Yeshua) name. See you soon in Israel. $-\!\!-\!\!\operatorname{Zvi}$

You Never Know What a Zola Levitt Tour Can Do!

We consider all of our tours to the Holy Land over the past 30 years special, but sometimes the Lord does extraordinary things for our tour passengers, as the following story from Kevin and Carolyn McMurry testifies:

First, we want to thank our heavenly Father for making this day possible. Without Him this marriage certainly would not be taking place.

Most of you know the unique and wonderful story of our relationship. You also know why we have the Lord to praise for it. For those of you who may not have heard, let us share the "condensed" version.

Soon after completing law school, Kevin felt led by the Lord to go to Nepal for a year of missionary work. Before leaving for that small Himalayan kingdom, he backpacked across Europe for a month. At the end of that time, he flew to Greece to meet his parents for a tour of the Greek Isles and of Israel [with you know who]. It was September of 2000.

In the meantime, Carolyn was preparing for the same Zola Levitt tour, which was her college graduation gift from her parents. It was on that tour, in the land where our Savior walked, that we met according to divine appointment. For the next ten blessed and eye-opening days, we shared our hearts, thoughts and lives with one another. At the end of the tour we said our goodbyes in the Tel Aviv airport with Carolyn heading back home to Alabama and Kevin going on to Nepal. We said, "See you in a year!" But the Lord had other plans. The courtship began via broken phone lines and long emails. God blessed this time and allowed us to come to know each other without the distractions of typical dating. By December of that year we both knew that we were going to be married one day.

Kevin and Carolyn were married on February 2, 2002 in Montgomery, Alabama. Congratulations!

Now, we're not promising that you'll find your mate on one of our tours, but...you never know what will happen when you travel to Israel with Zola!

Disabled Parking System



By Zola Levitt

Many of you who are disabled are issued handicapped parking stickers or tags for your vehicle so that you may park close to a store for the sake of your health. I, too, was issued such a permit because of my bypass surgery some years ago.

But let me issue a warning about traveling to Norfolk, Virginia: they're not friendly to their disabled visitors.

On a recent speaking engagement in that area I was ticketed for parking in a handicapped space. Although my permit was clearly visible, it was rejected because it was "unknown." Mind you, I've used this permit, as do many of you, all over America, and it's even respected in other countries. However, Norfolk seems to draw a good bit of its revenue from their out of town visitors (\$250 a pop!).

We contacted the authorities there and it was discovered that a private company actually operates the city's parking ticket system and makes a profit from each citation paid. When the validity of my permit was proven (valid driver's license number and expiration date), we were told that, "Oh, the officer changed his mind and never submitted his report." Really. I wonder how many visitors have paid their fines immediately when, in reality, the citation was invalid or never filed.

BiblicalInsights

Taking the Mystery Out of Bible Study

By Lawrence Ford, Staff Theologian

As we discovered in our last lesson, the first step in good Bible study is *observation*. This is where we dissect the verses to discover how many different components there are, which will help us in discovering the meaning of the passage. One teacher has said, "Before declaring 'Thus saith the Lord,' first determine what the Lord 'saith!'"

Thorough observation of a passage is the foundation to accurate interpretation. While some verses may seem obvious in their meaning at first glance, often a more detailed look at the components of a verse or passage will allow you a more complete picture of what the Lord is saying. This is not rocket science or an Agatha Christie mystery — remember that the Holy Spirit will give us insight — but discovering the full meaning of Scripture must not be taken lightly or done in a cursory manner.

For instance, Jesus said in John 14:2-3:

"In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

At first reading, we could simply say that Jesus is referring to heaven, but a more detailed study of the passage—the context, the culture in which Jesus lived and those to whom He spoke—would reveal the correlation of Jesus' reference to "My Father's house" to the cultural traditions of Jewish betrothal. Zola elaborates on this in his book *Christian Love Story*, but the example is clear. Making thorough observations of a passage is key to understanding the full and complete meaning.

With your notebook and pencil handy, read the passage through several times and jot down what you see, answering these basic questions:

Who is writing/speaking? Who is the audience? Where is this passage taking place? What event occurred before this? What occurs after this? Are there repeated words used by the writer? What was the emotion of the speaker and then the audience? Does the passage quote other verses found in the Old Testament? Which words do you see as significant to the understanding of the passage? Are there statements, questions, commands, warnings, contrasts, etc., in the verses? Use good journalistic methods and barrage the passage with: Who? What? Why? When? Where? How? The list could go on and on.

Once you have your observations recorded, re-read the passage a few times and begin to organize your data. Note words that will require lexicon study, try to outline the passage in a logical order, pay attention to cultural issues that will need further clarification, etc. Next, ask the Lord for insight as you go to the next step, *interpretation*, which we will look at in next month's issue.

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Hebraic Insight

The "fear of the Lord" (*Yirat Adonai*) does not denote a cringing terror of God but a reverential awe at the glory of His Presence as He daily condescends to be involved in our lives. *Yirah* is really a form of devotion, a consciousness of the sacredness and mystery of receiving life itself from the Living God (*El Chai*), and essentially draws upon gratitude to God for this great gift.

Such an attitude of devotion yields wisdom *(chochmah)* and is a result of "practicing the presence" of the Lord in our daily lives. As James tells us, this wisdom is "first pure, then full of peace, gentleness, mercy, good fruits, and sincerity" (see James 3:17).

Churches Beware: Your Recent Moody Graduate May Be an Amillennialist

There was a time when churches could count on the fact that a pastoral candidate who was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute would be an enthusiastic evangelical, pre-millennial, pre-Tribulation Rapture, Bible teacher and preacher. Some graduates may still be this strong, but there is a growing likelihood that he could just as well be an a-millennialist with a very fuzzy prophecy orientation. How did this change come about?

As our long-time readers know, Zola and I have been chronicling the changes that have occurred in the major Dispensational Seminaries and Bible Schools over the last decade. In theological circles, this really has not been anything secret. The National Evangelical Association has had a number of papers on the new doctrines of Progressive Dispensationalism and related topics. The Pre-Trib Research Center, led by Dr. Tim LaHaye and Dr. Tom Ice, has published numerous tracts, books and articles warning of the significance of these changes. Zola and I are attendees and frequent contributors to the Pre-Trib annual study session, and there is much discussion among some 50 or more Bible prophecy teachers and authors about what has been happening in many of the schools. Our recent book, *Battles with* Seminaries, has been described as a meaningful contribution to this whole discussion.

As we have stated many times, the problem is that most people in the churches don't know about these changes. The schools are presenting themselves to the supporting Christian public as being the same as always, and the professors and graduates do not normally draw attention in the churches to the new doctrines, but instead teach and preach on other subjects about which they have more convictions. This is probably the reason why there are fewer and fewer sermons and books about the Rapture of the Church, the Restoration of Israel, and many other prophetic issues. Even those who believe in these powerful prophetic Biblical doctrines may avoid speaking about them, because few or none of their colleagues are doing so.

In earlier articles, we have mentioned how the doctrinal requirements for professors at Moody have needed clarification over the years, due to faculty uncertainty. Recent communications from our confirmed sources at Moody tell how the requirements for students graduating from the school were changed over the last couple of years. Before a significant meeting in the fall of 2000, all graduates of Moody had to sign a doctrinal statement developed in 1928 affirming Christian orthodoxy, the pre-millennial return of Christ, and the pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. As early as 1998, the Faculty voted down that long-standing 1928 doctrinal statement, and the move was on to develop a new one.

The newly-arrived Vice President and Provost, Dr. Charles Dyer, presented to the Faculty a statement (similar in doctrinal content to the 1928 statement) in the form of a survey at the above-mentioned meeting in the fall of 2000. The results of the Faculty survey were remarkable:

- 1/3 supported the new strong statement
- 1/3 opposed the statement
- 1/3 had no strong feelings about the matter

According to the reports, Dr. Dyer decided that he would go with the middle undecided group, and develop another, more neutral statement for the students to acknowledge. The result was a statement that affirmed "historic Christian" doctrine, with little emphasis on eschatology (prophecy) or Dispensationalism, for which Moody has long been famous.

In Part II we'll take a look at the details of Moody's new "prophecy-neutral" doctrinal statement and the implications for your church. ■

SMOKE SCREEN...continued from page 9

This is how many great doctrines of the faith have been watered down. The Bible is very clear that we are to "right-ly divide the Word of truth." In doing so, it is essential to recognize certain basic Biblical distinctions, such as the difference between God's program for Israel and His program for the Church (Acts 15:14-17; Romans 11:25-27). God will literally fulfill His covenant and kingdom promises to the nation of Israel just as the prophets foretold in Genesis, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel and Jeremiah. God will also fulfill His plan for the Church. The Church is NOT the "new Israel," nor is it "spiritual Israel," but rather "one new man" created of two groups, saved Jews and saved Gentiles.

Progressive Dispensationalism is a trap, and the greatest danger is that it is pulling good people into its snare. Reformed and Covenant theology is up front about its differences with Dispensationalism, but Progressive Dispensationalism is merely a smoke screen. It reminds me of my military days when we would throw a smoke grenade to block the view between the enemy and friendly forces. I see no difference here.

I thank God that as important as my education is, it is more important to hold doggedly to Biblical truth, which enables us to see clearly, even through a smoke screen of compromise where the very Word of God is attacked.

"Israel has not used a fraction of a fraction of the means that it has available, as you can imagine."

Netanyahu said deterrence would no longer work with the Palestinian leadership, because "at this point Arafat is already in 'Never-Never-Land.'"

Palestinian Cabinet minister Saeb Erekat condemned Netanyahu's comments. "It's very irresponsible, very shortsighted and very unacceptable," Erekat said. "The Palestinian people chose President Arafat.... It just reflects the danger of the likes of Netanyahu who really, in their attitude, reflect a lack of concern for human life."

Netanyahu opposed the 1993 interim agreements with Arafat's PLO. As prime minister from 1996 to 1999, he put the brakes on the land-for-peace process and had mostly acrimonious relations with the Palestinians. Still, he did negotiate two interim peace deals and handed over most of the West Bank town of Hebron.

He also developed a reputation for adventurism that dogged him throughout his tenure and contributed to his landslide defeat. But in light of almost 17 months of fighting, Netanyahu's hard-line ideas are again in vogue and he clearly feels vindicated and combative.

The Palestinian Authority is "truly a corrupt, backward, primitive regime that oppresses the Palestinians, that kneecaps anyone who dares to disagree with Arafat... that controls the media, sucks all the money, leaves the Palestinians in an impoverished state," he maintained. He said that as prime minister he would only resume peace talks once terrorism was wiped out, and then offer



much less than his successor Ehud Barak did a year ago — a Palestinian state in almost all of the West Bank and Gaza with a foothold in east Jerusalem.

That this "wild" offer was rejected by Arafat proves the Palestinian leader's true intention remains to destroy the Jewish state, Netanyahu said.

Sharon has said a Palestinian state is inevitable eventually — but Netanyahu disagreed. A state, Netanyahu said, would mean Palestinian control of borders and airspace — with the potential of bringing in weapons and making military pacts with Israel's enemies — and that this Israel could not allow. ■

IOC Judges Mid East Politics

Did you know that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) lists "Palestine" as a member nation? Striving to be a-political, it places this never-before-heard-of nation in its Asia council while listing Israel in its European council? Of course, we all know the Olympic committee is not famous for judging facts fairly.

How Far We've Fallen

"Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies, which is to know God and His Son Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, John. 17.3, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning."

- New England's First Fruits, Harvard College, 1648

Those Bloody Trading Cards

Topps trading card company has issued a card honoring Yasser Arafat because of his blood donation after the terrorist attacks on the U.S. Part of their "Enduring Freedom" series, the company placed this Palestinian serial killer alongside foreign heads of state rather than next to Osama bin Laden.

Voice your concern over this slap in the face to victims of terror around the world by writing to Topps, One Whitehall Street, New York, NY 10004 (<u>www.topps.com</u>).

Erratum: The news service providing the cover photo in February's *Levitt Letter* erroneously placed the date of the Karina-A arms incident as 2001 instead of 2002.

A NOTE FROM ZOLA continued from page 5

[Osama bin Laden is Saudi Arabian], turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism [Saudi Arabia provides aid to terrorists like bin Laden and Arafat]. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists [Saudi citizens adore Osama bin Laden and name their sons after him]. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime [does this include Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Indonesia, to name a few?].

Middle East expert Daniel Pipes, in a recent *New York Post* article, spells out Saudi Arabia's culpability:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia bears a heavy responsibility for the disaster. Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda and the Taliban derived their radical ideas mainly from the Wahhabi ideology that rules in Saudi Arabia. The kingdom permitted the recruitment of some 25,000 young Saudis to wage jihad, fully aware of the danger they posed to the United States. And 15 of the 19 suicide hijackers hailed from Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi royal family and perhaps also the government (the two are difficult to keep apart in a country sometimes called the only family-owned business with a seat at the United Nations) donated large sums of money for years to bin Laden.

It's time to stop playing the game of diplomatic political correctness. The war against terrorism is dangerous. Simply removing the obvious lesions of terrorism from the skin of our world (like the Taliban or Saddam Hussein) provides only temporary relief. It's time to do serious surgery and cut out the cancer of terrorism from its very roots. Saudi Arabia would be a good place to start.

And the so-called Palestinians could be next. While media like the *Los Angeles Times* continue to inflate the gravity of the situation there, the *Times* recently ran a letter to the editor that says it straight:

America has 15 times more traffic deaths than the world had in terrorism, including the World Trade Center. So, if you're afraid to go to Israel because of terrorism, for heaven's sake, stay off the road.

I know you're not going to stop driving, so seriously consider joining one our many Israel tours, either here in the States or in the Holy Land itself. Choose from Holy Land Experience tours in Orlando, Florida, May 10-12 and 17-19, our Kibbutz tour to Israel (tentatively scheduled for June 1-10), Eureka Springs from June 14-16, or one of our many "Little Israel" tours here in Dallas at the Biblical Arts Center. See page 4 for details and call Tony at (214) 696-9740 for brochures and complete tour information.



Revival of the Roman Empire? continued from page 3

Middle East without putting "politics back at the center of gravity," rather than cracking down on terror.

The European outline for peace would require: 1) Israel to withdraw to the positions they held in Sept. 2000, before the beginning of the intifada. 2) Israel and the PA state would sign a peace treaty. 3) Lift travel restrictions imposed on Palestinians to Israeli territory.

In other words, all that is required for peace in the Middle East is Israel's unconditional surrender, placing all its faith in Europe to guarantee its continued security. Simple.

The options extended Israel by the Europeans would seem unacceptable, *but* — as an alternative to all-out war, or from the rubble, if the unthinkable does happen — the idea of Israel agreeing to similar terms is not beyond the scope of possibility.

Consider the following: The prophet Daniel predicted, 2,500 years ago, a political dynamic that would develop in the last days. It was an impossible projection. Writing from the 6th century B.C., Daniel said that in the last days, there would exist a state of Israel.

No such state existed from Daniel's day until May 15, 1948. Daniel said that Israel would be at war with the surrounding states. Daniel also foretold the rise, fall and revival of the old Roman Empire. Daniel said a prince of that revived Roman Empire would confirm a 7-year treaty between Israel and the "many."

It just so happens there's a 7-year Oslo Agreement in dire need of confirmation right about now. It may or may not be *Daniel's* 7-year agreement, but, at the very least, it sets the precedent for it.

The Middle East is about to explode into all-out war. The European Union is floating a plan that, if accepted, would put revived Rome at the heart of the Middle East peace quagmire. All this — predicted thousands of years in advance. And all due to come together in the same generation. Coincidence? I think not. ■

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