



Levitt LETTER

*Brethren, my heart's
desire and prayer to
God for Israel is that
they might be saved.*

— ROMANS 10:1

inside: **Practical
Prophecy p.4**

Strategy to Move U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem

By Dr. Jürgen Bühler, David R. Parsons,
and Susan M. Michael of the
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ.org)

For a brief background on the U.S. Embassy in Israel, please see the [January 2017 Levitt Letter](#). — Editor

Before formally announcing the move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, discreet contact by U.S. diplomats with other members of the international community should be held quickly and intensely along three simultaneous tracks:

1. Discuss with the Israeli government various aspects of such a move and coordinate the necessary steps, as well as bilateral responses to any potential security challenges;
2. Address concerns of officials in key Arab and Muslim nations and elicit their cooperation; and
3. Confer with countries friendly to the U.S. and Israel that also might consider moving their embassies to Jerusalem.

U.S. discussions with Arab and Muslim

[\(continued p.2\)](#)

You Can Help Steward Ministry Expenses

By Brenda Carol Duff
Monitor Coordinator

In my decade of coordinating TV viewing feedback reports, I have grown to appreciate how—just like ancient Jerusalem's “watchmen on the walls”—our monitors safeguard ZLM's quality of programming.

Here is what our broadcast monitors do:

1. Keep track of dates and times *Zola Levitt Presents (ZLP)* airs via their provider—cable, satellite, etc.—and network
2. Report problems with signal quality, pre-emptions, etc.
3. Provide personal opinions about the programming itself

[\(continued p.3\)](#)



U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem *continued from cover*

countries should focus on conveying a determination to repair a diplomatic offense by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, along with a desire to maintain regional stability and minimize any negative consequences that might ensue. Make clear that this move will not prejudice the final talks over Jerusalem's status or impede access to holy sites in the city, and that there will be no tolerance for misrepresenting these facts and engaging in baseless rhetoric that only inflames the situation, such as false claims that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is endangered.

While one can expect some venting by extremist elements in the Middle East and beyond, it would be demeaning to view all Arab and Muslim leaders as irresponsible actors who will abandon their senses and wantonly incite the masses into an anti-Israel, anti-American frenzy.

Further, there are incentives that could be offered to ensure these nations' acceptance of this decision, such as firm commitments to:

- counter the Iranian threat to the region,
- work for the destruction of ISIS and other radical Islamic militias, and
- seek a quick and mutually acceptable end to the carnage in Syria.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (l) with columnists David R. Parsons (center) and Dr. Jürgen Bühler (r) at the ICEJ, December 2016.

By leading a group of nations willing to move their embassies to Jerusalem, the U.S. would signal that resistance is futile. If well planned and executed, the ICEJ believes that such a strategy for the return of democratic nations to Jerusalem would go far in defusing tensions in the region. Through our international network, the ICEJ believes that a number of countries are ready to move their embassies back to Jerusalem. Some once had embassies in Jerusalem but left because of threats of violence and oil embargoes. Today, a violent response could never be justified, and the discovery of gas and oil deposits elsewhere has largely diminished the power of Arab oil embargoes. The ICEJ is convinced that many nations are ready to relocate to Jerusalem under the lead of an American umbrella. We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Next, the United States should announce its firm decision to officially recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move its embassy there.

In practical terms, the U.S. should designate a business suite or other property in Jerusalem as the official home of the U.S. ambassador (or set up the ambassador's office within an existing U.S. government facility in Jerusalem) until an embassy is built. Other pragmatic issues need consideration, such as finding housing and schools in the Jerusalem area for families of diplomatic personnel who relocate from Tel Aviv.

The impact of a timely and robust American effort to do right by Jerusalem holds many potential benefits for the United States, as well as for Israel, the region, and the world. [\[More about Jerusalem on pp. 21, 30.\]](#)

We praise God that our son Ryan blesses Israel by working for the authors' wonderful organization! Thanks, Jürgen and co-authors, for your insight and wisdom about this important matter. — Kirsten ★



- 4 Practical Prophecy**
- 6 The Prodigal Son**
 Our Man In Haifa
- 8 Old Homesteads**
- 10 The Disappearing Dead Sea**
 Classic Zola
- 12 Travel Woes**
 TJF Report
- 13 The New Covenant is for Israel**
 A Note from Mark
- 14 Ken Berg Presents**
- 15 ZLM Bulletin Board**
 Parsons: Hebrew Lesson
- 16 Turning to God ...**



21 Islam's "Holy" Weeds?

22 Letters to ZLM



Science

26 Dead Sea Drilling



Medicine

28 Resistance to Antibiotics



29 How to Survive Natural Disasters



30 Select Briefs

Archaeology

32 Jerusalem's Destruction—70 A.D.



34 No Churchill Today



35 Jewish Humor

You Can Help Steward Ministry Expenses *(continued from cover)*

This information helps ZLM carefully steward every "mite" (Luke 21:1-4) entrusted by donors for the outreach of God's message.

Please join our team of monitors. Help us collect valuable information from all of America's zip codes. We have significant gaps and need volunteers everywhere to provide data for faithful stewardship of the airtime this ministry buys.

Your input would enable us to know how many TVs, computers, and cell phones are turned on and watching ZLP. We need to know about any trouble spots, and we want to hear what interests and blesses you and what you would like to see on ZLP.

Past monitors disliked mailing their reports. Now we have an Email Monitoring System that saves time and money. I'm thrilled by the prospect of receiving widespread feedback. Would you please help us kick off our new email system by volunteering to be a ZLP Monitor?

Here's how you can help:

1. Contact me (Brenda Duff) by email at LevittMonitors@BergProductions.com about your willingness to volunteer.
2. I will email you a few questions. Replying with your answers will register you.
3. Every month you will receive an email with a) an attachment of brief *Instructions*, and b) a link to an easy-to-fill-in *Monitor Tracking Form*. Each form contains a section for sharing your comments as a part of our ZLP Monitor Team.
4. Just fill out the online form and click "submit." Simple!

Please join us, won't you?

P.S. We're working on a web-based solution that will make reporting feedback even easier. Thank you for your willingness to help us ensure that our broadcasts are actually shown in far-flung markets and that any quality issues can be quickly detected and resolved. ★



Practical Prophecy — Last Things

Tony Derrick, M.Div.
Zola Tours Leader
ZLM consulting theologian



A foundational mission of Zola Levitt Ministries is to cover news in Israel and around the world as it relates to prophecy. With the world in a downward spiral and on a collision course with the end of the Age, I will address over the next couple of months some current issues as they relate to prophecy. Before I do, **let's look at the practical side of prophecy.**

The Perils of Prophecy

The study of End Times prophecy (eschatology, or “last things” as some call it) is a complicated theological subject and worthy of careful study. Some background: As I was ending my student career, I sat at roundtable discussions with freshmen and other graduate students. I listened and watched as they discussed (no, argued) until red in the face (literally) regarding “their” interpretation of Scripture about last things. Each one was convinced of his faultless reasoning!

I was entertained, and also encouraged, by the passion displayed by these young students who “knew they were right.” I also admired the patience my mature colleagues exhibited as they waited while these younger students climbed out on a limb of opinion, at which time my colleagues would saw off the limb with solid Biblical reasoning. And that’s the nature of eschatology — a lot of moving parts. I often prayed that these for-the-most-part young men would take that same passion into the classroom and be open to having their beliefs proven right or wrong. Personally, I was proven wrong on numerous occasions!

Our Christian Hope

This month, I want to look at the practical side of prophecy, our Christian hope. God (and not the devil) is in the details. Because of what we do understand, we should be motivated to live Godly lives, always ready with our testimony of faith. Our Christian hope lets Believers live with confidence in our future inheritance from God through Yeshua/Jesus our Messiah. We are, in fact, joint heirs with Yeshua.

*“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ”
Romans 8:16–17a (NKJV).*

Our hope is in God because He is the One who gave us our hope by His grace. Prophecies reach fulfillment only because God, in His grace, opened the door for mankind to repent and have eternal life in the

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St. John the Evangelist on Patmos,
painting by Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1489



Kingdom to come. He is our hope because He will do what He has promised.

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work” 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NKJV).

Our hope is also in Yeshua, our Messiah because of His resurrection.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” 1 Peter 1:3.

In the next couple of months, we will look at the Rapture and Second Coming; resurrection is prominent in both. For now, we make the point that Yeshua’s resurrection is foundational in our hope!

There is no greater hope than the Old Testament promise of Isaiah 53:5, which tells us:

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

We read the fulfillment of that prophecy in John 3:16,

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Clearly, our hope lies in the power of God to save through the risen Messiah — Yeshua/Jesus. All the Old Testament prophecies find their fulfillment in Jesus, our Messiah. As we keep “on the ready” for the final act in history, we can do so with confidence and hope.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” Romans 8:31, 35, 38–39.

A Confident Hop

I pray that you will see through all the prophetic fog and live in a confident hope regardless of where the world is in the prophetic timetable. We can move forward in our lives with confidence and assurance, encouraged by the truth that God is on His throne!

While you and I are, as someone once put it, “in the waiting room of life,” much remains to be done before His Kingdom arrives. Each of you readers knows someone who needs the LORD, a friend, or encouragement to cope in an ever-changing world. Be that someone who presents the practical side of prophecy — the confident hope in God our Father and Yeshua His Son!

Please stay with us, and join me in the next couple of months as I delve into some of the more “gritty” components of End Times prophecy. ★



The Prodigal Son

David Hart
studio co-host of
Zola Levitt Presents



The Return of the Prodigal Son, etching by Rembrandt (1636)

I am drawn to the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11–32. When my father passed away about ten years ago, my inheritance was a Ziploc® baggie full of cheap costume jewelry — cuff links, tie clips, etc. — from yard sales and thrift stores. Although I loved my father dearly, there was little if any “inheritance.”

If you heard my testimony on *Zola Levitt Presents*, you know that I am a pastor’s son. And yes, we were typically the wildest kids around. Because my dad was the pastor, every time the church doors were open, I had to be there. If I wasn’t, parishioners would let my parents know that I was “missed.”

As a teen, I wanted to fit in with the cool kids. When we’d move to a new church, if my clothes weren’t “right” or I didn’t understand local idioms, it affected me. In my college days, my need to be with the “it” crowd resulted in some poor choices. I now understand that everything in our lives makes up our testimony.

I wasn’t the Prodigal Son: I didn’t ask for an early inheritance or waste money on wild living, and, thankfully, I didn’t end up sleeping with the
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pigs. However, when the Prodigal decided to go home to his father, he felt unworthy and offered to work as a servant. I, too, felt that way.

During my rebellious days, in my mid-twenties, I lived in Los Angeles, trying to make it in secular music. One night, I found myself on top of a lounge bar singing songs about relationships breaking up and other depressing themes. My manager learned that I was a preacher's kid and demanded that I sing a Gospel tune in my bar gig! It angered me; I did not want to be a hypocrite. At one point, I put my fist through a wall to prove my refusal to sing Gospel.

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



The 'Prodigal Son' returns and suddenly the life of the fatted family calf flashes before his teary eyes. **Luke 15:11-32**

For two years, I tried just about anything to succeed in Hollywood. The Lord spoke to me every day, but I always responded, "Lord, when I get that big opportunity, when an amazing door opens for me, I will give You my full life." Another night as I was singing, the smoke of a patron's clove cigarette filled my lungs so painfully that I decided something had to change.

I now recognize the hand of Yeshua protecting me from an early death. I am thankful that He always waits with open arms for us to come back to Him, just as the father was waiting for his

prodigal son. Instead of relegating his son to the role of a servant, the father put a robe on his back and a ring on his finger, and then threw a huge party welcoming him home. Those like the prodigal's brother will never understand how their father could be so forgiving.

Who are you in the parable? The rebellious child, lost and far from God? The self-righteous sibling, no longer capable of rejoicing when a lost family member finds the way home?

Our Man in Haifa, Eitan Shishkoff ([see his article on p.8](#)) will teach in our upcoming series *Called Together*. Eitan relates the Prodigal Son to Jewish men and women coming back to *Yeshua HaMashiach*.

If you feel alienated from God, listen. Be silent and listen for a soft voice. When you hear His voice urging, "Return to Me, I'm waiting for you," do it. Don't wait. Don't talk yourself out of being worthy of His "welcome home." He loves you. ★



Old Homesteads Revisited

Our Man in Haifa
Eitan Shishkoff
and wife Connie



Connie and I have always wanted to revisit the New Mexico mountains where we homesteaded as newly-weds. From January 1969 until late 1974, nearly six years, we lived at the most basic level — sans electricity, eating primarily rice, homegrown vegetables, and beans and tortillas. We learned to cultivate fallow ground with a team of horses. Our group built a couple of one-room houses out of rocks, logs, and mud. Now forty-five years later, we were curious to see these primitive, yet cherished, homes. How had they fared?



Eitan, Connie, son and dog (1971)

Not totally surprised, but sobered, we found barely a trace of the dwellings where we had struggled to stay warm in the snowy winters and where we had savored many a simple meal after working long hours in the fields.

What does this have to do with Israel, where we've lived the last 25 years? For me, there's a strong connection. Both then and now we are engaged in social revolution. A vast distance separates manmade solutions from Yeshua's redemption of the world. Yet **the same energy and passion with which we approached communal farming is essential for Israel's salvation.** How?

Our farming days prepared us to live as pioneers. Adjusting to life in Israel drew on the grit we'd acquired while living off the grid. For us to pioneer Messianic faith communities and distribute humanitarian aid now requires the same determination and idealism that compelled us back then.

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Eitan, lower left playing barrel drum (1970)



Eitan with harmonica, drum, and dog at jam session (1970)



Eitan with water yoke (1972)





Still pondering our trip “down memory lane,” we visited a New Mexico History Museum exhibit, “Voices of Counter-culture in the Southwest,” that focused on the hippie commune movement we’d been so much a part of. To our amazement, in the middle of a display documenting our very commune was a photo of ME!

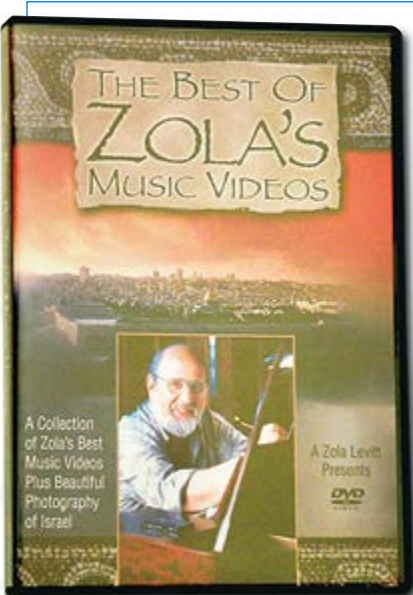
What a strange sensation seeing oneself on a museum wall! My fascination turned to analytical curiosity. What had propelled us to this radical lifestyle, motivated us to live so primitively?

My reflection led me to two factors, both still relevant to spiritual pioneering in Israel nearly 50 years later.

1) Disenchantment with the status quo, fed up with the materialism and superficiality of 1960s America. Is it any better now? It’s far worse. The world is descending into a maelstrom of terror and apathy.

2) A dream of how life could be. In 1969, we set out to create a new society of love and purity. Is Yeshua’s plan any less radical? He tells us to seek first the Kingdom, and to give evidence of His transforming power by our love. We are still living a dream, but now it’s His.

Our encounter with the bygone days of our youthful idealism was a timely reminder. As Messiah’s disciples longing for Israel’s full redemption, we are still engaged in a radical pioneer effort. It’s time for us to be renewed in our passion to change the world — not by dropping out of society and heading for the hills, but by being salt and light in the midst of a crumbling civilization. (See Matthew 5:13–16.) ★



The Best of Zola's Music Videos 2 DVDs

More than 3 hours of on-location video footage with Zola's favorite music selections on two DVDs

Our production team made a special effort to pair video shot on-location in Israel and Greece with selections of Zola's favorite and original compositions for your viewing and listening pleasure. Breathtaking scenes of the Holy Land accompany Zola's original music on 2 DVDs.

The Disappearing Dead Sea

BY MELANIE LIDMAN (r) TimesOfIsrael.com



Photo by Melanie Lidman / Times of Israel

Boater Jaky Ben Zaken next to a sinkhole filled with salt water (January 2017)

In the small alcove where Jaky Ben Zaken pushes his military-grade rubber Zodiac boat into the Dead Sea, a crystallized salt formation juts out of the water, reaching 4.5 feet into the air. It stands at attention over the brilliant turquoise bay, passively watching as the waves recede, exposing more and more of its base.

This specific salt “chimney” is the measuring stick for photographer Noam Bedein. When Bedein first came out with Ben Zaken on his boat in April 2016, the top of the chimney was just peeking out of the water. **In the following nine months, the level of the Dead Sea dropped 3.8 feet.** Nothing shows this drop as starkly as this particular salt structure.

Jaky Ben Zaken runs boat trips on the Dead Sea for tourists and researchers. The first time he went out on Ben Zaken’s boat, Bedein was “...blown away. For a week, every time I shut my eyes, I would see all those colors and formations and salt layers.”

Three months later, he came back with his family and was shocked at the difference. The same places they visited were now completely changed or gone altogether.

“Seeing it dried out, it was pretty shocking,” he admitted. “It pinches you somewhere. You see this magical formation of the salt coming out, then you



Photo by Noam Bedein

The Dead Sea salt “chimney” (April 2016) ...



Photo by Noam Bedein

The same salt “chimney” six months later (October 2016), after the water level dropped by nearly 3 feet.



To
Index



Back to
p. 27

[\(continued next page\)](#)

Brilliant colors revealed in the rock surface on the shores of the Dead Sea



Photo by Noam Bedein

come back a few months later and it's gone." Bedein and Ben Zaken struck up a partnership, and now Bedein goes out twice a month with Zaken, photographing the drastic changes.

"We found these geophysical chimneys five years ago by accident," said Ben Zaken. "On another research project, we found freshwater springs coming up from under the sea, and these salt chimneys form around them with fresh water coming up the inside."



Photo by Noam Bedein

Ben Zaken's boat is made of a special Hypalon® military-grade fabric, a multi-layer rubbery material that includes neoprene, which he must wash down every night to avoid the salt's corrosive destruction. Because the Dead Sea is a closed military zone, Ben Zaken coordinates with the authorities for every boat launch. He used to set sail from Mineral Beach, but after sinkholes forced the beach's closure in 2015, Ben Zaken had to close his business while he looked

for a new launch spot. Today, he uses a spot just below his kibbutz, but is candid about his precarious position. He never knows if sinkholes will render this access spot impossible as well.

Ben Zaken visits the same spots with tourists and researchers nearly every day. "It's more an educational tour than a boat tour," he said. Added Bedein, "We're seeing the Dead Sea like never before. We're discovering newborn beaches, and we're the first people in history setting foot on all these alien-looking beaches."

"Just look at the satellite image," he continued. "It's not a sea; it's a pool of salt that's left over. If we don't do something now, the next generation is not going to have a Dead Sea. By the year 2050, there will be a pool of salt. No one wants to think ahead 20–30 years," Bedein added. "Israel's water problems are easy to solve. They don't cost anything; **it's about opening the Jordan River. That's the only solution.**"

As a photographer, Bedein is particularly intrigued by the swirls of colors the water uncovers — alternating layers of salt and mineral and dirt that look like eddies of brilliant acrylic paint slathered on the ground and rocks.



Photo by Noam Bedein

Beautiful while dying: As the water level of the Dead Sea recedes, brilliant colors and patterns emerge from beneath the water

"I'm really capturing these treasures of the Dead Sea, all these unique formations coming out, documenting the water level going down," said Bedein. "This is beauty, and it's disappearing. I try to look at it positively, and connect people visually. I have to show this beauty and the true magic that is disappearing very fast in front of our eyes."

Please see [Dead Sea Drilling on p. 26](#). ★



Travel Woes

Classic Zola
from 1982
35 years ago



I'd like to ask our DFW Metroplex readers something. I really don't mind going out to the countryside wherever the Lord calls, but I would like to serve more often at home. They say Dallas is the city of churches, but oddly, only about half of my speaking engagements are local, and I constantly find myself traveling.

Frankly, there are people everywhere who can teach the subjects I deal with, and I wonder if some of you would consider taking advantage of my residence here in Dallas-Fort Worth. It is much easier for me to drive to a church than fly, and when my car starts burning, I just park it and get out. [\[For insight into this esoteric joke, please see the February 2017 Levitt Letter, p. 10.\]](#)

Perhaps some of you don't realize that I am available for local speaking engagements or that this ministry can also provide other speakers on a variety of topics. Remember, there are plenty of Biblical topics to share year round. I teach the New Testament, Israel and prophecy, and all about the Seven Feasts, each in its season. There's no reason for Bible teachers to rush around every Passover season and then sit home through the summer, fall, and winter.

So much for the speaking ministry. Now to our television program: Please know that we are grateful and thankful, etc., etc., to get out of debt. We have finally paid our bills on *The Holy Places* and our heads are above water. As to the upcoming programming: We plan to run a few of our best shows from last fall, and then one new *Holy Places* program that we couldn't afford to complete until now. Please, don't miss this very special show made at the Western Wall on the subject of Bar Mitzvah. After that, a new program on the Messianic prophecies, designed to show the dramatic fulfillments in our Lord's earthly ministry. We will

rerun *The Holy Places* series through the summer and you can pick up on any programs you may have missed. During this time of reruns, we will be saving up for our new fall shows, and our goal is to make another series on holy places. If we can work it out, we'd like to go back to Israel, Egypt, and the Mediterranean islands with our cameras. Please reflect on this opportunity as you watch this series in rerun. If we can get the support, there's no reason we can't make new programs year round from the holy sites in the Promised Land.

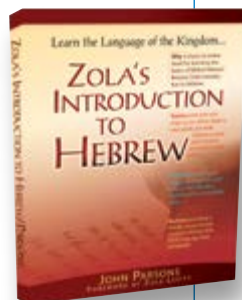
I really appreciate all the contributions that you've given us recently, and the tremendous vote of confidence that it represents. If I could, I would visit each and every one of you to thank you personally, but frankly, I'm a little bit down on flying at the moment. [\[Seriously, please see the February Levitt Letter if you missed it.\]](#)

Ministry speakers are still available, and engagements close to their homes are still easier. —Mark ★

Zola's Introduction to Hebrew study book

There is no better book for learning the basics of Biblical Hebrew.

Unlike most academic books on Biblical Hebrew, this course provides a step-by-step approach that will enable you to understand the Hebraic mindset while learning the alphabet and vowel signs. Studying at your own pace, you will master the Hebrew alphabet, sound out actual Hebrew words, and begin connecting your studies with your heart by reading Hebrew prayers, blessings, and even passages from Scripture!



400+ pages



The New Covenant is for Israel

On the latest **To The Jew First** (TJF) Gospel outreach in Israel, team member August Rosado and I watched, once again, as the Holy Spirit of God opened doors to witness about Yeshua the Messiah to the Jewish people. One powerful day comes to mind.

As August and I were leaving the *Kotel* (Western Wall) after prayer, a young Jewish man eating his lunch greeted us as we walked by. Sensing

that the Lord wanted us to engage this young Israeli, August and I stopped to chat with **Tal** while he was on his lunch break from his job at an archaeological dig nearby.



Tal

In the course of our conversation, Tal casually admitted that he was an atheist. I gently pointed out that **he was actually an agnostic, because no one can know with absolute certainty that God does not exist.** Man simply lacks the power, knowledge, and physical means to make such a claim. Tal agreed.

Now on common footing, I shared with Tal about my former life as an unenlightened atheist. I told him that when the Son of God supernaturally revealed Himself to me, He led me to the Scriptures and convinced me that everything that Yeshua said and did in the New Testament was absolutely true.

August and I then challenged Tal to take a copy of the Scriptures — both the Old and New Testaments — in Hebrew to see this saving truth for

Dr. Todd Baker
Zola Levitt Ministries
Staff Theologian



himself. Tal initially balked at our invitation, but after the Holy Spirit persuaded him, Tal accepted the Bible in order to test his agnosticism in the light of God's Word.

After we left Tal, August and I encountered two young Israeli women raising money for an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) charity. August spoke with one of the women, while I shared the Gospel with the other, **Bathsheva**. I told Bathsheva about a new covenant that was promised in the *Tanakh*, or Old Testament, to Israel in Jeremiah 31:31–37. Then I related it to Yeshua, the One who ratified this covenant in the *B'rit Hadashah*, or New Testament (Matthew 26:28). Bathsheva immediately understood the clear connection between the two Testaments of the Jewish Bible.

From talking to her, I could see that Bathsheva had a good, working understanding of the *Tanakh* from her Orthodox Jewish upbringing. But this was the first time she'd heard about the New Covenant for Israel being prophesied, or even mentioned, in the *Tanakh*! She



Bathsheva

expressed a genuine interest to learn more about the Messiah, the Messenger of the New Covenant. She eagerly accepted a copy of the Hebrew Bible with the New Testament, and also some Messianic Gospel tracts that explain how a Jewish person can accept Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah and still be a Jew. There's no "conversion" involved. Jews can — and should — trust that Yeshua is the Messiah. ★



Ken Berg Presents

A Note From Mark
by **Mark Levitt**
ZLM Director



“That was some of the best flying I’ve seen yet — right up to the part where you got killed! You never, *never* leave your wingman!” Tom Cruise’s Maverick character receives that invaluable advice in the movie *Top Gun* (1986) during fighter pilot training. (goo.gl/Wskdqr)

Television producer Ken Berg has been this ministry’s wingman since our first broadcast in December 1978. God, of course, is Commander-in-Chief. It was Ken, however, who initially suggested that Zola teach on television. Had it not been for Ken’s anointed talent scouting, Zola might have limited his career to hosting radio talk shows, writing books, and speaking in churches. Ken’s eye for television talent compares to Zola’s ear for music, which included the profound gift of perfect pitch.

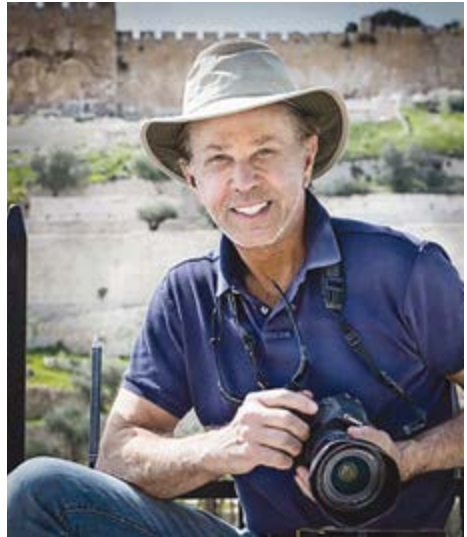
And it was Ken, figuratively speaking, who fired Zola. Toward the end of Zola’s life — battling cancer and receiving morphine — Zola declared himself a soldier.* Weathering the ravages of chemo, Zola insisted on recording TV segments in his home, well past a presentable demeanor. Ken deemed the last recordings unsuitable for broadcast.

Again, it is Ken bringing to life what this ministry’s board has requested for years: a magazine approach to Bible teaching modeled after CBS’s *60 Minutes*. According to conventional wisdom, hiring a Messianic spokesman or couple to take the baton would have been simpler — and safer.

Gideon defied reason when he commanded 300 men without weapons to confront the Midianites’ massive army. Now our ministry relies on gentile studio hosts in combination with our favorite Messianic Jewish teachers (who declined long-term commitments with us).

Eitan Shishkoff (see his article on p. 8) heads Tents of Mercy in Israel, and Marty Waldman leads Dallas’s preeminent Messianic congregation, Baruch HaShem. (Side note: It is arguable that Baruch HaShem is the successor congregation to Beth Sar Shalom, where Zola’s mentor, Dr. Tom McCall, conducted my bar mitzvah in 1973.)

Our ministry’s Doubting Thomases should open their eyes to the silver that lines the supposedly gray clouds of God’s plan for our ministry. You — the loyal viewers, readers, and supporters of this ongoing outreach — will be learning from teachers so stellar and capable that they’re in high demand in their current callings.



Ken Berg, TV producer extraordinaire

Serving you with a diverse team of teachers will offer us more challenges, but the final product will contain the dynamic content that our new generation of ZLMers has come to require. Stay with us and our wingman; you’ll be glad you did! ★

* Years earlier, Zola wryly acknowledged readers’ accusations that he was a Zionist spy (whether or not the Israeli government had a clue), supposedly evident from his pro-Israel writing.



ZLM Bulletin Board

Israel Tourism Record

According to Israel's Tourism Ministry: This

1.43 MILLION

May, 347,000 tourists entered the Holy Land, an all-time record and an increase of 16.7% from May 2016. During 2017's first five months, 1.43 million tourists infused \$2.18 billion into Israel's economy, a 25% increase over last year. [Please see page 36 to learn about joining one of ZLM's guaranteed-departure tours.](#) We offer solid Bible teaching and super praise & worship while using the best land agent in the business, Immanuel Tours.



Who Is Stealing Palestinian Land?



The Israeli government in 2005 forced Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip to shut down in an effort to create a Middle Eastern Singapore. Instead, Hamas seized control over Gaza in 2007 and transformed it into a base for various Islamist groups who launch terror attacks.

It is Hamas and Fatah who undermine the supposed Palestinian dream of founding a democracy. (source: gatestoneinstitute.org.)

FREE ITEM

Pamphlet of the Month

Life insurance is an especially flexible planning tool that can be used to meet a variety of personal financial needs. The pamphlet *Giving Through Life Insurance* includes six questions to determine whether a gift of life insurance would make sense for you. It also offers seven ways to give charitably using life insurance. A table summarizes tax benefits, and the Technical Advisory Section addresses basic tax rules, qualified appraisal rules, and more. To receive this booklet at no charge, email us at staff@levitt.com or write to our P.O. Box.

Sears: Where America ...

...used to shop. Did tough times inspire Sears to commercialize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with "Free Palestine" T-shirts? For roughly seven months, the Sears website encouraged shoppers to "Make a statement about the Arab-Israeli conflict with this powerful design," featuring a fist in the colors of the Palestinian flag. Sears

felt "unfairly singled out on this issue," as similar items are offered by other companies, such as Amazon and Walmart.



"Come Home!"

Zola Tours to Israel



[See page 36 for details](#)



GIVING THROUGH LIFE INSURANCE





דְּרָשׁוּ יְהוָה בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ קְרָאֵהוּ בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ קְרוֹב

“Seek the LORD while He may be found; call out to Him while He is near.” (Isaiah 55:6)

קְרוֹב	בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ	קְרָאֵהוּ	בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ	יְהוָה	דְּרָשׁוּ
(2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	(1)	(2) (1)
ka-rohv	beeh-yoh-toh	ke-ra-oo-hoo	be-hee-matz-oh	Adonai	deer-shoo
near	while He is	call out to Him	while He may be found	the LORD	seek

The theme of the High Holidays is *teshuvah* (תְּשׁוּבָה), a word often translated as “repentance,” though it is more accurately understood as *turning back* (i.e., *shuv*) to God. In spiritual terms, *teshuvah* may be regarded as a practical turning away from evil and a turning toward the good, though it is simpler to regard turning to God *as the means* by which we turn away from evil. Indeed the Greek word translated repentance (i.e., μετανοοῖα) means going beyond our habitual thinking, changing our mind, and learning to see from a radically new perspective. As we look to God, we begin to see that “everything is new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Teshuvah, or repentance, *believes* that the kindness of God can give life to our dead hearts, and therefore it is first of all a matter of faith, trusting God to perform the miracle for us. However, even though it is a great gift from Heaven, repentance requires *honesty* and acknowledgment of the truth. We must *confess* our inner poverty, our neediness, and mourn over the loss and harm caused by our sin (Matt. 5:2–8). Repentance turns away from our attempts to defend or justify ourselves and instead turns to God to heal our separation from Him (Rom. 8:3–4). *Teshuvah* buries our old nature by making it into a new creation.

It is no small feat to believe the message of Yeshua, and indeed, it involves a passionate inwardness that “scandalizes” the rational mind. Our father Abraham is extolled as the model of righteous faith, but he was tested to sacrifice the moral law (e.g., “thou shalt not murder”) when he lifted up the knife to slay his beloved son Isaac. Faith requires you to change your everyday thinking, to go beyond natural expectations, to “walk on water.” In the case of Yeshua, we are confronted with the “Absolute Paradox,” namely, the God-Man, the Infinite-made-Finite, the Holy-made-Profane, the Sinless-made-Sin, who says to you: “I AM the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25–26). You will never die; you will never hunger; you are made whole through My brokenness; you will be cleansed by My defilement, and so on. It’s not just hard to believe, it’s impossible, which is why it is a miracle of God to be saved (Matt. 19:26). “It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is no help at all” (John 6:63). The difference is Yeshua: Salvation is of the LORD. We are enabled to love and know God by means of His inner life and spirit, not by means of good intentions or religious zeal. **Faith itself is a miracle, the power of God.** ★



The Gospel According to Isaiah DVD Set

Eight 30-minute TV programs on Two DVDs

The Gospel of Isaiah, written 700 years before Christ, reveals the Jewish nature of our Messiah and the fulfillment of His coming as the Lamb of God. See why New Testament authors have quoted Isaiah more than any other Old Testament source and why this Old Testament narrative is often called the 5th Gospel.

Jesus' Birth Dr. Jeffrey Seif takes us through the drama of Jesus' miraculous birth as described by Isaiah the Prophet. Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would come as a "root out of dry ground" and that "His name shall be called Immanuel, meaning *God with us*."

Jesus' Rejection "He was despised and rejected by men." Jeff explains that the theme of rejecting God's anointed is not new to Isaiah. On location at an ancient Jewish synagogue, we learn that the Messiah who was rejected shall one day be vindicated. Zola teaches Jesus' prophetic fulfillment of Isaiah 53 (from *The Prophesied Messiah* series, now available only in the archive).

Jesus' Condemnation At the Church of the Gallicantu, Jeff explores the story of Jesus' arrest and condemnation by the unbelieving Pharisees and Pilate. Thought to be the location of Caiaphas' house, the Gallicantu is where Peter denied the Lord three times before the rooster crowed.

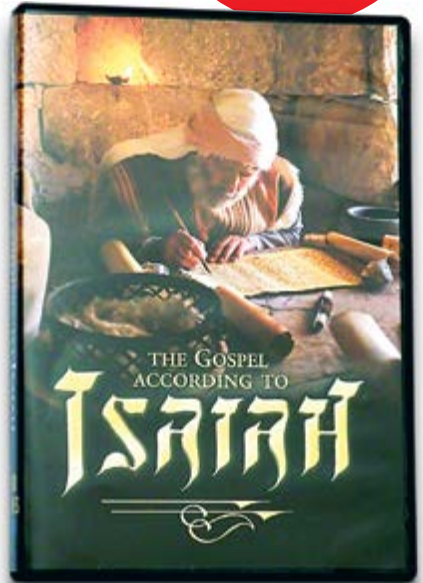
Jesus' Death How can a Jewish Messiah be "numbered with the transgressors?" In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jeff reports on Jesus' suffering as foreseen by Isaiah to fulfill a final blood atonement for the entire world. We see a dramatic exploration of Jesus' sacrifice for sins, and Zola playing "For His Name's Sake."

Jesus' Resurrection The concept of resurrection from the dead did not originate in the New Testament. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus the Messiah would conquer death and the grave. Witness a celebration of Jesus' miraculous fulfillment of prophecy. In addition, Zola and Dr. Michael Wise discuss Messianic prophecy from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Holy Spirit Jesus told His disciples, "You are the light of the world." At the Temple Mount's Southern Steps, Jeff teaches the prophetic nature of the Holy Spirit as fulfilled by Jesus and spread to all Believers like a fire from on high. Zola plays special music from our series *Tell It On the Mountains*, now available only in the archive.

Rebounding from Devastation At the ruins of a first-century estate, Jeff explores the prophecy of Jesus as the Deliverer. God sent the Messiah to set the captives free and heal the broken-hearted. Discover the Hebrew meaning behind the Lord's Prayer, and enjoy an enlightening interview with Zola and Ra'anah Gissin, a former senior advisor to then-prime minister Ariel Sharon.

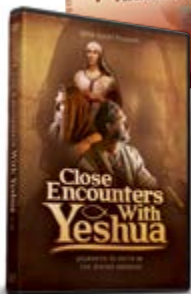
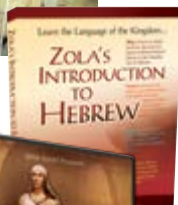
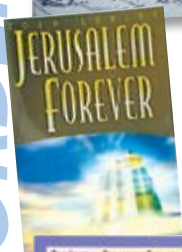
Summary Atop the Mount of Olives, Jeff reviews the entirety of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Jewish Messiah's birth, rejection, death, and resurrection. Nevertheless, Jesus' active role in prophecy will not be completely fulfilled until He returns to Jerusalem to rule and reign for 1,000 years.



ORDER FORM

Zola's Classic Study Booklet Library

Qty.	Title	Price	Total
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___	Jerusalem Forever	\$4	_____
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___	The Promised Land	\$3	_____
___	The Second Coming	\$3	_____
___	Seven Churches	\$3	_____
___	The Seven Feasts of Israel	\$3	_____
___	Spirit of Pentecost	\$3	_____
___	Mix or Match: 50 Classic Study Booklets (above)	\$49	_____



New!

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Dallas TX 75225

Books

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___	Gospel According to Isaiah (p.17)	(8 prog, 2-DVDs) \$49	_____
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ORDER FORM continued

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Music CDs: Hear samples at levitt.com/music

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Thy Kingdom Come	(Zola’s Musical CD)	\$12	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Works.....	(Zola’s first 8 albums on 4 CDs)	\$49	_____
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Please send this entire 2-page Order Form — Thanks.

Please fill out area below and send the entire page.

Shipping & Handling Chart

up to \$15.99, add \$5
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For shipments outside the United States, please **DOUBLE** shipping. Please send U.S. funds.

(Please allow about 2–3 weeks for delivery.)

Any amount that exceeds the listed price is considered a tax-deductible gift to our ministry.

Name _____

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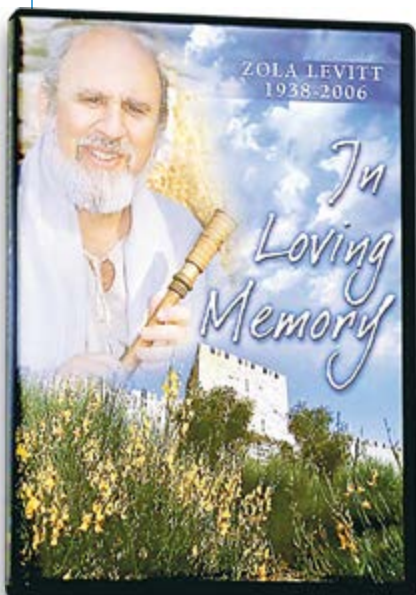
Israel, My Love — *27 Years with Zola Levitt*

Six 30-Minute TV Programs on 2 DVDs

Zola accepted Jesus as his Messiah on March 14, 1971. Within several years, he authored a dozen books and hosted a live talk-radio program. In December 1978, Zola's ministry expanded to television. From then until the end of his life, Zola produced over 700 hours of television that reached millions. This retrospective series of six programs brings you many highlights of Zola's work, music, and life.

Six 30-minute Programs Include:

- First Love
- Covenants Revealed
- Scripture Upheld
- Prophecy Unfolded
- Faith Proved
- Ultimate Victory



In Loving Memory DVD

Two 30-Minute TV Programs on 1 DVD

These two television productions—*Remembering Zola* and *In Loving Memory*—are dedicated to the viewers and readers who loved Zola like a family member. Join us as we celebrate his work, music, joy in the Lord, and sense of humor. Remember a man who lived to open others' eyes to the beauty of God and His Word.

Remembering Zola is a one-hour television special recorded at Zola's memorial service in Dallas on May 7, 2006. This retrospective of Zola and his ministry includes highlights of past telecasts as well as tributes to a never-to-be-forgotten warrior of the faith.

In Loving Memory is a tribute to Zola by those who knew him best. His widow, Sandra, talks with Zola's family, friends, and co-workers in this special half-hour reminiscence of a man who planted seeds of faith in millions of lives.



Islam's "Holy" Weeds?

ElderOfZiyon.blogspot.com

In 1901, Dwight L. Elmendorf set out to visit Palestine and document it with photographs — his “only weapon,” as he put it. He published the pictures in 1912. Two photos are particularly interesting.

The “Mosque of Omar”
(Dome of the Rock) **on the Temple Mount:**

The “Wailing Place of the Jews”
(Western Wall/Kotel):

Notice the huge number of weeds poking through the stones at the “third holiest place in Islam.” In 1901, the Temple Mount is desolate and looks rarely visited.

Compare the scraggly floor of the Temple Mount — where Jews aren't allowed because it is too holy — with the smooth floor in front of the Kotel where Jews pray daily. In 1901, it was clear which people venerated Jerusalem and which people ignored it.

Until 1967, the Temple Mount was under Muslim rule and there were no restrictions on access, except for Jews. The only people who couldn't visit were Jews. But Muslims treated this holy site with contempt. Only when the Jews arrived en masse did this become one of the most important issues in the world. The only time Muslims care about Jerusalem is when Jews (or Christians) control it.

When Muslims controlled it, the entire complex was mostly empty and decrepit. **Muslims never venerated their “third holiest site.”** And these photos prove it. ★



Al-Aqsa Mosque 1960



Temple Mount 1967





Letters to ZLM

For ministry products and TV programs, visit the [web store](#) and [video archives](#).

Comments:

From Y.H. (TX): May God bless ZLM through another transition. The number one priority is keeping Zola's message, teachings, and music prominent in each and every show, with no exceptions. — Our new TV series, *Called Together*, will begin at the end of August and includes your priorities! Zola's message is front and center. The Messianic teaching from Israel — from this ministry's "Man in Haifa" Eitan Shishkoff — is inspiring. We have new Messianic faces, weekly Hebrew Lessons from Jerusalem resident Dana Feinstein who speaks it every day, plus Kirsten and I are revitalizing Zola's songs. — David

From M&M F.J. (CA): We had watched Zola for years and toured Israel with him — a wonderful trip, forever in our memories. Then came Dr. Jeffrey Seif. We enjoyed his teaching and learned much about Israel. Then came Myles and Katharine — both wonderful teachers. We are very disappointed in their departure, but we will continue to watch ZLP and support the ministry financially. — You will love the new format and new series in the making. Of course, the message will never change! Zola's passion will remain through everything we offer on *Zola Levitt Presents*. — Kirsten

From B. & J.J. (MT): A special thanks to Mark Levitt for his unwavering *Levitt Letter* articles. It seems that he straightens out the crooked paths when readers get confused or waylaid. He's so much like his father, Good Zola.

From J.H. (AR): A lifelong friend wrote recently of her depression. I immediately searched the Scriptures for some encouraging words but came up empty. Then I read John Parsons's Hebrew Lesson, which contained the very sentiment I needed. God is good! I sent my friend encouraging words from ZLM. The LORD be praised.

From D.E. Ph.Ed. (CA): As a college professor on the outside and now teaching as an inmate, I loved the article by Naftali Bennett, Israel's Minister of Education, in the [June Levitt Letter \(p. 24\)](#) and the concept of teaching children entrepreneurship. Thank you for sending me the *Levitt Letter*. I share the articles with the 16 inmates studying God's Word in our Bible study group. P.S.: I must commend Kirsten's excellent article on the food of Israel and the miracle of the bounty of food. My mouth still salivates at the picture of Israeli salad. By the way, where is "Ask the Chaplain"? — I know that your kind words encourage Kirsten's

(continued next page)



partnership with this ministry. As for “Ask the Chaplain,” Tony will answer Bible questions while Todd pursues another Ph.D. in theology. Todd continues to lead our To the Jew First outreach, however, so you will hear from him periodically ([p. 13](#) in this issue). — Mark

Israeli salads will always remind me of your sweet words. Thank you, D.E., for sharing your appreciation. — Kirsten

From Pastor L.C. (KS): Please renew my subscription to the Levitt Letter. It is the best for understanding the Jewish-Christian relationship!

From P.S. (OR): I hope we will continue to see Myles teaching and Katharine’s kind smile occasionally. — Yes, their teaching will continue to be available and, of course, you can view the teaching by Zola, Jeff, Myles, and all the new teachers for free, anytime you want, on [levitt.tv](#). — Mark

Open to God’s Plan

Dear ZLM,

I just made a donation to ZLM in obedience to the Lord telling me to send it in celebration of Jerusalem as the reunited capital of Israel and the 70th/Jubilee Pentecost. He advised me that you would put it to good use blessing Israel. I’m an 80-year-old Christian who has watched Zola since the early ‘80s.

Grandpapa tuned into the BBC when Israel became a modern nation, and he explained a lot of prophecy as we listened. I can remember him turning to me and saying, “You will see the return of Messiah. The Scriptures prophesy that the generation who sees Israel become a nation again will see the return of Messiah. I am an old man, but you are young.”

I never heard any more regarding that Scripture until Hal Lindsey wrote his book *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. I’ve not visited Israel personally, but I’ve learned much from your TV programs and appreciate them. The Lord recently asked me how long it had been since Grandpapa told me of His return, and of course the answer was 69 years. Maybe you and I will meet Him soon. Blessings, E.B.

Dear E.B. —

You have been blessed with the vision to see what is happening in the world and within our ministry. I hope that one day we will meet face to face. Through financially upholding this ministry, you also bless Israel and fulfill the prophecy of gentiles blessing Zion (Isaiah 60:5) “... *the wealth of the gentiles shall come to you.*” Thank you for letting God use you! — David

(continued next page)



Authentic Hebrew from Israel

Dear ZLM,

One of the main reasons I tune into *Zola Levitt Presents* is to get my dose of Hebrew and Jewish learning. I hope the new hosts will have guests who can teach us Jewish customs and a little more Hebrew so that we gentiles get the true meaning of the Word. Keep up the excellent work! — R.P.

Yes, R.P. —

You'll be seeing weekly Hebrew lessons from Dana Feinstein — real Hebrew from a Messianic Believer who speaks it conversationally in Israel every day. Better Hebrew than you could expect from American Jews who attended Hebrew School in their youth. Authentic Hebrew from the Land. — Mark



God's Name is Not Ineffable

Dear ZLM,

Re: [April 2017 letter "God's Ineffable Name" \(p. 24\)](#). I believe we should print the name of God as the Holy Spirit gives it to us. God would not give us something over 6,000 times in the Bible that we are not allowed to use. In fact, I think the way not to use God's name in vain includes:

1. Not as a swearword. Don't say "Jesus Christ" after hitting your thumb with a hammer ... unless praying for His help to manage the pain.
2. Not saying that we love and follow God, but we don't DO His commands. Example: We shouldn't say we are Christian, but then not read Scripture to learn who we are in Christ, not pray regularly, or not follow the commands Jesus gave us.

To me, those are the definition of taking the LORD's name in vain — K.F. (FL)

Keep the LORD Center

Dear ZLM,

I pray that your new hosts are not as full of themselves as the last two. I quit watching the TV show. This is about *our LORD*, not about any of us. — J.G. (WA)

Dear J.G. —

We didn't see that, but humility is definitely a virtue, and being on television can inflate the egos of otherwise humble people. Thus far I have seen lots of solid indications that David and Kirsten have servants' hearts and are sincerely devoting themselves to this ministry's calling rather than aspiring to become celebrity televangelists. — Mark

(continued next page)

Re: “Why Is Israel Called Israel?”

(May–July 2017 *Levitt Letters*)

From Mrs. A.W. (FL): They don’t have a clue! They don’t understand WHERE it became Israel; where God changed Joseph’s name to Israel.

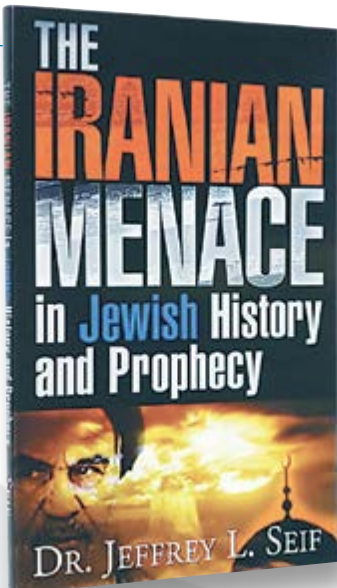
From S.J.L.: I was astonished to think that I, a gentile Christian, needed to respond, when Messianic Jews should know this subject by heart. To answer why Israel is called “Israel,” one only needs to look at Genesis 32:28, where God changes the name of Jacob to “Israel.” It really is that simple. Again, shocked that I have to point your staff in the right direction to answer questions that arise out of the Torah.

Dear Mrs. A.W. and S.J.L. —

It appears that you both missed the first parts of the three-part series on how the modern State of Israel came to be called by that name. The choice seems obvious in hindsight, but apparently it wasn’t for the people making the decision in 1948.

Of course “Israel” comes from Jacob’s celebrated wrestling match with the Lord. Part 1 ([May, p. 26](#)) explains that nocturnal event and also documents the history of the name and breakdown in meaning. Part 2 ([June, p. 12](#)) discusses the origin of the term “Jew” and how it became interchangeable with “Israel.” Part 3 ([July, p. 34](#)) showcases all the options available for naming the newly reborn state.

Please take another look at all three parts of this series that describes not how the name Israel came into existence but how the modern nation came to officially bear the name. — Editor ★



The Iranian Menace in Jewish History and Prophecy

Book by Dr. Jeffrey Seif

Iran is central in End Times prophecy. At a time when Iran has captured the world’s attention with nuclear threats, Jeff harnesses scriptural and secular evidence to support his case for the Iranian-Armageddon connection. After a glimpse of Iran in ancient Roman and Jewish histories, you will learn the significance of prophecy in the Jewish Scriptures and apocalyptic literature. Jeff’s analysis is based on sound scriptural understanding as well as his conclusions from two decades of academic contemplation. This easy read will provide fodder for its advocates and critics alike.

Dead Sea Drilling Reveals 'Epic' Droughts



SCIENCE: BY MELANIE LIDMAN (r) TimesOfIsrael.com

Scientists who drilled 1,500 feet into the floor of the Dead Sea announced this spring that the region may have been affected by “epic” centuries-long droughts, much worse than researchers previously believed.

The study, led by Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and scientists from six countries, examined a geological sample revealing more than 200,000 years of climate history in the Dead Sea region.

“All observations show this region as one of those most affected by modern climate change, and it’s predicted to get drier,” said Yael Kiro, the lead study author and a geochemist at Lamont-Doherty. “What we showed is that even under natural conditions, it can become much drier than predicted by any of our models.”

The scientists drilled the core sample in around-the-clock drilling that lasted for 40 days and 40 nights. They studied the thickness of the salt layers, as well as liquid bubbles trapped in the layers of salt, to determine precipitation and runoff to the Dead Sea, uncovering some alarming trends.

According to the study, the region experienced two major drought periods when rainfall and runoff patterns were at some points less than 20% of the average rainfall for the 20th century.

Generally, salt accumulates at approximately half an inch per year, after which

[\(continued next page\)](#)



Courtesy Yael Kiro/Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory

The geological core drilled 1,500 feet into the Dead Sea floor reveals layers of mud from the rainy season (bottom) and layers of salt deposited during the dry season (top).



A spate of sinkholes along the shores of the Dead Sea (January 2017). Today there are more than 6,000 sinkholes, with new ones appearing each day.

Photo by Melanie Lidman / Times of Israel

View of salt evaporation pans on the Dead Sea, taken in 1989 from the Space Shuttle Columbia (STS-28)



A salt flat on the shores of the Dead Sea in January 2017

Photo by Melanie Lidman / Times of Israel

a layer of mud is deposited during the rainy season. But in some places, the salt layers were 300 feet thick — indicating an epic drought with little to no rain.

These “epic” droughts lasted for decades or even centuries. There were at least two indications of these massive droughts, one dating from 115,000 to 130,000 years ago, and the other one from 6,000 to 10,000 years ago.

According to researchers, rainfall has declined about 10% since 1950, and existing climate models say it could sink another 20% this century. Long droughts can have catastrophic effects on the region. Many people blame a 1998–2012 drought in Syria, the worst in 900 years, as one of the catalysts for the current civil war.

Residents around the Dead Sea are trying to find new ways to deal with the reality of the shrinking Dead Sea, as millions of people in Syria, Jordan, and Israel siphon out the water to use for agriculture and consumption. The Dead Sea is shrinking at more than 3 feet per year, creating more than 6,000 sinkholes along the shore as the water recedes.

Currently, the Sea of Galilee (also known as Lake Kinneret), which is the main source for the Dead Sea runoff, is at its lowest level in more than a century. The Kinneret, Israel’s most important natural water source, received just 10% of its average rainfall for February, the driest February in the area since record-keeping began.

The Dead Sea is one of our favorite spots. It saddens us to see its current plight. But we hold fast to the promise in Ezekiel 47:8–9. One day that body of water will be alive again! — David and Kirsten

(Note: see “The Disappearing Dead Sea” on [p. 10](#) and what artists can do with concentrated salt in the [December 2016 Levitt Letter p. 25.](#)) ★

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IRONIC THING IS, SHE HAD JUST CUT WAY BACK ON HER SODIUM INTAKE



Overcoming Bacterial Resistance to Antibiotics



MEDICINE: BY JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH (r) JPost.com

A breakthrough by researchers at Haifa's **Technion — Israel Institute of Technology** could lead to new types of antibiotics to fight bacterial disease effectively.

At present, due to overuse of existing antibiotics and the growing resistance of bacteria to them, highly pathogenic (disease-causing) bacteria such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) cause deaths from nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections.

But that could change, thanks to the findings recently published in *Science* by Technion Asst. Prof. Meytal Landau and colleagues of the biology faculty.

The researchers discovered the existence of unique amyloid fibrils with which MRSA attacks the human cells and immune system. The discovery — that could advance the development of

antibiotics with a novel mechanism of action that will attack key bacterial toxins — is “ammunition” that helps the bacteria. Atomic resolution revealed a novel form of a toxic amyloid fibril. Amyloids (proteins notoriously known for their association with neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's) form a network of protein fibrils similar to a spider's web. These are characterized by an orderly and extremely stable structure that makes it possible for the proteins to withstand extreme conditions in which ordinary proteins do not survive. The study revealed an amyloid with a completely new structure, which was named cross-alpha.

“At some point, we knew that we had found something unique, but only after several trips to cyclic particle accelerators (synchrotrons) in Grenoble and Chicago were we successful in verifying its being a new type of amyloid,” said Landau. “Much more work was required before we could publish our findings, but from the very first moment, it was clear to us that what we had was a paradigm shift.”

She believes that **the new discovery will lead to antibiotics with a new action mechanism**. Such drugs would inhibit the amyloid formation, thereby neutralizing one of the important “weapons” in the arsenal of this pathogenic bacterium.

Since such an antibiotic is not aimed at killing the bacterium but only reducing its toxicity to humans, it would not lead to the development of bacterial resistance toward it. ★



The Technion in Haifa



How to Survive Natural Disasters



IDF HOME FRONT COMMAND / IDFblog.com

Most people don't worry about natural disaster preparedness until it's too late. It's the job of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Home Front Command's head officer of first aid courses, 2d Lt. Eyal, to prepare civilians to survive natural disasters. Now, he's teaching you.

1. Shut it down

When disaster strikes, get as far away from the destruction as possible. Then unplug, turn off, and deactivate any source of water, gas, or electricity. If you're outside a building when it collapses, find the nearest sources and do what you can to prevent further damage.

2. Don't Yell!

"It's crucial to stay calm and not panic, no matter how difficult the situation is," says Eyal. If you find yourself under rubble, it might take some time before you're found. Yelling wastes your energy and creates panic in an already chaotic situation.

3. Take charge

Every citizen has the power to make an impact, especially when disaster strikes. If you, or people near you, are trapped under rubble, take matters into your own hands if you can. You don't need to wait for authorities to arrive to start clearing the way.

4. Elements attract

Rubble can weigh hundreds of pounds, so pure human muscle won't always do the trick. Be creative and remember that "elements attract." When picking up metal debris, use something metal. When lifting wood, use something wooden—it makes the lifting a lot easier. If this isn't an option, you can still use whatever tools you find.

5. Cover up

The smoke and dust that circulate in the air after buildings collapse or an earthquake can be hazardous to the lungs. Use your shirt or a nearby cloth to cover your mouth and filter out the dust. It won't beat a mask, but until help arrives, it can help keep you healthy.

The Home Front Command demonstrates these tips during regular courses for citizens of all ages and backgrounds. You can see them in action in disasters both in Israel and [abroad](#). As Eyal explains, "At the end of the day, we all want to save lives." ★



SELECT MEDIA BRIEFS



Claims on Jerusalem:

Jewish—Kings David and Solomon, the Temples, the direction Jews pray, the subject of Psalms, artworks, etc.

Muslim—A flying horse

Myth: Jerusalem Is Holy to Muslims

By Morton A. Klein and Daniel Mandel / JNS.org

With the 50th anniversary of Jerusalem's reunification, there is no better time to end the propagandist myth that Jerusalem is a city holy to Muslims.

Jerusalem rates not a single mention in the Koran, and Muslims face Mecca in prayer. The Muslim shrines in Jerusalem—the Dome of the Rock (691 A.D.) and the Al-Aqsa mosque (705 A.D.)—were built on the site of the destroyed Biblical Jewish Temples—a time-honored Islamic practice to physically signal the dominance of Islam.

References in the Koran and *hadiths* to Mohammed's "night journey" to heaven on his steed Buraq from the "farthest mosque" couldn't mean Jerusalem, because the Koran refers to the land of Israel as the "nearest" place. Nor could it have been a reference to the Al-Aqsa mosque, for the simple reason that Al-Aqsa didn't exist in Mohammed's day.

When did Jerusalem become a passionate Islamic issue? Only with the Arab confrontation with Zionism

in the 20th century. It was **Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, a vociferous anti-Semite and later Nazi collaborator, who fabricated a tradition** that the wall to which Mohammed tethered his steed was not the southern or eastern walls, as Muslims had asserted for centuries, but the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest prayer site. This turned the Western Wall into a flashpoint.

Neither the PLO's National Charter nor the Fatah Constitution mentions Jerusalem, let alone calls for it as a Palestinian capital.

But today, **the PA uses Jerusalem as a propaganda instrument to incite violence**. In 1996, Yasser Arafat used Israel's opening of an archaeological tunnel near the Temple Mount to incite riots on the basis of the lie that the tunnel threatened the stability of the Al-Aqsa mosque.

In 2015, PA President Mahmoud Abbas fabricated claims of Jewish assaults on the mosques.

When a senior White House official recently said that the U.S. would not move its embassy to Jerusalem because "we're not looking to provoke anyone when everyone's playing

really nice," it gave the Palestinians their latest reason to believe that violence over Jerusalem reaps rewards. The

(continued next page)



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fabrication of Jerusalem’s importance to Islam enables the instigation of bloodshed. If the propaganda myth persists, expect no change.

UK Won’t Apologize for Balfour Declaration

By Adam Rasgon / Reuters

The British Foreign Office said recently that it does not plan to apologize for issuing the Balfour Declaration, as the 100th anniversary of the document, which helped pave the way for the establishment of the State of Israel, approaches in November.



Lord Arthur James Balfour and the text of the Balfour Declaration

Manuel Hassassian, the Palestinian Authority’s ambassador to the UK, said that unless Britain apologized, canceled celebrations of the declaration’s centenary, and recognized a Palestinian state, the Palestinians would proceed with a lawsuit against the British government for issuing it.

“The Balfour Declaration is an historic statement for which Her Majesty’s Government does not intend to apologize. We are proud of our role in creating the State of Israel. The task now is to encourage moves toward peace,” the British Foreign Office said in a statement.

The Balfour Declaration was a letter sent by then-British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to a leader in the British Jewish community, in which Balfour said the British government views “with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

The document also says that the British government “will use [its] best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object” and further states, “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”

Palestine was under British rule when Balfour made the policy statement.

Following the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in 1920 the San Remo Mandate gave birth to Israel’s founding as a modern nation ([Levitt Letter, May 2014, p. 6](#)).

Palestinian Tweeting Without Facts [JTA.org](#)

A Palestinian activist in the northern West Bank sounded the alarm that settlers were building a new outpost in the area. It was actually a set for a children’s movie — *Yuval, The Hero in the Clouds*, scheduled for release next summer.

Children’s television personality Yuval Shemtov (known as *Yuval HaMebulbal*, or Yuval the Confused) stars in the movie. The production company making the film explained that it chose the site for its green and mountainous scenery, not due to politics.

Tweets on the official Hamas Twitter feed accused Israeli residents in a settlement near Ariel of building a new outpost made up of 13 colorful tents, wooden caravans, and a generator.

The alarm was widely reported in Palestinian media. ★



Evidence of Jerusalem's Destruction in 70 A.D.



ARCHAEOLOGY: BY TZIPPE BARROW and CHRIS MITCHELL (r) CBN.com

As Israelis celebrate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem this summer, archaeologists are finding evidence of the battle for Jerusalem two millennia ago. They are excavating the main thoroughfare that led to the Second Temple before its destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D.

The road, about 20 feet below the surface, leads from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple Mount. Archaeologists believe that it could have been built during the reign of Pontius Pilate and would likely have been the route Jesus walked on His way to the Temple, according to a co-director of the excavation, Moran Hagbi. "It's opening a new era in the research of Jerusalem," he adds. Hagbi and Nahshon Szanton are co-directing the work.

"Two thousand years after the destruction of Jerusalem and 50 years since its liberation, we are going back to the water cisterns, the market, and the city square on the eve of its destruction," they state.

Arrowheads and ballista balls used in the battle against Jerusalem, as recorded by historian Flavius Josephus, are among the finds.

"On the following day, the Romans, having routed the brigades from the town, set the whole on fire as far as [the pool of] Siloam," Josephus wrote.

Verifying Josephus

Szanton and Hagbi say their finds verify the authenticity of Josephus' descriptions. The Romans used ballista balls, fired by catapults, to bombard Jerusalem. The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) archaeologists also discovered arrowheads used by the Jewish rebels in the hard-fought battles against the Roman legionnaires, exactly as Josephus described.

Using state-of-the-art research methods from the fields of biology, geology, and

[\(continued next page\)](#)



Excavation co-director Nahshon Szanton and ballista



ballista stones



Roman oil lamps



natural science, archaeologists have so far uncovered a section of the road 328' x 25'.

Their findings indicate that King Herod was not solely responsible for the mammoth construction projects in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple Period. Instead, the evidence shows that the street was built after Herod's reign, under the stewardship of the Roman procurators of Jerusalem, possibly during the reign of Pontius Pilate, who sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion.



"This conclusion sheds new light on the history of Jerusalem in the late Second Temple Period, and reinforces the importance of the Roman procurators' rule in shaping the character of Jerusalem," Szanton and Hagbi observe.

Thousands to Walk on the Ancient Street

"When the excavations are completed, the remains of the street will be conserved and developed and made ready to receive the tens of thousands of visitors who will walk along it," IAA Jerusalem region archaeologist Dr. Yuval Baruch states.

Baruch says archaeologists hope to uncover the entire length and width of the street within five years and complete earlier excavations begun by European and American scholars.



Szanton and glass juglet

The IAA says that using a multidisciplinary approach to the excavation, such as wet sifting at the IAA's sifting site in the Zurim Valley National Park, will provide insight to many unanswered questions. Meanwhile, the dig is continuing upward toward the Temple Mount.

"It will soon be possible to walk for the first time along one of the main streets of ancient Jerusalem — to see how it looked and receive answers to historical questions that have been asked for 100 years about the history of Jerusalem at the height of its splendor during the Second Temple and from the moments of its destruction," the IAA concludes.

The excavation is being conducted under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Nature and Parks Authority in the City of David. ★



This Time, No Churchill In Sight



BY LARRY ALEX TAUNTON (r) Spectator.org

In 1934, Winston Churchill warned of an aggressively armed Germany. Called a “warmonger” then, Churchill, we now know, was prophetic.

The days in which we live are not so different from the 1930s. In fundamentalist Islam, the West faces the greatest threat to its existence. And like leaders in Churchill’s time, we are sleepwalking through it. In the 1930s, Western media and governments ignored persecution of the Jews. Today, it is not only the Jewish people, but more so Christians.

The world is witnessing the rise of a new generation of Christian martyrs. The primary oppressor of Christians and Jews (and even of Muslims) is Islam. Archbishop Bashar Warda (of Erbil, Iraq), said that the threat posed by ISIS is enough to bring about “the extinction of Christianity as a religion and as a culture in Mesopotamia.”

According to the Global Terrorism Index, **there has been a fivefold increase in fatalities from terrorist acts since 9/11. Four groups — all of them Islamic — are responsible for most of these.**

“Radical Islam” needn’t be *the* representative of the Islamic faith; it is undeniably *a* representative of that religion. Characterizing ISIS, the Taliban, Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, etc. as fringe elements of Islam simply won’t do. These groups occupy *whole countries*, not a mosque or two.

Furthermore, these groups enjoy a great deal of support among Muslims globally. A February 2015 BBC poll of British Muslims found that 27% were “sympathetic” to the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Though 27% is not a majority, 1 in 4 is not insignificant, translating to roughly 700,000 Muslims in Britain alone.

Though not all Muslims are would-be terrorists, Islam contains a disproportionate number of adherents who believe that practicing their religion faithfully means that non-Muslims must convert or die. As in the lead-up to World War II, there is a comprehensive failure on the part of Western leaders to understand the nature of this

threat. Why? The answer can be found in Christianity’s waning influence in the West.

Secularism renders the West ill-equipped to understand an absolutist religious mindset like that of Islamists. People, secularists assume, act out of rational self-interest unless they are insane. Note the narrative after every terrorist attack: the perpetrators, we are told, were unhinged or reacting to Western oppression (thus, it is our fault) rather than faithful followers of their religion. Politicians said the same thing of *Mein Kampf*. History has demonstrated all too painfully that Hitler meant every word of it.

Truth itself is deemed an abstract, fuzzy concept. Conflict is avoided by acknowledging no truth, no culture, as superior to another. But this is nonsense. Were Western values superior to those of Imperial Japan? Yes. And they are superior to those of North Korea and of any Islamic state.

Secularism renders the West ill-equipped to understand an absolutist religious mindset like that of Islamists.

Commenting on the Japanese surrender ceremony, Toshikazu Kase, Japan’s foreign minister and signer of the document, wrote this to the Emperor immediately afterward: “After all, we were not beaten on the battlefield by dint of superior arms alone. We were defeated in a spiritual contest by virtue of a nobler idea.”

Whether we Westerners want to acknowledge it or not, we are engaged in a spiritual contest, a global war, and Christianity is unquestionably the nobler idea.

Spot on. The Bible is clear in the Great Commission that Jesus gave to His followers (Matthew 28:19–20). The Church (Jewish and gentile Believers), as the Bride of Christ, has played the harlot too often in modern history — substituting a feel-good religion for truth. I pray for another Great Awakening in the people of God. That, Dear Reader, is our only hope! —Tony ★



JEWISH HUMOR, ETC.



Homonyms

Rebecca is reading a Bible story to her young daughter, Rivka. “The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.”

Rivka’s eyes widen as she asks, “What happened to the flea, Mommy?”

Beauty and the Beholder

Sarah and Rachel have been married to their husbands for many years and are best friends. Sarah doesn’t think her husband finds her attractive.

Rachel replies, “Don’t worry, dear. As you get older, your husband will find you more beautiful every day. After all, he’s an antiques dealer.” ★

A cheerful heart is good medicine —
Proverbs 17:22



* “Kvetch” – Yiddish for “to complain” or “a complainer”



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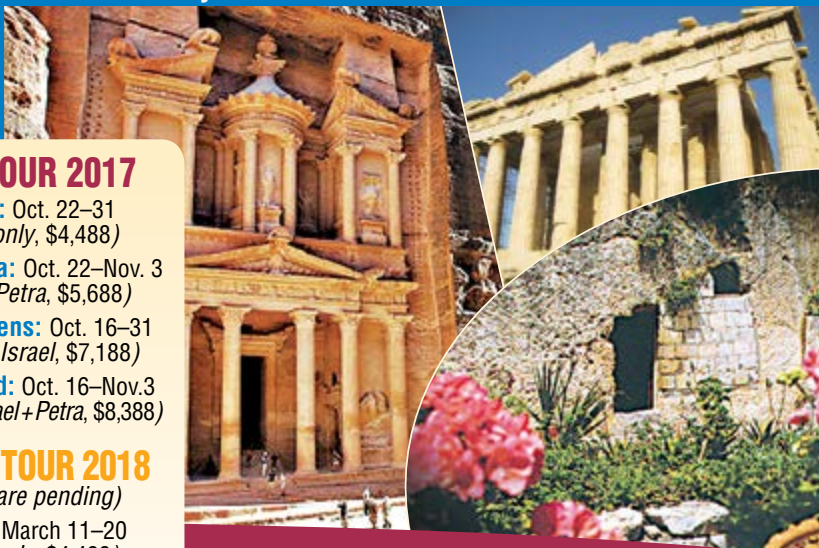
To Index

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Back to
p. 15