



# Levitt LETTER

*Brethren, my heart's  
desire and prayer to  
God for Israel is that  
they might be saved.*  
— ROMANS 10:1

inside: **Peace in  
the Midst** p.4

## Shavuot/Feast of Weeks: Jewish or Christian or Both?

Jews for Jesus / [JewsForJesus.org](http://JewsForJesus.org)

**Shavuot** (shah-voo-oat) means “weeks” in Hebrew. The Greek word for this holiday is *Pentecost*, which means “50<sup>th</sup>.”

### Old Testament Jewish Tradition *(Leviticus 23:15–21)*

*Shavuot* is a harvest celebration commemorating God’s provision for His people. It shares two important characteristics with *Pesach* (Passover) and *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles):

1. All three holidays involved a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
2. All three holidays involved first-fruit offerings at the Temple.
  - Passover (in early spring) included first fruits from the first harvest, barley.
  - *Shavuot* (in late spring) offered first fruits from the wheat harvest, including a “wave offering” of two loaves of leavened

*(continued p.2)*

#### REMEMBER:

**Shavuot May 29\*–30, Pentecost May 31,  
State of Israel’s Independence Day May 14**  
*(\* Jewish holidays begin at sunset the evening before.)*

## Luther on Plagues

The Lutheran Church

We hope you enjoy this devotional from Martin Luther on how to respond to things like the coronavirus, steering between the extremes of faithless panic on the one hand and foolhardy putting God to the test on the other. Written in 1527, as the Bubonic Plague had begun to sweep through the streets of Wittenberg, it answered a question posed by Pastor Johann Hess: “Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague.”



*Martin Luther (1529) by Lucas Cranach the Elder*

*“I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and*

*(continued p.5)*



# Shavuot/Feast of Weeks ... *continued from cover*

bread. Some say they represent all of humanity — one loaf is the Jewish people, the other non-Jews (gentiles); others see them as representing the two tablets that Moses brought down from Sinai.

- *Sukkot* (in the fall) was the final harvest and included firstfruits of olives and grapes.



The Book of Ruth is read, tying in with the themes of harvest and community. This also ties in with the belief that King David was born on *Shavuot*, since the last verse of the book shows that Ruth was one of his ancestors.

- Jewish people traditionally decorate homes and synagogues with flowers and greens.
- Milk products are eaten, because the rabbis say that when the Jews received the Law they were as newborn babies.

## Shavuot in the New Testament *(Acts 2)*

### God's grace revealed through the Living Word

When the Holy Spirit came to the disciples in tongues of flames and they began speaking other languages, they were preaching the Gospel of Jesus to God-fearing Jews who had come to Jerusalem from every nation to observe *Shavuot* at the Temple.

### The Resurrection connection:

#### King David and Yeshua

Peter seemed to know the tradition of King David's birth and death on *Shavuot* when he used the prophecies of David in the Psalms to speak of the resurrection of Jesus, the Son of David.

### Prophecy fulfilled

Peter pointed out to the crowd that they were witnessing a fulfillment of proph-

ecy from the Book of Joel (Joel 2:28).

### An experience of revelation and community

A mighty revelation occurred that day as 3,000 Jewish people understood the truth of Peter's words and became followers of Jesus. The 3,000 souls saved equaled the same number of disbelievers lost when Moses descended with the Tablets (Ex. 32:28).

### Shavuot in the future

#### *The harvest festival to come*

Just as there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that Jewish people heard and accepted Jesus in a supernatural way on Pentecost, so an even greater outpouring is predicted by the prophet Zechariah:

*"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." (Zechariah 12:10)*

Yes, there will be mourning when all of Israel finally realizes who Jesus is, but after the mourning and the repentance will be great joy. Yeshua said this regarding the End Time harvest of souls:

*"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38)*



It's important to remember that Pentecost did not involve speaking an unknown language. The disciples shared the Gospel message in languages they had never spoken before, to pilgrims who understood those languages ... making it more of a miracle than seemingly random syllables! — Kirsten ★



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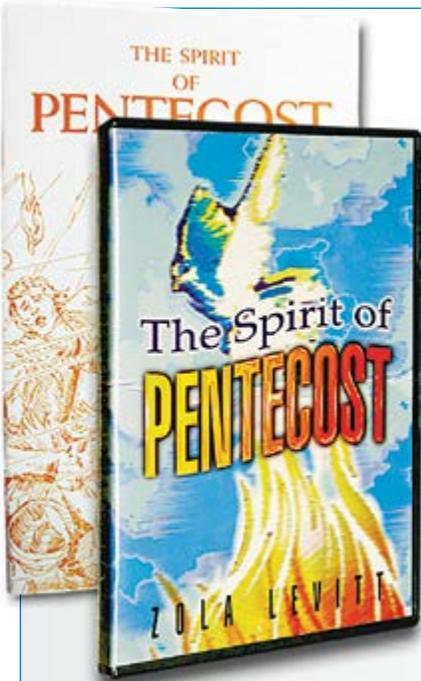


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## The Spirit of Pentecost

study booklet & teaching CD  
by Zola Levitt

An insightful look at Peter's stunning sermon based on Scripture from the Psalms and the Book of Joel.

Pentecost marks the inception of the universal Church and, so far, the last of the fulfilled prophetic feasts. The "birthday of the Church" is explained as it happened on that dramatic day when the Holy Spirit came.

See the related [cover article](#), "Shavuot/Feast of Weeks: Jewish or Christian or Both?"

(All titles also available as eBooks.)

# Peace in the Midst

David and Kirsten Hart  
Studio co-hosts of  
*Our Jewish Roots*



*Christ Asleep during the Tempest* (circa 1853) by Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City



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Churches canceling services, a worldwide pandemic, Zola Tours postponing its Holy Land tour for the first time in 41 years ... and folks hoarding toilet paper? There have been crazier times (see cover side story), and there will be more.

We're not trying to downplay what is happening but, rather, convey the truth that this too shall pass. Is running out of toilet paper an inconvenience? Yes. (But remember, modern toilet paper is an invention of the mid-1800s. Before that, folks used whatever was handy: leaves, grass, corn cobs, seashells, moss, water, and paper from various sources, e.g. the Sears catalog). Can losing income be devastating when businesses, schools, major events, and airports close? Yes. Nonetheless, we Believers in Yeshua *must* bear in mind that He is still in control.

## Hunkering Down

We Harts look on the bright side of living through this time of "hunkering down" (as they say here in Missouri), and concentrate on what's important. Forced quarantine — self-isolation with family and slowing down — *can* be a good thing. Perhaps we all need some mandatory family time.

The days when Jesus lived in the flesh were perilous. Roman rule was harsh and particularly cruel to the Jewish people. Jesus arrived when the Middle East was in turmoil. Bringing good news, He offered peace during their storm, as He does during ours.

How has the coronavirus affected you and your family? Perhaps you were planning to go with Zola Tours to Israel when Israel "self-isolated." Maybe your income and investments declined, and you now face financial challenges. Even if you come down with the virus itself, God wants you to know that He'll walk through this with you. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus expresses His desires to give us rest for our souls and come alongside to carry our burdens.

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credit:  
Pluspng.com

## “Peace, be still”

One of our dear Israeli friends, Talya Polinger, manages The Decks restaurant in Tiberias, Israel. Portions of the restaurant jut out over the Sea of Galilee. She recently posted a video showing the sea's large, pounding waves, mentioning that she had never seen the water so turbulent! Messiah, 2,000 years ago, was on that very body of water in a small fishing boat. You know the story: He commanded the water, “Peace, be still” ... and it obeyed!

As Jesus spoke over the roaring waters that night, so we speak over you now, “Peace...” May the God of *shalom* (peace) give you deep, sweet peace in your life this very moment. May you rest in His many promises. We love all of you and are thankful to have you in our lives. ★

## Luther on Plagues *continued from cover sidebar*



*persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their*

*death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what*

*he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely, as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”*

To read the rest of his letter, [click here](#).

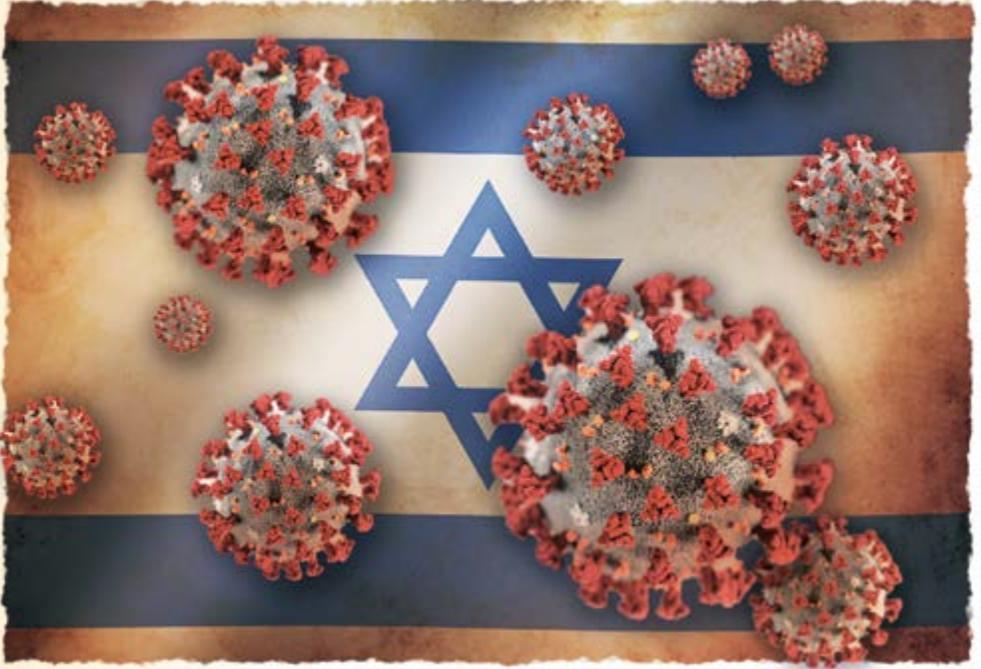


# Extreme Measures

On the Ground in Israel  
**Sarah Liberman**  
[SarahLiberman.com](http://SarahLiberman.com)  
OJR Contributor



## PART 1:



Coronavirus in Israel

Here in Israel, we have a saying: “*Yihiyeh B’seder.*” It translates roughly: “Everything will be okay.” This common response reflects a cultural attitude when facing a problem ... or a stressed-out person. This kind of attitude could have put Israel on a collision course with tragedy in the early months of 2020.

## The Response of Israel’s Government

A quickly spreading disease like COVID-19, the novel coronavirus that originated in China in late 2019, has not been experienced by people since the Spanish flu pandemic (January 1918 – December 1920). In contrast to

most countries, Israel took swift and harsh action to deal with this virus.

Israel immediately closed our borders to flights from China, Thailand, Singapore, and Hong Kong, which, because they are gateway airports, effectively shut down all travel to the Eastern Hemisphere. As a result, many Israelis lost deposits and payments on

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credit: Flash90



Israeli firefighter wearing protective clothes to disinfect Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv as part of measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in 2020



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expensive vacations, and hundreds of thousands of tourists who enter Israel through Asia were blocked, causing severe financial strains on several important industries with no warning.

Shortly after this, Israel began to place additional countries on the no-fly list, effectively stopping entry for the 4.5 million tourists who visit annually. Financial as well as job losses kept piling up. The Israeli government faced stern criticism both from within and without due to these measures.

Inside the country, Israelis were stunned at how swiftly new steps were introduced, curtailing citizens' freedom and causing painful financial repercussions. Mandatory measures — closing the borders, mass quarantines for the sick or suspected sick, clamping down on mass gatherings, and enforcing social distancing — sounded far-fetched just days before they came into effect. It felt surreal, especially with the reported low numbers of infected people. It was a hard pill for the Israeli public to swallow as we swung from apathy to concern about the virus. However, Israel proved to be one critical step ahead of most countries in the world in its response. These extreme measures soon became the heart of global consensus on how to deal with this pandemic.

## The Response of Israel's People

As Israelis watched the catastrophic spread of the virus in Italy, the public mood switched and a high degree of solidarity emerged. Within days, most

people began to obey the strict guidelines, and the country effectively shut down as people remained home. The message that a change in our behavior would save lives was heard loud and clear.

This time, Israelis swung into gear and abandoned their *Yihiyeh B'seder* demeanor. In a real crisis, the true measure of a people and their society is visible. Israelis choose to fight and sacrifice in order to save lives.



credit: Flash90



Israeli youths during a remote learning session at their home in Moshav Yashresh in March 2020

Next month, in part 2 of this series, we will examine:

- What is happening in Israel's neighboring Muslim nations as COVID-19 spreads
- Ramifications for the future of the entire region ★

# What Trump's Peace Deal is Missing

**PART 2:** BY RYAN JONES (r) *Israel Today*



credit: The White House in Washington, DC (official White House photo by Shealah Craighead)



President Donald J. Trump delivers remarks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Jan. 28, 2020 in the East Room of the White House to unveil details of the Trump administration's Middle East Peace Plan.

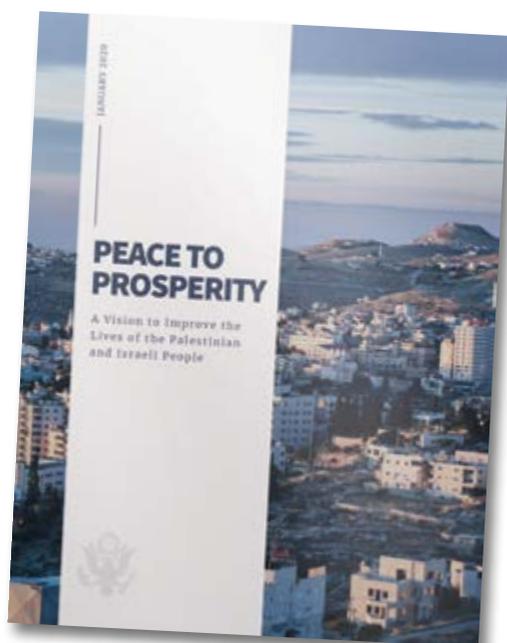
[Last month \(p. 8\)](#), we examined the underlying factor of the Middle East conflict, namely, a willingness to work for peace in the hearts and minds of the people. As a barometer of how the next generation's hearts and minds are being shaped, after-school children's TV programs reveal that Israelis educate for peace while "Palestinians" promote conflict and hatred.

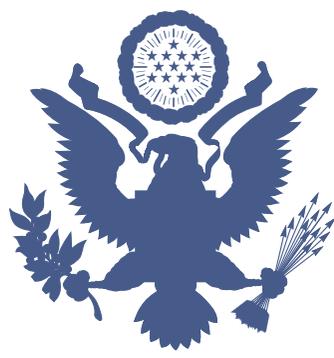
For example, *Tomorrow's Pioneers*, a program on a popular  [Hamas-controlled television](#) station, made waves some years back after [Farfur](#), its beloved Mickey Mouse-like host, was shown being "martyred" by Israelis. His replacement — [Nahool](#), a fuzzy bee character — said he desired to massacre the Jews (note: all Jews, not just Israelis) for killing the mouse, and encouraged his young audience to aspire to the same violent hatred. Many more such examples have been documented, but I won't belabor the point.

Meanwhile, the Israeli version of *Sesame Street* that airs every afternoon on local television

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President Trump's vision for a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, titled *Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People*





features Jewish and Arab characters living side by side in peace and harmony. The underlying theme in *Sesame Street* and other Israeli children's programs is that while Israel is being forced to fight, it must not hate the Muslims, as it ultimately desires to coexist with them.

### Kids will do what they're taught

That's why Israel has long stressed the necessity for the Palestinians to educate their population for peace. But what does that mean in real life?

Not long ago, I attended the "end of year" party at my son's Israeli pre-school. He and his classmates were 4-year-olds at the time. They had no clue that a conflict was raging around them. And yet, the entire event — nearly all the songs the teachers had chosen for the children to sing — focused on the idea of, and the desire for, peace.

These children were not even old enough to understand what "peace" is or why they should be seeking it. But they were having, and continue to have, the idea ingrained in their young, impressionable minds nonetheless.

By contrast, children as young as my own in the Gaza Strip routinely participate in summer camps that indoctrinate them with the idea that Jews are bloodthirsty parasites who should never be trusted, let alone made peace with. Their instructors follow up the ideological lessons by teaching these children how to physically take action and violently eradicate what they like to call the "Jewish cancer."

There is a reason why both sides target such young children with their respective messages of peace and hate: **Kids will do what they are taught to do, even into adulthood** (Proverbs 22:6).

The Israelis are, by and large, ensuring that their future generations will continue to seek peace, even as they fight for their existence as a nation in this region. The Palestinians are ensuring that their future generations will never give peace a chance.

It is difficult to understand how anyone — from President Trump to the average Tel Aviv peace activist — can imagine that there will ever be true peace in the Middle East when **only one side educates for peace**, while the other teaches that its negotiating partners are inherently evil. ★

### Dry Bones



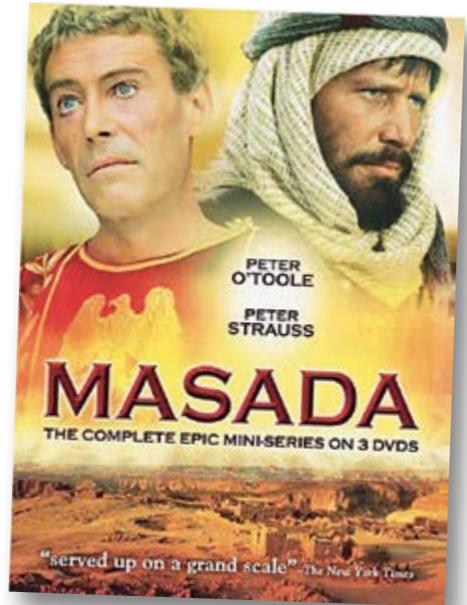
# In Israel's Story We See Christians' Spiritual Journey

Classic Zola  
from 1981  
39 years ago

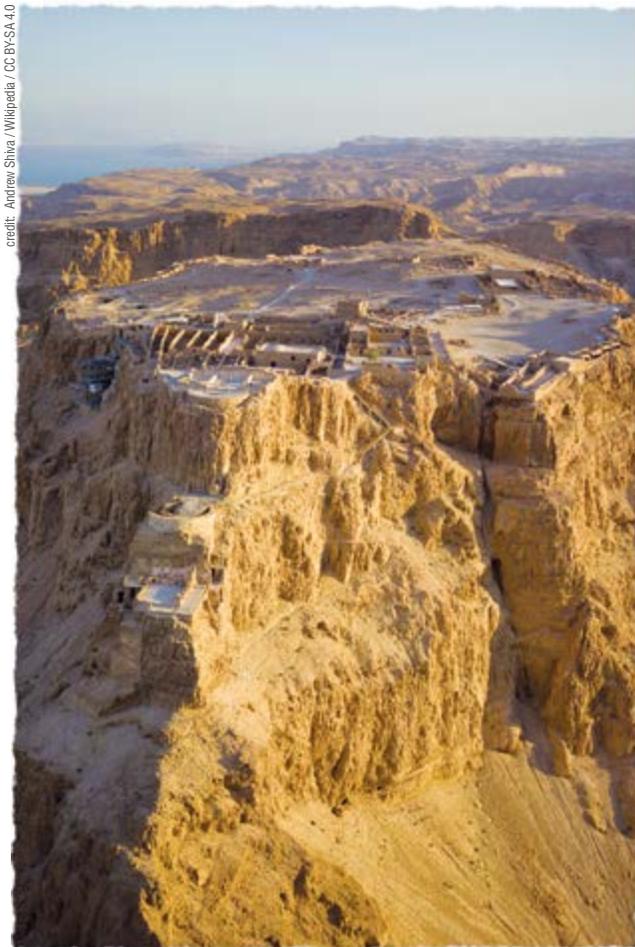


A TV miniseries got people excited about Masada, as though that unparalleled story of courage and fortitude were just discovered.

I rather liked the TV version for its faithfulness to the facts, though like most secular television, it had its tedious stretches of "high drama." Nobody knows what the Romans or the Jews were really thinking or talking about during that long siege, and I rather doubt that the Roman Tenth Legion assigned to that desert assault had as dashing a leader as Peter O'Toole.



The TV miniseries Masada aired on ABC in April, 1981.



credit: Andrew Shiva / Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 4.0

Aerial view of Masada in the Judean Desert

## The Lesson of Masada

The important lesson in Masada is the Israeli attitude toward freedom and possession of their own land. The Romans underestimated the tenacity of the Israelites to hold on to even a barren rock, and in our own future, the Russians will underestimate that same tendency. The Roman Empire as a whole thought it could wipe out Judaism, a Scripturally impossible task. The Russian empire supposes it will wipe out Israel, and it won't even be as successful as the Romans were. As a matter of fact, the Russians will meet with the same fate — extinction!

The Masada-like mentality of modern-day Israel is well known to anyone who's ever visited the place. The Chosen People are more than pioneers.

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They are driven by a single-minded dedication to their land brought on by nineteen centuries of dispersion, Crusades, Inquisition, Holocaust, and a host of other persecutions. Jehovah has inspired His people to regain and fortify their promised land, and they will do just that. An assault on Israel by any power is absolutely hopeless.

Near Masada lies beautiful Jericho, very much a symbol of Heaven itself.

Despite the terribly barren terrain around the Dead Sea and Masada, Jericho is the very picture of beauty and plenty. Cold water courses down its gutters from faithful springs that the prophet Elisha purified. Oranges and grapefruits hang from the trees. Flower boxes adorn many windows and the whole place gives a feeling of nothing less than the Garden of Eden. (Some people suppose that the Garden was actually in Jericho, archaeologically the world's oldest inhabited region).

### The Lesson of Jericho

**Jericho is the end of the Passover story — the grand finale of the Exodus.** As such, it is the symbol of Christian translation — our deliverance to Heaven in the Rapture of the Church. First in the Passover study come the bitter herbs — the bondage of slavery. Then comes the blood of the lamb (Lamb) and salvation; then the water of the Red Sea (our baptism), and finally our journey through the wilderness — this discouraging earthly sojourn.

Ultimately, we are all headed for beautiful Jericho. The children of Israel took that city with shouts and trumpets (Joshua 6:20) just as the Church will rise to Heaven with shouts and trumpets (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Even the name of the leader is the same; Jesus' name in English is Joshua (another version of "Yeshua"), the name of the general at Jericho.

They say Ireland is "a little bit of Heaven." I have seen it and turned green with envy at the beautiful Irish hills and fields. But Jericho thrills me even more since I understand its symbolism. There's simply no other place like it on the face of the Earth.

And so they sit, near to each other, Masada and Jericho, the hope of the Jew and the hope of the Christian. A road connects them, one of many two-lane desert trails that lead out of the arid plains to more-settled parts of Israel. The way is narrow indeed, but the Jewish people at Masada were within sight of complete deliverance!

There's a lesson in those metaphors: Before the world overtakes us Believers — before the "Romans" trap us at the "summit of Masada" — we must plan our trip to "Jericho." We must be sure that when Joshua/Yeshua sounds that trumpet, we will be ready to enter that heavenly city and occupy our promised land. ★



**Q.** What is the key to interpreting the Book of Revelation?

**Dr. Todd Baker**  
Zola Levitt Ministries  
Staff Theologian



**A.** The key to unlocking the meaning of Revelation is found in the book itself! The Holy Spirit gives us the key when Jesus commanded Apostle John: “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things” (Revelation 1:19).



Woodcut of the vision of John on Patmos, by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

The threefold command that Jesus gave to John provides a three-point outline for interpreting the Book of Revelation — encompassing past, present, and future. This spans the time from Jesus’ personal visit to John on Patmos, the Church Age, the events of the Tribulation Period, the Second Coming, and eternity to follow.

**Let’s look at the threefold division crucial to interpreting Revelation.**

Based on Revelation 1:19, we note the following:

1. **“The things which you have seen”** encompasses Revelation 1:10–20 and the vision of the glorified Christ standing before John and in the midst of the “seven lampstands.”
2. **“The things which are”** encompasses Revelation 2:1–3:22 in which Jesus gives messages to the seven Churches of Asia. While these seven were actual congregations in Asia Minor (today’s modern Turkey), they also represent congregations of every church today and prophetically describe the seven well-defined periods of Church history from the Apostolic Age right up to the Church of the Last Days just before the Rapture.
3. **“The things which will take place after these things”** encompasses events from Revelation 4:1 to Revelation 22:21, including John’s being caught up to Heaven and the future happenings: the seven-year Tribulation Period, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Earth, the Millennial Kingdom that follows, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the creation of a new Heaven and Earth by God.

The awesome 21 judgments in Revelation 6–16 (set in three series of seven) will be so devastating that **more than half of the world’s population will be killed** (Revelation 6:8 with 9:18). This progression of judgments has never happened in the past (nor in the present) **within a short seven-year period of time**, so the progression alone argues for the cosmic nature of the events of Revelation’s chapters 6–22 yet to occur!

Walter Scott in his fine 1905 commentary on Revelation underscored the critical importance of how Revelation 1:19 is the key to the correct interpretation for the Book of Revelation set in three divisions of past, present, and future when he wrote:

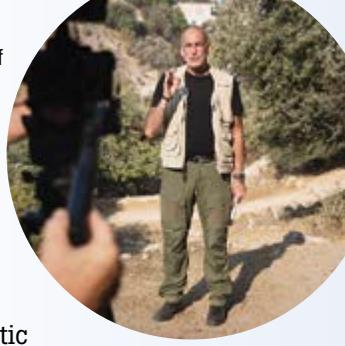
*Here is the key for its interpretation hanging at the door. Take it down, use it, and enter it. There is simplicity and consistency in apportioning the main contents to a past, a present, and a future. You cannot consistently lift events out of the future, or third division, and place them in the second. Each division has its own group of events, and to transpose them is to wrest Scripture. The breaking of the Seals, the blowing of the Trumpets, and the pouring out of the Vials are, with numerous other prophetic events, the time contemplated in chapters 4–22, and that supposes the close of the church’s sojourn on the earth. Thus, much of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation await future fulfillment.*

— *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 50 ★



# Kings and Kingdoms

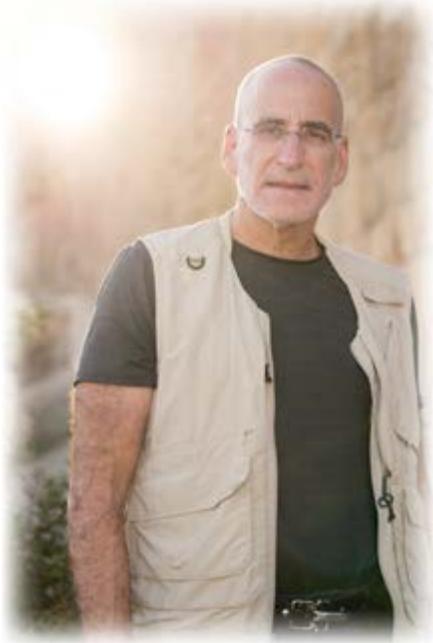
Dr. Jeff Seif  
filming *Kings  
and Kingdoms*  
on location  
in Israel



What follows is a teaser transcript of the teachings from Dr. Jeffrey Seif.

I'm interested in the Book of Kings — actually, in the old Hebrew Bible, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Kings. [What Christians call 1 and 2 Samuel, the Hebrew Bible calls 3 and 4 Kings.] From Saul at the beginning ... all the way to the ending kings, with the fall of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. We're going to explore that in this series ***Kings and Kingdoms***.

The Northern Kingdom that breaks away is going to have 19 kings. It's going to have 200 years of history before it's destroyed, and nine dynasties. Lots of intrigue, lots of despair. We want to look at that and consider what happens when people turn away from God.



We want leadership that's Godly — not just in our broader, cultural home, but in our individual homes as well. We're going to see that there's a correlation between success in life and commitment to Biblical vision and virtue.

We look at the story of the Northern Kingdom. It spins into decay and disrepair and eventual dissolution. The Southern Kingdom is not going to

go through dynastic changes, as was the case with the North. It's going to have 28 kings, but only eight of them are going to prove themselves to be men after God's own heart. The net result is that the Southern Kingdom is going to experience all kinds of decay and disorientation as well.

In a series that deals with kings and kingdoms — even in Biblical literature — **we see all kinds of schemes at work, yesterday much as we see them today**, as individuals are vying to be "the man of the hour with the power." A difference in the Biblical economy, however, is that leaders were not "elected" leaders. They were "selected." That is the way the story begins, with God Himself appointing and anointing, in fact.

We know the word "Messiah" from the Bible. Messiah means "anointed one." It might as well mean "appointed one." There's providence at work when God chooses a person. God selects the person with a net result: They're given power! They're keeping power and using it successfully as predicated — not on the dint of their own determination, but to the extent that they adhere to Biblical principles.

When it comes to politics, there's always intrigue. I think it best to look for individuals who are endeavoring to build on a bedrock of good promise as opposed to scheming and manipulating their way to get to the top with fancy words and an extension of their own ambition.

I don't mind ambition. As we look at kings and kingdoms throughout the Word, we'll see what the Bible looks for in leaders; how the Bible holds leaders accountable to whether or not they build their own lives and kingdoms on the bedrock of Biblical faith, vision, and virtue. ★

# Welcome to The Twilight Zone

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



**Mr. Rod Serling** (1924–1975) created and presented the 30-minute, black-and-white television program *The Twilight Zone* from 1959 to 1964. Each episode's story featured mem-

orable individuals coping with novel challenges, thus involuntarily finding themselves in "The Twilight Zone."

Serling was born to a Jewish family in Syracuse, New York on Christmas Day 1924. (Some science fiction fans and Believers\* wondered if he wasn't also divinely inspired.) Like Zola, he was a longtime smoker afflicted with heart disease.



Ed Wynn—keeping his grandfather clock ticking

**Would any ZLMer disagree that Benjamin Netanyahu's imposed Israeli quarantine has put this ministry and Zola Tours—and all of Israel—in a *Twilight Zone*?** One of the TV program's episodes, "Ninety Years Without Slumbering" (1963), concerned a retired watchmaker who fears that when his grandfather clock stops ticking, his own life will end. What is befalling the apple of God's eye now that Israel's tourism has stopped ticking?

Many Israeli businesses are going dormant and perishing. "Misery loves company" goes the adage, and the Israelites are in good company around the globe. For the first time since my father founded Zola Tours in 1983—and it took a *plague!*—

our pilgrims had to either accept refunds or postpone their enrollments until our next tour. What a stunning economic blow to our guides, drivers, land agencies, and Biblical sites.

The loss of revenue for this ministry, which owns Zola Tours, also amounts to a body blow. We certainly are not alone in reeling financially. Nonetheless, this ministry does not seek contributions from those suddenly living on modest reserves.

We are, however, rekindling our *Good News from a Far Country* fund for donors who wish to designate contributions to help sustain our Holy Land guides and drivers. Zola initially created this fund during the Gulf War, when Scud missiles frightened away too many would-be tourists. Meanwhile, our own groups, though smaller, NEVER. STOPPED. GOING... and receiving a warm reception as crème-de-la-crème Zionists from afar.

Israel's self-quarantine also torpedoed our mid-March Holy Land TV shoot with Dr. Jeffrey Seif, David and Kirsten, and a bevy of Messianic Jewish guests ready with contemporary Biblical commentary. Fortunately, our resourceful producer Ken Berg is able to shoot worthy footage at Capernaum Studios's First Century Village, about 90 minutes west of Dallas.

Scott Burns, a financial-business columnist, offered a silver lining to the gray cloud of today's downturned stock market. Investors in IRAs and 401(k)s are getting bargain prices on shares with the bear market. Retirees realize that this decline, too, shall pass and their accounts should recover over time.

God, as always, is in control (Isa. 41:10, Psalm 46:1, Phil. 4:6–7). Coronavirus won't be our last pandemic. Whatever doesn't kill us will enable us to prepare for what's coming next, such as the Rapture ... CQLJ (*Come quickly, Lord Jesus!*) ★



\* A Believer is anyone who believes in Yeshua as Messiah

# ZLM Bulletin Board

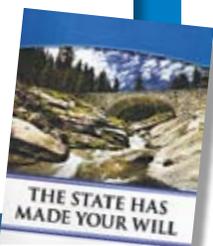


## Leaked Video Proves ...

that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is masquerading as (choose one): **A**) an Arab oil sheik, **B**) a beauty contestant judge at the King Abdul Aziz Camel Festival, **C**) yet another anti-Zionist running for U.S. Congress, **D**) an almost-ready-for-primetime singer who knows Psalm 147 by heart. (Answer: **D**)

In 2020, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu joined Israeli television personalities Yinon Magal, Erel Segal, and Shimon Riklin in an impromptu jam session. Together, they sang Psalm 147:12-13 in its original Hebrew. After the video went viral, guitarist Erel Segal was suspended from his position as a television presenter on Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation's KAN Channel. In a protest of solidarity, his colleague Kalman Libeskind refused to work as a presenter until Segal is reinstated.

[Here's the leaked video.](#)



**FREE ITEM**

## Burgeoning Atheism and Agnosticism

A recent Barna Group survey indicates that Christians who actively practice their faith (prioritizing faith and regular church attendance) have decreased by nearly half (from 45% to just 25%) since 2000. Meanwhile, the survey concluded, the number of American atheists and agnostics has doubled. Thanks to you, our donors, [levitt.com](http://levitt.com)'s two-Testament Bible teaching remains FREE 24/7 for folks reluctant to attend church for whatever reason.



## Pamphlet of the Month

**The State Has Made Your Will** pamphlet begins, "There's no law that says you have to make a will or other estate plans." Then it explains some assumptions the court may be forced to make in the absence of one and possible ways it would divide assets. The various topics are especially relevant to parents of minor children and anyone who wishes to minimize estate taxes. To receive this pamphlet at no charge, email us at [staff@levitt.com](mailto:staff@levitt.com) or write to our P.O. Box.

**Request POM# 10.**

## Free Levitt Letter Overages

Our overprints each month are available for the asking, while supplies last. These are suitable for sharing with your Bible study groups or neighbors that love Israel. Maybe drop them in logical places to be discovered by the curious. Write to our PO Box or email us at [staff@levitt.com](mailto:staff@levitt.com) with the quantity we can mail to you.



## "Come Home!"

Zola Tours to Israel



See page 36 for details



## Awakening to Judgment

by John Parsons  
Hebrew for Christians  
[Hebrew4Christians.com](http://Hebrew4Christians.com)



יָבֵשׁ הָצִיר נָבֵל צִיץ וּדְבַר-אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם

“The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God stands forever” (Isa. 40:8)

|          |           |         |        |             |             |                 |         |             |           |
|----------|-----------|---------|--------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| יָבֵשׁ   | הָצִיר    | נָבֵל   | צִיץ   | וּ          | דְבַר       | אֱלֹהֵינוּ      | יָקוּם  | לְ          | עוֹלָם    |
| (2) (1)  | (2) (1)   | (2) (1) | (1)    | (3) (2) (1) | (3) (2) (1) | (4) (3) (2) (1) | (2) (1) | (3) (2) (1) | (1)       |
| ya-veish | cha-tzeer | na-vell | tzeetz | oo-de-var   | oo-de-var   | e-lo-hey'-noo   | ya-koom | le-o-lahm   | le-o-lahm |
| withers  | grass     | fades   | flower | but         | the         | word of our God | stands  | forever     | forever   |

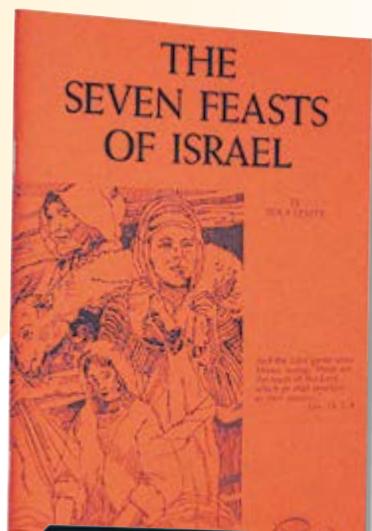
As we draw closer to the appointed “End of Days,” it is crucial that we gird ourselves by recalling the truth of God and by refusing to embrace the world and its despair. The coronavirus may be a foreshock of judgment upon the world system that scorns the truth of God, though the real judgment may come not so much in the form of the virus itself, but from the control measures instituted by Godless worldly powers that seek to capitalize on the disaster. In this time of divine testing, we must keep our eyes focused heavenward, trusting in the LORD God Almighty (כָּל יְכוּל), calling upon Yeshua who is the only Savior.

Just as the patriarch Noah foresaw the great cataclysm to come, so we understand that the world above our heads and under our feet is likewise destined to destruction, as we also await the promised world to come. As it is written in our Scriptures: *“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever (שְׁוַעֲתִי לְעוֹלָם תְּהִיָּה), and My righteousness will never be dismayed”* (Isa. 51:6). Amen. *“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever”* (Isa. 40:8).

Faith sees the invisible. Our father Abraham was promised descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky or sand on the seashore, despite the fact that he was an old man and his wife had long passed the age of bearing children. Abraham believed in the One who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist: *“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform: And therefore ‘it was imputed to him for righteousness”* (Rom. 4:20–22).

**Faith in God trusts in an unseen good**, apprehends a future and a hope, and refuses to allow this world to have the last word of what is ultimately real. Therefore, like Abraham, we are *“strangers and exiles on the earth, looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God”* (2 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:10, 13). ★

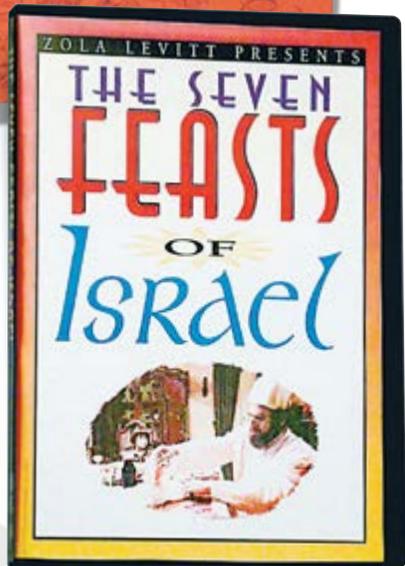




## *The Seven Feasts of Israel*

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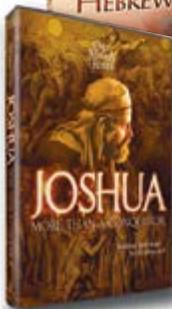
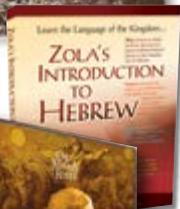
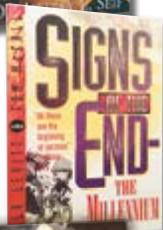
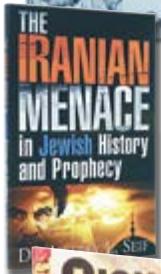


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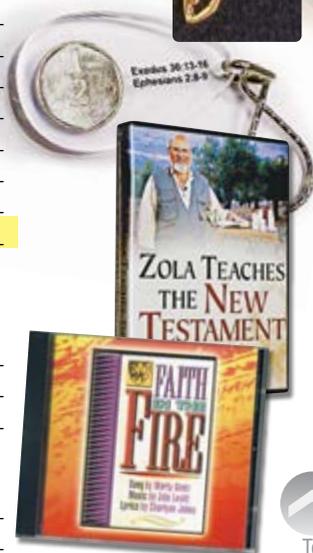
**Teaching CDs**

|     |  |    |      |       |
|-----|--|----|------|-------|
| ___ | <b>The Seven Feasts of Israel</b> (p.17).....            | CD | \$7  | _____ |
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**Music CDs: Hear samples at [levitt.com/music](http://levitt.com/music)**

|     |  |                                  |      |       |
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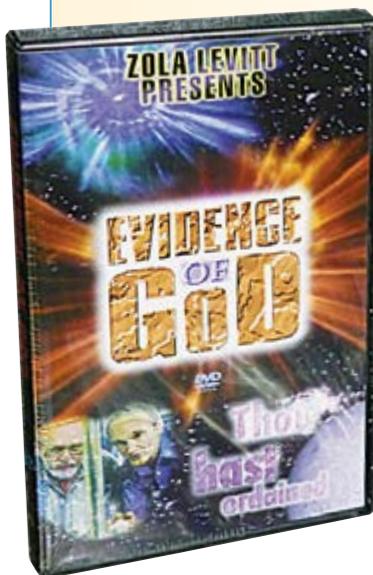
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## [Evidence of God](#)

DVD set

Eight half-hour TV programs on two DVDs

Countering claims that the Bible's Creation "fantasy" is incompatible with dinosaur bones, fossils, and carbon dating, nuclear physicist Dr. Gerald Schroeder explains time dilation—how time has shrunk since the Big Bang—and bridges the perceived differences between science and Scripture. **Science confirms the Biblical sequence of events that occurred during our planet's first week.**

**The Universe Had A Beginning** Physicist Gerald Schroeder explains how science can look backward in time and count fifteen billion years since the Big Bang; yet, from God's perspective this vast time period happened within six 24-hour days.

**Relatively Speaking** Schroeder presents scientific evidence that time is not a constant. Similar to how astronauts weigh less on the Moon than on Earth, experiments show that atomic clocks run slower on high-speed aircraft. Because the universe is expanding, time is perceived differently in different locations.

**Tuned For Life** Science observes that the universe has expanded a million million times. Dividing 15 billion (the number of years in the scientific record) by a million million equals .015 years, or approximately six days.

**Day One Of Creation** Using the Hebrew Bible, Schroeder and Zola analyze the first day of the Creation account. Out of chaos, God created order.

**Days Two And Three Of Creation** Schroeder demonstrates how both Genesis and science show that a firmament was created and water was formed before life began on Earth.

**Day Four Of Creation** How could the Sun, Moon, and stars not appear until day four? The words "evening" and "morning" correspond to their Hebrew roots—"chaos" and "order"—revealing God's overall trend of creating.

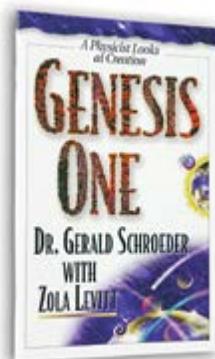
**Days Five And Six Of Creation** Science proposes an explosion of life that agrees in sequence and time with the Bible's account of day five and Schroeder's computations.

**Creation Reviewed** Zola reviews how science agrees with the Creation account in Genesis 1. Technologically, we are only now achieving the ability to prove how true and accurate the Bible really is.

## [Genesis One—A Physicist Looks at Creation](#) study booklet

By Dr. Gerald Schroeder with Zola Levitt

The *Genesis One* study booklet is a transcription of the first two programs from the *Evidence of God* TV series, described above.

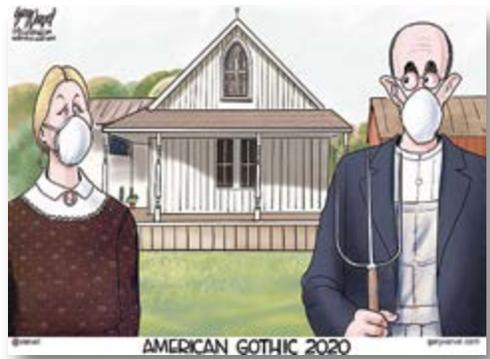


Please see letter on [p. 24](#) "[Science proves the Bible](#)" from L.M.

# Social Distancing Humor



While COVID-19 is nothing to laugh about — it puts many of us and our loved ones at risk — we do see in this situation an aspect we should always have the humility to laugh at: our shared human nature. ★



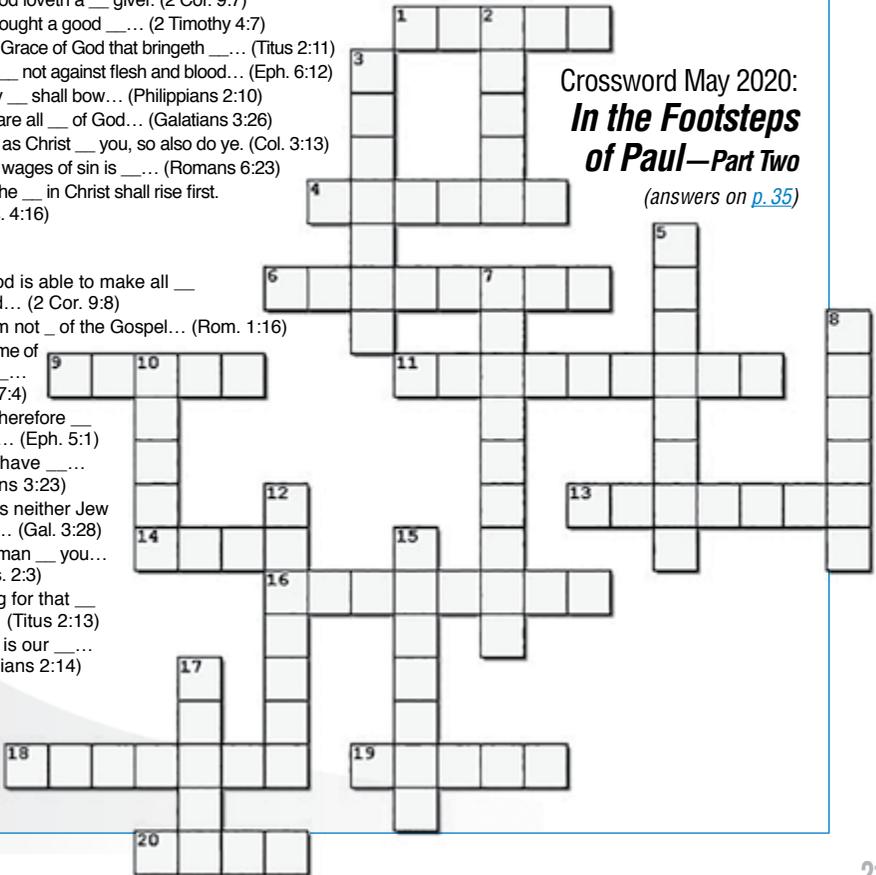
## ACROSS

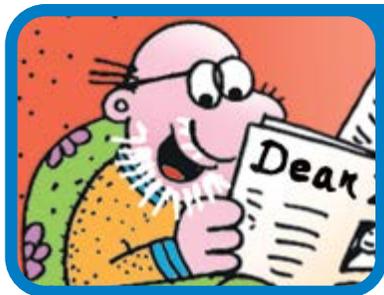
1. ...walk as children of \_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 5:8)
4. For it pleased the \_\_\_\_\_ (Colossians 1:19)
6. ...for God loveth a \_\_\_\_ giver. (2 Cor. 9:7)
9. I have fought a good \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Timothy 4:7)
11. For the Grace of God that bringeth \_\_\_\_\_ (Titus 2:11)
13. For we \_\_\_\_ not against flesh and blood... (Eph. 6:12)
14. ...every \_\_\_\_ shall bow... (Philippians 2:10)
16. For ye are all \_\_\_\_ of God... (Galatians 3:26)
18. ...even as Christ \_\_\_\_ you, so also do ye. (Col. 3:13)
19. For the wages of sin is \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 6:23)
20. ...and the \_\_\_\_ in Christ shall rise first. (1 Thes. 4:16)

## DOWN

2. And God is able to make all \_\_\_\_ abound... (2 Cor. 9:8)
3. For I am not \_\_\_\_ of the Gospel... (Rom. 1:16)
5. And some of them \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 17:4)
7. Be ye therefore \_\_\_\_ of God... (Eph. 5:1)
8. For all have \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 3:23)
10. There is neither Jew nor \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal. 3:28)
12. Let no man \_\_\_\_ you... (2 Thes. 2:3)
15. Looking for that \_\_\_\_ hope... (Titus 2:13)
17. For He is our \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 2:14)

Crossword May 2020:  
***In the Footsteps  
of Paul—Part Two***  
*(answers on p. 35)*





# Letters to ZLM

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

**From D.D. (WA):** As I am getting up in years, this will be my last donation to your excellent organization. I'm more sorry than you are about having to back away as I've always been proud and happy to be able to support your mission and goals.

We value your prayer support too and have a feeling that *that* part of your "donations" won't be ending anytime soon. Thank you for helping us keep this ministry active for so many years. **Please remember to write in every year or so to let us know that you're still interested in receiving our mailings.** — David and Kirsten

**From D.C. (TX):** Have been a ZLMer for many years. Thank you for all you do to minister to Jews, gentiles, and the Church. I like the new name of the weekly TV program.

Thanks for your positive feedback about our new program title, *Our Jewish Roots*. I think Zola would also agree that the new name is as suitable as it is timely. — David

**From A.H.:** J.C. Rosenberg (*Levitt Letters* [Dec. 2019–Feb. 2020](#)) was generous. In stating there is religious progress in Muslim nations, much is not presented. The text in the Koran is like "Peace peace, without peace." A tactic of offer, to ease attack as the guard is let down. — T.C.

You're certainly right about that, A.H. Some of that "progress" could be illusory, a strategic gambit. On the other hand, the hearts of Arabs (not all follow Islam), Moslems (some aren't Arabs), and Arab-Moslems can and DO open to Yeshua's saving grace. — Editor



## Making extra copies count

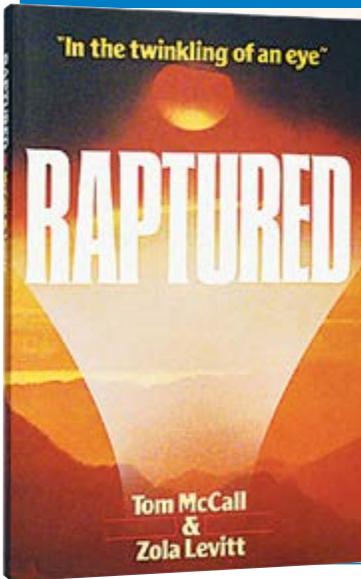
Dear ZLM,

In the past, you have sent extra *LL* copies to give away, and when I pass them along, the recipients' faces always glow when they start to read. "Wow!" they declare. "I didn't know there was anything like this available!" Thank you. — R.H. (CA)

Dear R.H.,

It is angels like you distributing copies to the spiritually hungry that keep hundreds of *Levitt Letters* from going into the bin. (Note to readers: Please see our Bulletin Board announcement ([p. 15](#)) regarding free *Levitt Letter* overages.) — Mark

*(continued next page)*



## ***Raptured*** book

By Tom McCall and Zola Levitt

The Rapture of the Church—discussed in full with relevant Scriptures. The various views of when it might happen are evenhandedly debated as to which seems most correct. A doctrine not always understood by the Church, but one that will affect everyone on Earth—Believer and unbeliever alike.

*(Please see Todd's response to "What Is the key to interpreting the Book of Revelation" on p. 12.)*

*(All titles also available as eBooks.)*

## Targeted

Dear Mark Levitt,

In the [February 2020 Levitt Letter](#), you stated that "Satan's minions are on to our expansion vision and eager to sabotage it." You implied that the devil caused the tornadoes that ripped through Dallas-Fort Worth, one of which destroyed stored items. It was unfortunate that that should occur, but it seems that you think that weather is of the devil. — J.S.

No, J.S.,

I believe that inaccurate weather forecasts are of the devil! — Mark

## Use your time wisely

Greetings, ZLM,

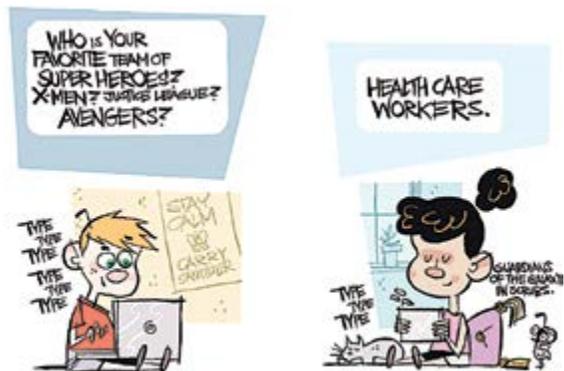
I want to thank you and your kind donors who make it possible for us prisoners to receive one of the most informative End Time and historical times journals on the planet. Thank you also for mentioning us as a benefit for your donors' kindness and what it means to me and those I pass it to afterward.

I know that to receive your mailings, I must write periodically—therefore, I'm letting you know how joyfully I anticipate receiving the *Levitt Letter* every month. By the way, good choice in selecting the name *Our Jewish Roots*. May *Yahweh Sabaoth* (LORD of hosts/armies) make His face to shine upon you. —D.G. (MS)

Dear D.G.,

Some of the greatest men in the Bible were incarcerated. If Joseph hadn't endured ≈11 years in a jail cell, he never would have been positioned to save the Israelites from famine! Don't underestimate how God can use this current season in your life. ZLM is grateful that you find what this ministry provides helpful in your own ministry and that you appreciate the donors and prayer warriors who enable us to fulfill our Godly missions. — David

*(continued next page)*



## Hungry for the Spirit

Dear ZLM,

You ought to see the joy on folks' faces when I hand them the copy of the *Levitt Letter*. Some are elderly, some are young; all are Christians wanting to know more about the Jewish roots of their faith. Believe me when I say that ZLM is not only a Godsend to me but also to these grateful recipients. Be safe, be blessed. Shalom, Pastor R.

Dear Pastor R.,

Speaking of Godsend, we ZLM staffers must thank those who sent us: your fellow donors (Romans 10:15). —Mark

## Hm-m-m ... you don't look Jewish

Dear ZLM,

We enjoy Dr. Seif very much and wonder why a Messianic program would have Christians hosting the program. Why not just have Dr. Seif host the program by himself? Just wondering. — A. and J.C.

Dear A. and J.C.,

Let me ask you why Jesus would want gentile Believers grafted in. Why should non-Jews even be allowed in the Kingdom? Why did Paul write (Galatians 3:28) that we are all *one* in Christ Jesus? Simply because the Jew-or-gentile distinction doesn't matter to Him. Please don't discount our calling and our message because of our ancestry. Dr. Seif, David, and I work in harmony with complementary perspectives yet the same Gospel message. —Kirsten

## Trump's Peace to Prosperity

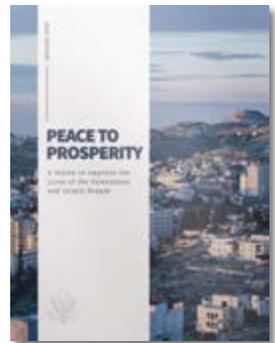
Dear Mark,

I was thinking about you today and how much I miss your father. Zola was a great help to me years ago in researching the Jewish roots of our faith.

What are your thoughts on the current Middle East peace plan that our President has offered? Do you think we are close to the Biblical peace treaty? In Messiah, C.R.

Dear C.R.,

Please see [page 8](#) for "What Trump's Peace Deal is Missing." I believe that President Trump's peace plan is as useful as any other in smoking out the truth that the Palestinian Authority wants all of Israel and not just a coexistence. —Mark



## Science proves the Bible

Dear ZLM,

I'm directing my church's study on the *Evidence of God* series. An average of 40 attend each night, and I laugh when I hear Zola comment in the videos, "Boy, we are really getting some letters!" Though I have received little or no support or opposition, our poor pastor has "caught it," so to speak, and has been a rock and extremely supportive.

His words to the congregation are basically: "This is a 'theory,' folks! Like it or hate it, whatever; but be sweet. We probably won't know the total truth of everything until we see Jesus. Examining Dr. Schroeder's theory won't hurt and might help you. Listen and maybe learn something from it. This physicist

*(continued next page)*



is not an evolutionist, and his theoretical explanations will compel us all to burrow into the Bible and the Holy Spirit. If you wish to question or oppose the theory, please try to be Biblically based. We are going to continue and finish this series. I encourage all to attend.”

That’s the general flavor of his comments, and attendance has not fallen off, praise God! God is good to me! —L.M. (AR)

Dear L.M.,

Your pastor’s rationality inspires us, once again, to offer Dr. Schroeder’s television series and book on [page 20](#). One of my favorite takeaways from that brilliant scientist’s thinking is that science corroborates the Bible ... as well as vice versa. —Editor

## Loves ALL the hosts

Dear ZLM,

After decades in partnership with you, it saddens me to read the snarky comments from viewers about changes in the hosts or name. Every host has been wonderful—the husband-wife teams are excellent—and I’ve enjoyed them all.

Mark, you’re doing a fine job carrying the ministry forward. It’s an honor to partner with such an ethical outreach. I’ve called on my prayer partners to pray for ZLM—we’re spread across the country!

May God bring new partners and increase for your needs! —K.G. (CA)

Dear K.G.,

Your encouragement soothes our souls. It amazes us that people will write to a ministry with such, as you say, *snarky* comments. We Hart-ily agree that the husband-wife teams work well. —Kirsten ★



## Collapsible Drink Koozies

Set of two (2) neoprene insulators with pro-Israel messages.

Never be LUKEWARM again! Neither when it comes to STANDING WITH ISRAEL nor when sipping your favorite beverage. Sized to hold 12 oz. cans, our ministry’s full-color koozie features two distinctive themes:

**Side 1: STAND WITH ISRAEL**

**Side 2: DON’T BE LUKEWARM** and Bible reference Rev. 3:15–16

Offered in pairs; wonderful as gifts and conversation starters.



# Reviving Dates with Healing Powers

SCIENCE: BY ADAM ELIYAHU BERKOWITZ (r) BreakingIsraelNews.com



credit: Elaine Soboway

Methuselah, the one-of-a-kind ancient Judean date palm, planted 2011

Scientists in Israel have succeeded in growing a date palm from 2,000-year-old seeds. The date palm accompanied the Jews when they left Egypt and, according to prophecy, will reappear in the Messianic era to be watered by rivers flowing from the Temple, giving them special healing qualities that researchers are already seeing appear.

*Science Advances* recently published the results of a project in which a team of scientists from Israel, France, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates **successfully germinated six 2,000-year-old date palm seeds.**

Hundreds of seeds of *Phoenix dactylifera* were collected from Judean desert archaeological sites, such as an ancient palace-fortress built by King Herod and caves located in southern Israel. Hundreds of seeds were collected between 1963 and 1991. Sarah Sallon, director of The Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center in Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, led a team that selected 34 seeds considered the most viable. One was separated out as a control. The remaining 33 were soaked in water and fertilizer to encourage germination. One seed, found to be damaged, was discarded. The remaining 32

(continued next page)



credit: Guy Eisen

Sizes of six germinated ancient date seeds before planting. (A) Adam, (B) Jonah, (C) Uriel, (D) Boaz, (E) Judith, (F) Hannah, and (G) HU37A11, an unplanted ancient date seed from Qumran (Cave FQ37) used as a control. Scale bars, 0.2 inches (A, no bar size as unmeasured before planting).



Herodotus wrote highly of dates.  
[Relief of Herodotus (1806) by  
Jean-Guillaume Moitte, Louvre, Paris]



seeds were planted in a quarantined site at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies in southern Israel.

Of these, six of the seeds successfully sprouted. They were given the names Jonah, Uriel, Boaz, Judith, Hannah, and Adam.

A previous experiment with the seeds produced a single male plant (which researchers named Methuselah) that sprouted in 2005. Five years ago, Methuselah was over ten feet tall and had been used to pollinate a wild, modern female date palm. Scientists determined that Methuselah was of the Hayany breed originally from Egypt.

**Sallon hopes that Hannah, a female date tree, will flower this year and can be pollinated by Methuselah.**

Radiocarbon dating of the fragments of the seed shells still clinging to the roots of the plants confirmed that the seeds date back to between 1,800 and 2,400 years ago. Methuselah, Adam, and Hannah date back to the first to fourth centuries B.C. Judith and Boaz date back to approximately mid-second century B.C. Uriel and Jonah date back to the first to second centuries A.D.

Genotyping of germinated seeds indicates that exchanges of genetic material occurred between the Middle East (eastern) and North Africa (western) date palm gene pools. The results suggest that sophisticated agricultural practices may have contributed to the Judean date's historical reputation.

"Described by classical writers including Theophrastus, Herodotus, Galen, Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Josephus, these valuable plantations produced dates

*(continued next page)*



Germinated ancient date seedlings. Ages in months at time of photograph (A to C) Adam (110 months), Jonah (63 months), and Uriel (54 months). (D to F) Boaz (54 months), Judith (47 months), and Hannah (88 months).





Dr. Sarah Sallon, director of The Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center in Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem.

In 2012, Sallon noted that **the Hayany breed of dates is known for treating respiratory problems and depression.** She also suggested that dates could be used to tackle diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and cancer.

Ezekiel 47:12 prophesied that in the Messianic era, a river would flow from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, revitalizing the saline water and transforming it into a thriving ecosystem. As the researchers hoped would be the case with their revived date palms, plants irrigated from the Jerusalem waters would be uniquely vibrant and grant special medicinal qualities.

The researchers discovered that the seeds were up to 30% larger than date seeds today, which probably meant that the fruit was larger, too.

Date palms generally thrive in hot arid regions and, in Biblical times, were cultivated in the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea region, where cultivation of dates almost disappeared after the 14<sup>th</sup> century from a combination of climate change and infrastructure decay.

Dates were one of the seven species listed as special to the land of Israel, described in the Bible as "honey" (Deuteronomy 8:8). The fruits from these seven species were the only acceptable plant offerings in the Temple, and their first fruits were brought to be eaten in Jerusalem.

**In Israeli date palm orchards, donkeys walk the grounds eating the dates that fall to the ground (keeping the orchard clean) and then naturally fertilize the trees! — Kirsten ★**



Palm trees growing in a field near the Dead Sea

# Making Bones From Scratch

MEDICINE: JerusalemOnline.com



credit: Reuters

A researcher displays parts of a lab-grown, semi-liquid bone graft at the laboratory of Israeli biotech firm Bonus BioGroup in Haifa, Israel in 2016.

The human body cannot regenerate entire bones, but doctors in northern Israel are using innovative tissue-engineering technology to grow new bones ... in a lab.

In Haifa, technology company Bonus BioGroup is growing artificial bones in a laboratory following four years of research into artificial bone regeneration. Bones that are cultivated in the lab will be used in patients with osteoporosis, cancer, and traumas caused by accidents and severe fractures.

This scientific breakthrough has been very successful in 32 patients. The first volunteer was a man who suffered severe traumas from an accident. Dr. Nimrod Rozen, head of the orthopedic unit at Haemek

Hospital, points out that **using this technique they are able to replace any bone in the body**. He says that "this surgery is truly science fiction."

First, doctors use liposuction to remove a small stem cell sample of fatty tissue from the patient and then isolate the cells of interest. In a bioreactor that simulates a biological environment, the bones are cultured using cells from the patient himself and biodegradable scaffolds to give them the desired shape. Finally, after two weeks, the patient undergoes surgery to incorporate the living, functioning bone into his body, bypassing the rejection process that accompanies transplants made from artificial substances. ★



credit: Bonus BioGroup

Dr. Shai Meretzki, CEO of Bonus BioGroup, with a lab-grown bone.



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The main protagonists in the *Harry Potter* stories are (from left to right) Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley

## SELECT MEDIA BRIEFS

### Harry Potter in Yiddish ... a Hit!

By Spencer Jakob / *The Wall Street Journal*

Publishing a Harry Potter book in Yiddish sounds crazy: Hasidic Jews — the biggest potential audience of Yiddish speakers — are disinclined to read it, much less buy it. And that audience isn't very big to begin with.

Yet, something magical is happening. The 1,000-volume print run of *Harry Potter un der Filosofisher Shteyn* (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*) sold out in 48 hours, spurring a second printing. The success of Yiddish Harry Potter is providing competition for translations in Greenlandic and other less-spoken languages.

"Young Hasidim are interested in literature from other cultures," said Ellen Kellman, an associate professor of Yiddish at Brandeis University.

Translator Arun Viswanath, a 29-year-old New Yorker whose mother wrote

a Yiddish-English dictionary and consulted on this translation, is fluent in 15 languages. He conjured up Yiddish sayings for the book's nonsensical words and employed linguistic devices to translate the book's hidden phrases. In one new trick, Viswanath translated a backward inscription on the Mirror of Erised (Desire) to read like Aramaic from right to left and in Yiddish left to right.

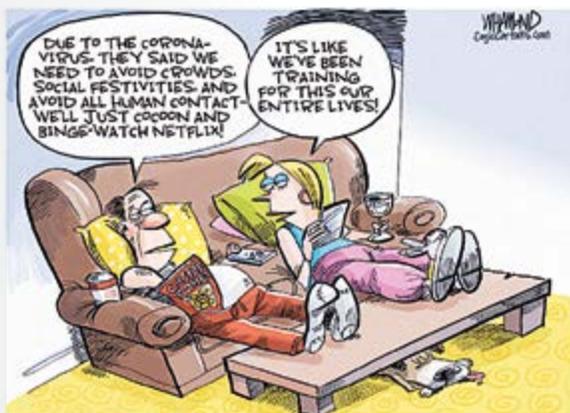
Before the Holocaust, more than 10 million spoke the 1,100-year-old Ashkenazi Jewish language, including secular Jews. Now, there are probably about half a million, almost all extremely religious.

Viswanath believes that Jewish readers feel a connection to the book's wizards and witches, often misunderstood characters who live with their own laws, culture, books, and beliefs in the larger world, as they do.

Given the book's unlikely success, **Swedish publisher Nikolaj Olniansky**

**is thinking about the next six Potter books.** That could take longer than it took J.K. Rowling to write them. Viswanath harbors no illusions about his calling: "The books get progressively longer, so I may die before I finish the whole series." But Olniansky is game to barrel forward, a man unafraid of failure. For a short time, he had a Yiddish heavy metal band.

(continued next page)





## Shavuot at IHOP

By Ben Sales / JTA.org

An Aleph rabbinical student fell in love with *Shavuot* when he learned about it in college. Even though the holiday is observed by fewer Jews than Passover or Hanukkah, the aspiring rabbi thinks

**it's a better fit for the modern American Jewish experience:**

It combines intellectualism, schmoozing, and unhealthy portions of food. Pioneering the observance in a comfortable location like a diner, he said, could open the holiday up to more people.



The ubiquitous IHOP sign

"I was flabbergasted that this wasn't universally understood as the most amazing thing in the Jewish calendar year," the student said. "If I had been a 7-year-old and you had told me, 'Hey, you have this Jewish thing coming up, you get to stay up all night, eat a lot of cheese, and learn with your friends' — that's a Jewish nerd's dream."

A group of rabbinical students is gathering at a local IHOP. Others will

## Dry Bones

Stop the Boycott!



hold similar sessions at a Jackson, Mississippi IHOP and at Waffle Houses and diners in Maryland, Washington D.C., and a few other cities.

Let's hope that restaurants will be reopened for *Shavuot* this year.

Otherwise, "Next year in IHOP" — (no sacrilege intended). — Editor ★



## Favored by anti-Semites:

T-shirt that labels ALL of Israel as "Palestine"



# Was the Bible Right About Israel's Borders?



ARCHAEOLOGY: BY ROSSELLA TERCATIN (r) JPost.com



credit: Robert Mullins

Jars found in 2019 at Abel-beth-maacah

How far north did the Biblical kingdom of Israel extend?

A newly discovered Hebrew-language inscription might confirm that the border of ancient Israel reached areas that some archaeologists were previously skeptical about. Extending to these areas would confirm the Bible's account.

The inscription was discovered at the site of Abel-beth-maacah, according to archaeologists Dr. Naama Yahalom-Mack and Dr. Nava Panitz-Cohen from the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The Bible mentions Abel-beth-maacah several times.



source: archaeology.huji.ac.il

Dr. Naama Yahalom-Mack

*Ben-hadad responded to King Asa's request; he sent his army commanders against the cities of Israel and captured Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.*

— 1 Kings 15:20

Later, 2 Kings 15:29 lists the city among those conquered by the king of Assyria. The researchers explained that the prominent tel (mound) was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and identified as the city mentioned in the Bible because of its location and the similarities between the ancient Biblical name and the Arab name of the village (Abil al-Qamh) located on top of it on the border with Lebanon, not far from the border with Syria.

"It is a very large and prominent site," said Panitz-Cohen. "Before we started our project eight years ago, it had never been excavated, possibly because of its border location."

*(continued next page)*



The archaeologists pointed out that 3,000 years ago, the city was also at the crossroad between political entities: the Kingdom of Israel, the Aramean kingdom, and the Phoenicians, who were not part of a unified state but lived in several independent cities along the northern coast.

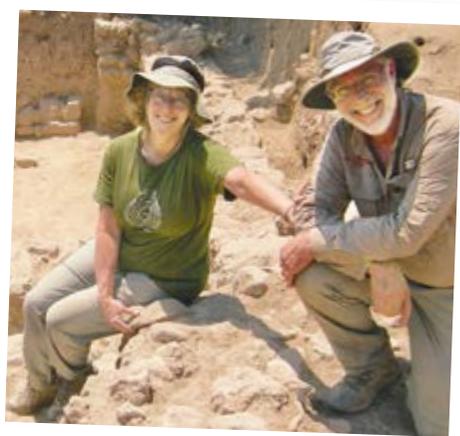


Although Abel-beth-maacah has yielded several important discoveries over the years—including figurines, seals, and jars—no finding so far has allowed the archaeologists to understand the city’s political affiliation in the Iron Age.

“The question archaeologists ask is to whom they paid their taxes. This doesn’t necessarily change the culture, the cults, pottery, and the cuisine of the city. Maybe it means that the Israelites, the Arameans, and the Phoenicians in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. shared cultural traits,” Panitz-Cohen said.

At the very end of the excavation period last summer, the team, led by the two archaeologists from Hebrew University and Prof. Robert Mullins from Azusa Pacific University in Southern California, found five crushed jars in an Iron Age building.

Only much later, when Israel Antiquities Authority restorer Adrienne Ganur was working on them, did she realize that one of the jars featured an ink inscription, quite rare for that time. After further study, Prof. Christopher Rollston from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. said that the inscription included the word “*Lebenayau*,” or “belonging to Benayau,” a name formed by the root “*Bana*”—which in Hebrew and many Semitic languages refers to the concept of building—and the theophoric ending “*yahu*”—referring to YHWH, the God of the Israelites.



credit: Carroll Kobs



Nava Panitz-Cohen and [Bob Mullins](#) (a contributor to *OJR*)

Yahalom-Mack and Panitz-Cohen explained that **more work is needed in order to prove that Abel-beth-maacah was part of the Kingdom of Israel**. The jar could have been brought from afar and the name written on at a later stage, or the city might have been home to people having different cultural and ethnic identities.

Some answers will come from further research on the artifact, which is underway. For example, testing the source of the clay from which the jar was made.

A crucial question about the inscription is also related to its dating: The archaeologists suspect that it dates to the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C., or the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> at the latest. If proved true, the inscription would be one of the earliest examples of this type of northern theophoric ending.

Other mysteries surround Abel-beth-maacah. For example, they “have identified cultic activities, some of them unique, that differ from archaeological expressions of religious activities at contemporary sites,” explains Yahalom-Mack. Also, the site has not presented any sign of the late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. destruction brought by the Assyrian conquest, which is mentioned in the Bible and has emerged at other sites in the area. The team will return for another excavation season this summer and may find answers to these issues then. ★

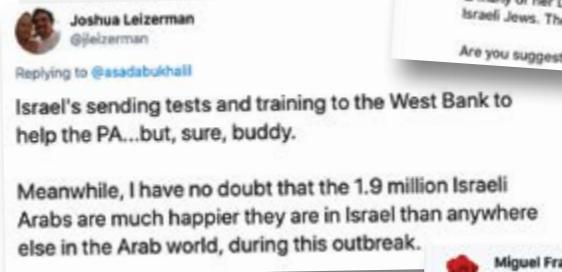
# Anti-Semitism, Pure and Simple

Compiled from [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) / TheMossadIL

The following tweet from a professor at Cal State, Stanislaus was retweeted by The Mossad: Elite Parody Division with the comment: This is what an actual anti-Semitic blood libel looks like.



These comments ensued:





## Mankind's Beginnings

One day, eight-year-old Sarah asks her mother, "Mommy, I've been thinking about us humans, and I'm puzzled. How did humans first appear on Earth?"

"That's a very good question, dear," her mother replies. "God made Adam and Eve, and they had children and then their children had children, and as a result, mankind began."

Later that day, Sarah asks her father the same question. "Daddy, how did humans first appear on Earth?"

"That's an intelligent question, Sarah," he replies. "Millions of years ago, there were monkeys from which, gradually, the human race evolved."

Sarah is confused by this answer and goes back to her mother. "Mommy," she asks, "how come you told me the human race was created by God, yet daddy said we came from monkeys?"

"Well darling," replies her mother, smiling. "The answer is simple. I told you about my side of the family, and your father told you about his." ★



Remember: Mother's Day is May 10<sup>th</sup> this year!

### Answer Key for May 2020 Crossword (p.21)

*Across:*

- 1. Light
- 4. Father
- 6. Cheerful
- 9. Fight
- 11. Salvation
- 13. Wrestle

*Down:*

- 2. Grace
- 3. Ashamed
- 5. Believed
- 7. Followers
- 8. Sinned
- 10. Greek
- 12. Deceive
- 15. Blessed
- 17. Peace



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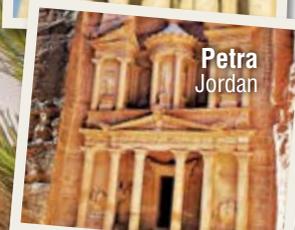
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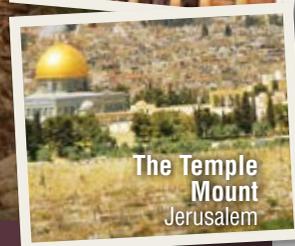
See you in  
Jerusalem!



The Acropolis  
Athens



Petra  
Jordan



The Temple  
Mount  
Jerusalem



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