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Enhancing Trust

July 2023

Dear Reader,

Recently I read through the Book of Judges. While I've read it several times, I'm always astonished by these closing words: "*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 21:25). When they neglected or rejected God's standards, the Israelites experienced an ongoing cycle of sin and suffering.

This pattern wasn't limited to that period or those people, however. Many today ignore the standards God set forth in the Bible. As you will read starting on the cover of this *Levitt Letter*, though Scripture greatly influenced the founders of our nation, many Americans no longer think that the Bible is necessary to discern right from wrong.

As Believers, we know that blessing comes to those who know Yeshua (Jesus) and follow His Word (Luke 11:28; see also James 1:22-25). Thus, this *Levitt Letter* offers insights to help you understand more of God's holiness (12) and mercy (16). You'll also discover people in Israel who are learning about God's Word and Messiah Yeshua (13), truth about the Temple Mount (28), astonishing statements from a Palestinian Islamic scholar (34), and much more.

These are trying times, not only in the U.S. but throughout our world. Please pray for our leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2) as you continue to *sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* — pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6),



Greg Miller, Editor
Zola Levitt Ministries

P.S. ZLM offers publications, TV programs, online Bible teaching resources, and more to help people live according to God's standards. Would you support us in this ministry? Your prayers and financial contributions enable us to continue sharing the Gospel around the world so that others may experience the blessings of knowing and following Yeshua and His Word.

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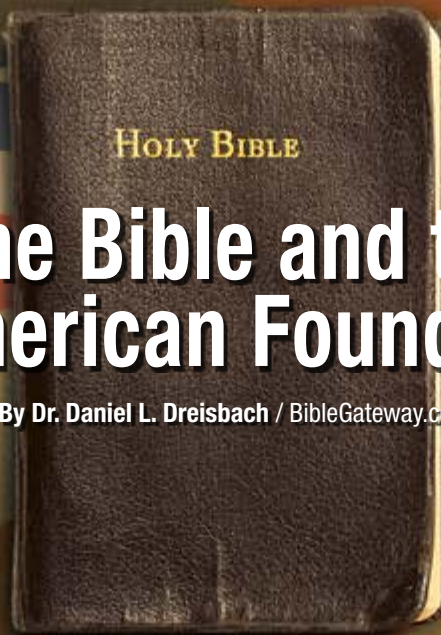
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The Bible and the American Founders

By Dr. Daniel L. Dreisbach / BibleGateway.com



The American “founders” include an entire generation or two from many walks of life. In the last half of the 18th and early 19th centuries, they articulated the rights of colonists, secured independence from Great Britain, and established new constitutional republics at both the national and state levels.

Scholars have noted that the founders were well acquainted with the Bible. Yet some historians contend that the era, sandwiched between two great religious awakenings, was an enlightened age when rationalism was advancing and the Bible was, at best, relegated to the sidelines. While there is extensive scholarship on Enlightenment influences, **few scholars have closely examined the Bible’s influence on the political culture of the age** or have given attention to specific Biblical texts and themes that informed the founders.

(continued p.4)

U.S. Majority: “Bible Not Essential for Right and Wrong”

By Ryan Foley
ChristianPost.com

Less than one-third of Americans believe that the Bible should serve as the foundation for determining right and wrong, even as most people express support for traditional moral values.

The fourth installment of the America’s Values Study, released by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, asked respondents for their thoughts on traditional moral values and what they would like to see as “America’s foundation for determining right and wrong.”

Overall, when asked to identify what they viewed as the primary

(continued p.3)

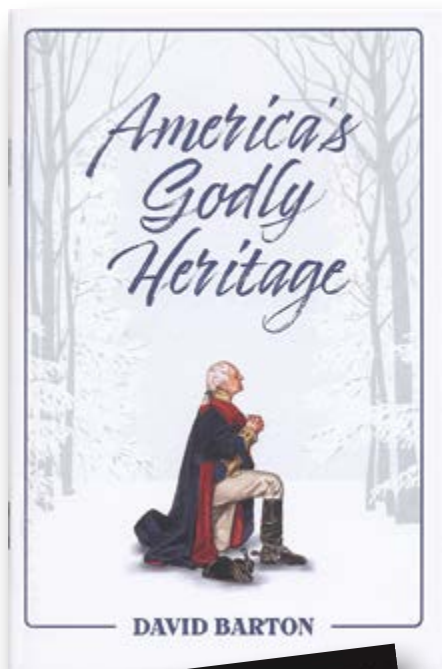


George Barna (credit: American Culture and Faith Institute)



Celebrate and explore America's Heritage

with two books by David Barton



[America's Godly Heritage](#) [book](#) by David Barton

America's Godly Heritage sets forth the beliefs of many well-known Founding Fathers concerning the proper role of Christian principles in education, government, and the public affairs of the nation. The beliefs of Founders such as Patrick Henry, John Jay, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, George Mason, and many others are clearly presented.

[The Bulletproof George Washington](#) [book](#) by David Barton

Colonial George Washington's perilous experiences in the French and Indian War are chronicled in this riveting account of God's providence and protection. The only officer on horseback to avoid being shot down, young Washington openly attributed his miraculous escape from harm to the intervention of a sovereign God. A story once found in student textbooks, this awe-inspiring adventure is recaptured in a modern edition, complete with maps and illustrations.

Please see [the cover article](#) "The Bible and the American Founders" and [the sidebar article](#) "U.S. Majority: Bible Not Essential for Right and Wrong"





Teaching

4 The Bible and the American Founders *(continued from cover)*

Studio Co-host

6 2,000 Years from Today

8 Israel's Independence Day: It's in the Bible

Classic Zola

10 Are We Taking Our Tour?

Ask the Chaplain

12 What is the holiness of God? *(part 1)*

TJF Report

13 Ministering in Tel Aviv and Netanya

Wise As a Serpent

14 Maybe Don't Wait Past Full-Retirement Age?

15 ZLM Bulletin Board

Parsons: Hebrew Lesson

16 The Heart of the Lord

18  ZLM Order Form



21 Iran's Crown Prince Visits Israel

22 Letters to ZLM

23 Crossword Puzzle

Science

24 Natural Spray Extends Life of Fresh Produce

Medicine

25 People with Autism Feel More Pain, not Less

26 Teaching Christians About Judaism

28 The Truth About the Temple Mount

29 Wikipedia Editors Distorted Holocaust Articles

30 Select Media Briefs

Archaeology

32 Rock Solid References to the "House of David"

Muslim Focus

34 Palestinian Islamic Scholar: Palestinians "Have No Historical Right To Palestine"

35 Jewish Humor

U.S. Majority: "Bible Not Essential ..."

continued from cover sidebar

determinant of right and wrong in the U.S., 42% said, "what you feel in your heart." An additional 29% cited majority rule as their desired method for determining right and wrong, while **just 29% believe that the principles in the Bible should determine the understanding of right and wrong in the U.S.**

The report also found that 71% of those surveyed supported the "traditional moral values" of integrity, justice, kindness, non-discrimination, trustworthiness, free expression, property ownership, individual self-expression, and self-control. A majority of those who identified as liberal on social and political issues (52%) supported traditional moral values compared to 70% of respondents who classified themselves

as moderates on such matters and 89% of self-described conservatives on social and political issues.

"In the same way that most Americans contend there is no absolute moral truth, they now believe that there is no divine guidance required or even available to define right and wrong," noted **George Barna**, the director of research at the Cultural Research Center. He lamented that most Americans "are now more likely to take their moral cues from government laws and policies than from church teachings about Biblical principles."

The survey was based on responses from 2,275 U.S. adults collected in July 2022. ☆

The Bible and the American Founders *continued from cover*

Biblical Influence

The Bible had a substantial impact on the founders. **Legislative debates, pamphlets, and political sermons were replete with Biblical references.** In a survey of American political literature from 1760–1805, Donald S. Lutz reported that the Bible was cited more frequently than any European writer or philosophy. Approximately one-third of all citations in the literature he surveyed came from the Bible. The Book of Deuteronomy was most frequently cited, followed by Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*. But Deuteronomy was referenced nearly twice as often as John Locke's writings, and the Apostle Paul was mentioned about as frequently as Montesquieu.

The founders devised a constitutional system of republican self-government and liberty under law that emphasized limited, representative government, and required the consent of the governed. When framing their governments, they sought Biblical insights into human nature, civic virtue, social order, political authority, and other concepts essential to establishing a political society. In Scripture they saw political and legal models—including separation of powers and due process of law—which they believed enjoyed divine favor and were worthy of emulation in their polities.

For example, their discourse included many appeals to the Hebrew “republic”

as a model for their own political experiment. Republicanism existed apart from the Hebrew experience, and the founders studied both ancient and modern traditions. The republican model described in the Hebrew Scriptures, however, reassured pious Americans that it was a political system favored by God.

The Bible also informed their views of humanity. In 1776, most Americans of European descent were affiliated with the Reformed (specifically Calvinist) theological tradition, which emphasizes original sin and mankind's fallen state (Genesis 3). This view of human nature was a source of the founders' reluctance to vest unchecked government power to fallen humans. Their solution was a constitutional system—defined by the separation of powers and checks and balances—to restrain man's inclinations to seek power for selfish ends and to abuse power.

Significant Scriptures

Micah 6:1–8—This prophetic passage presents God's grievance against His people for their unfaithfulness to Him. Micah 6:8 is the climax of this passage because it indicates what the Israelites must do to restore their relationship with God. **Likely the verse appealed to Americans because it emphasizes that nations, and individuals, must be virtuous** if they desire to be stable, prosperous, and tranquil—a nation blessed by

(continued on next page)

source: Wikimedia Commons



Detail of *Declaration of Independence*, painting (1819) by John Trumbull (1756–1843) (U.S. Capitol rotunda)



Almighty God — and it notes God’s prescription for enjoying divine favor. George Washington, anticipating his retirement as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, invoked this verse in a 1783 letter to the state governors. If they hoped to become a flourishing “happy Nation,” Washington explained, Americans must be disposed “to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the [characteristics] of the Divine Author of our blessed Religion.”

Exodus 13–14 — Another favorite text, this shows liberation and God’s providential protection. Many Revolutionary-era Americans believed that they, like the Israelites, were oppressed by harsh rulers. Thus, they sought deliverance from God. Just as God directed the Children of Israel to depart the land of their oppression with its tyrannical monarch, cross a great sea, and establish a new nation, so, too, God led the children of Great Britain to leave the land of their religious oppression, cross a great ocean, inhabit a promised land, and, eventually, resist a “tyrannical” George III and create a new nation in “God’s American Israel.”

Romans 13 — By some accounts, this was the most referenced Biblical text in the founding era’s political literature. Instructing citizens to be subject to the authorities, it was a pertinent and challenging text for Americans contemplating resistance to an oppressive

British rule. While many treatises and political sermons noted this text, Americans were divided on whether Scripture approved resistance to British colonial authority.

Many patriotic Americans interpreted the text as teaching that God ordained and established civil government, but only to serve the common good. But a civil government that oppresses citizens and acts contrary to their interests deposes itself — ceasing to be a legitimate government. Thus, citizens are no longer obligated by Scripture to obey it. This interpretation led many Americans to conclude that they had not only a right but also a duty to resist the “tyrannical” rule of George III and Parliament.

Proverbs 14:34 — **This proverb, perhaps more succinctly than any other text, expresses a Biblical prescription for the success (or failure) of a nation and her people.** It was referenced frequently in speeches, proclamations, and sermons by founders including John and Abigail Adams, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, and George Washington. The founders regarded it as a reassuring promise and a warning that God elevates nations that conform to His standards but withdraws His blessings from those who disregard His ideals.

Adapted from an interview with Daniel L. Dreisbach about his book, *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers*.

[Please see the two books about America’s Christian heritage on p. 2](#) ☆



source: Wikimedia Commons

Detail of *Declaration of Independence*, painting (1819) by John Trumbull (1756–1843) (U.S. Capitol rotunda)

2,000 Years from Today

Kirsten Hart
Studio co-host of
Our Jewish Roots



credit: Shannon Nuszen



Ancient *mikvah* in Jerusalem

Many people focus on the past. I hear it often as friends and others refer to the “good ol’ days.” Even so, we all live in the present, doing what’s necessary to make it through our current day. But how many of us think about the future? Do you ever think 2,000 years into the future?

On our recent Zola Tour to Israel, I had such a moment. Our tours give our pilgrims opportunities to embrace and experience many special moments. Those “pause and reflect on a truth that positively affects your life” junctures are priceless.

source: Zola Levitt Ministries



The Southern Steps of the Temple Mount

Mosaic Mastery

We were at the Southern Steps in Jerusalem. These steps were one of the main entrances to the Temple Mount where the rabbis, pilgrims, and even Yeshua Himself walked on their way to worship at the Temple. Excavated in 1967, the brilliance of their construction has remained since the Temple’s destruction in A.D. 70. Archaeologists have discovered *mikvahs* (ritual cleansing baths) in the area that offer valuable insight into Jewish life related to the Temple.

Beside one *mikvah*, I had a moment that simultaneously catapulted me 2,000 years into the past while transporting me 2,000 years into the future. The moment came after I saw an ancient, meticulously crafted tile mosaic that mirrored a simple rug design.

(continued on next page)



Back to
Cover



To
Index

What Will We Leave?

As I paused and admired its artistry, I wondered who was responsible for this well-preserved wonder. A craftsman first visualized the mosaic's design. Then, each tiny tile was expertly cut and intricately placed so that the whole pattern would come together in perfection. It was breathtakingly beautiful. And 2,000 (or more) years after this craftsman finished his design, it continues to inspire. The mosaic's glory spoke to me. That's longevity!

As I pondered the ancient artistry, I asked myself: What am I doing that could remain meaningful 2,000 years into the future? Is there anything of lasting value that I will leave in this world when I am gone? Will my life even matter thousands of years from now?



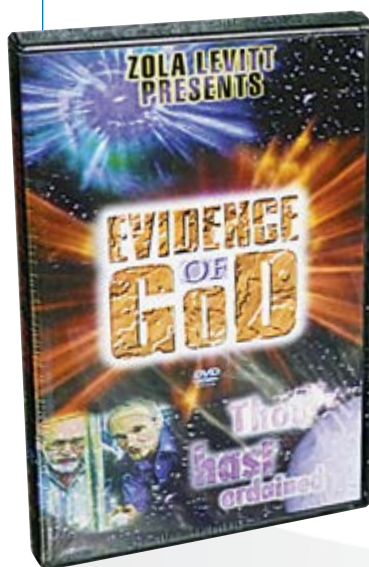
Enduring mosaic tiles

Making Purposeful Choices

As I walked away from the mosaic and returned to our Israel pilgrims, I determined that I would be purposeful from that moment on. I would be resolute in my choices and projects. I would live for today, yes, but also strive to leave a lasting legacy. Thank you, Mosaic Maker, for your enduring gift.

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works, which God prepared
beforehand that we should walk in them.*

—Ephesians 2:10 ☆



Evidence of God DVD set Eight 30-minute 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.

Episodes include:

- The Universe had a Beginning
- Days Two and Three of Creation
- Relatively Speaking
- Day Four of Creation
- Tuned for Life
- Days Five and Six of Creation
- Day One of Creation
- Creation Reviewed

Please see the booklet *Genesis One* on [p.11](#).

Israel's Independence Day: It's in the Bible



BY AVIEL SCHNEIDER (r) IsraelToday.co.il

As it has every year since 1948, Israel again celebrated its Independence Day, this year for the 75th time. A major part of the day is remembering our fallen soldiers and the high price we have to pay to live in our own sovereign country — a free and independent Jewish state.

Even though God promised our land, we still needed to re-conquer it. From a Biblical point of view, this was a liberation of the Promised Land. In the eyes of most Palestinians, however, it was an illegal conquest.

Israel has lost over 23,000 sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers in wars since the restoration of the Land to the Jewish people.

Blood had to be shed in order to redeem the Land, and some Israelis still sacrifice their lives in perpetuating this fulfillment of God's promise.



source: Wikimedia Commons

Joshua, illustration (1908) by Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874–1925)

Independence Day in Biblical Times

Independence Day celebrations are nothing new. In Biblical times, **the people of Israel celebrated their first Independence Day after Joshua successfully conquered the Promised Land.** In his case, it was also a liberation, though to the people who lived here then, it seemed like a foreign invasion.

Joshua was, so to speak, the chief of staff of the Israeli army. They waged war against the 31 kings of Canaan and captured the country in fulfillment of God's promises. Joshua was a brilliant military strategist and commander, able to defeat powerful armies.

In those wars, many of the people of Israel lost their lives, as did the people on the other side. I can well imagine that both grief and joy were experienced during those ancient independence days, just as Israelis today grapple with the same emotions every spring.

The Same Today

Back then, Joshua divided the Land among the Twelve Tribes and settled it from the north near Tel Dan to the south in the Negev. We saw a similar process under David Ben-Gurion, who ensured that both the fertile land and the Negev Desert would be settled.

Joshua chapters 23 and 24 describe the ceremony of the first Independence Day of the Children of Israel in the Land. After Joshua had completed his mission and fulfilled God's promise by conquering the Land, he **"assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges, and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God"** (Josh. 24:1), between the Mountain of Blessings and the Mountain of Curses.

(continued on next page)



After a long speech in which he reminded the people why God chose their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as His people, Joshua recalled the many miracles God performed for them during the journey through the desert to the Promised Land. Joshua emphasized God's words: *"I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you — also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant"* (Josh. 24:12–13). God took the Land from foreign peoples to give to Israel. **These days, most journalists and politicians would claim that God had violated international law by giving the Land to Israel.** Even in Joshua's time, it was controversial and triggered a conflict.

Just as in ancient times, every year on Independence Day, the leaders of modern Israel remind us of God's miracles that the people of Israel experienced on their way from exile back to the Promised Land. In addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is especially eager to talk about God's promises, and likes to justify Israel's sovereignty by reminding the world of the Biblical mandate.

God's Covenant

The highlight of Joshua's Independence Day celebration was when God renewed the covenant with His people, Israel. God's promise to Abraham of the Land became a reality through his seed, and Joshua addressed the people at a historic moment to ensure that the covenant between God and the people of Israel would last forever.

In his speech, Joshua noted the differences between Israel and the nations that worshiped idols. In so doing, he sharpened Israel's sense of calling, her national identity, and the narrative of a people chosen. All of these are still relevant and crucial truths for today. Joshua also emphasized that faith in God was essential to their story, and he raised the existential question that has accompanied the history of Israel until this day: *"Are the*

people of Israel like all other nations, or must Israel retain its uniqueness from among the other nations?" **Every year, this question underlies the Independence Day celebration in Israel:** *"Why has God restored the Land to us at this time?"*

Three times Joshua asks the people if they are sure that they know what they want, and the people reply, *"We will serve the Lord our God and obey His voice"* (Josh. 24:24). After the first Independence Day celebration in Eretz Israel was over, Joshua's task was also completed. He later died at the age of 110 and was buried at Mount Ephraim. But each year we still celebrate in our country. And we are still challenged to respond to the same questions about our calling and the privileges and responsibility that come with living in the Land of Israel today.

Israel Today originally published this article, reproduced here with permission. Their subscribers enjoy full access to a plethora of worthy, pro-Israel articles. Their website is www.IsraelToday.co.il.

Please see the article "Palestinian Islamic Scholar: Palestinians 'Have No Historical Right To Palestine'" on p. 34. ☆



David Ben-Gurion declaring independence on May 14, 1948 beneath a portrait of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), founder of modern Zionism



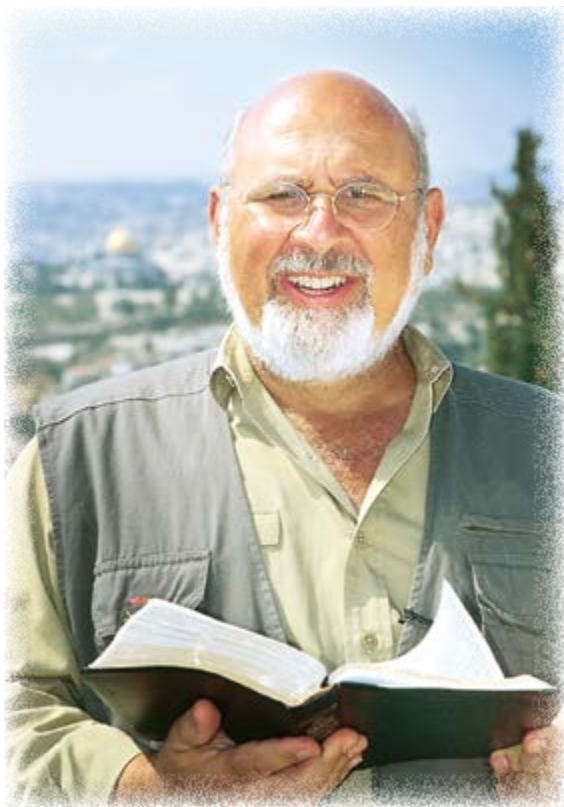
Are We Taking Our Tour?

by Zola Levitt
from 1991
32 years ago

Zola's Security in Going

I've never canceled a tour since 1973, when I visited Israel just before and just after the Yom Kippur War. I have never seen an incident during any of our tours that I could relate to any problem in the Middle East, although I've had my block knocked off in American cities time and again. I've never lost so much as a button in Israel. But in Dallas some thugs broke into my car and ripped out the radio.

Statistically, you are twenty times better off sitting in the middle of Tel Aviv and trying not to get hit by a missile than you are taking a walk in Dallas and trying not to be shot down in the street. People are nicer to me in Israel than in Dallas, and that includes Palestinian people, who are more likely to be found cooking and serving excellent meals in hotels, delivering the mail, and skillfully working in construction or other industries than they are to be throwing stones.



Zola teaching in Jerusalem



Zola's Obedience in Going

But I'm not going to Israel because it's nicer or safer than staying home. I'm going out of love and out of obedience to our God, who bade me to report often. He asked me to plant trees, visit the Holy City, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

And, I'm happy to say, He assigned me to take some pilgrims with me when I go. Believe it or not, we've got plenty, as usual, paid up and packing.

We will take the advice of our contacts in Israel as to our exact routing, but I don't anticipate any significant changes from what we usually do and see. Tel Aviv and Haifa are modern cities that do not contain sites of Biblical interest. The areas where we tour have not been part of the action.

I look forward to blessing the Chosen People, as the Lord bade us to do in His

first conversation with their father, Abraham — *"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee ..."* (Gen 12:3).

(continued on next page)



Tel Aviv



Western Haifa

Zola's Witness in Going

And, most important of all, we pilgrims will give the Israelis a very compelling witness. By our very presence, we will speak of the love, the faith, the courage, and the hope of our precious Lord. "And they'll know we are Christians by our love."

People in Israel are coming to the Lord. Many who find it very hard to talk about Jesus Christ are at least realizing that

this is a good time to think about redemption. **Jerusalem and Tel Aviv these days are examples of that old proverb, "There are no atheists in foxholes."** I remember when I was in the coronary care unit, after bypass surgery, where I met a lot of formerly rough and tough Dallas lawyers and bankers who had similar grave heart trouble. Among them, I found no one who wasn't thinking about his Creator at such a time. This, then, is the time to go to Israel and the time to witness.

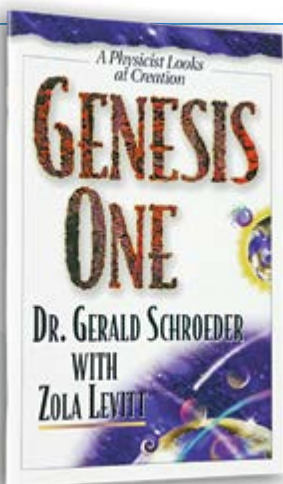
Still Going

If there is peace in the Middle East by the time you read this, then it's still a great time to go and explain the peace of our Lord, who promised, *"I will give you rest"* (Matt. 11:28). The Israelis, particularly the unspiritual Israelis, are a very scared people right now. This is a wonderful time to take them the Gospel and to fulfill our Lord's admonition to His disciples: *"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 10:6).

Thank you, Zola! These are the same comments we share with prospective pilgrims today who ask, "Is it safe to go to Israel?" To which we reply, "Is it safe to shop at Walmart?" — David and Kirsten ☆



Jerusalem



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.

Please see the DVD set *Evidence of God* on [p.7](#).

Q. What is the holiness of God? (part 1)

Dr. Todd Baker
Zola Levitt Ministries
Staff Theologian
staff@levitt.com



A. **"The LORD our God is holy!" (Psalm 99:9).** The Bible frequently declares God's incomparable holiness — His moral perfection, absolute purity, and impeccable righteousness. He is perfect in all He does and says: *"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just ..."* (Deut. 32:4) and *"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple"* (Psalm 19:7).

Theologian Walter A. Elwell writes, "Holiness refers to [God's] essential nature; it is not so much an attribute of God as it is the very foundation of His being *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts"* (Isa. 6:3). Thrice holy, intensely holy is the Lord. Holiness, accordingly, is the background for all else declared about God."

The God of the Bible reveals Himself through three Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Godhead is absolutely holy. Echoing Isaiah's declaration, Revelation 4:8 also affirms: *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD GOD, the Almighty!"* **This threefold proclamation of God's holiness is called the trisagion.**

The Hebrew word for holy is *kadosh*, and the Greek word is *hagios*. These terms reflect something that is "set apart," "different," or "distinct." Regarding God, they denote that He is separate from everything else, without equal: *"There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You ..."* (1 Sam. 2:2).

God first declared His holiness when He revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2–5). God's holiness is a primary theme throughout the Book of Leviticus, which reveals how an unholy, sinful people can approach a holy God: *"... be holy; for I am holy"* (Lev. 11:44). Both Testaments repeat this command (Leviticus 11:45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 1 Peter 1:15–16).

Because God is perfectly holy, He cannot look upon sin with pleasure, approval, or acceptance: *"Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor ..."* (Habakkuk 1:13). This is a problem for all humans, who are fallen and sinful (Rom. 3:23). We cannot rightly relate to a holy God, nor can we achieve holiness by our own efforts. Ultimately, we deserve death because of our sin (Rom. 6:23).

But because of His great love for us, God became Man in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is *"holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners"* (Heb. 7:26). He lived a perfect life and died in our place to pay the penalty for our sin. Thus, Jesus enabled those who believe in Him to have a right relationship with God and to become holy.

Next month, we will look at what it means for Believers* to reflect God's holiness.

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD GOD, the Almighty!"

— Revelation 4:8 ☆



Moses Sees a Fire Burning in a Bush, engraving by unknown artist for Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us by Charles Foster (1897)



* "Believers" is short for "believers in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah."



The 53rd Gospel outreach to Israel (March 2023) started great! After a long flight, August Rosado and I arrived in Israel — the land of divine destiny — exhausted but quickened by God’s Spirit. We distributed four complete Hebrew Bibles with three Messianic Gospel tracts, and shared a verbal witness for *Ha Adon Yeshua* (the Lord Jesus) among His people of Israel.

Eldan and **Raphael** worked at the Europcar rental desk at Ben Gurion Airport. We told them that part of our gratitude to the Jewish people for giving the world God’s Word and Jesus the Messiah (see Romans 3:1–2; 9:4–5) involved sharing the Good News with them. **Both men were open to our Gospel message and received two complete Jewish study Bibles** so they could learn for themselves about their Messiah.

The next day, August and I shared the Gospel and distributed complete Hebrew study Bibles in Netanya, a coastal city north of Tel Aviv. God led us to a shopping mall where this ministry has had previous success.

We met **Gaya**, a young Israeli lady working at a kiosk. She was cordial, and we started a conversation with her about Yeshua being the central

Person of the Bible. After we noted that Yeshua is the bridge of both Testaments of the Bible, we were astounded that Gaya verbally agreed with us. Most Israelis don’t recognize this truth because the rabbinic community and often even the Church have failed to share it. But Gaya knew better! She forthrightly stated that Messiah connects and completes the Scriptures, both Old and New.

Gaya mentioned that she had read selected portions of the New Testament in school and liked what she read. **She also agreed with us about the narrow mindset and unbelief most rabbis have toward Yeshua.** She said that they were “primitive” in this regard! August and I told Gaya that her recognition of these things made her not far from the Kingdom of God! To help her understand better — so she could get a clear and complete picture of the Messiah of the Jewish Bible — we suggested that she read both Testaments together, as they converge on Messiah Jesus. Gaya gratefully accepted our gift of a complete Hebrew Bible along with Messianic reading materials to begin her journey into salvation by faith in Jesus the Messiah. He is revealed from Genesis to Revelation! ★



Eldan, Raphael, and Todd in Tel Aviv



August and Gaya in Netanya



Maybe Don't Wait Past Full-Retirement Age?

Mark Levitt
ZLM Director
since 1988



Given an average life expectancy, should someone begin collecting Social Security (SS) benefits at full retirement age (FRA) or wait until age 70?¹ **Maybe it's time to challenge the possibly dated wisdom of two yesteryear "Wise As A Serpent" articles.**

Here are excerpts from "Maximizing Social Security" ([Levitt Letter, December 2013, p. 21](#)):

[SocialSecuritySolutions.com](#) identifies the strategies that perform best over the greatest number of projected life expectancies. Their site also allows you to enter your salary data or an estimate of your SS benefits... With the \$20 service, users can rerun the numbers using different mortality assumptions.

In a different article, [financial advisor] Scott Burns explains that "Delaying Social Security benefits also works as a form of life insurance — providing a lifetime benefit to a spouse at death."

"Don't Think 'Carpe Diem' on Social Security" ([Levitt Letter, April 2014, p. 21](#)) also quotes Scott Burns, who cited life expectancies from National Vital Statistics Reports. Scott advised waiting until age 70 even though the 8% per year increase in benefits takes until age 82 to break even.

Financial necessity often dictates taking SS benefits at or before FRA, which is 67 for those born after 1959. Here are some new considerations for those who question the present entitlement system's sustainability:

- The Rapture could come sooner than later, causing Believers to miss investing in fulfilling The Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20).

- America's age dependency ratio (the sum of people younger than 15 and age 65 and older) is forecast to increase from its current level of 54% to 60% in 2033, 63% in 2043, and 65% in 2053.²
- The SS Administration might reduce benefits in 2033, when reserves will be depleted from decades of borrowing by the feds.
- Income tax rates could rise dramatically if the feds opt against sufficiently reducing benefits, raising the salary cap for paying FICA taxes, and/or printing more money.
- Parents could use earlier SS benefits to fund annual contributions to their children's IRA accounts, seizing tax advantages rather than leaving more to inherit — or forfeiting SS benefits from dying sooner than expected.
- Conservatively investing monthly SS checks could average gains of over 8% per year and offer flexibility on withdrawal frequency and amounts. Scott Burns advocates laddering into broadly diversified, no-load mutual funds from Vanguard and/or Fidelity. His "couch potato" strategies³ extol Vanguard's Total Stock Market Index Fund (VTSAX), 500 Index Fund (VFIAX), Balanced Index Fund (VBIAX), and (one of my favorites) Star Fund (VGSTX).

The points above may give peace of mind to those who must collect SS benefits at FRA to make ends meet. *"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"* (Matt. 6:34). ☆

Notes:

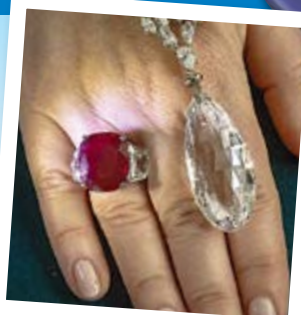
- 1 <https://www.blueprintincome.com/tools/life-expectancy-calculator-how-long-will-i-live/> offers a free, credible life-expectancy calculator that uses age & physique, life events, fitness, and lifestyle.
- 2 <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/age-dependency-ratio-projected-to-2100?country=-USA>
- 3 See <https://scottburns.com/category/couch-potato-investing/>



ZLM Bulletin Board



Do Jewish Lives Matter ... to fans of Nazi jewels? Christie's auction house raked in \$201 million in May by peddling more than 700 pieces of jewelry with Nazi ties — the largest jewelry sale in history. Organizations representing Jews and Holocaust survivors criticized the auction because the wealth that paid for the jewelry originated from Nazi Party member Helmut Horten (1909–1987), who amassed a fortune buying businesses from Jews under duress. A spokesman from one association said **this continues "a disgraceful pattern of whitewashing Holocaust profiteers."**

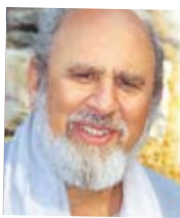


Ruby and diamond ring beside a diamond necklace

credit: REUTERS/Danis Barboise

Zola's Free Music

You can listen to samples on our website and buy CDs in our online store or MP3s from Amazon, Apple, and Google. You can also listen to Zola's music via streaming services — some require a subscription, but Spotify and YouTube Music allow you to listen for free (with ads). Search for "zola levitt" on your favorite streaming service and see what you find.



The Land Where Time Began

Imagine joining a Bible study tour with fellow Believers who love Jews, Israelis, and Jewish Israelis. Our **Deluxe Tour** (Israel only) will go October 16–26. The **Grand Petra** (Israel & Petra) is from October 16–29. David and Kirsten team up with Immanuel Tours, our Messianic land agency in Israel, to make your pilgrimage the story of a lifetime. Please call our travel manager Sandra at (214) 696-9760 during office hours or our answering service anytime at **1-800-WONDERS** (800-966-3377).



FREE ITEM

Pamphlet of the Month

Making an estate plan often requires legal assistance and a few hours of careful planning. Our free brochure ***Eleven Things to Remember ... As You Plan for Your Future*** describes 11 steps that include: 1) Make a Will and Other Plans, 3) Consult an Attorney, 5) Name Final Beneficiaries, and 7) Keep Plans in Balance. To receive this pamphlet at no charge, email us at staff@levitt.com or write to our P.O. Box. **Request POM #17.**



"COME HOME!"

Zola
Tours
to Israel



See [page 36](#)
for details





Courtesy:
The Jerusalem
Connection



רַחוּם וְחַנוּן יְהוָה אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד

“The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in love.” (Psalm 103:8)

רַ	חֻ	ם	וְ	חַ	נוּן	יְהוָה	אֶ	רֶ	ךְ	אַ	פַּ	יַ	ם	וְ	רַב־	חֶ	סֶ	דַּ
(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)
ve-rav'	cha'	sed	a-pa'	yeem	e'-rek	Adonai	ve-cha-	noon'	ra-	choom'								
& full of love	longsuffering	the LORD	& gracious is	merciful														

Read Hebrew right to left! ➡

It's been said that **grace is getting what you don't deserve, whereas mercy is not getting what you deserve**. Yeshua said, *"Blessed are the merciful (μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες), for they shall receive mercy"* (Matt. 5:7). **This is not a reciprocal principle like "karma"** (the Buddhist teaching that you supposedly get in return what you first give). We cannot obtain God's mercy as a reward for our own presumed merit (Rom. 4:4). To the contrary, we are able to extend mercy to others when we are made merciful, that is, when we receive mercy from God — we become "full of mercy." After all, we can't give away what we don't have. So, if we have no mercy for others, it is likely that we have not received it ourselves, as the Parable of the Good Samaritan reveals (Luke 10:25–37).

Your forgiveness is your forgiveness: as you forgive, so you reveal your heart. What you do comes from what you are, not the other way around. We are *first* transformed by God's grace and then come works of love. We are able to judge others mercifully, with the "good eye" (Matt. 6:22), because we come to believe that we are beloved by God.

The pattern therefore abides: *First*, you realize that you are broken and impoverished of heart — therefore you mourn

over your sinful condition. *Next*, you hunger and thirst for God's righteousness, healing, and deliverance. You also learn to trust God's mercy — that is, you **accept that you are accepted despite your unacceptability**. *Finally*, you begin to show yourself merciful — you learn to "suffer yourself" and forgive your own evil, and you also extend this mercy to others who are hurting around you.

When we don't extend mercy or demand our "rights" and hold on to grudges, it implies that we relate to God as Judge rather than as Savior (James 2:13). If we condemn what we see in others, we have yet to truly see what is within our own hearts — we have yet to see our desperate need for God's mercy in our own lives. If you don't own your own sin, your sin will own you.

Being merciful is our response to God's love. Therefore, showing mercy is essential to genuine *teshuvah* (repentance). Ask the Lord to help you let go of the pain of the past by being full of mercy toward yourself and others.

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you, But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? —Micah 6:8 ☆



The God of Miracles

DVD Set

9 half-hour programs on 2 DVDs

We can't read many pages in the Bible without encountering miracles. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture reveals our miraculous God at work. In this nine-part series, Dr. Jeffrey Seif teaches the Bible from Israel to help us discover God's astonishing activity in His world. Jeff also talks with people who have experienced the Lord's supernatural hand in their own lives.

The Holy Spirit God's Spirit hovered over the waters at Creation. Later, His Spirit descended on humans at Pentecost, saving 3,000 people. He also indwells Believers today. Jeff teaches about God's empowering and guiding Spirit from the Western Wall and the Southern Steps in Jerusalem.

The Exodus The Bible presents the Lord as Deliverer. While teaching from the Judean wilderness and Nehemiah's Wall in the City of David, Jeff emphasizes how God is devoted to building and rebuilding lives.

Death and Life Elijah resurrected the widow's son. Jesus resurrected His friend Lazarus. Filmed at Lazarus' Tomb and Bethany Church, Jeff highlights the Lord's power over life and death—both physical and spiritual.

Exile and Return God directs circumstances to accomplish His will. For ancient Jews, God allowed the Babylonian captivity. From a busy street in Jerusalem, Jeff teaches how God brought His people home, just as He promised.

The Incarnation From locations in and around Bethlehem, Jeff teaches about one of the most magnificent miracles—the birth of the Messiah, the prophesied Child, the Prince of Peace.

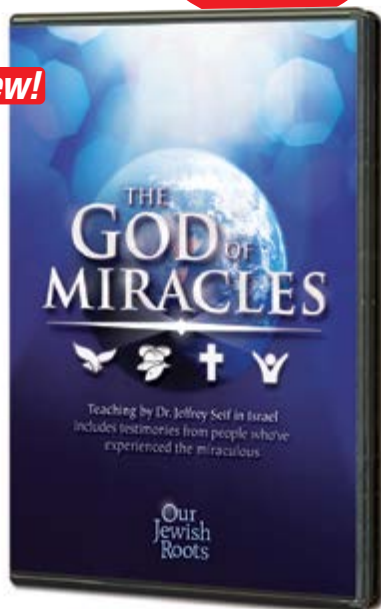
Our Daily Bread Not all miracles are spectacular. Many are very practical—from feeding a multitude to finding a coin in the mouth of a fish. The Lord is our benevolent Father who wants to give wonderful gifts to His children.

The Physical Realm Jeff defines a miracle as suspending the laws of nature. Whether changing water to wine or transforming a paralyzed man's limbs, the Lord moves in mysterious ways—both yesterday and today.

Our Greatest Need Life's circumstances can be debilitating. Our ultimate assurance comes from our Father, who loves us and desires to help us. Jeff teaches from the Pool of Siloam and the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

Bonus Interviews You'll appreciate the extended interviews with individuals appearing in this series as well as bonus interviews with Israeli Believers.

New!





Zola's Classic Study Booklet Library

Qty.	Title	Price	Total
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___	Glorious! The Future of the Believers (pictured)	\$4	___
___	How Can a Gentile Be Saved?	\$4	___
___	In My Father's House	\$4	___
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___	The Miracle of Passover	\$4	___
___	The Promised Land	\$4	___
___	The Second Coming	\$4	___
___	Seven Churches—Does Yours Fit In?	\$4	___
___	The Seven Feasts of Israel	\$4	___
___	The Spirit of Pentecost	\$4	___
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___	America's Godly Heritage (David Barton) (p.2)	\$8	___
___	The Bible Jesus Read (pictured)	\$11	___
___	The Bulletproof George Washington (David Barton) (p.2) ..	\$9	___
___	Genesis One —A Physicist Looks at Creation (booklet) (p.11)	\$6	___
___	Heaven and Earth (Ken Berg) (pictured)	\$18	___
___	The House That God Built	\$8	___
___	The Iranian Menace (Jeff Seft)	\$9	___
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___	Faith of Our Fathers	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	New! The God of Miracles (p.17) ..	(9 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
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___	Hebrew Names of God Notecards (12 unique cards)	\$24	___
___	Magnet—"Pray for the Peace" (pictured)	(3 of 1 design) \$12	___
___	New! Jewish Heritage Calendar (5784 / 2024)	\$6	___
___	"Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" Bumper Sticker	\$3	___
___	Pro-Israel Button—"Pray for Peace" (pictured) (4 of 1 design)	\$8	___
___	Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies (info only) (p. 27) ..	no charge	___
___	The Classic Zola Collection	79 products for \$999	___

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Music CDs: Hear samples at levitt.com/music

___	Jerusalem 3000 (pictured)	(Music CD)	\$12	___
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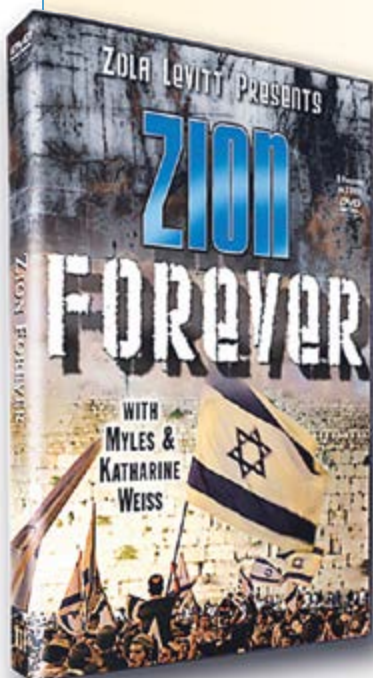
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↑
To
Index

↓
Back to
p. 27



Zion Forever DVD Set Nine 30-minute programs on 2 DVDs

This nine-part series looks back at Israel's history and forward into prophecy while remembering the present status of the Temple Mount, the most contested real estate on Earth. Throughout the series, we hear from Eitan Shishkoff, archaeologists Eli Shukron, Dan Bahat, and Shimon Gibson, tour guide Hannah Ben Haim, and Israel expert Shahar Shilo. Zola Levitt's music complements the narrative and scenes of Israel.

The Place The Holy of Holies stood on a foundation stone called in Hebrew *HaMakom* (The Place). In exploring the ancient City of David, we hear from knowledgeable archaeologists and tour guides.

Western Wall The Western Wall is the closest that Jewish people can get to the site of the Holy of Holies. We see a Bar Mitzvah celebration at the Wall and hear how King David purchased the threshing floor atop Mount Zion.

Southern Steps Myles and Katharine Weiss walk along the southern edge of the Temple Mount where Messiah and other worshipers would have entered.

Kidron Valley From the Kidron Valley, which lies between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives, we hear the history of Jerusalem. Messiah will enter through the Golden Gate when He comes again.

Valley of Elah Young shepherd boy David slew the giant Goliath here. We discuss the walls of ancient Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring where David's forces invaded the city, and the tunnels at the southern end — possibly the final resting place for Judean kings.

Ein Gedi David hid from King Saul in a cave near the spring at Ein Gedi. We hear about the discovery of the Pool of Siloam and that the current King of Israel is Yeshua Himself.

Temple Mount The Temple Mount is the earthly center of spiritual warfare. We see thousands of artifacts from Bible times that have been discovered in the debris discarded over a decade ago from unauthorized Muslim excavations. Guest archaeologist Zachi Dvira was the first to note the importance of the debris.

Mount of Olives From the Mount of Olives, we look to the future of the Temple Mount. Archaeological finds continue to surface on Mount Zion, confirming Jewish heritage as recorded in the Bible.

In the Meantime The Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque currently sit atop the Temple Mount. A representative of Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, which governs the area, gives us the Muslim perspective. Guests: David Parsons of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, Itamar Marcus of Palestinian Media Watch, and a Jewish woman who is raising her family in the City of David.



Iran's Crown Prince Visits Israel

BY TOVAH LAZAROFF (r) JPost.com



Israel and Iran can have a prosperous future. So said **Reza Pahlavi**, the oldest son of the former Iranian Shah, as he and his wife Yasmine recently made their first visit to Israel.

"We are very happy to be here and are dedicated to working toward the peaceful [and] prosperous future that the people of our region deserve," Pahlavi tweeted on landing at Ben Gurion Airport. He was greeted by Israel's Intelligence Minister Gila Gamliel, who arranged the visit.

"From the children of Cyrus, to the children of Israel, we will build this future together, in friendship," Pahlavi tweeted.

His trip underscores Israel's message of unity with the Iranian people, given that the two nations have a historic connection that continued with the modern state. That relationship was destroyed in 1979 during the Islamic revolution that deposed Pahlavi's father.

The Islamic Republic has since treated Israel as an enemy nation and has threatened to annihilate it, a goal that has caused Israeli leaders to view it as an existential threat akin to what the Jews faced from Nazi Germany. Iranian leaders are also among those who have denied that the Holocaust occurred.

To counter that image, Pahlavi went to the national Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony at Yad Vashem. "It is especially meaningful for me to be here on #YomHaShoah, Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day. Today, I join Holocaust survivors and their families at @yadvashem to help keep the memory of Holocaust victims alive. As author Elie Wiesel said, without memory there is no hope."



credit: Ariel Zandberg / GPO

Reza Pahlavi, son of former Iranian Shah, praying at the Western Wall

Later, Pahlavi met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara.

Prior to his arrival, Pahlavi wrote of his visit, "I want the people of Israel to know that the Islamic Republic does not represent the Iranian people. The ancient bond between our people can be rekindled for the benefit of both nations."

Gamliel noted that Pahlavi was "the most senior Iranian personality to ever come to a public visit to Israel. We appreciate the Crown Prince's expression of solidarity with the citizens of Israel in the face of the severe terrorist attacks perpetrated by Iran."

Nasser Kanaani, Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson, was dismissive when asked about Pahlavi's trip: "Neither the person you've mentioned, the purpose of this trip, nor the place he wants to travel to are worthy of discussion." ☆

"I want the people of Israel to know that the Islamic Republic does not represent the Iranian people."





Letters to ZLM

Some letters have been edited for space.
For ministry products and TV programs,
visit our [web store](#) and [free video archives](#).

Letters, emails, and comments from [www.levitt.com](#) and [YouTube](#)

Learning Hebrew

From B.K.: *Zola's Introduction to Hebrew* was presented in my Torah Club as a great book for learning Hebrew.

Dear B.K.,

I completely agree! This fine Hebrew primer is well organized, easy to understand, and invaluable for learning Hebrew in your Torah Club. —Kirsten

The Bearded Bible Brothers, Joshua & Caleb

Present — Return of the Shekinah on YouTube

From A.: I love the Bearded Bible Brothers. They are a gift from Abba indeed. I pray the Lord lights the path for all of the anointed and guides our feet in His righteousness. May we all be the beacon of hope and light in a world that has gone dark. I am waiting on the Rapture, Caleb and Josh, and I am right there with you on the timing. It makes perfect sense knowing our Abba loves us beyond measure and would never ask the Bride to endure the horrors that await those who are alive during the Tribulation.

I cry out to Abba all the time, asking when will Yeshua come to remove us from this hell on Earth. Abba has the devil in checkmate; his back is up against the wall as he knows his days are numbered. All praise and glory to Abba Father. #SoonTheRapture — I love your hashtags by the way. You are both such a blessing to me in my life.



Discuss — Apostasy on YouTube

From S.M.: I came across you two days ago, and I'm so blessed by your knowledge and explanation of the Bible. Caleb resembles one of my brothers and sounds just like him! My sister-in-law confirmed this as well. Thank you both for your inspiration and faith in the Lord. God bless you both!

Shalom S.M.,

Thank you for watching and sharing these messages with your family. It's always our prayer that Yeshua speaks through us. Your encouragement is a blessing! Love in Messiah. —The Bearded Bible Brothers

Our Jewish Roots

From R.S.: God bless your ministry. We love Jeff and your staff, and we're awaiting news of your next TV programs. Trust in Messiah now and when He returns. Shalom, my brothers and sisters.

Dear R.S.,

Thank you for seeking God's blessing on our weekly television program.

(continued on next page)

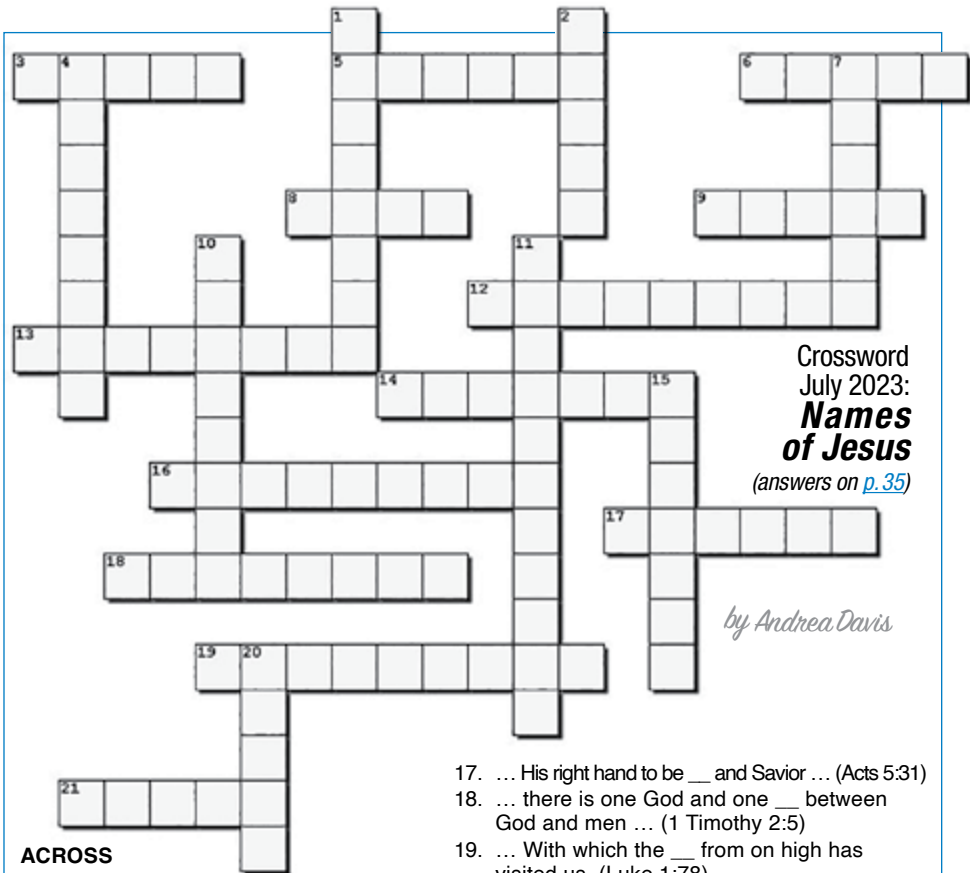
It has been airing for over 40 years. We love Jeff and our entire crew, too. Shalom to you! — David



Ezekiel (2023) —
The Restored Temple (#8) on YouTube

From N.A.T.: I finished the trilogy of the teaching by Mr. Seif about three great prophets. I can't wait to see what will be next. Shalom.

Dear N.A.T.,
Dr. Seif just filmed a brand-new series for *OJR* on the soon-coming Third Temple. You'll appreciate every program of this new series. — Kirsten ☆



Crossword
July 2023:
**Names
of Jesus**
(answers on [p.35](#))

by Andrea Davis

ACROSS

- 3. ... I am the ___ of the world ... (John 8:12)
- 5. looking unto Jesus, the ___ and finisher of our faith ... (Hebrews 12:2)
- 6. And when the ___ Shepherd appears ... (1 Peter 5:4)
- 8. For the ___ Himself will descend from heaven ... (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
- 9. ... I am the ___ of life (John 6:35)
- 12. ... And His name will be called ___, Counselor ... (Isaiah 9:6)
- 13. The ___ will come to Zion ... (Isaiah 59:20)
- 14. and from Jesus Christ, the faithful ___ ... (Revelation 1:5)
- 16. ... The ___ will come out of Zion ... (Rom. 11:26)

- 17. ... His right hand to be ___ and Savior ... (Acts 5:31)
- 18. ... there is one God and one ___ between God and men ... (1 Timothy 2:5)
- 19. ... With which the ___ from on high has visited us. (Luke 1:78)
- 21. ... Behold, the Lion of the tribe of ___ ... (Rev. 5:5)

DOWN

- 1. ... For indeed Christ, our ___, was sacrificed for us. (1 Corinthians 5:7)
- 2. ... I am the way, the ___, and the life ... (Jn. 14:6)
- 4. ... and they shall call His name ___ ... (Matt. 1:23)
- 7. ... waiting for the Consolation of ___ ... (Lk. 2:25)
- 10. ... the good ___ gives His life for the sheep. (John 10:11)
- 11. ... Has become the chief ___. (Psalm 118:22)
- 15. ... a Man of ___ and acquainted with grief ... (Isaiah 53:3)
- 20. I am the ___ and the Omega ... (Rev. 1:8)



Natural Spray Extends Life of Fresh Produce



BY ARIEL GROSSMAN (r) NoCamels.com

U.S. consumers discard a good portion of the produce that they purchase because it spoils — even though most supermarket fruits and vegetables are sprayed with a preserving wax or wrapped in clear plastic.

Israeli startup Sufresca has developed a natural alternative. Their spray allows the produce to breathe, which can add weeks to its life. “We develop edible coatings for fruits and vegetables to prolong their shelf life,” says Tal Marmur Sirota, VP of R&D at Sufresca. “Our two main aims are to reduce the massive food waste and reduce the use of plastic, which is currently the most popular solution to preserve fresh fruits and vegetables.”

The coating — made of natural ingredients like water, fatty acids and polysaccharides — is odorless and tasteless and is less than a micron thick. [By comparison, a human hair is approximately 70 microns in diameter.]

Fruits and vegetables deplete their store of nutrients after harvesting. They also lose water through their skin, thus they wilt and dry out. But Sufresca’s new coating slows down both processes. Sprayed produce can last days longer at room temperature, or several weeks longer in the fridge.

Efrat Boker Ferri, co-founder and CEO, noted: “The uniqueness in our solution is that it’s natural. It works with vegetables and fruit, and the results are better than [those of] any competitor.”

Each fruit or vegetable must be coated with a slightly different mix of the same ingredients, depending on its water content, and its peel or skin. Currently, Sufresca has developed coatings for cucumber, mango, avo-



credit: Sufresca

Red bell peppers harvested at the same time stayed fresh longer when coated with Sufresca’s solution

cado, tomato, garlic, onion, pepper, and pomegranate seeds.

The idea began as a wager. Amos Nussinovitch, Sufresca’s co-founder and a professor at the Faculty of Agriculture, Food, and Environment at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was studying edible coatings. A colleague bet him that he couldn’t preserve peppers — which are 90% water and thus quickly shrivel and lose nutrients. After 15 years of research, he finally succeeded.

Sufresca will soon sell its sprays for use in packing houses after the produce has been cleaned and treated with antibacterial materials. **It’s cheaper than the wax currently used, and packers can apply it using existing machinery.**

Unlike rival solutions, Sufresca can be applied by hand. “Even developing countries without packing houses will be able to apply the coating,” added Marmur Sirota.

Bravo — another remarkable Israeli invention! I throw out bagged salad weekly because it spoils so fast.

— Kirsten ☆



Israeli Study: People with Autism Feel More Pain, not Less



BY JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH (r) JPost.com

People with autism spectrum disorder supposedly are “indifferent to pain.” A new Israeli study, however, revealed that they experience pain at a higher intensity than the general population and are less adaptable to the sensation. The researchers expressed the hope that the findings of their study will lead to more appropriate treatment for people with autism, who do not always express the experience of pain in the usual way.

Dr. Tami Bar-Shalita at Tel Aviv University’s Sackler Faculty of Medicine led the study. She noted that about 10% of the general population suffers from sensory modulation dysfunction (SMD) — sensory hypersensitivity at a level that compromises normal daily functioning and quality of life. These people have difficulty, for example, ignoring or adapting to the buzzing or flickering of fluorescent lights, humming of air conditioners or fans, or the crunching of popcorn by someone sitting next to them in the cinema.

Previous studies revealed that these people suffer from pain more than those without SMD. Since this occurs in people with autism at a rate of 70% to 90%, it constitutes a criterion for diagnosing autism and is associated with its severity.

For many years, the prevalent opinion was that people with autism hurt less or that they were indifferent to pain. “The proof of this was supposedly their tendency to inflict pain on themselves by self-harm,” Bar-Shalita explained. “But this assumption is not necessarily true. We know that self-harm could stem from attempts to suppress pain, and it could be that they hurt themselves so as to activate unconsciously a physical mechanism of ‘pain inhibits pain.’”

The study included 52 adults with high-functioning autism (HFA) and normal intelligence. This created the largest reported sample in the world in studies on pain among people with autism.

“The results indicate that in most cases, sensitivity to pain in people with autism is actually higher than that of most of the population, while at the same time, they are unsuccessful at effectively suppressing painful stimuli. We hope our findings will benefit the professionals and practitioners handling this population and contribute to the advancement of personalized treatment,” Bar-Shalita concluded. ✨

For many years,
the prevalent
opinion was
that people with
autism hurt less
or that they were
indifferent to pain.



Dr. Tami Bar-Shalita

Jewish-Christian Partnership to Teach Christians About Judaism

BY ADAM ELIAHU BERKOWITZ (r) Israel365News.com

In an unprecedented initiative, an Orthodox Jewish university is partnering with a Christian organization in a post-graduate program to give Christians a “deeper understanding of Jews and Judaism.”

Yeshiva University (YU), in cooperation with The Philos Project, is launching a Hebraic studies program specifically designed for Christians. Classes are available at YU’s New York City campus or online via Zoom beginning in the Fall 2023 semester.

The program will include:

- An immersive Hebrew course
- 2 Bible courses
- 2 Jewish history courses
- 1 course on post-Biblical literature
- 1 course on Jewish-Christian relations

The goal of the program is to provide Christian students with a firm grasp of the deep Jewish roots of Christianity, highlighting both shared values and real contrasts. It also aims to provide Christians with a deeper understanding of Jews and Judaism—and of the unique bond between the “people of the book” and the books Christians venerate, without compromising on the particularity of the two faiths.

Those completing the program will receive a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies from the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University and a certificate in Hebraic Studies from The Philos Project.

Yeshiva University is a private Orthodox Jewish university with four campuses in New York City. The Philos Project seeks to promote positive Christian engagement in the Near East by creating leaders, building community, and taking action in the spirit of the Hebraic Tradition.

Robert Nicholson, president and executive director of The Philos Project, has high hopes for the program.

“We want to provide Christians with an

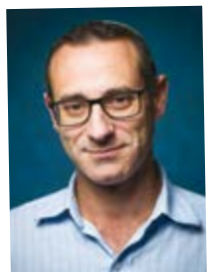


credit: Scalligera (Wikimedia Commons)

above Yeshiva University
top right Robert Nicholson
bottom right Dr. Daniel Rynhold



credit: PhilosProject.org



credit: Yeshiva University

immersive, comprehensive encounter with Judaism, Jewish history, and the Jewish people on their own terms. That last part is important because too often, Christians study Jews from a distance, without any interaction with living members of the Jewish community. Thus, they unknowingly adopt all kinds of nonsensical and even offensive ideas about who they are and what Judaism is all about.

“If the program is successful, we will see a small but growing number of Christians who understand where their faith comes from. They’ll be able to empathize with Jews despite the many differences that separate them,” Nicholson added. “Eventually, I would love to see a world in which graduates of this program go on to impact Christian society in long-lasting ways.”

Professor Daniel Rynhold, dean at Yeshiva’s Revel Graduate School, said: “If one considers the improved relations between Jews and Christians in recent decades, and the corresponding thirst among many Christians for an understanding of the Hebraic roots of their religion, partnering with an institution like The Philos Project becomes an obvious step to take.” ☆



To
Index

Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies

by Dr. Zola Levitt & Dr. Jeffrey Seif

Our 12-course study uniquely blends Jewish and Christian perspectives. Finally, a way for you to master important subjects without packing off to seminary. Each course arrives in a three-ring binder with CDs, an easy-to-follow outline, and a mail-in test. We'll evaluate your tests and encourage your progress as you enrich your walk with the Lord. Complete the 12 courses and receive a handsome diploma with your name in calligraphy.

Zola Levitt, a Jewish Believer, was best known as the host of the weekly national television program *Zola Levitt Presents*. He was also widely published, with some fifty books in several languages, and he conducted regular tours to the Holy Land.

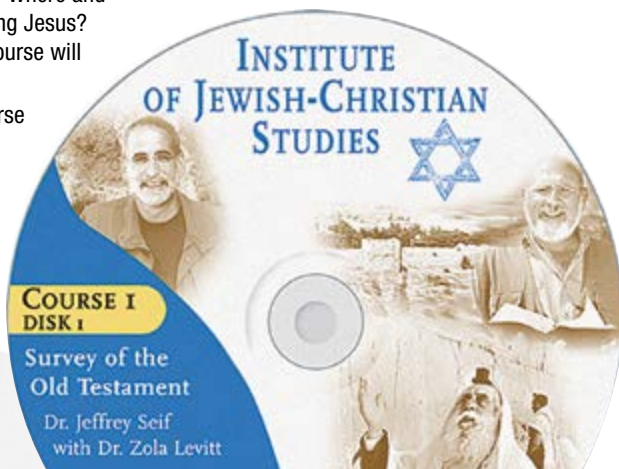
Dr. Jeffrey Seif, also a Messianic Jew and co-host of *Zola Levitt Presents* (now *Our Jewish Roots*), is an ordained minister and an expert on subjects related to Israel, the Jewish people, and prophecy.



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(or see [p.19](#))**

The 12 courses include:

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- 12. Israel & End Time Events** In a fitting conclusion to the series, Dr. Levitt and Dr. Seif put the focus on the chronology of events related to the Rapture and beyond.



The Truth About the Temple Mount

BY MENACHEM WECKER (r) JNS.org



An April article in *The Washington Post* seems to equate the truth of the Jewish Temples in Jerusalem with the story of Muhammad's miraculous "night journey" to Heaven.

"In Jewish tradition, the Temple Mount is the site where the First and Second Temples once stood. For Muslims, it [is] known as the Noble Sanctuary, the place where the prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven," wrote Louisa Loveluck, Niha Masih, and Miriam Berger. "The night of violence at the al-Aqsa compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, adds fuel to an already combustible situation."

The reality of the two Temples, however, goes beyond mere "tradition."

According to Lawrence Schiffman, professor of Hebrew and Judaic studies at New York University, the locations "can be proven archaeologically, and [are] a hard fact." He noted that many Islamic sources prior to the modern period recognized this. But whether Muhammad miraculously ascended from there is not a fact, particularly for non-Muslims. Rather, it's "a religious belief ... like saying that Jacob prayed there," Schiffman added.

There is scarce archaeological evidence of the First Temple, which is associated with King Solomon, since Herod rebuilt and expanded the Temple Mount in the year 20 or 19 B.C., "and also because Muslim authorities do not allow scientific excavation of the site," noted Steven Fine, professor of Jewish history at Yeshiva University and director of its Center for Israel Studies.

"Literary sources, however, are ample," Fine added. "No historian doubts the presence of an Israelite Temple on Mount Zion in Biblical times."

Washington's paper of record has had prior difficulty with its reporting on the sacred site in Jerusalem.



credit: Lee Atm/Flash90

The Western Wall Plaza with the Dome of the Rock in the background

A 2006 *Post* article appeared to suggest the opposite of its recent story. It reported on a discovery that "strengthens Jewish ties to the site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif ... The site of ancient Jewish Temples contains Islam's al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock and is revered as the place where the prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven."

Then in 2013, the *Post* explained in a correction: "An earlier version of this article misidentified the Jewish Temple built by King Solomon. Solomon built the First Temple, not the Second ... The article also incorrectly referred to Herod as the builder of the Second Temple. Although the Temple is sometimes called Herod's Temple in honor of his expansion of it, the original construction occurred centuries earlier."

But in 2016, a *Post* article questioned the history of the Temples.

Asked if the *Post* has changed its policy to express skepticism toward the scholarly consensus that the two Jewish Temples are historical facts, a spokesperson did not immediately respond. ☆



Wikipedia Editors Distorted Holocaust Articles

BY DR. YVETTE ALT MILLER (r) Aish.com

"For the last ten years, a group of committed Wikipedia editors have promoted a skewed version of [Holocaust] history on Wikipedia," noted Shira Klein, associate professor of history at Chapman University in California. Klein, along with Jan Grabowski, a history professor at the University of Ottawa, co-authored "Wikipedia's Intentional Distortion of the History of the Holocaust," which was recently published in *The Journal of Holocaust Research*.

"Due to this group's zealous handiwork, Wikipedia's articles on the Holocaust in Poland minimize Polish anti-Semitism, exaggerate the Poles' role in saving Jews, insinuate that most Jews supported Communism and conspired with Communists to betray Poles, blame Jews for their own persecution, and inflate Jewish collaboration with the Nazis," added Grabowski.

Drs. Klein and Grabowski spent two years researching Wikipedia articles, checking facts, and scrutinizing editors' work and their sources. Their article went viral, garnering tens of thousands of views, which is very unusual for a scholarly article.

Wikipedia, the world's fifth most popular website, describes itself as a "multilingual free online encyclopedia written and maintained by a community of volunteers." Anyone can edit, contribute to articles, or fact-check existing entries. A complex system of rules ensures that, in most cases, inaccuracies are corrected.

Regarding many Holocaust-related articles, however, 11 editors apparently circumvented Wikipedia's system of checks, vigorously arguing against editors who tried to change their anti-Jewish distortions.

"When distorting the past, the editors involved cite unreliable sources such as popular websites, self-published



Arrests after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1943

source: Wikimedia Commons

work, or academic work that has been widely discredited," Klein and Grabowski noted. "At times [these biased editors] cite scholarship but misrepresent it to support their agenda. The same group... also wage a war of legitimacy on Holocaust historians themselves, inserting scathing critiques into Wikipedia biographies of mainstream scholars, and idealizing the biographies of fringe academics." The editors warped Wikipedia in four primary ways:

- They altered countless Wikipedia entries to suggest that Jewish suffering and Polish suffering were equivalent during the Holocaust.
- They edited numerous entries to imply that Poles did not harbor anti-Semitic feelings and to exaggerate the role that Poles played in saving Jews.
- They introduced hateful and false anti-Jewish ideas into countless Wikipedia entries, including 1) that most Jews conspired with Communists to undermine Poland, 2) that greedy and duplicitous Jews have controlled Poland historically and continue to do so today, and 3) that Nazi Jew-hatred was sparked by Jews themselves.
- They manipulated many Wikipedia entries to falsely assert that much of the Nazi extermination of European Jewry was done with the cooperation, instigation, and/or help of Jewish groups.

After a later review by Wikipedia's Arbitration Committee, two distortionist editors were banned from the topic area, but the arbitrators ignored the false content. — Editor ☆





SELECT MEDIA BRIEFS

Holocaust survivor Efim Gimelshtein lights a torch at the 2023 ceremony

Nearly 150,000 Shoah Survivors Live in Israel

JNS.org

Approximately 150,000 Holocaust survivors live in Israel, according to statistics published by the Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority, ahead of Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The 147,199 Holocaust survivors residing in the Jewish state include 521 new immigrants from war-torn Ukraine who last year were recognized as survivors of the Nazi genocide.

Holocaust Remembrance Day is an annual event in Israel commemorating the six million Jews murdered by the Germans and their collaborators, and those who fought back and partook in rescue efforts. The somber day features a two-minute siren at 10:00 a.m. local time, when the country comes to a standstill.

One of the central themes of this year's commemoration was Jewish resistance during the Holocaust, as the world marked 80 years since the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

According to the data, 462 Holocaust survivors celebrated their 100th birthdays last year. Around 31,000 are over 90 years old. **The average age of survivors is 85.**

Haifa is home to the largest population of Shoah survivors in Israel, followed by Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Some 63% of Holocaust survivors in Israel were born in Europe. Significant numbers of Holocaust survivors came

from outside of Europe, including Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Iraq.

We will always remember these brave survivors. I'm so thankful that some remain to tell their stories. —David

Israeli Rugby Team Disinvited to South African Event

By Shiryn Ghermezian / Algemeiner.com



Players from Tel Aviv Heat celebrate after a victory in 2022

The international governing body for rugby, World Rugby, ruled that the South African Rugby Union's (SARU) move to disinvite the Israeli team from a competition in April was not discriminatory.

World Rugby said that after investigating, it believes SARU's decision to disinvite Tel Aviv Heat was done in response to threats of violence made by the public because an Israeli team was expected to come to South Africa. The governing body highlighted a

(continued on next page)



Facebook post that warned of a “blood bath” at the tournament, and threatening messages by South African BDS Coalition regarding Israel’s participation in the Mzansi Challenge.

The ruling, however, was met with outrage. “Despite multiple requests, we still have not received any specific examples of credible threats nor any evidence of attempts to prevent, contain, or mitigate them, including investigations or legal actions aimed at their sources,” noted Tel Aviv Heat CEO Pete Sickie. “Unfortunately, World Rugby decided not to launch a more thorough investigation that would have provided greater transparency and accountability for SARU’s decision-making process. In the end, the whole episode raises serious questions about South Africa’s capacity to host international sporting events.”

Relations between Israel and South Africa have been strained for years. Ironically, a majority of the Israeli team members who planned to compete in the event were of South African descent. Moreover, the team’s Jewish coach, Kevin Musikanth, was born in South Africa. The Tel Aviv Heat includes athletes from different ethnicities and religious backgrounds.

Iran Smuggled Arms into Syria Under Guise of Quake Aid

[JNS.org](https://jns.org)

The U.S. intelligence leak in April included a classified document showing that Iran and its proxies exploited earthquake relief to smuggle weapons into Syria. Iran-backed militias and the Revolutionary Guards’ Quds Force brought small arms,



Iranian aid arriving in Syria after the earthquake

ammunition, and drones (unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs) into Syria in convoys from Iraq, *The Washington Post* reported. Reuters also confirmed the reports, citing Western, Israeli, Iranian, and Syrian sources.

The World Health Organization called the February 6 quake the worst natural disaster in the region in a century.

The *Post* story explained that a day after the 7.8 and 7.7 magnitude temblors, a militia group “allegedly orchestrated the transfer of rifles, ammunition, and 30 UAVs hidden in aid convoys to support future attacks on U.S. forces in Syria.”

The following week, an officer from the Quds Force directed an Iraqi militia group to “embed weapons within legitimate earthquake aid,” the intelligence assessment stated.

Israel’s Alma Research and Education Center, which specializes in the country’s northern security challenges, also confirmed that Tehran has attempted to use humanitarian aid shipments to Syria as cover for this smuggling effort.

According to the Alma Center, a series of airstrikes in Syria between March 30 and April 4, attributed to Israel by international media, reflects intensified Iranian weapons smuggling.

Iran’s actions are deplorable — and, sadly, very typical. —Kirsten ☆





Rock Solid References to the “House of David”

JPost.com

The Mesha Stele, also called the Moabite Stone, is a basalt stone slab that has provided historians and linguists with the largest source of the Moabite language to date. Currently displayed in the Louvre museum in Paris, researchers have only recently been able to verify with considerable certainty that the stele contains explicit references to King David.

The stele was discovered in fragments in 1868, roughly 15 miles east of the Dead Sea. Though it was damaged in 1869, researchers made a paper-mache impression (squeeze) of the inscription before the damage occurred.

The slab is etched with a lengthy account of King Mesha of Moab going to war with Israel. The events described correspond, albeit imprecisely, with a similar account in 2 Kings chapter 3.

The text contains allusions to the Israelite God and the “House of David” and the “Altar of David.” However, scholars were not entirely sure that these references to King David were being correctly deciphered.

The Moabite phrase “House of David” consists of five letters: BT DWD. “BT” is similar to today’s Hebrew word for house — *bayit* — which is *beit* in its construct form. And “DWD” can be thought of like modern Hebrew’s *daled vav* (the letter, in this case, is actually *waw*) *daled* which spells the name “David.”

Until now, only the first and fourth letters of the series — *bet* and *waw* — were completely clear. In a 2022 article entitled “Mesha’s Stele and the House of David” in the winter issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, researchers André Lemaire and Jean-Philippe Delorme re-examined the evidence. They wrote:

“In 2015, a team from the West Semitic Research Project of the University of Southern California took new digital photographs of both the restored stela and



Mesha stele

source: Wikimedia Commons



(continued on next page)



Detail of a portion of lines 12–16. The middle line (14) reads “Take Nabau against Israel.”

the paper squeeze. The team used a method called Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), in which numerous digital images are taken of an artifact from different angles and then combined to create a precise, three-dimensional digital rendering of the piece. This method is especially valuable because the digital rendering allows researchers to control the lighting of an inscribed artifact, so that hidden, faint, or worn incisions become visible.”

More recently, in 2018, the Louvre took these new, high-resolution pictures and projected light onto them coming directly through the 150-year-old squeeze paper. **Thus, researchers gleaned a much clearer picture of the ancient records.** Lemaire and Delorme explained that this was how they could see evidence of the other three letters, *taw* (like modern Hebrew *tav*), *dalet*, and *dalet*.

Encyclopedia Britannica characterized the relationship between Moabite and the Hebrew of its time as differing “only dialectically.” According to Dearman and Jackson’s 1989 book, *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, “It is probable that Moabite and Hebrew were, for the most part, mutually intelligible.”

The stones reliably cry out truth to the world! —Kirsten ☆



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UN Joke



Palestinian Islamic Scholar: Palestinians “Have No Historical Right To Palestine”

MEMRI.org

In an address at Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque, Palestinian Islamic scholar Issam Amira declared that the Palestinians are Muslims, with neither Canaanite roots nor ancient history.

Issam Amira: “The people of Palestine have no historical right to Palestine. They have no right that dates back 2,000, 3,000, or 4,000 years.

“The right of the Canaanites to Palestine is equal to the pharaohs’ right to Egypt. Is it conceivable that any Muslim in Egypt would say: ‘I am Pharaonic and proud of it?’ Well, it’s the same if a Muslim in Palestine says: ‘I am a Canaanite and proud of it.’ To hell with your Canaanite identity and with his Pharaonic identity.

“People, our history is simple, and it is not ancient. Our history dates back only 1,440 years. 1,440 years ago, we had no rights of any kind. Absolutely none.

“It must not be said that the Palestinians have Canaanite roots. We can

go back to the words of Yasser Arafat who lost our cause. He referred to you as the [Canaanite] ‘nation of giants.’

“This is the first time I see a president who curses his own people. The Palestinians are Muslims.

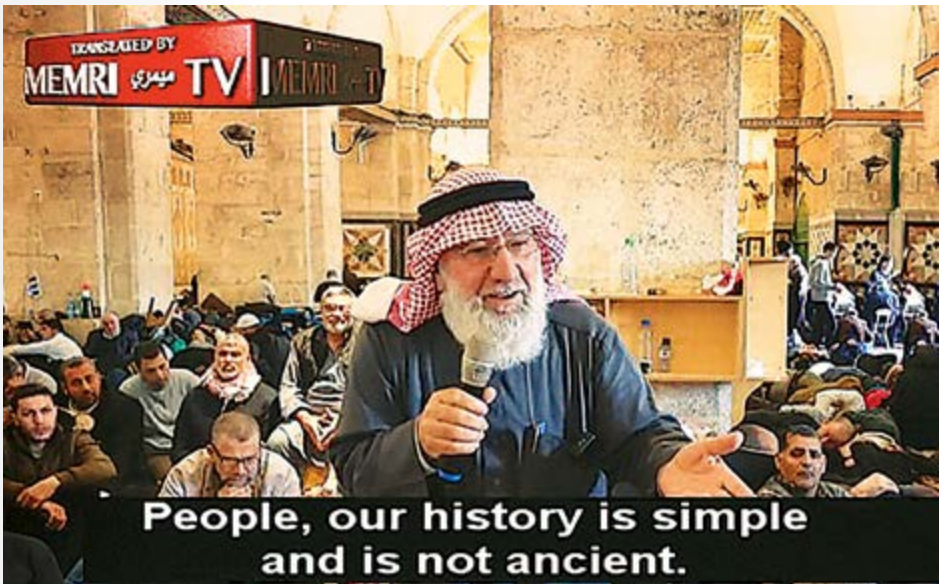
“Calling them [the Canaanite] ‘nation of giants’ is cursing them. It’s humiliating to them. It sends them back to the infidel days of tyranny. The only thing you are allowed to say is: ‘Oh Palestinians, you are Muslims.’”

Amira’s address was posted on the Aqsa Call YouTube channel in April 2023. ☆

“Our history dates back only 1,440 years. 1,440 years ago, we had no rights of any kind. Absolutely none.”

↑
To
Index

↑
Back to
p.9



Issam Amira speaking at the Al-Aqsa Mosque



Jewish Humor, etc.

*A cheerful heart is
good medicine—
Proverbs 17:22*

Time Will Tell

Two men are waiting for a train. The younger man asks the older man for the time, but the older man ignores him. After a while, the younger man again asks for the time and again the older man ignores him. Frustrated, the younger man finally asks, "Why won't you answer me when I ask you for the time?"

The older man sighs and explains: "Look, if I tell you the time, we'll start to talk. Then when the train comes, you might sit down next to me. Perhaps we'll get to know each other, and maybe I'll eventually invite you to my house for Shabbat dinner. Maybe then you and my daughter would really get along — why, you might even get engaged! And why would I want a son-in-law who can't even afford a watch?" ☆

Dry Bones



Answer Key for July 2023 Crossword (p.23)

Across:

- 3. Light
- 5. Author
- 6. Chief
- 8. Lord
- 9. Bread
- 12. Wonderful
- 13. Redeemer

Down:

- 1. Passover
- 2. Truth
- 4. Immanuel
- 7. Israel
- 10. Shepherd
- 11. Cornerstone
- 15. Sorrows
- 20. Alpha



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