



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

inside: **How Rabbis  
Avoid Messiah p.4**

# A Messianic Look at Purim

By Mark Stover / [JewsForJesus.org](http://JewsForJesus.org)

Purim is the most carnival-like Jewish holiday. Young girls hold Queen Esther beauty pageants. Children drown out Haman's name with *greggers* (noisemakers) and enact plays. Everyone noshes on poppyseed and prune *hamantaschen*. Yet, **behind the feasting and partying lies a somber message:** the near destruction of the Jewish people. It reminds us that Jewish survival hangs by a thread—but the matter is in God's hands.

The account in the Book of Esther takes place in 5<sup>th</sup>-century B.C. Persia, with court intrigue, dramatic confrontations, heroes, and villains. Esther, a beautiful Jewish teenager, becomes queen of Persia. Haman, an ambitious and arrogant bureaucrat, turns his envy of the Jew, Mordecai (Esther's cousin), into a vendetta against the entire Jewish population of Persia. To save her people, Esther exposes Haman's plot to destroy the Jewish people and reveals

*(continued p.8)*

**REMEMBER:**

**Purim is Thursday, March 21, 2019  
(beginning at sunset the evening before)**

## Tiny Jewish Community Hangs On in Myanmar

By Charles Dunst  
[JTA.org](http://JTA.org)

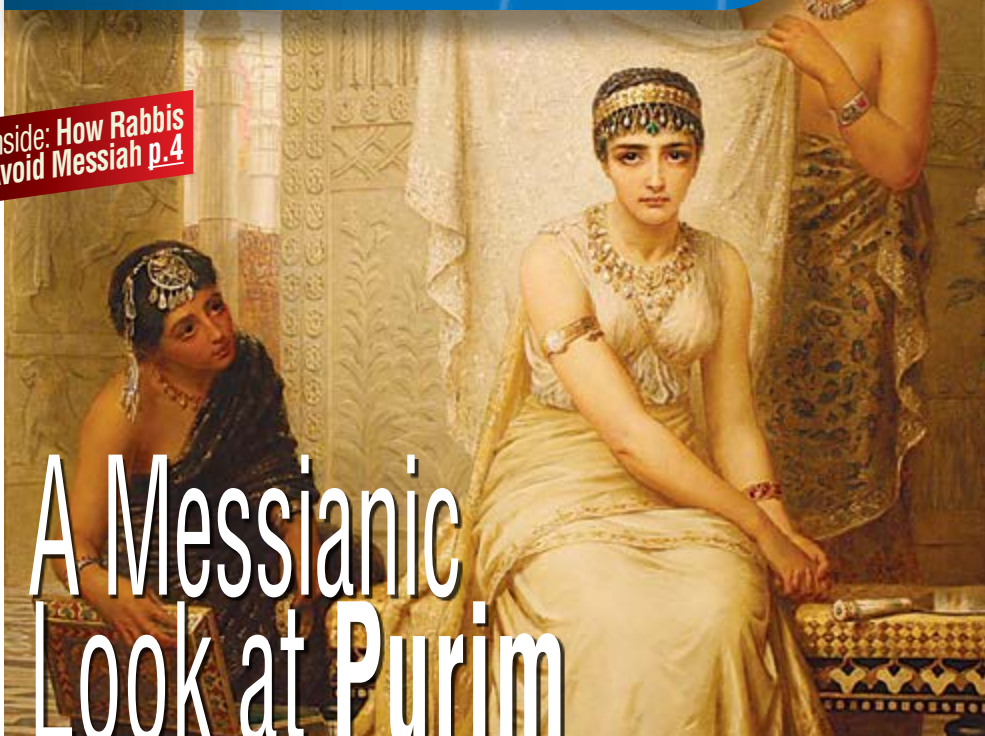
Recently, a Hanukkah party in Yangon, Myanmar's former capital, had enough guests—over 200—to surprise a tourist.

"There are no Jews here anymore," the tourist proclaimed. "They said there are only 10 families."

"Well, that's not nothing—that's 10 families," another countered. "Go to Calcutta, and you're lucky to find 16 Jews, let alone 10 families."

Indeed, Myanmar's Jewish community has dwindled to about 20 people. **Most of the Jews fled when Japan invaded the country in World War II, as the Axis power distrusted them**

*(continued p.13)*



painting: Queen Esther by Edwin Long (1829–1891), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne



# Don't Fall For Scams

By Greg Hartwig  
ZLM Webmaster



Cyber robots attack [levitt.com](http://levitt.com) and [levitt.tv](http://levitt.tv) every day. They try to break in using common passwords or other exposures. Our system blocks an average of 350 attacks per day from hackers in Korea, Egypt, India, Malaysia, Vietnam, Colombia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Uganda, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, as well as within the U.S.

We have defenses in place to automatically block these attacks, and all important data—addresses and credit card information—are encrypted to prevent theft.

Hackers and scammers target individuals, as well. You're probably aware of scams like the "Nigerian prince"—a stranger who promises you a large reward in return for helping him transfer money into the U.S.—or "rich" people who want to give you money if you'll just provide your bank information.

## The Tricks

Because most of us know not to give personal information to strangers, scammers have gotten creative, posing as a friend or an authority so you'll feel comfortable giving them information. These ruses are called "phishing"—they "fish" for information.

### Fake Authority:

1. You receive an email stating that your account has been locked. It reads: "Click here to unlock" and links to what looks like the official website. However, it's a fake—a trap to learn your user name and password. — **Don't click or sign in.**
2. You receive an email or phone call from your "neighborhood watch" or some other authority. They ask for simple things, like your wife's name. "She's a Johnson, isn't she?" "No; a Robinson," you respond. You've just given away her maiden name, a common security question on websites. — **Don't confirm or correct strangers' information.**
3. You receive an email "receipt" from Amazon showing a credit card charge of \$1,195 for a new laptop. It reads: "Click here to dispute the charge." Yikes... You bet I will! You click quickly. You know what comes next. — **Don't click or sign in.**
4. You receive a phone call or email: "This is the IRS and we have a warrant for your arrest. You can resolve this by sending us \$500 right now, or you can face expensive litigation. How do you want to fix this?" — **Hang up!**

### Fake Friends:

1. A friend emails that she's traveling and

lost her passport and money. Can you lend \$500 to get her home? **More likely: She (or a friend) fell for one of the above traps and scammers got your email address from her contacts list. — Ignore.**

2. You receive a phone call that sounds fuzzy and distant. "Grandma?" you hear. "Is this Jimmy?" you ask. "Yes. I'm in trouble with the law! Can you send me \$500 right away and not tell my parents?" — **First, confirm.**

### Threats and Ransoms:

1. "We have locked your computer files. Send us \$500, and we'll give you the password to unlock them." These are usually hoaxes and usually shown as a pop-up in your web browser when visiting a hacked site. — **Close pop-up and ignore. If it happens to be a real threat, restore from backup. (Keep computer backups current.)**
2. "We've been watching you through your computer and have all your friends' contact info. We will send them incriminating evidence unless you send us \$500 in the next 48 hours." — **These are ALWAYS hoaxes and should be ignored.**

## How They Use This Information

They will try to:

1. Get you to send them money quickly, before you think better of it.
2. Use your credit card to buy things or open new accounts.
3. Use your email account to phish your contacts, using the above tricks.
4. Break into your financial accounts and transfer money.

## What should you do?

- Be aware that cyber criminals want your online accounts.
- Use strong passwords and 2-factor sign ins.
- Be suspicious of emails that ask for personal information. Legitimate companies don't conduct important business by email out of the blue.
- Always check the website's address in your web browser before divulging any information. Answers to security questions like birthdates or where you went to school may help crooks break into your accounts.

See a humorous look at a serious subject, [p.3](#). ★





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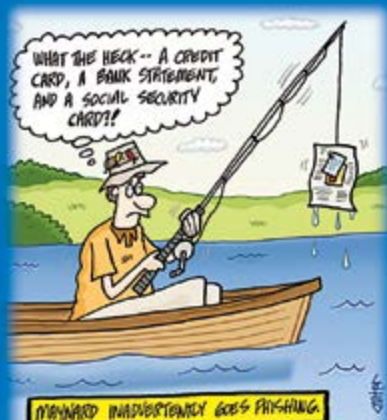


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**'Toons about Phishing (see p.2)**

BETTER TO "LAUGH AND LEARN" THAN TO LEARN THE HARD WAY THROUGH EXPERIENCE. ★



**DILBERT BY SCOTT ADAMS**





# How Rabbis Avoid the Messiah

Classic Zola  
from 1995  
24 years ago



## PART 2 BY ZOLA LEVITT



Detail of *Talmudic Discussion*, oil on panel by Carl Schleicher (1825–1903)

[Last month](#), we left frustrated rabbis trying to answer the very persuasive arguments of Believers in the Lord. Scripture is Scripture, after all. To avoid those embarrassing questions, the rabbis needed to find an escape from First Fruits and Pentecost.

Separating from those Feasts wouldn't be easy, because Scriptural directions for First Fruits are very precise. The Masoretic Text (authoritative Hebrew manuscript of the *Tanakh*/Old Testament) says that when the Israelites are in the land, they need to bring the first fruits of their harvest to the priest at the Temple, and then *"he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall wave it on the day after Shabbat"* (Lev. 23:11).

Although the day after *Shabbat* (the Sabbath) is Sunday, the rabbis could muddle that definition to change the day and thereby avoid the Resurrection. Even though the immediate and obvious meaning of "*Shabbat*" is "Saturday," it can also mean "a day of rest." Since Jewish festivals are known as days of rest, the rabbis could say that the *Shabbat* Leviticus refers to is really Passover and not the Saturday *Shabbat* of the following week. Eureka! Now Sunday has just about disappeared: Since Passover has an exact date (Nissan 14) and can happen any day of the week, the day after Passover (their new *Shabbat*) can be a Tuesday, Thursday, or any day.

But then they run into problems with Pentecost/*Shavuot*/Feast of Weeks. It's scheduled exactly 50 days after First Fruits, and Scripture again specifies a Sunday—the day after *Shabbat*. If we happen to start counting on Wednesday, 50 days later lands on a Wednesday.

Having that knowledge, let us sample the writing of the teacher Moshe Kohn (and note his use of dots. We'll come back to them.):

It is strange that of all the festivals the Torah ordains, *Shavuot* [Pentecost] alone, the anniversary of the event that marks the birth

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of the Jewish people, is given no specific date. The Torah only tells us that at a vaguely specified time during *Pessah* [Passover], from the day after the *shabbat* [Sabbath] ... there shall be seven full weeks. Till the day after the seventh *shabbat* you shall count 50 days (Leviticus 23:15–16).

It is strange, writes the teacher, that Pentecost is given no specific date. Actually, what is strange is that Jewish scholars would purposely obfuscate the Scripture. The final touch in manipulating the two festivals amounts to this: First Fruits is omitted completely, and Pentecost (or *Shavuot*) is now said to be the day the Law was given at Mount Sinai, which in turn is known as the birth of the Jewish people. (Its true meaning is the birth of the *Church*.) Scripture specifies only that the Jews were at Mount Sinai in the third month of the year, which would be Sivan, the month of Pentecost. But Scripture doesn't mention which day, and the true Scriptural meaning of the feast is of a great harvest.

Still, if God gave the Law at Pentecost, then 3,000 who worshipped the golden calf were killed that day (Exodus 32:28). When Peter spoke at Pentecost and God added 3,000 souls to the disciples' number (Acts 2:41), it was a very good harvest indeed—and God is a very good bookkeeper. The letter kills; the Spirit gives life.

The *Jerusalem Post* teacher, confounded by tradition, is mystified at the Torah missing the engineered reason for Pentecost:

*No less strange is that the Torah doesn't name this 50<sup>th</sup> day as the day of the Mount Sinai event. Again, it is the Talmudic Sages who ruled that the date is Sivan 6. (Shabbat 6b, Pessahim 68b).*

The whole sham festival schedule was accomplished by the rabbis pretending that it was unclear what day the counting began.

### Watch Those Dots!

And now we come to those infamous dots. In Kohn's first Scriptural quotation above, he omitted the crucial phrase "the day that you bring the sheaf of wave offering" and replaced it with dots. (Leviticus 23:15 in the Masoretic Text reads: "*From the day after the Sabbath, the day that you bring the sheaf of wave offering, you shall keep count [until] seven full weeks have elapsed.*")

In Leviticus 23:11 (quoted above), this wave offering clearly occurs after the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, and not on the day after Passover. (The Feast of Unleavened Bread, which requires no wave offering, occurs on the day after Passover.) So, the counting of the 50 days to Pentecost does *not* begin at a vaguely specified time as Moshe Kohn states. If the day of the wave offering (First Fruits) is confused with the second day of Passover (Unleavened Bread), then those two festivals fall on the same day. A close examination of the Scripture shows that such a rendition is impossible.

The Jewish people must return to an understanding of Scripture. If they knew Scripture, then they would know their Messiah, the true First Fruits that Believers celebrate. And Christians, also, should take care to base their lives on the Word of God alone, lest error creep in and rob them of God's light and leading.

Through all my years in Sunday School, no one explained the timing of the Feasts like Zola. Come on, Church ... it's time to deepen parishioners' knowledge of Christianity's Jewish roots! — Kirsten ★



# Believe It or Lot

Kirsten Hart  
Studio co-host of  
Zola Levitt Presents



Many phenomena in life challenge us to believe it ... or not. As a child, I enjoyed Ripley's Believe It or Not! museums and books.

The Bible is full of stories and events that make readers question their authenticity. Six-fingered giants roaming the Earth? (2 Samuel 21:20) The sun standing still for Joshua's battle. (Joshua 10:13) How did that happen? We may never understand many mysteries until we sit at the Master's feet.

Prior to hosting Zola Tours, David and I never ventured south of Masada, where our Petra extension takes ZT pilgrims. On one such trip, our bus driver called out, "... there's Lot's wife to the right." Lot's wife? I looked out the expansive window of our tour bus and viewed something I never thought possible.

Before my eyes was a rock salt formation that unbelievably looked exactly like a woman looking back into the distance behind her. Now, I've heard about Lot's wife in sermons and Sunday school lessons, but this sight wasn't words on paper. It was a ginormous piece of physical evidence concerning a Bible "story" from the beginning of history. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot, his wife, daughters, and the angel visitors goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 19. You don't get more ancient than Genesis!

If you know the story, you will recall that two angels told Lot to take his wife and family out of the city; to flee and not look back, because imminent destruction was coming. As Genesis relates, Lot's wife disobeyed, and when she looked back to see her home, she turned into a pillar of salt ... literally, *salt*.

Our tour bus stopped for scenic photos. On the mountain in front of me, the giant figure resembled a woman wearing a white shawl over her head and a blue, full-length robe (see picture at right). Granted, it was larger than a typical woman's body, but **it unmistakably looked like a woman frozen in time**.

Our bus driver explained that though the other mountains in the area were limestone, this one was 100% salt ... and was directly across the valley from ancient Sodom and Gomorrah.

I took photos and was permitted to collect a tiny piece of salt-rock (pictured). I thought about that majestic "sculpture" for days. You can take the truth of this salt monument with a grain of salt (pun intended), or you can believe that this is the literal, preserved woman-turned-to-salt in Genesis, enlarged by deposits over the millennia.

Is it really Lot's wife? Just a rock formation that reminds people of the Bible story? Or possibly the inspiration for the "myth" about fleeing a vengeful god? The fact that this is the only salt mountain in the area is either an interesting coincidence ... or it's Biblical truth revealed before our very eyes.

My question to you: Do you believe it or not? ★



**top:** "Lot's wife"  
**bottom:** salt souvenir





# Introducing ... Sarah Liberman

On the Ground in Israel  
**Sarah Liberman**  
ZLP Contributor



I was born in the Galilee region of Israel, where I now live with my wonderful Jewish husband and three amazing kids. To those enamored by the idea of walking each day in the places our Biblical heroes walked, living in Israel sounds inviting. To others, because of unfavorable media reports, it might sound scary and stressful. Through this column each month, I look forward to bringing you an exciting “boots on the ground” perspective, a real view into what living in Israel is like today.

When I was young, my parents came to Yeshua through meeting other Jewish Believers, so I grew up in a Jewish-Messianic home. As a believer in Yeshua living in this land with over 3,000 years of rich, ancient history, I cannot help but conclude that there is a special, significant role for us Messianics. However, it personally took me awhile to figure that out, and God radically transformed my life to bring me to where I am today.

As a young child, I dreamed of singing with multitudes. Later, however, I decided to pursue a business career. I earned my first degree in communications from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and my M.B.A from the University of Manchester in the UK. After meeting my husband and marrying in Israel, when the opportunity arose, we moved to California where I quickly advanced my career working in corporate sales and marketing. I didn't fully understand that because I'm a Believer, God wants to partner with me to effect His Kingdom on Earth. In order to empower such a relationship, I needed to ask Him about His plan for my life. You see, **your identity is linked to your God-given destiny**, but I didn't have a clue what my destiny was.

Ten years ago, our family moved back to Israel, and I found myself far away from the things that I enjoyed and thought were fulfilling. That's when I decided to ask God about His plan. Immediately, He restored my vision, and I dedicated my life to worshiping Him. In 2014, I recorded my first worship album, *I Am Before You*, and doors began opening for me to lead worship. In 2016, I recorded *A Pure Heart* and launched a 10-day worship program — Ascend Carmel — that I now direct, teaching the Biblical principles of worship. I'm working on a third album and traveling throughout Israel and around the world speaking, singing, and leading worship. I love bringing the sound of modern and ancient worship from Israel to the nations. Now I encourage people to worship the King of Kings. I can't think of a more fulfilling life than the one I'm living, because I know that I'm right in the center of God's will.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways press on to know Him and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5–6).* ★



## A Messianic Look at Purim *continued from cover*



*Ahasuerus and Haman at the Feast of Esther*, 1660, oil on panel by Rembrandt, Pushkin Museum, Moscow

her Jewish identity. Haman and his sons hang on the very gallows he had constructed for Mordecai, Mordecai becomes prime minister, Esther remains queen, and the Jewish people are spared.

### A Minor Holiday

Purim — so named because Haman threw lots (*purim*) to determine the timing of his plot — is classified as a “minor” holiday. Yet many ancient rabbis believed that the Book of Esther taught God’s work behind the scenes. That interpretation makes sense in light of a Bible book that neglects to mention the name of God, the concept of religion, even the ritual of prayer.

The Scroll (*Megillah*) of Esther refers to Haman as an Agagite, a descendant of Agag, King of Amalek. After Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness prior to entering the promised land, the Amalekites made the mistake of becoming the first Canaanite nation to attack them after the Exodus. For this arrogance, the Amalekites were punished with the ultimate ignominy: the blotting out of their name. (Exodus 17)

The theme of cursing or blotting out the names of evil men recurs throughout the *Tanakh*. The Hebrew verb *machah* is used in the context of blotting out or obliterating. It occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures 35 times in various forms, often describing the actions of God to “blot out” the name or memory of particular people or nations. Sometimes it refers to the “blotting out” of sin.

### What’s in a Name?

People are given names to illuminate their character. A name can invoke honor, respect, fear, pity, scorn, or ridicule. For example, when Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, he went from being known as “the one who took his brother’s birthright” to “the one who strives with God” because he had wrestled with God and prevailed (Genesis 32:28).

One of the most important aspects of ancient life was passing one’s good name on to one’s descendants. A good name would endure through many

*(continued next page)*







generations, bringing honor even after death but shame if forgotten or blotted out. Many observant Jews avoid writing even the Hebrew letters that make up God's name, since words on a chalkboard will eventually be erased and words on paper might be thrown away or burned.

God's severe curse on the Amalekites consigned their name and memory to oblivion so that the only mention of them is one of ignominy in the Bible (Exodus 17:14, 16). Yet, despite the attempts by Israel to forget this arrogant nation, the name of Amalek came back to haunt them several hundred years after the Exodus: Saul, Israel's first king, ignored God's instruction to destroy the entire city of Amalek, costing him his throne.

Moses and Amalek, Saul and Agag, Mordecai and Haman. At Purim, Jewish listeners make noise to drown out the reader each time Haman's name is mentioned during the reading of the *Megillah*. The name of Haman is shameful; it stands for evil, hatred, and rebellion against the God of Israel. In contrast, the names of Esther and Mordecai bring joyful remembrance and are honored.

## Good and Evil

The rejoicing at Purim reminds us of God's faithfulness and the quintessential triumph of righteous victim over evil oppressor. But reality tells us that there are too many Hamans for the world's Esthers and Mordecais to handle. Could the only way to rebuild the world be to turn it upside down once again? And if it were turned upside down, would it finally be right side up?

What if the innocent willingly took the place of the guilty? Would the weight of such a sacrifice be enough to swing the world back into an upright position — a position where people could face God and ask forgiveness? Instead of an evil Haman hanging from the gallows, what if an innocent Person made this sacrifice? Would His name become the Name that brings life and salvation, a Name that is above all other names, before whom all should bend the knee and bow down (Psalms 95:6)?

This Purim, as we blot out the name of Haman, and by extension Amalek and Agag and their ilk, we might also consider the claims of Yeshua, whose name actually means "salvation." He offers life and peace to all — Jews and gentiles — who trust in His name. And all who follow Yeshua, according to the New Covenant, will have their own names written in the Book of Life, where they can never be blotted out.



Cursed be Haman and his kind! Blessed be Mordecai and Esther, and all those who are faithful to the God of Israel! ★



photo: Milt Blumenfeld

A Purim Gregger,  
as illustrated in the  
2018 ZLM Jewish  
Heritage Calendar  
([order 2019's on p.19](#))



# Rescuers (continued from last month)



BY JONATHAN BLAUSTEIN (r) NYTimes.com

Our profiles of “Rescuers,” non-Jewish Europeans who risked torture and death to save Jews during the Holocaust, continues. We hope that these stories documented by Malka Drucker, a children’s book author, and Gay Block, a portrait photographer, will inspire others to stand strong in difficult times. (Our monthly series began in the [November 2018 Levitt Letter](#), p. 10.)

## Rescuer Semmy Riekerk

Semmy Riekerk, born in 1916 in the Netherlands, attended a Lutheran school, married Joop Woortman in 1938, and joined the underground movement with her husband, hiding Jews in their home. After the war, she actively spoke against anti-Semitism.

In 1942, Semmy and Joop began efforts to steal and forge papers to help Jews escape. He would arrange for pickpockets to steal the documents, and Semmy would carry the money to purchase the papers. The forged documents were complete after a photograph was added and a Jewish woman hiding in Semmy and Joop’s home attached a German official seal.

Joop would often go to the train station to look for Jews to take into hiding. When they learned that the Germans planned to deport all Jewish children to concentration camps, Joop and Semmy focused on saving Dutch children.

Joop was captured in 1944 and later killed in Bergen Belsen. “I carried on his work until the end of the war,” Semmy said. “His book listed 300 names and read: ‘These are the people who are hiding children. You have to take them ration cards and money every month.’ The banks provided money from the Dutch government-in-exile, and our organization provided the ration cards.”

## Rescuer Stefania Podgorska Burzminski and her husband, Joe

Stefania Podgorska Burzminski of Poland was interviewed above her husband Joe’s dentist office in Massachusetts. “Every time I have to do an interview like this, it brings back all the memories and I can’t sleep for some nights,” she told Ms. Block.

Stefania had moved to Przemyśl and found work with a Jewish woman who

*(continued next page)*



Photo: courtesy Gay Block

Semmy Riekerk (1916–2004)





Stefania Podgorska Burzminski (1921–2018) and her husband, Joe



had four sons, including Joe. When Polish Jews were sent to the ghetto, Stefania would sneak in to bring her friends food. Stefania's family was taken to Germany to work, so her six-year-old sister, Helena, came to live with her in Przemysl. When Joe's family was deported, Joe jumped from the train and made his way back to Stefania's apartment. Stefania hid him. At Joe's suggestion, Stefania found a bigger apartment enabling her to hide Joe and several other Jews. **After**

**several weeks, Stefania and her sister were hiding 13 Jews.**

The Germans set up a hospital across the way from Stefania's apartment and began taking over apartments in the area. "They came to my apartment and said I must be out in two hours. I thought, Where can all fifteen of us go in only two hours? My thirteen people told me to run away and they would stay and fight the Germans... they would not die without a fight. My neighbors told me to run away, but I wouldn't. They all said I was crazy. I started to pray. A woman's voice spoke to me. It was strong and clear; the same voice that told me where to find the apartment. She said, 'No one will take this apartment from you. Just send the people up to the attic and tell them to be quiet. Then open all the windows and doors and start to clean. Be quiet and sing and have your sister sing, too.' Of course, we thought we all would die. I did what the voice told me. The SS man came back and told us, 'It's good you didn't prepare to move because we only need one room, so you can stay in the other room.' And do you know what? They stayed there for seven months with thirteen Jews over their heads!"

After the war, Stefania and Joe were married. They lived in Israel for a while and then emigrated to the U.S.

The heroic stories in this outstanding series are worthy of sharing with children, either personally or through teachers and librarians. —Kirsten ★



## The Kingdom of Heaven

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



**Q.** What is the significance of the eight parables in Matthew 13 and the phrase “the kingdom of heaven”?

**A.** The 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew’s Gospel relates eight parables told by Christ, who called them “*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 13:11). Let’s define the terms “mystery” and “kingdom of heaven.”

As commonly found in the New Testament, “mystery” refers to an aspect of God’s plan that has remained hidden until the appointed time when God reveals it to those whom He chooses (Romans 16:25–26; Ephesians 3:3–5). The word does not mean, as is commonly assumed, an inscrutable or unsolved problem or situation. A mystery is, rather, an unrevealed part of God’s program for man. So with each parable that Jesus told, He revealed for the first time a truth about God’s purpose for Man. These truths would unfold and develop during the period between Christ’s first coming and His return.

This new phase of God’s rule is called “the kingdom of heaven,” and it took on this “mystery” after Jesus and His Messianic kingdom were rejected by the nation of Israel, as seen in the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Matthew 12. **The term “kingdom of heaven” is unique to Matthew, and he uses it 34 times** in his Gospel to convey the invisible rule of God in the present age—the Church Age—that will culminate in the Second Coming of Yeshua.

The Lord spoke these eight parables for two reasons:

1. to pronounce divine judgment on unbelieving Israel, resulting in their inability to spiritually understand the teachings of the Messiah (13:13–15);
2. to enlighten and instruct the believing disciples who come to Him with childlike faith about God’s program for Israel and the world during the age between His physical departure and return (13: 11, 16–17). The disciples of Yeshua’s time comprised the Jewish disciples and remnant of Israel. Today, all Believers are His disciples.

The “kingdom of heaven” as used in the context of Matthew 13 does not refer to the millennial (thousand year) reign of Christ over all the Earth but to its current expression during the interregnum—that period of time between the two comings of Christ. This period largely covers the current Church Age. The parables thus predict how the course of this age will go during the physical absence of Christ until His glorious return to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19).

The parables of Matthew 13 thus prophetically describe Christendom through the centuries in its varied forms and stages of development until the Lord’s return, when the final separation of the good and bad within the Church and the world is completed (Matthew 13:40–43). ★



*John Sees the New Jerusalem (1860) by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the Hathi Digital Trust Library and the Getty Library*



# Tiny Jewish Community Hangs On in Myanmar

## *continued from cover sidebar*

for their perceived political alignment with the British. A majority of those remaining left in the mid-1960s, when the new regime nationalized businesses, an agenda that would run the country into the ground.



Sammy Samuels inside Yangon's synagogue

Still, Sammy Samuels, 38, the de facto leader of this Southeast Asian nation's remaining Jewish community, has held out hope for its future, if not revival. In recent years his father, Moses, had maintained the community, opening the door of Yangon's sole synagogue daily to welcome tourists.

Following Moses's death in 2015, Samuels took over, embracing social media and tourism to keep the community alive. But while he has replenished the dried-up well of history with the fresh water of modernity, Myanmar's fraught politics—most notably the crime perpetrated by its military against the Rohingya Muslims—are bringing a downturn in tourism and putting those gains at risk.

At the Hanukkah celebration, Samuels pointed out the attendance of “government people—the embassy, friends and family, too.”

The Jewish community here grew rapidly from the mid-1800s through 1942. At its peak, 3,000 Jews called Myanmar home when it was still known as Burma. Some rose to local power: in the 1930s, David Sofaer served as the mayor of Yangon, then called Rangoon. Burma was a component of the British Empire.

Jewish restaurants, pharmacies, and schools once marked the city's streets. While these businesses have dissipated, Stars of David still adorn some buildings.

Today, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue in Yangon sits solitary in this land of golden pagodas and remains wholly unguarded in the city's main Muslim neighborhood.

“People do not understand ‘anti-Semitism,’”

says Samuels. “Thank God, there's no such word here.

Five buildings away, we have a mosque. And then right in front of us is the Buddhist temple.”

Samuels credits this respect across Myanmar's ethnic and religious groups to Israel. Burma was Israel's first friend in Asia, as both countries secured independence from the British in 1948. Burma's first prime minister, U Nu, was close with David Ben-Gurion, his Israeli counterpart. U Nu was the first prime minister of any country to visit the Jewish state.



David Ben-Gurion, left, meets with General Ne Win, then-prime minister of Burma, in 1959

“The Burmese population fully respects Israel,” Samuels says.

But Yangon's religious diversity, which has long bestowed Jews with safety, is not reflected in Myanmar at large. The majority of the country remains off limits for tourists due to raging ethnic conflicts against the Rohingya Muslims, whom most Burmese regard as outsiders and some as terrorists. Jews historically lived mostly in Yangon and Mandalay. ★



Yangon's Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century

# Seniors “Deducting” Contributions

Below are excerpts from a recent *Wall Street Journal* article that seniors and their accountants may want to read in its entirety at [levitt.com/?p=15278](http://levitt.com/?p=15278). Our ministry — a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization — qualifies to receive the distributions described below. — Mark

**Question:** Can seniors deduct gifts to charity?

**Answer:** Yes, by donating IRA assets, Americans age 70½ or older can lower their taxable income.

**Remember:** Such donations must be made **directly** from a traditional individual retirement account (IRA) to the charity by making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

“This transfer is usually the best way for IRA owners older than 70½ to do their giving,” states IRA specialist Ed Slott.

A growing number of IRA owners can use this maneuver. The new focus on QCDs arises from the Trump administration’s tax overhaul,

which nearly doubled the standard deduction that taxpayers get if they don’t itemize their write-offs on Schedule A. Yet IRA owners who are 70½ and older have the best of both worlds: They can get a tax break for donations while taking the higher standard deduction.

**Here’s how an IRA QCD provides benefits.** Say that Mary and Jack, a married couple, are 71 and 72. Because they’re older than 70½, they must withdraw a certain amount every year from their traditional IRAs. This year their Required Minimum Distribution is \$40,000.

This couple contributes about \$10,000 to various charities such as their church and colleges. They can choose

Wise as a Serpent  
by Mark Levitt  
ZLM Director



BIZARROCOM

by Dan Piraro



to write checks to these groups, or give appreciated assets such as stock held in a taxable account, or donate from their IRAs.

But they won’t get a write-off if they send checks, as they’re taking the standard deduction of \$26,600. Donating IRA assets gives Mary and Jack the best outcome. **While they won’t get a charitable deduction, they legally avoid tax on the \$10,000 in donations** and will reduce their taxable IRA payout to \$30,000.

What’s more, the \$10,000 donation disappears from their adjusted gross income (AGI). That can lower Medicare Part B and D premiums, which are based on AGI plus tax-free municipal-bond income.

**Result:** If the couple made \$10,000 of IRA donations in 2017 that cut their AGI to \$165,000 from \$175,000, they’d save about \$130 per month on Part B and Part D premiums for 2019, based on data from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

IRA donations may also reduce the 3.8% surtax on net investment income. Less commonly, making donations from an IRA can help reduce taxes due on Social Security payments.

[Instead of letting the government take your savings, invest in our ministry and share Yeshua’s Gospel worldwide.](#) —David ★

## SIDE NOTE:

Since IRA custodians aren’t required to detail donations on the account owner’s 1099-R form, taxpayers must remember to claim their IRA donations to reduce their income taxes.





# ZLM Bulletin Board

## U.S. Congresswoman Dons Palestinian Flag

Michigan Democrat Rashida Tlaib, who recently won a seat in the House of Representatives, wrapped herself in a Palestinian flag at her victory party. She is one of the first two Muslim women ever to be elected to the deliberative body. Daughter of Arabs who left Samaria, Tlaib became the first Muslim female member of Michigan's state legislature a decade ago. Asked during an interview whether she would vote against military aid to Israel when she goes to Congress, Tlaib answered "absolutely." "U.S. aid should be leverage," she added.



## Who On Earth Is That Baby?!

Two in five British Millennials don't realize that the Nativity scene's infant is Jesus! Moreover, 37% of respondents aged 21–38 in a OnePoll survey had no clue about Jesus/Yeshua's parents, Joseph and Mary!! Less than 10% of young people could name the three wise men's gifts — gold, frankincense, and myrrh. A 2017 study by ComRes discovered that only 6% of British adults are practicing Christians. Moreover, 55% of Believers don't read the Bible, 33% never attend church, and 29% don't pray. Meanwhile, Islam prospers there. (See p. 18 for [Bad Moon Rising DVDs](#).)

## In-Kind Gifts Made Easy

Clicking on Donations at [www.levitt.com](http://www.levitt.com) allows you to securely contribute to our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt ministry from anywhere. You can even send a text message to **469-615-2009** with the amount you wish to donate. Our website's *SECURE* donation form allows you to click on Money (credit or debit card, PayPal), Vehicle (auto, boat, RV, ATV, motorcycle), Assets (stock and mutual funds, real estate, business interest), Gift Card, or Other (bulk donation, inventory, commodities, jewelry, precious metals, other). You still can call **1-800-WONDERS** (1-800-966-3377) anytime or 1-214-696-8844 during office hours CT. Or write to us at P.O. Box 12268, Dallas TX 75225.

## FREE ITEM

### Pamphlet of the Month

The 8½" x 11" workbook **A Guide To Your Christian Will** addresses key questions, like: 1) Who needs a will? 2) What are the advantages of having a will? 3) What happens without one? The Guide then delves into the appropriate steps, such as identifying your heirs and what you'll leave behind, and keeping your records and documents where they can be found. The worksheets include a Key Information Organizer, Facts to Help Your Attorney, a form for listing personal property, and more. To receive this free pamphlet, email us at [staff@levitt.com](mailto:staff@levitt.com) or write to our P.O. Box.



## "Come Home!"

Zola  
Tours to  
Israel



See [page 36](#)  
for details



## Classic Lesson: *Miracle of a New Heart* God's Radical Cure for Spiritual Death

by John Parsons  
Hebrew for Christians  
Hebrew4Christians.com



וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חָדָשׁ אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם

"I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you." – Ezek. 36:26

וְנָתַתִּי	לָכֶם	לֵב	חָדָשׁ	וְרוּחַ	חָדָשׁ	אֶתֵּן	בְּקִרְבְּכֶם
(4) (3) (2) (1)	(2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(2) (1)	(1)	(2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)
ve-nah-ta-ti	la-khem	lev	cha-dash	ve-ru-ach	cha-dash	e-ten	be-kir-be-khem
I will give	to you	a new heart	and a new spirit	I will give	within you		

**The central commandment of Scripture is to love God and others**, yet this is precisely the commandment we find impossible to obey. Tragically, when we look within, we discover that we are loveless at heart: "For out of the heart comes evil..." (Mark 7:21; Jer. 17:9).

The essence of Torah is to "do good and no evil," but we are inherently selfish, judgmental of others, calloused, and proud. So how can we do the impossible? We are tempted to regard our inability to love as the result of something other than our own inner perversity (what the Bible calls "spiritual death"). If we are not careful, we will pray for the Lord to show mercy on that which is to be crucified and taken away! **God does not reform our carnal nature but puts it on the cross.** Then He places in us a *radically new nature* based on the Spirit and resurrection life. This great miracle of God is found in union with the Messiah's life. "Live in Me and I will live in you," Yeshua says. "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it finds life in the vine, neither can you, unless you find life in Me...for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:4–5). You cannot do the impossible, but with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27; Phil. 4:13).

Therefore, the ability to truly love comes by the miracle of God (Ezek. 36:26; 1 John 4:19). As we live in Yeshua, we find life, love, light, truth, and salvation from the hell of a loveless heart. Unite yourself with His death, burial, and resurrection; reckon yourself to be immersed into Him, death-for-death, life-for-life (Rom. 6:8–11; Col. 3:1–4). "Unless a seed of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it abides alone" (John 12:24).

Yeshua is the source of all life, and we find nourishment, strength, and joy as we connect with Him. By faith affirm: "I have been crucified with Messiah, and it is no longer 'I' who live but Messiah who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). A new "I" comes from above, known only in spiritual relationship with the Savior. The miracle of the exchanged life comes as we surrender to the truth of what God has done for us (2 Cor. 5:17). That's the essence of the Gospel, "the power of God for salvation to all who believe" (Rom. 1:16).

Therefore, we do not attempt to crucify ourselves, or labor to reform our lower nature; but we instead accept that we already have been crucified by the mercy and power of God. We clothe ourselves in the robes of His righteousness as we celebrate God's redeeming love for our lives. **Only then are we empowered by the Spirit to truly "love the LORD and keep His charge always" (Deut. 11:1).** ★



Courtesy, The Jerusalem Connection



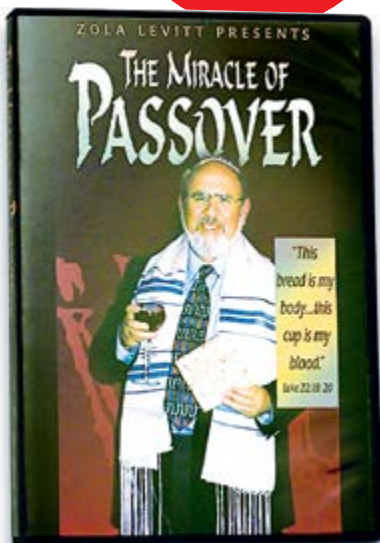
## [The Miracle of Passover](#) [DVD, CD, study booklet](#)

(One of our most popular and best-selling titles!)

**Passover, the crown jewel of the Biblical feasts, begins this year at sundown on Friday, April 19.**

In the booklet, CD, and DVD, Zola explains the origin and significance of Passover and demonstrates the feast in which Christ is revealed through its very elements. This is one of the most basic and important Bible studies, shedding clear light on the mysteries of the Lord's Supper and unearthing the Jewish roots of Christianity.

Zola demonstrates how dramatically this traditional celebration, thirty-five centuries old, typifies Christ—even in Jewish homes that don't realize the Messiah for whom they wait has already come.



## [The Messianic Passover Haggadah](#) – a Messianic book of celebration

You don't have to be Jewish to relive the Feast of Redemption—just redeemed! This 2-color, 36-page book guides you step by step through the traditional Passover Seder, the dinner Jews celebrate annually to remember the Israelites' rescue from Egyptian bondage.

This unique Haggadah focuses on Yeshua's teaching in the Upper Room, which institutes the Lord's Supper. The theme of redemption recurs throughout the evening. You'll find words and sheet music for the songs traditionally sung on Passover. Singing them will enrich your experience.

Scripture quotations come from the popular *Complete Jewish Bible*.





## Zola's Classic Study Booklet Library

Qty.	Title	Price	Total
___	A Christian Love Story .....	\$3	___
___	Glory! The Future of the Believers .....	\$3	___
___	How Can a Gentile Be Saved? .....	\$3	___
___	In My Father's House .....	\$3	___
___	Israel, My Promised .....	\$3	___
___	<b>The Miracle of Passover</b> (p.17) .....	\$3	___
___	The Promised Land .....	\$3	___
___	The Second Coming .....	\$3	___
___	Seven Churches .....	\$3	___
___	<b>The Seven Feasts of Israel</b> (pictured) .....	\$3	___
___	Spirit of Pentecost .....	\$3	___
___	<b>Jerusalem Forever</b> (pictured) .....	\$4	___
___	<b>Mix or Match:</b> .... 50 Classic Study Booklets (above) .....	\$49	___

## Books

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___	The Beginning of The End .....	\$8	___
___	The Bible Jesus Read .....	\$10	___
___	<b>Broken Branches:</b> Has the Church Replaced Israel? (Zola on Replacement Theology) (pictured) .....	\$6	___
___	Coming: The End! Russia/Israel in Prophecy .....	\$10	___
___	Genesis One .....	\$5	___
___	<b>Heaven &amp; Earth</b> (p.23) .....	\$18	___
___	The Iranian Menace .....	\$8	___
___	<b>Israel's Right to the Land</b> (pictured) .....	\$2	___
___	Once Through the New Testament .....	\$9	___
___	Our Hands are Stained with Blood .....	\$16	___
___	<b>The Messianic Passover Haggadah</b> (p.17) .....	\$6	___
___	Raptured .....	\$10	___
___	Signs of the End: Millennium .....	\$7	___
___	The Warrior King .....	\$12	___
___	"What About Us? .....	\$8	___
___	Whose Land Is It? .....	\$6	___
___	<b>Zola's Introduction to Hebrew</b> (pictured) .....	\$39	___

## Featured DVDs

Qty.	Title	Price	Total
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___	Bad Moon Rising ..... (8 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$49	___
___	Beauty for Ashes ..... (9 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$59	___
___	The Bible: The Whole Story ..... (7 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$39	___
___	Called Together ..... (8 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$49	___
___	Eretz Israel ..... (8 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$49	___
___	Ezekiel & MidEast 'Piece' ..... (8 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$49	___
___	Journey of Restoration ..... (10 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$59	___
___	<b>The Miracle of Passover</b> (p.17) .. (3 programs, 1-DVD) .....	\$19	___
___	<b>NEW! Return to Eden</b> (pictured) (p.17) (10 progs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$59	___
___	The Seven Feasts of Israel .... (7 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$49	___
___	Sons of Israel ..... (9 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$59	___
___	Times of the Signs ..... (8 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$49	___
___	Zion Forever ..... (9 programs, 2-DVDs) .....	\$59	___

New!

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**214-696-8844**, or  
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 2-pg. form, fill out  
 box at right, mail to  
 ZLM, Box 12268  
 Dallas TX 75225

## ORDER FORM continued

UNIQUE WITNESSING ITEMS!

### Studies, Specialty, Etc.

Qty.	Item	Price	Total
___	<b>2-flag Collar Pin</b> (pictured).....	\$2	___
___	<b>AHAVA Mineral Body Lotion</b> 17 oz. (p.32).....	\$37 <sup>50</sup>	___
___	<b>AHAVA Mineral Foot Cream</b> 3.4 oz. (p.32).....	\$22	___
___	<b>AHAVA Mineral Hand Cream</b> 3.4 oz. (p.32).....	\$23	___
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___	Genealogy Chart.....	\$10	___
___	Grafted-In Gold Decal (1.2" x 3" hand-cut).....	\$2	___
___	<b>Grafted-In Lapel Pin</b> (pictured).....	\$10	___
___	Half-shekel Key Chain.....	\$10	___
___	<b>Jewish Heritage Calendar</b> (5779 / 2019) (pictured).....	\$6	___
___	Matzoh Postcards (pack of 12).....	\$8	___
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___	Pictorial Map of Jerusalem.....	\$12	___
___	Pilgrim's Map of the Holy Land.....	\$6	___
___	The Prophesied Messiah Bookmark.....	2 for \$1	___
___	<b>Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies</b> (info only)....	no charge	___

### Teaching CDs

___	<b>The Miracle of Passover</b> (p.17).....	CD	\$7	___
___	The Seven Feasts of Israel.....	CD	\$7	___
___	<b>Zola Teaches the New Testament</b> (pictured) (6 CDs).....		\$29	___

### Music CDs: Hear samples at [levitt.com/music](http://levitt.com/music)

___	<b>I Call You Friend</b> (p.36).....	(Music CD)	\$14	___
___	<b>Next Year in Jerusalem</b> (pictured).....	(Music CD)	\$12	___
___	The Works.....	(Zola's first 8 albums on 4 CDs)	\$49	___
___	The Works II.....	(Zola's next 8 albums on 4 CDs)	\$49	___

PLEASE SEND THIS ENTIRE 2-PAGE ORDER FORM—THANKS.

Please fill out area below and send the entire page.

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For shipments outside the United States, please **DOUBLE** shipping. Please send U.S. funds.

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

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To  
Index

↑  
Back to  
p.9

## ***Return To Eden*** DVD Set

Ten 30-minute programs on 2 DVDs

***Return to Eden*** tells the Bible's story from Genesis to Revelation. The Lord bridged the relationship gap (caused by mankind's sin in the Garden of Eden) by creating a special relationship with a people and a land that eventually led to the Messiah. David and Kirsten Hart present this series that features teaching from Dr. Jeffrey Seif, interviews, insights from worship leader Sarah Liberman ([see p. 7](#)), and music composed by Zola Levitt.

**Out of Eden** Adam and Eve's sin led not only to man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden but, more importantly, to the loss of personal fellowship with the Lord. To bridge this relationship gap, God instituted the sacrificial system.

**Back to Eden** The journey to restoring a relationship with God has no shortcuts. God tested Abram's faith. The Tabernacle allowed people access to the Holy God by providing the setting for sacrifice necessary to atone for sin.

**Recreating Paradise** For 369 years, the Israelites could approach the Lord via the Tabernacle in Shiloh. The Menorah symbolizes not only the Jewish people but also the Tree of Life.

**Eden and Old Testament History** The Lord wants to restore fellowship with His creation and is rebuilding us and making us a testimony to His faithfulness.

**Eden and New Testament Prophecy** Sin leads to loss, and rebuilding can take generations. In the end, the Lord will renew His relationship with His people and dwell with them forever.

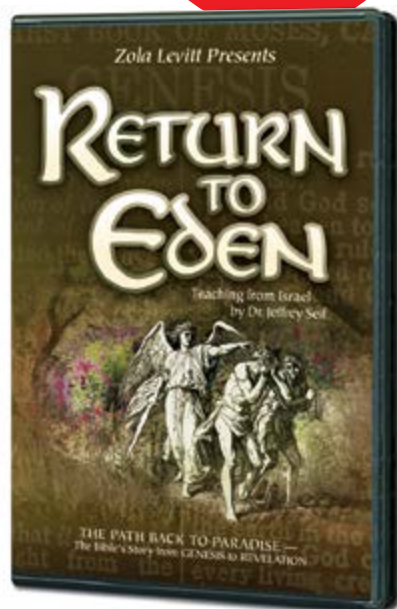
**Eden and Israel** Solomon's Temple was a reconstitution of the Garden of Eden. Today, the Lord is bringing the Jewish people back to their ancestral homeland.

**Jesus and the Return to Eden** When Messiah returns, New Jerusalem itself will be the Temple of God.

**Paradise Restored** Adam and Eve started in the Garden of Eden paradise. Believers will spend eternity with the Divine in a similar paradise. The choice one makes now to accept Jesus or not dictates where one will spend eternity.

**Bonus Interviews – Part 1** Extended interviews with: Doron Keidar, Cry for Zion; Dr. Seth Postell, academic dean of Israel College of the Bible in Netanya; and Guy Erlich, owner/director of Balm of Gilead Farm.

**Bonus Interviews – Part 2** Extended interviews with: David Parsons, vice-president of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem; singer Pat Boone; and Yehuda Glick, member of Israel's Knesset.





# Purim: Clues That Lead to Deliverance

BY BONNIE SAUL WILKS / Messianic Jewish Bible Institute (MJBI.org)



Purim is commemorated annually on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Adar on the Hebrew calendar, March 21 this year. Jewish people around the world honor this day of deliverance with feasting, merriment, and celebration. Jerusalem celebrates two days, remembering *Shushan* Purim on the 15<sup>th</sup>, because fighting in the capital of Shushan continued through the 14<sup>th</sup>, delaying their day of rest.

In the Scroll of Esther, hiddenness is a prevailing theme as evil plots and redemptive plans come to light. Haman, an evil advisor of Persian King Ahasuerus, cast lots to set a date to kill all the Jews of the kingdom. Mordecai discovered his plans and persuaded his relative Queen Esther to plead with the king for the lives of her people. Moved by the Jewish queen's plea, the king nullified the edict, and the conspiracy was foiled.

The Megillah is careful not to say that God commanded the observance of Purim. In fact, God is nowhere mentioned—ironic, considering the great peril of the storyline. The Jewish people faced complete annihilation by an evil enemy. Where was the Covenant Maker when the Jewish people were in real trouble?

Yet Adonai's plan and presence are tangible. Behind the scenes, He chose and prepared a young Jewish woman and her kinsman. He filled their hearts with faith to be silent when it was appropriate, and courage to act when the time became critical. Although God is not center-stage or even named, Esther and Mordecai are not the champions of the great deliverance. God Himself rescues the Jewish nation. He orchestrates, ever-mindful that the Chosen People have a call to be a light to the nations. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made covenant with them from the beginning and never breaks His promises.

Today, the whole world may be asking God, "Where are You?" Anti-Semitism is rising, economic stability is illusive, innocents are succumbing to brutal deaths, and no person seems able to escape. No face emerges as defender and rescuer.

World citizens share a common enemy. He may wear the mask of terrorism, but he

## HEBREW WORDS:

**"Purim":** plural Hebrew form of the word *pur*, which means "lot"

**"Hester":** Hebrew word meaning "hidden." The root letters "s-t-r" are the same root for the name "Esther."

**"Hester Panim":** Hebrew for the "hidden face of God"

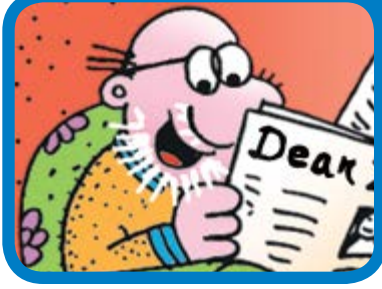
**"Megillat Ester":** Hebrew for "Scroll of Esther." Jewish people read this rich story of deliverance from a scroll. Hidden within the word *megillah* is the Hebrew root "g-l-h" which means "to reveal." An alternative meaning of *Megillat Ester* could be "The Revealing of the Hidden."



is the same old contender against God: Lucifer, who aspires to be equal with the Almighty. **That adversary is not to be feared.** Scripture admonishes: *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matthew 10:28). It also reminds us that our true rivals are not flesh and blood, but the powers of this age (Ephesians 6:12).

In all this uncertainty, the Deliverer of Israel is ever-present, in the "happenstance" occurrences of life, orchestrating victory. Although His face is unseen (*Hester Panim*), the Great Deliverer is working to bring salvation and eternal purpose in your life. You may not see Him; but look for His clues. Yeshua is near. Victory is **"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts"** (Zechariah 4:6). God actively provides a way of escape for those who are tuned in to His clues.

Please share this with people you know who wonder where God is in their lives. He is always present behind the scenes. —Kirsten ★



# Letters to ZLM

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

## Aliyah Truly Means “Going Home”

Dear ZLM,

The Hebrew Lesson ([Dec. 2018 Levitt Letter, p. 16](#)) stated: “No, we are strangers and pilgrims here; we are on the journey to reach ‘the City of the Living God.’” I was immediately struck with the visual of Abraham moving his tents through different lands on his way to the Lord’s land in Canaan.

It seems the same with the Diaspora Jews. Anti-Semitism rises, and the Jewish people choose to make *aliyah* to the Lord’s land. They seem to be strangers in a foreign land until they reach Israel! —H.L.

Dear H.L. —

Students of history enjoy discovering these parallel associations (aha! moments). It’s vitally important that Bible Believers know the history of our Jewish roots. ZLM offers wonderful resources for connecting Christians with their roots: the [Discovering Our Jewish Roots](#) CDs, Zola’s study booklet [Broken Branches—Has the Church Replaced Israel?](#), and our ministry’s correspondence course, [The Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies](#), created by Jeff Seif and Zola.

The good news is that the Jewish people are coming back to their land in droves! —Kirsten



## U.S. Embassy Still in Temporary Quarters

Dear ZLM,

Mark mentioned in last [December’s LL \(p. 25\)](#) that he would like to see the permanent construction of America’s embassy in Jerusalem. I was under the impression that President Trump refurbished a building in Jerusalem and that it is a permanent site. Am I wrong? —H.L.

Dear H.L. —

Construction is expected to be carried out over the next six years. In August 2018, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat announced, “The permits that I signed yesterday”  
(continued next page)

NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY

GOCOMICS.COM/NONSEQUITUR



— Too bad he doesn’t know about Roku ([levitt.com/Roku](#))

for the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem are another stage in establishing and setting the role of the embassy in Israel's capital." As YNetNews reported, the May 2018 renaming of a consular building in Jerusalem as the U.S. Embassy was "largely symbolic as only the ambassador moved to Jerusalem. The road to the diplomatic mission actually beginning operations is still a ways off." — Editor



## Heaven and Earth Book

*Ken Berg's favorite Holy Land photographs and stories*

For four decades, the producer of *Zola Levitt Presents* has traversed the Bible Lands with his camera at the ready. Now this well organized, full-color portfolio of Ken's most inspirational shots chronicles key appointed places that God chose as backdrops for His Holy Writ, the Bible, to unfold. From the mountaintops to the rivers and seas, deserts, and archaeological excavations, this book's narrative lets the reader commune anew with Scriptures written thousands of years ago.

## Styling Dates

Dear ZLM,

I learned that A.D. means *anno Domini* ("in the year of our Lord") and precedes the date, as "in the year of our Lord 2018." B.C. means "before Christ" and follows the date. — Rev. R.G.S.

Dear Rev. S. —

The AP Style book agrees with you. Henceforth, Peter's death will be expressed as occurring "in A.D. 67." Thanks for your watchful eye and constructive email. — Editor

## The Message, Not the Messengers

Dear ZLM,

I pray this story will bless you and staff.

Two years ago I dumped Zola Levitt Ministries because they dumped my Myles and Katharine, so it seemed. I refused to watch. But tonight on *ZLP*, I heard the yearning in Jeffrey's heart for support to assist the ministry. I thought, hmmm. Then I noticed that the animosity that I felt previously was gone! I thought, "Thank you, Lord . . . yes, I will." I praise Him and thank Him as I begin to feel the restoration. I will send a quarterly check, as before. May we all have a blessed year ahead. *Baruch haba b'Shem Adonai*—"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:35 and Matthew 23:39). Shalom — V.V. (AZ)

Dear V.V. —

God's calling for our ministry to transition to our new generation of hosts and teachers was unmistakable. Despite our viewers' and readers' devotion to Zola, the ministry's original messenger, our outreach has always been (and

*(continued next page)*



always will be) about the Message rather than the messenger. It is important to remember that whether our teachers move on to greener pastures or the great beyond, their legacies of Bible lessons remain in our vast television and news magazine archives at [levitt.com](http://levitt.com). To learn how to search these voluminous treasure troves, please see our webmaster's helpful article "Searching [levitt.com](http://levitt.com)" in the [January 2018 Levitt Letter](#), p. 10. —Mark

Dear V.V. —

Kirsten and I have served in church ministry for many years. Every time there is a change in pastor, people leave because new faces have "taken" the spot vacated by someone they revered and loved. Since mid-2017, Kirsten and I happen to have been those new faces at ZLM.

Thank you for coming back and for accepting the new work that God is doing with the ministry Zola started years ago. We also thank you for your financial assistance that lets us keep sharing the Good News of Messiah to the world. —David

NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY

GOCOMICS.COM/NONSEQUITUR



— Believers rejoice that Yeshua's sacrifice exempts them from scrutiny at the Pearly Gates, per Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."



## Best Ways to Spread the Gospel

Dear ZLM,

As a ZLMer, I am thankful for your news magazine. I suggest praying the Prayer of Jabez daily (1 Chronicles 4:10). I ask in Jesus/Yeshua's name, and by the power of His blood, that you will find the way to bring the truth where it should be taught on the Internet.

Have you considered the app Livestream? Is there a way to fund a new television network? Anything (like sports, etc.) that gets in the way of viewers' eyes being open to see your message is where to fund. I will continue with prayer and financial support as possible. —M.R. (CA)

Dear M.R. —

Our producer, Ken Berg, has always been on the cutting edge of media, technology, and television. He continually looks for the best way to get our ministry's message across. Kirsten and I are very active on Facebook and Twitter and through [levitt.com](http://levitt.com). Thank you for your prayers and support as we continue to pursue various avenues to reach our viewers. —David

Dear ZLM,

I receive your *Levitt Letter* and always look forward to discovering it in my mailbox. My work also has issues with budget constrictions. We mail some copies of our newsletter and post it online. Some families prefer to receive the

*(continued next page)*

newsletter via email, and we save on postage going this route.

Why not email your newsletter to those who have email addresses and mail to those who don't? Every penny counts, right?

I always watch *Zola Levitt Presents* online rather than on television. Perhaps this familiar door's closing is simply redirecting you to another avenue, such as the Internet.

Thank you for all you do. I enjoy your programs and printed material and pray that God will show you the way forward. Blessings, M.F.

Dear M.F. —

How right you are about making every penny count. It's also wise to avoid the pitfalls of penny wisdom and pound foolishness. ZLM is compelled, I believe, to cast its bread (news magazines and TV programs) upon the waters because too few fish (readers and viewers) will jump into our boat (visit [levitt.com](http://levitt.com)) to be fed.

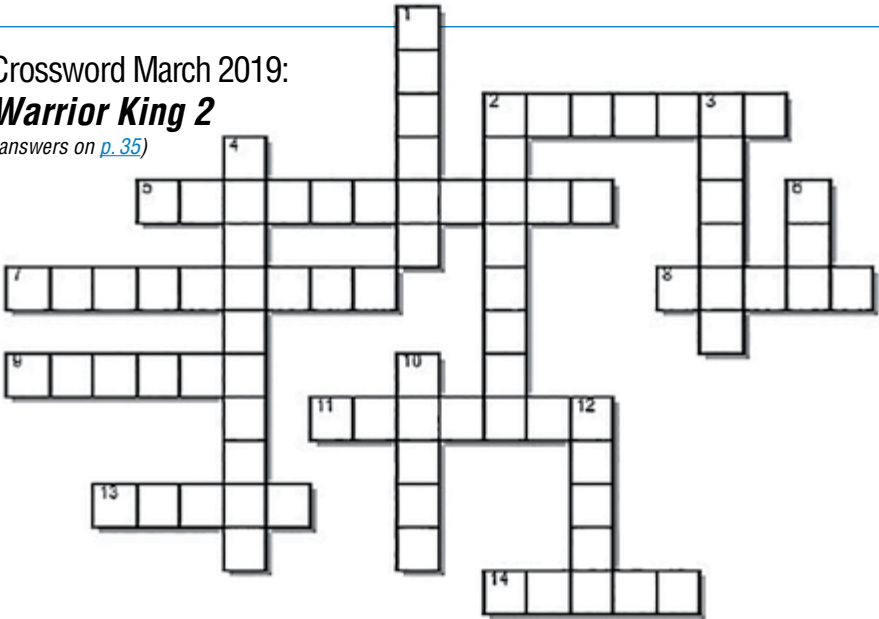
Time will tell how long it will make sense to continue broadcasting Bible teaching via TV as well as posting at [levitt.tv](http://levitt.tv). Many readers enjoy receiving hard copies of our monthly mailings even though they manage to read them beforehand online. "Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment." (Zig Ziglar, American motivational speaker 1926–2012).

Like many people, I retain more content when I read the hard copy as well as see it on my computer screen. Therefore, I encourage our subscribers to request free email notifications of when our ministry's webmaster posts new newsletters—and to continue enjoying (and sharing!) our mailings —Mark ★

## Crossword March 2019:

### **Warrior King 2**

(answers on [p. 35](#))



#### ACROSS

2. And Saul cast a \_\_\_\_ (1 Sam. 20:33 KJV)
5. And the \_\_\_\_ gathered themselves... (1 Sam. 28:4 KJV)
7. Ye \_\_\_\_ of Israel, weep over Saul... (2 Sam. 1:24 KJV)
8. And David said in his \_\_\_\_ (1 Sam. 27:1 KJV)
9. And the \_\_\_\_ went sore against Saul... (1 Sam. 31:3 KJV)
11. And they \_\_\_\_, and wept... (2 Sam. 1:12 KJV)
13. Then Saul's \_\_\_\_ was kindled... (1 Sam. 20:30 KJV)
14. ...they anointed David king over the house of \_\_\_\_ (2 Sam. 2:4 KJV)

#### DOWN

1. ... how are the \_\_\_\_ fallen! (2 Sam. 1:19 KJV)
2. Then \_\_\_\_ and David made a covenant... (1 Sam. 18:3 KJV)
3. But all \_\_\_\_ & Judah loved David... (1 Sam. 18:16 KJV)
4. And David was greatly \_\_\_\_ (1 Sam. 30:6 KJV)
6. And there was \_\_\_\_ again... (1 Sam. 19:8 KJV)
10. The Lord \_\_\_\_ between me and thee... (1 Sam. 24:12 KJV)
12. And Saul was afraid of \_\_\_\_ (1 Sam. 18:12 KJV)



# Hacking Via Power Lines

SCIENCE: BY LIAM TUNG (r) ZDNet.com



Researchers from Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev have shown once again that air-gapped PCs are not safe from a determined and patient attacker.

The researchers previously devised several techniques to extract data from isolated or air-gapped computers that store highly sensitive data. These include:

- using computer noise to steal data
- using a computer processing unit's (CPU) low-frequency magnetic radiation to leak data through a Faraday cage
- drone-assisted attack on a computer's flashing LEDs
- attacking the very CCTV cameras used to monitor air-gapped computers

The latest technique, dubbed **PowerHammer**, exploits current fluctuations flowing through the power lines that are supplying electricity to air-gapped computers. The researchers have been able to exfiltrate data at a rate of 1,000 bits per second from lines connected to the target computer. As with other recent attacks, the PowerHammer technique uses malware to regulate a CPU's utilization to control the system's power consumption.



*inset* Dr. Mordechai Guri

Instead of observing magnetic emissions as CPU usage rises and falls, the attacker can observe changes in current flow from the electricity lines outside a building or via the cords supplying power to the infected machine.

"The data is modulated, encoded, and transmitted on top of the current flow fluctuations, and then it is carried through the power lines," explains Dr. Mordechai Guri, head of research and development at the University's Cyber Security Research Center. "This phenomenon is known as a 'conducted emission.'"

The generated noise travels along the input power lines and can be measured by an attacker probing the power cables."

PowerHammer assumes an attacker has already infected an air-gapped network and focuses on the task of extracting protected data after infection. Dr. Guri notes that power-line communication is common for smart home and industrial applications. Countermeasures can be taken to protect against PowerHammer attacks, such as monitoring the current's flow on power lines for deviations from standard transmission patterns. Other options include power-line filters and signal jammers.

Traditional intrusion-detection systems, long thought impenetrable forms of physical security, continue to be found vulnerable. The latest attack vector is low-level magnetic fields. Air-gapped computers are seen as high-value targets, so considerable research has gone into taking data from them — without a network connection. Owners of air-gapped computers might consider covering the hard drive's leaky flashing LED lights. Surveillance camera lighting systems also can create a web of light for leaking and extracting data from networks. ★





# Getting Blood to Soldiers Quickly

MEDICINE: BY ARIELLA GENTIN (r) TimesOfIsrael.com



Twenty-six-year-old Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design graduate Netta Shanwald recently showed off her BCarrier, a blood transportation kit meant to assist special forces operating in military zones.

The number one cause of death in the Israeli army is loss of blood in the time between when a soldier is injured and when the soldier gets to the hospital for treatment, explained Shanwald. Carrying blood around in the army can be problematic because it needs to be stored at about 39° Fahrenheit; but when utilized, the blood needs to be warmed to body temperature.

Usually, the blood is stored in coolers, and a separate device is used to warm the blood. Carrying around all of those containers, however, can be cumbersome. Additionally, blood is sometimes wasted, because once it is released to an army unit, it is often not taken back by the blood bank, which assumes that at some point the blood will have exceeded the proper temperature and become unusable.

So Shanwald has created a kit that she says could both keep the blood cool and heat it up to the appropriate temperature when needed.

**The BCarrier has two compartments: one to cool the blood, and one to heat it, all in the same container.**

The blood, stored in a tube, stays cold because of cooling strips that Shanwald has created to work in a similar way to NanoCool. NanoCool, used by FedEx, is an evaporative cooling technology in the form of a white plastic box that evaporates water over time to keep packages cold.



**background:** Soldier using BCarrier, **inset** Netta Shanwald

Shanwald's strips use that same type of technology to keep the blood cold in the BCarrier. The user takes the strip and breaks it like a glow stick; this generates cold air. Once the strips are put into the compartment, the cold lasts for 24 hours, after which the user can put in more strips and keep the blood cold for more time, if needed.

When soldiers want to heat up the blood, they pull open the top part of the device, exposing buttons and a compartment that heats up the blood. When a button is pressed, the tube with the blood is heated with a battery. Because that compartment is completely hidden until the soldier opens it, there is no concern that the heating device will be activated in a soldier's bag before the blood is needed, explained Shanwald.

The device also has a screen that displays the temperature at which the blood has been stored, so that blood doesn't get unnecessarily thrown away.

The IDF knows about Shanwald's device because she worked with officers to create it. But she does not know when or if the IDF will use her technology, due to the expense and other factors. Still, she hopes that the technology will save lives. ★

photo: Ariella Gentin/Times of Israel



# The Lone Evangelist



**VOICE OF THE MARTYRS**



Growing up in Pakistan, Abdul lived under Islam's strict Sharia law within an oppressive shame culture. His uncle, the head of his extended family, was an Islamic leader in the community, and the Koran was the source of ultimate authority over his life.

As Abdul grew older, however, he began to worry about where he would spend eternity. He often thought of heaven and discussed the afterlife with his uncle, but his uncle simply assured him that he would get there.

You know you're doing a good job," he told Abdul. "You will go to heaven." Instead of providing comfort, his uncle's words offended Abdul. He knew he had not lived a good life, even by his own standards. And surely heaven's standards were higher. After further conversations with family members, Abdul's disgust with his life grew so intense that he wanted to commit suicide.

Distraught, he shared his dark intentions with a friend, who surprised Abdul by challenging him to take a Bible correspondence course that he had been taking.

Abdul soon received the first lessons. Everything made sense ... until he came to Romans 8:1 — *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* That declaration shook Abdul's understanding of God, judgment, and heaven. The concept of grace it presented was so foreign that he thought it was an error. But the more he studied the Scriptures, the better he understood the uniquely Christian teachings about God's mercy and grace. Finally, in 2005, Abdul placed his faith in Christ and was baptized, unaware of the persecution his decision would bring.

## Rejected by Family

Three months after becoming a Christian, Abdul spent weeks in prayer and preparation before beginning to tell friends and strangers about Jesus. Then

*(continued next page)*





one day, he arrived home and saw a group of people gathered outside his house. Some villagers had reported his evangelistic work to his family. Abdul sensed the tension of his family, and then his uncle pointed a gun at him.

Abdul's uncle lunged toward him, the gun's butt striking Abdul's shoulder as his brothers pulled him away.

**"If you again become a Muslim, we will forgive you,"** Abdul's father promised. But Abdul held to his Christian faith. "I am asking you to become a Christian so you can have salvation," he responded.

Kicked out of the house, Abdul had nowhere to stay. So after nightfall, he returned to his parents' house and climbed on the roof to sleep. At sunrise, he left. He followed the same pattern the next day ... and every day for the next six years.

"It was easy in the summer, but very hard during the winter," he recalled. "I kept a matchbook in my pocket to make a fire to warm myself." Whenever he found himself suffering from the weather or loneliness, he prayed: "Thank you, God. This is all about You and for You."

## Relentless Evangelist

Throughout those six years, Abdul shared the Gospel with everyone he could. As the only Christian in an area of dozens of villages, the harvest was plentiful. He sold newspapers to earn money, talked with neighboring villagers, and visited workers in the fields. Every morning, he walked two miles and discussed the Scriptures with a man who daily got milk for his family.

Abdul has led 10 men to Christ so far, and another 30 have shown interest in learning more. He hopes that the Christian woman he plans to marry soon will be able to reach out to women with whom he is unable to speak in their strict Islamic culture.

Abdul still receives frequent death threats from Islamic leaders because of his evangelism. Nevertheless, he continues as the sole evangelist in his community.

Six years after Abdul began sleeping on his parents' roof, his mother learned that he was sick and urged her husband to forgive Abdul.

Abdul's father relented, allowing him to move into a separate room that he added to the house. Then, when Abdul's father died in 2012, his uncle refused to let him attend the funeral. "You are a Christian and you don't believe in Allah; so, out!" his uncle ordered.

Abdul has not given up on his uncle. While the verbal abuse continues today, Abdul's standard response is a kind smile. "I pray that my uncle can receive salvation before he dies," Abdul says.

Abdul accepts the threats as a part of his faith. He now knows for sure where he is going when he dies.

"I know that I have to die," he says. "But before then, I want to share the good news that people don't have to go to hell. They can go to Heaven."

**And some of us think a difficult day is not finding a parking spot or being too tired from the day before to teach Sunday School. Please pray for God's blessings on Abdul and his calling. — Kirsten ★**

**Abdul accepts  
the threats  
as a part of  
his faith.**





# SELECT MEDIA BRIEFS



Michael Jacobs across from BDS protesters in Amsterdam

## Dutch Jew Protests BDS Protesters

By Itamar Eichner / YNetNews.com

Michael Jacobs, 66, a resident of Amsterdam, has been going out five times a week over the past two years to defend Israel at Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) demonstrations.

"I stand in front of the anti-Israel demonstrators with the Israeli flag to show them that we will not give up and will not surrender to their lies," Jacobs declares.

He holds his solo protests in Dam Square and other central sites in the city. "I'm on duty, and I feel like a soldier defending the human morality that is missing in the Netherlands and defending the State of Israel," he says.

Jacobs feels he has to confront the boycott activists, who wave PLO flags and signs with false and distorted information about Israel.

"They present Israel in a misleading way. They display signs with an erased Star of David, signs of an Israeli flag combined with a swastika of Nazi Germany, and a sign in which a blue Star of David was replaced by a blue cockroach. It is terrible, precisely the Nazis' method," says Jacobs, a veteran of the Israel Defense Forces whose grandparents perished in the Holocaust.

An Israeli acquaintance who supplies him with flags says the BDS demonstrators often push him. "Policemen stand by and watch. I admire this man and his love for

Israel. He pays a price, but that does not deter him."

Israeli tourists who see Jacobs standing with an Israeli flag in front of the demonstrators come to support him. "Their reactions give me strength," he says.

## You May Be Eating Halal Meat

By Esther Honig HarvestPublicMedia.org

Wearing a heavy smock and rubber boots, Amadedin Eganwa stands

over a large conveyor belt that's carrying unconscious lambs. He faces east, towards Mecca, gently lifts the animal's head in the same direction

and under his breath quickly says a prayer — *bismillahi allahu akbar* ("in God's name, Allah is greater") — before swiftly cutting the lamb's throat.

Eganwa, a practicing Muslim, performs this slaughter almost 900 times during each shift at Superior Farms slaughterhouse in Denver so that the meat is halal, meaning it's prepared according to Islamic law.

With the Muslim population on pace to become the second-largest religious group in the United States by 2040, the demand for halal meat and other foods is on the rise to the

(continued next page)





point that Nielsen reports U.S. sales increased 15% from 2012 to 2015. Some of the largest meat producers in the country — e.g., American Foods Group — are providing more that’s halal (in part to satisfy global, not domestic, demand). But industry experts say U.S. consumers may not be aware of it, because some large grocery chains choose not to label products halal and there’s no way to tell the difference.

“Some retailers are concerned about the halal insignia,” Superior Farms vice-president of sales Greg Ahart said, adding that **the lack of labeling generally happens in areas without large Muslim populations.**

Superior is one of the largest lamb producers in the country, selling to small ethnic grocery stores as well as to retail giants. Five years ago, the Denver plant and one in California slaughtered lamb according to halal standards just one day a week. As demand rose, Superior Farms, which mostly handles lamb with some goat, became all-halal, all the time.

“It really got to be too cumbersome as time went by to maintain inventory segregation on what was halal and what wasn’t,” Ahart said.

Shane MacKenzie, who oversees Superior’s operations and has worked with the company for 21 years, said halal slaughter doesn’t slow anything down: “It’s exactly the same except for the practicing Muslim [slaughterman].” The company follows guidelines of the federal Humane Slaughter Act, which every slaughterhouse must follow, as well as a certifying board like Halal Transactions of Omaha,



photo: ESTHER HONG / HARVEST PUBLIC MEDIA



photo: ESTHER HONG / HARVEST PUBLIC MEDIA

**top:** Cuts of halal lamb shoulder at the Superior Farms plant in Denver  
**bottom:** Shipping boxes of Superior Farms products with halal label that disappears at the meat counter

which requires the plant to prevent any contamination by non-halal foods, such as pork, alcohol, or antibiotics since they tend to contain pork byproducts.

No single governing body oversees halal certification of halal meats and the standards can vary, which means there’s little data on the industry (\$1.9 billion in the U.S. and \$415 billion globally).

When it comes to serving halal in the U.S., some retailers may be doing it, but don’t trumpet that fact.

[For more information on halal food and how the Apostles dealt with food sacrificed to idols, please see our February 2012 Levitt Letter \(p. 13\) or visit \[www.levitt.com/the-apostle-paul-and-jihad-turkeys\]\(http://www.levitt.com/the-apostle-paul-and-jihad-turkeys\).](#) ★



# The Pilate Stone



ARCHAEOLOGY: BY RAY VANDER LAAN (r) ThatTheWorldMayKnow.com

While excavating the amphitheater at Caesarea Maritima (Caesarea by the Sea) in 1961, archaeologists discovered a stone, which was being used as a step in a small stairway. When they had uncovered it, they found that it originally had been the dedication stone for a temple that had stood nearby.

Writing on the stone is as follows:

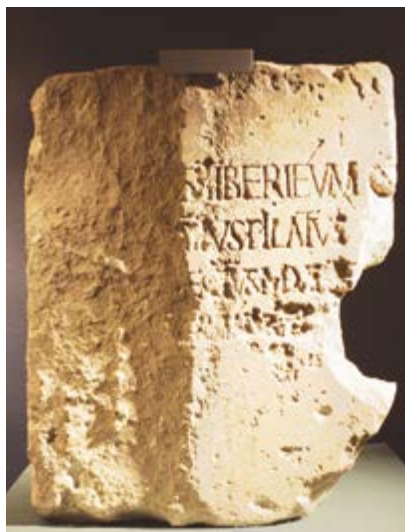
**Line 1:** ends with the name of the temple: *Tiberieum, named after the emperor Tiberius.*

**Line 2:** gives the name of the one who dedicated the temple: Pontius Pilatus (Pontius Pilate).

**Line 3:** gives his title: prefect of Judea.

**Line 4:** is unreadable but probably indicates that he dedicated the temple.

Since Pilate was in office from approximately A.D. 26–36, and Jesus was crucified by Pilate around A.D. 30, the stone was placed around the time of, if not during, the ministry of Jesus. In this temple, people offered their allegiance to the “divine” Tiberius. Ironically, Pilate met the real King of the Universe, but did not realize it.



The Pilate Stone

[Zola Tours pilgrims enjoy seeing this stone.](#) — David ★



## [AHAVA Mineral Skincare products:](#)

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### [AHAVA—Mineral Hand Cream \(3.4 oz.\)](#)

This mineral-rich cream is specially formulated to protect hands and safeguard them from environmental and household damage. It instantly improves the skin's moisture level, smoothes rough, dry skin, and restores suppleness. Witch Hazel extracts sanitize and smooth the skin, providing a refreshing, revitalizing effect. Allantoin heals dry, cracked skin and blemishes.

### [AHAVA—Mineral Foot Cream \(3.4 oz.\)](#)

This effective moisturizing cream softens and renews rough feet and soles. Powered by AHAVA's proprietary Osmoter™ and natural plant extracts, the rich formula of concentrated Dead Sea minerals helps to soothe, repair splits and cracks, and leaves feet smooth and hydrated. Avocado, Wheat Germ, Sweet Almond, and Jojoba oils smooth, soften, nourish, and comfort the feet. Aloe Vera soothes. Tea Tree Leaf oil contains antibacterial and antifungal properties. Salicylic acid helps renew skin.

### [AHAVA—Mineral Body Lotion \(17 oz.\)](#)

The Dead Sea minerals and soothing Aloe Vera in this quickly-absorbing body lotion protect the skin while they stimulate and elevate the natural hydration processes for a smooth, refined skin texture. Aloe Vera extracts soothe and provide natural moisture. Witch Hazel extracts smooth the skin, providing a refreshing, revitalizing effect.





# Hiker Finds 1,700-year-old Stone Busts

ARCHAEOLOGY: BY DAVID ISRAEL / JewishPress.com



Two Roman busts were found recently near Beit She'an in northern Israel, thanks to an alert local resident who was hiking north of the ancient city when she spotted the top of one of the busts' heads sticking out of the ground.

She called the Israel Antiquities Authority Theft Prevention Unit, who quickly sent inspectors to the site. Together, they unearthed the first bust, and as they worked, they found another one right next to it.

The busts, which date to the Late Roman period (3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.), were taken to the IAA laboratories to protect them from theft, to study and preserve them.

According to Dr. Eitan Klein, deputy head of the IAA Theft Prevention Unit, "these busts were made of local limestone and show unique facial features, details of clothing, and hairstyles. At least one of them depicts a bearded man."

"Busts like these were usually placed near or in a burial cave and may have represented the image of the deceased. Similar busts have been found in the past in the Beit She'an area and in northern Jordan, but not one of them resembles another, and that's the importance of these finds," Dr. Klein notes. He adds, "These busts are in the Oriental style, which shows that at the end of the Roman period the use of Classical art had subsided, and local trends came into vogue."

According to IAA Theft Prevention Unit inspector Nir Distelfeld, "It seems that the busts were exposed following the recent heavy rainfall in the area. These are very important finds and tell us a great deal about the inhabitants of the Beit She'an area in antiquity. We are grateful to the Beit She'an resident for her alertness and good citizenship." ★



photo: Arella Garmat-Levanon, the National Laboratory for Documentation and Digital Research in Archaeology, Israel Antiquities Authority



photo: Eitan Klein, IAA

**top:** Beit She'an busts  
**bottom:** Nir Distelfeld, Israel Antiquities Authority Theft Prevention Unit inspector, with the two busts.



# Tunnel Threat

BY SETH J. FRANTZMAN / JPost.com

In April 2017, a lumbering MC-130 aircraft with its four whirring propellers flew over a mountainous area in eastern Afghanistan. Just before 8 p.m., the plane dropped a 21,600-pound bomb, known as a GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB, aka Mother of All Bombs), the largest non-nuclear bomb ever used, on a tunnel network used by Islamic State in Afghanistan.

Ninety-six ISIS members were killed in the massive explosion that followed. The ISIS tunnel network was more complex than the one that Hezbollah has built recently in southern Lebanon, but just as the U.S. Army has had to contend with terrorist tunnels, Israel and all countries facing terrorism are increasingly forced to fight an underground war.

ISIS, like many terror groups, has become expert in tunnels. But they didn't invent this on their own. They graduated from what other terror groups have used.

In Douma in Syria, the Syrian rebels built a massive complex of tunnels. BBC called it "quite a work of engineering." It was excavated from solid clay and stones, and was big enough to "drive a vehicle down."

Hezbollah's tunnels into Israel were revealed in a recent video after Israel began Operation Northern Shield. [See Sarah Liberman's article in the [February 2019 Levitt Letter, p.10.](#)]

Considering Hezbollah's close relationship with both Iran and the Syrian regime, Hezbollah's expertise in tunneling can be expected to have more similarities with the kind of network that a state might be able to create: they have high levels of technology and run deep through difficult terrain.

## Confronting tunnels is a complex task.

Militaries and law enforcement agencies, such as those dealing with drug trafficking and smuggling, have to monitor tunnels. In Gaza, the tunnels built under the border with Egypt were used to smuggle people, infrastructure, and weapons. Militaries can bomb tunnel networks, but only if they aren't located in civilian areas. ISIS, for instance, festooned civilian areas with tunnels so that its fighters could pass unnoticed under houses and roads.



Terrorist tunnels have become more sophisticated

Thus, ISIS was able to hold out against a multi-nation coalition and the Iraqi army in Mosul for nine months.

Armies don't like to send men down into tunnels because the enemy has the advantage in its own tunnel and can neutralize a modern army's technological advantage. In 2016, *The New Yorker* noted that Israel had developed a kind of "underground Iron Dome" to confront tunnels. But Brig.-Gen. (res) Danny Gold, who helped pioneer the above-ground Iron Dome, said that "since the Vietnam War, tunnel threat hasn't been solved. Between Mexico and the United States, it isn't solved."

For countries fighting tunnels, detection is only one issue. Armies can listen for the tunnel or postulate on where it might be, but don't want to find any surprises when trying to unearth it. This may be difficult with civilians around. Once a tunnel is detected, the goal is to stop it. But a country might want to monitor what the enemy is doing before interdicting the tunnel.

Also, a means to dig a counter-tunnel has to be developed and used without alerting the adversary that the counter-tunnel is approaching the original. Different countries employ different means. Egypt flooded the tunnels along its border. The most important aspect of confronting tunnels may also be mapping their point of origin to know what threats might lurk where they begin. Tunnels in warfare have been used to hide men and materiel, including explosives. Israel, by necessity, has become proficient at confronting tunnels. Hezbollah, like other terror groups and its allied regimes, has also increased its skills.

The subterranean war will continue to be a layer of the modern battlefield.

[Luke 8:17 is a Bible verse come to life.](#) — David ★



# Jewish humor, etc.



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

## The Anniversary Wish

Ruth and David, both 65 years old, celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. When the family and guests had left, a fairy appeared and told them, "Congratulations, you two. I'm here to grant each of you one wish."

Ruth didn't hesitate: "I want to travel around the world."

The fairy waved her magic wand and *presto* ... Ruth held tickets for a round-the-world cruise.

Then the fairy asked David what he wanted.

"I wish I had a wife 30 years younger than me."

The fairy picked up her wand and *presto* ... David was 95 years old. ★

## Dry Bones



### Answer Key for March 2019 Crossword (p.25)

Across:		Down:	
2. Javelin	9. Battle	1. Mighty	6. War
5. Philistines	11. Mourned	2. Jonathan	10. Judge
7. Daughters	13. Anger	3. Israel	12. David
8. Heart	14. Judah	4. Distressed	



## AUTOMATIC FIRST AID! Zola's Monthly Gift Program

Increase the effectiveness of your contributions by reducing our expenses to process them, plus you save time and postage. Once you enroll in our **Monthly Gift Program**, ZLM will electronically receive a monthly offering from either your checking account or credit/debit card.



If you wish to use your checking account for donations, please follow directions numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 below:

1. Transfer date (please circle one): 5th 20th
2. Withdrawal amount (please circle one): \$8 \$12 \$16 Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Enclose your check payable to Zola Levitt Ministries (ZLM) for this month's gift. Monthly transfers will begin in about 4 weeks. Make changes by calling 214-696-8844.
4. Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (required for processing)
5. Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

For **credit/debit card** donations, please follow directions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 below. You may cancel at any time by calling 214-696-8844.

6. Withdrawal amount (please circle one): \$8 \$12 \$16 Other \_\_\_\_\_
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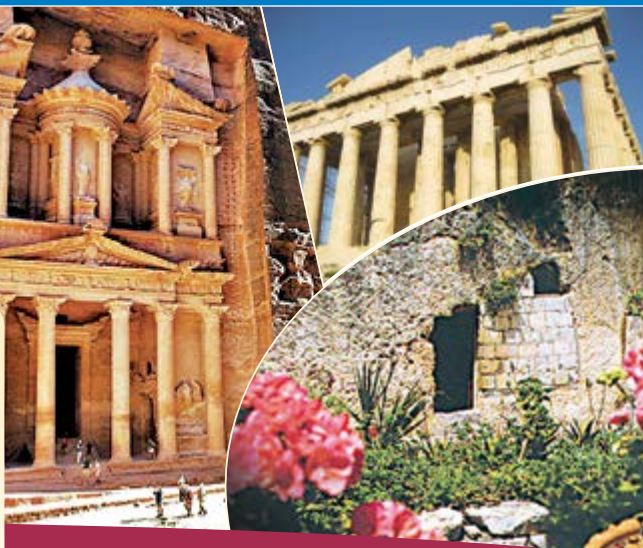
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