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Messianic Perspectives[®]

God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.

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HEAVEN ON EARTH

By Dr. Gary Hedrick

One of the best-kept secrets in Christendom is the fact that someday, every believer who ever lived will be resurrected and live again on Planet Earth.

Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, and every other Old Testament saint will be here, along with the disciples, the Apostle Paul, and all the rest of God's people from all periods of history.

Now I realize that this sounds like a radical idea to some people. Many of us have been conditioned to think that when we die, our bodies go into the ground and our spirits

float away to a place somewhere in the clouds where we spend eternity in white gowns, strumming on harps, and singing hymns.

Does that sound boring to you? If so, you'll be glad to know that while it's partly true, it's really not the whole story. According to Scripture, Paradise will be restored right here on earth—and it's going to be a busy place for at least a thousand years!

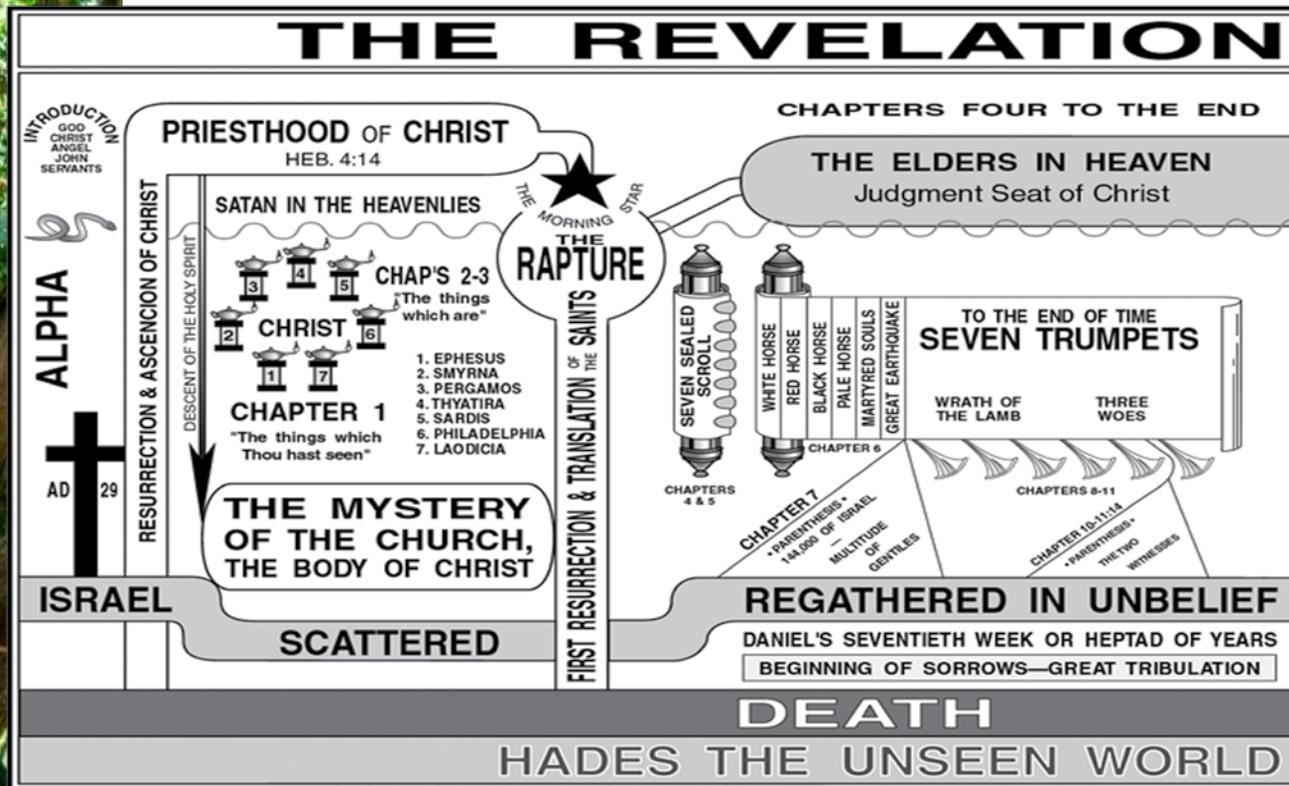
This is precisely why our physical bodies will be resurrected and glorified when the Lord returns (see 1 Thessalonians



4:16-18). If our ultimate destiny was to float around in some unearthly, disembodied state for all eternity, we would have no need for physical bodies!

Of course, we know there's no "heaven on earth" right now, while this world system is under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness (see Ephesians 2:1-3). Believers who die during this age go directly into the presence of the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 5:6-8) while their bodies "sleep" in the grave, awaiting the resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15:51, 1 Thes-

2:12). Some interpreters (and I am among them) believe the Parable of the Talents teaches that a believer's position (or level of authority) during the Millennium will depend on how faithful he was during his lifetime (see Matthew 25:14-29). This means that a faithful believer no one heard about during this current age could rule over millions in the next age. And conversely, some high-profile individuals (including some preachers), who enjoy great fame and notoriety in this age, might be street sweepers in the next!



salonians 4:14). But later, at the Second Coming, the Lord comes to this world and sets up His Kingdom (see Psalm 2). And when that time comes, we will rule with Him (see Revelation 20:6).

It is clear, then, that believers in the Lord Jesus have a very exciting and meaningful earthly destiny. And it will be far from boring! We will rule over this world as stewards and representatives of the Messiah (see 2 Timothy

During this future Golden Age of world history, it will be our privilege to join the Lord Jesus in righting the wrongs in this world, and restoring things to the way they were originally meant to be before the great Rebellion.

Paradise Lost—and Regained

Before Adam's Fall in the Garden of Eden, the earth was pristine and uncorrupted.

Messianic Perspectives®

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to being a drudgery and obligation. The work became much more difficult because of decreased fertility and the introduction of thorns and weeds to the ground (see Genesis 3:18).

Agriculture during the Millennium will be restored to the way it was when Adam and Eve lived and worked in their earthly Paradise. The Old Testament prophets associated the pouring out of God's Spirit with the coming of the Messiah and His restoration of agricultural blessing and fertility (see Isaiah 32:15, Joel 2:21-27). This may seem a bit quaint to some people, but we should never forget that farmers feed us! Every time we sit down to eat a meal, somewhere in the world a farmer put that food on our table. During the Tribulation, when food production and distribution will be disrupted, multitudes will perish from starvation (see Revelation 6:5-6). But during the Millennium, the ground will yield an abundance of crops unknown since the Garden of Eden. No one in the world will ever have to go hungry again.

Environment

The way the environment has been abused by mankind—especially in the last century or so—is nothing short of scandalous. Many of the world's waterways are so polluted, people become ill if they try to drink the water. Factories are often built near rivers because

it's considered a convenient place to dump industrial waste and toxic byproducts—never mind who may suffer downstream. Sometimes people dump toxic waste into the ground and it seeps into the water table which, in turn, poisons people's wells and community water supplies. This has become a major problem worldwide.

Air pollution is also a problem—especially in sprawling cities like Beijing, London, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Calcutta, and many others worldwide.

It is clear that man has not been a good steward of the earth. But all of this will change during the Millennium. Zion (Israel) and the rest of the world will be under new management! Isaiah says, *"For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody"* (Isa. 51:3).

Zoology

Isaiah makes some rather striking statements about the transformation of the animal kingdom during the Millennium. One of these passages is found in the eleventh chapter:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the
young goat, The calf and the young

lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den (Isa. 11:6-8).

Now let's stop here and talk about something the critics of premillennialism like to bring up—namely, how we interpret poetic passages in the OT. It is true that there are differences between narrative prose and poetry in the Bible—and these differences must be taken into consideration when we interpret these passages. It's also true that much of Isaiah—including this particular passage in Chapter 11—is written in poetic language. In fact, it is some of the most powerful and profound poetry ever written. In our English Bibles, the translators generally indicate poetic passages by indenting the paragraphs and dividing the verses up into stanzas, with each line beginning with a capitalized word, even if it doesn't begin a new sentence.

So the critics make the mistake of assuming that everything in these poetic passages is strictly figurative and not literal. Many times, they will look at one of these indented paragraphs and say, "Well, we can't take *that* literally. After all, it's just poetry."

However, this is just silly. It's pure nonsense, in fact. There are several prophetic, poetic passages in Isaiah that we can prove were meant to be taken literally. We can prove it because some of them have already been fulfilled—and in retrospect, we can easily see that they were fulfilled literally.

Isaiah 40 is one such passage. It is unsurpassed in its poetic beauty. Verses 3-4 say, *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;'"* (Notice the capitalized words that appear to be in the middle of a sentence. These capitalized words begin a *stich* or line of poetry.)



There are several prophetic, poetic passages in Isaiah that we can prove were meant to be taken literally.



Does any of this sound familiar? Of course it does; it was fulfilled in the ministry of the Messiah's first-century forerunner, John the Baptist (see Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23). So here we have a poetic statement from Isaiah that was fulfilled literally!

So then, is it possible that Isaiah's statements about changes in the millennial animal kingdom are symbolic and not literal? Yes, of course, it is possible. However, it is also possible—and perhaps even probable—that these statements reflect a condition that will be literal. That is, children will have snakes—even snakes that were formally poisonous—as pets, and won't be afraid of them. Wolves will hang out with lambs. The lion will eat straw like an ox.

Do we fully appreciate what a radical picture the Prophet is painting here? The lion's adoption of a cellulose-based diet will require a complete alteration of its digestive physiology. Other indicated changes will require similar adaptations on the part of certain

animals, carnivores in particular. It is evident that the current food chain, where stronger and faster predators feed on weaker and slower prey, was established as a result of the Fall in the Garden of Eden. Nothing had ever died before then. Blood had never been shed. The Fall was Paradise Lost—literally.

However, Isaiah gives us a prophetic glimpse of a future, restored Paradise here on earth, where the curse will begin to be reversed. A redeemed and glorified human race will rule and reign over the creation like God originally intended (see Genesis 1:28-31, Psalm 8:1-9, Romans 8:18-25, 1 Corinthians 15:25-28, Hebrews 2:5-8).

Business and Economics

The biblical evidence indicates that the economic system during the millennial Kingdom will be based on capitalism and free enterprise. People will prosper because of their own creativity, ingenuity, initiative, and hard work: *"They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of*

Where There's a Will, There's a Way!

We understand, as you do, that while we're here, there are no shortages of needs that take our time and resources. And though our intention is to remember the Lord's work with a financial gift someday, more immediate needs divert our attention. To our regret, that day of remembrance never comes, which is why including CJF Ministries in your will is an excellent way—without disturbing your current priorities—to ensure that your hard-earned assets will continue supporting the Lord's work even after your gone. If you've never considered such a method of assisting, we'd be most grateful if you'd make it a matter of prayer. Should you require additional information, we'd be happy to provide helpful instructions.

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a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isa. 65:22).

This will be an age of unprecedented prosperity. Poverty and unemployment will be virtually eliminated. Just think of the huge amounts of money industrialized nations are spending on military programs, armies, and weaponry—all of which will be unnecessary during the Millennium. These countless quadrillions of dollars (formerly military

In some cases, injustice is visited upon entire groups or races of people rather than merely individuals. All over this world, masses of humanity are oppressed by power-crazed and money-hungry despots. In underdeveloped regions—like much of Africa and parts of Central and South America—the underclass suffers in filth and squalor while brutal dictators and tribal leaders live like royalty.

In the Middle East, the Palestinian people have been oppressed in horrible

live in hopeless, intolerable conditions while the “ruling class” lives in the lap of luxury.

It’s unfortunate that in the past, evangelicals have largely left the defense of the poor and oppressed to the liberal “liberation theology” crowd.

Thankfully, this situation is changing. The Lord is raising up Bible-believing ministries that are addressing issues of suffering and injustice in this world.

You can be very sure that the Messiah will establish justice when He arrives, so we should be doing what we can now to prepare for that day.

Education

There will be a lot to learn during the Kingdom Age. There will undoubtedly be a revolution in the academic disciplines—particularly in history, philosophy, anthropology, religion, archaeology, earth sciences, life sciences, and others.

Take history, for instance. It is generally agreed that history is written by the victors, who are prone to portray themselves as “the good guys.” The problem

spending) will be poured into more productive programs for the benefit of all humanity.

Geopolitics

In New Testament times, the known world was, basically, the Roman Empire. The far-flung regions of the empire encircled the Mediterranean Sea, which had that name because it was considered the center of the world (the Latin *mediterraneus* means “middle of the earth”). During the past 2,000 years, the concentration of political power has shifted from Rome to other world centers like Moscow and Constantinople, and still later to Los Angeles, New York, Washington, London, Brussels, Paris, Toronto, and others. Today, Rome is considered a relatively minor player in the world political scheme.

In the Millennium, however, the seat of world government will be Jerusalem, where the Messiah will reign from the throne of His ancestor David (see Isaiah 9:6-7, Micah 4:2).

Justice

Where is the justice in this world? Evil-doers go free and innocent people suffer. It doesn’t seem right—and it’s not!

ways. However, the main culprits have not been the Israelis, but their own Palestinian leaders (some of whom have diverted massive amounts of relief funds to their own, personal bank accounts) and the other surrounding Arab nations. It is very sad that many Palestinians



with this, of course, is that the good guys don't always win. Sometimes they lose, and no one ever hears their side of the story. The so-called "Salem witch trials" are a good example of this phenomenon. Many historians now agree that the popular version of those events isn't even remotely close to what actually happened.

All of this will be rectified someday. History will be rewritten, not in a misleading revisionist sense, but rather to reflect what really happened and to demonstrate God's guiding hand through it all—including both good times and bad.

Transportation

The Prophet Isaiah refers numerous times to highways and pathways that will unite various parts of the Mediterranean world during the Millennium. Some people will argue that these are figures of speech that simply mean the alienation and animosity—that have divided peoples in that part of the world—will be absent in that future age. In the Hebrew text, however, some of these passages don't appear to be poetic. In Isaiah 19, for example, the Prophet says:

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that

day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance" (vv. 23-25).

In this section, Isaiah speaks matter-of-factly about five cities in millennial Egypt that will adopt Hebrew as their language (see Verse 18), the worship of *Yahweh* in that land (see Verse 19), the Lord's deliverance of Egypt from oppressors (see Verse 20), and other future events that don't appear to be symbolic. So it's perfectly consistent to interpret the language about roads and highways to mean that there will be free and unrestricted transportation back and forth between the Middle East nations during the Millennium—and, very possibly, that could be via literal highways.

And with man's true creativity unleashed, along with virtually unlimited resources available for research and development, one can only imagine what highway transportation will be like during that future age. Can you envision automobiles powered by a fuel (like hydrogen) that are 100-percent pollution free? Or maybe getting into your car, programming it for your destination, and then sitting back and reading or relaxing while it drives you there?

There is no reason to assume that there won't also be transportation by air, trains, ships, and perhaps other modes of transportation that haven't been invented yet. There may also be space travel—although it's doubtful that man is meant to colonize other planets (a popular theme these days among NASA scientists). The earth may be the only planet in the universe that is perfectly suited to sustain a biosphere like ours with human life. Psalm 115:16 says, "*The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.*"

But that's not to say we cannot explore the universe! Men have explored the peak of Mount Everest, too, but that doesn't mean anybody actually wants to live up there.

Continued on page 12

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT JUSTICE?

Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners (Psalm 146:7).

Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path (Prov. 2:9).

By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice (Prov. 8:15).

To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice (Prov. 21:3).

Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:7).

To rob the needy of justice, And to take what is right from the poor of My people, That widows may be their prey, And that they may rob the fatherless (Isa. 10:2).

Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; . . . (Isa. 28:17).

No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity (Isa. 59:4).



Why We Believe in a Pre-Trib Rapture

A look at why believers should study end-times prophecy

Rayford. Chloe. Buck. In the hands of authors Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, these three are not merely characters in a story, but real people struggling to survive the assaults of the Antichrist and a world engulfed in disaster. In the best-selling *Left Behind* series, we follow the fictionalized account of those who have been left behind on earth after the Rapture of the Church. Readers scarcely catch their breath before the protagonists are forced to deal with God's judgment as it falls on mankind during the seven-year Tribulation period.

First in a Three-Part Series

While some were riveted by the story line, others scoffed at the series' premise; still others dismissed the underlying theology as "false doctrine," and encouraged congregation members to avoid the books. Seminary-trained apologists were dispatched to answer the questions raised by those who disregarded this advice.

Whatever we may conclude of the literary merits of the *Left Behind* series, we believe Jenkins and LaHaye had it right doctrinally. The day is coming when the Church will be raptured or "caught up" to be with the Lord (see 1 Thessalonians

Tribulation? Or are we fated to endure the same disasters as unsaved humanity? Such questions have fueled theological debates for centuries.

As people tire of this world—discouraged by seemingly endless wars, inflation, disease, crime, political corruption, and natural disasters—they long for relief, for a better world where war is no more, and where life is truly good. The Bible is replete with references to that better world. In that great chapter of faith, Hebrews 11, we read moving accounts of the saints who willingly endured hardship, pain, and loss in this life because they looked for a better, more enduring world to come. *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. . . . But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them"* (Heb. 11:13,16).

A better day is coming for the believer. But the question remains: When and how will all this come to be? What will be the sequence of events leading up to this "Heaven on Earth?"

Christians of all stripes have accepted the biblical teaching of the Rapture—that there will come a time when believers, living and dead, will be "caught up" and joined with the Lord in the air. But there has been considerable debate about when that

event will occur. Will it occur before God's outpouring of judgment upon the earth, which the Book of Revelation describes in gruesome detail? Or will the Rapture occur at the end of the Tribulation, after believers and nonbelievers alike have endured the earth-wrenching apocalyptic events?

We believe that Jenkins and LaHaye are right. The Church will be spared from that great and terrible period known as the Tribulation. And in the next three issues

of *Messianic Perspectives*, and with the help of the *Believer's Bible Commentary*, we will walk through what the Bible has to say on this important subject.

Some believers avoid the study of prophecy and end-times events, feeling that it's irrelevant *when* or *how* we are translated into God's presence. For them, it is enough to know that Jesus is coming again, and that they will eventually be with Him. Others engage in lengthy debates, watch headlines, and speculate who might be the Antichrist. Their lives are consumed with charts, dates, and theories. Both of these theological extremes miss the mark. The Messiah's coming at the Rapture doesn't just involve the future—it affects the way we live here and now. Or, at least it should. The *Believer's Bible Commentary* does an excellent job of demonstrating how our lives should be different when we live in anticipation of Messiah's imminent return. The following is taken from its commentary on the Rapture of the Church:

and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. (Luke 12:36)

4:15-17). And not long after, there will come that great and terrible period of divine judgment known as the Tribulation.

Since the first century, believers have been looking for the Messiah's return, and confidently anticipating the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. This topic was clearly on the disciples' minds when they asked the resurrected Lord, *"... Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* (Acts 1:6). Jesus did not dismiss their question, but instead reminded them that the timing of such things was in God's hands, and they were to be focused on the tasks at hand. After the Lord ascended, angels assured the disciples, *"... This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11).

All believers agree that Jesus will one day return. But *when* will He return? And *when* will God rain down judgment upon the earth? And where, exactly, will believers be when all this happens? Will we be spared the fury of the

We must always remember that prophecy is not designed to intrigue our intellect or challenge our curiosity. Its purpose is to exert a transforming influence on our lives. For believers the hope of the imminent return of [Messiah] has practical implications of vast significance.

1. It should have a purifying influence on our lives (1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:3).
2. It should burden us to pray and work for the salvation of the lost (Gen. 19:14; Ezek. 33:6; Jude 21-23).

and that He may send Jesus . . . whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:20-21)

3. It should encourage us to persevere in spite of persecution and trial (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
4. It should make us reduce our holdings of material possessions; their value declines as His coming approaches (Lev. 25:8-10, 14-16).
5. It should constrain us to apologize to anyone we have wronged and to make restitution where necessary (Matt. 5:24; James 5:16).
6. It should inspire us to diligent service knowing that the night is coming when no one can work (John 9:4; 1 Thess. 1:9,10a).
7. It should keep us in the attitude of expectancy (Luke 12:36) and abiding in Him so we will not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28).
8. It should make us bold to confess [Messiah] (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26).
9. It should prove to be a comforting hope (John 14:1-3, 28; 1 Thess. 4:18; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:12).
10. It should be an encouragement to moderation, gentleness, and sweet reasonableness (Phil. 4:5).
11. It should be a motive for unity and love (1 Thess. 3:12, 13).
12. It should encourage an otherworldly attitude (Col. 3:1-4).
13. It should be a reminder of coming review and reward (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).
14. It should be used as a powerful appeal in preaching the gospel (Acts 3:19-21; Rev. 3:3).

For those who are not believers, the truth of [Messiah's] return should lead them to repent of their sins and make a full commitment of their lives to Him as Lord and Savior. Only those who are in [Messiah] will go to be with Him at the Rapture. The rest will be left behind for judgment.

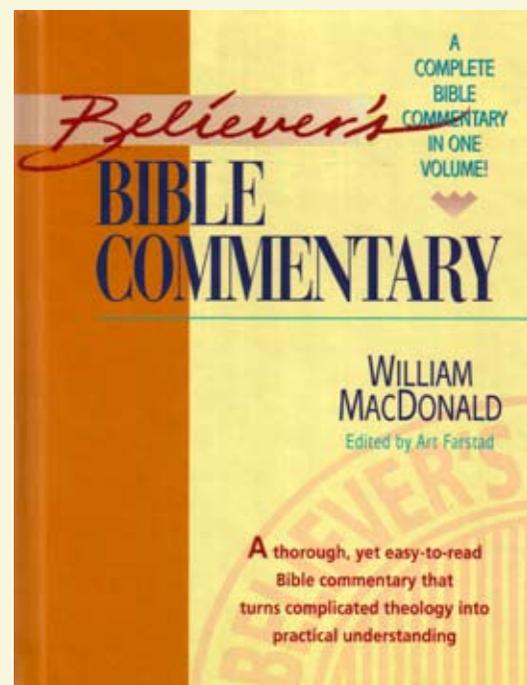
What if it were today?

Isn't that a sobering thought? If the Messiah were to come today, would we be ready? The Rapture is not merely a subject for academic debate; it is the reason for us to live righteously, to work diligently, and to proclaim the Gospel with fervor. May we be ready and find joy at His coming! In part two of this series, we will continue our discussion of the pre-Tribulation Rapture—examining biblical support for, and addressing common objections to the pre-Trib view.

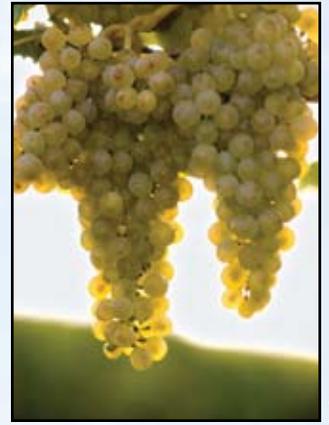
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Fruit from the Harvest



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By Violette Berger

The Survey Says . . .

Every year at *Rosh HaShanah* (the Jewish New Year), **Michelle Beadle, CJFM missionary (New Orleans)**, places free advertisements in local newspapers announcing the availability of our Messianic Jewish Art Calendar. Thus far, she has received 36 requests for the calendar. Of those, 34 people voluntarily responded to a telephone survey that Michelle created to help her understand someone's spiritual condition. As a result, Michelle had the privilege of sharing the Gospel message with all 34 people—praise God. Of those, two Gentile women prayed with her to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. One of the women even asked Michelle to send her six copies of the sinner's prayer, accompanied by a pamphlet explaining the Gospel message, which she intends to give to each of her six grandchildren.

Michelle adds, "One of the calendar requests came from a Latino believer who works in a Los Angeles law firm that has many Jewish people on staff. Along with a calendar, I sent him a book on how to witness to Jewish people and a calendar for each of the Jewish attorneys on staff. I hope you will join me in praying for this precious worker in Los Angeles as he reaches out to his coworkers, and for my follow-up conversations with three Jewish people who also requested the calendar."

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, . . ." (Isa. 55:11).

A Perfect Match

CJFM Missionary Richard Tovia (Phoenix) says, "It's always a thrilling experience to share the Jewish perspective of God's Word in churches, as you never know how or when God is going to touch hearts." Recently, while teaching on the Seven Feasts of Israel at a small church in Payson, Arizona, he spent a little more time explaining Passover's ancient and modern-day observances. Richard was told that a member of

the congregation had been bringing "Dorothy," an unsaved Jewish woman, to church every Sunday. During the service, Richard noticed that she appeared quite interested and receptive. When he gave an invitation at the end of his message, Dorothy and a gentleman both prayed with him to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Afterward, Dorothy told Richard that she had never heard the things he had shared about Passover. She now understood the Gospel message, and the true significance of Passover. Dorothy had finally met her Jewish Messiah—Yeshua (Jesus).

On the Road to San Jose

The Lord opened the door for **CJFM Missionary Richard Hill (Las Vegas)** and his family to minister in San Jose, California. During the trip, God provided many opportunities to share the Good News. In his speaking tour of churches, Richard taught on the Jewish roots of Christianity. Three people responded to his invitation and prayed with him to invite Jesus into their hearts.

Richard writes, "One of the pastors and his wife introduced Oanh and me to their two Jewish friends at lunch after I had preached at his church. We had a wonderful time getting to know them and sharing Yeshua with them. This pastor and his wife have a great love for the Lord and it shows in their ministry to all people—but especially to the Jewish people. It is evident that these two Jewish women have a love for the pastor and his wife as well. In addition, we also had the privilege of sharing the Gospel of Jesus with several of Oanh's nominal Buddhist and Catholic family members who live in San Jose. Please pray for the salvation of all who heard the Good News of Jesus during our time on the road."

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of [Messiah], for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).



Bible Questions AND Answers

By DR. GARY HEDRICK

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QUESTION: [A certain prophecy teacher] is selling a new video about Barack Obama's role in Bible prophecy. I'd like to buy the DVD, but my husband says not to waste the money. Do you have an opinion on this?

ANSWER: I'm with your husband on this one. It seems like every time a politician who's unpopular with the evangelical Christian community appears on the political scene, people start "finding" him in the prophetic Scriptures. In the 1990s, for instance, we heard the claim from some quarters that the charismatic, smooth-talking Bill Clinton was the Antichrist—particularly when it looked like he might succeed in mediating a peace accord in the Middle East. It's unfortunate that some groups will do almost anything to generate revenue by marketing CDs and DVDs. These profiteers know that sensationalism has a certain appeal for gullible people, and they are more than willing to exploit these poor, unsophisticated folks if it'll put a few bucks in their own pocket.

We all know that sensationalism is a lucrative business. That's why the supermarket tabloids have a larger circulation than many legitimate newspapers and magazines. The *National Enquirer*, for instance, has been competing favorably (circulation-wise) for years with magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek*. So, it's evident that many folks enjoy reading about scandals and sensationalism—whether the content is true or not. (Two recent tabloid headlines were about the Space Shuttle Endeavour having a secret rendezvous with a flying saucer and an 80-year-old woman giving birth to 18 babies—and both articles were accompanied by photos!)

Prophetic sensationalism is nothing new. In the 1930s and '40s, Hitler and Mussolini were both identified as the Antichrist by various crackpot "experts." In the late 1940s and early '50s, Christians were warned (by some preachers) not to get Social Security numbers because they would be taking the dreaded "mark of the beast" (see Revelation 13:18). In the 1970s, certain people said the letters in Henry Kissinger's name added up to the numerical value of "666," which meant (according to them) that he was the Antichrist. We could go on and on with this, but I'm sure you get the idea.

Barack Obama is not mentioned in prophecy. Bill Clinton is not mentioned in any prophetic passage. Neither is Henry Kissinger. Any interpretation that says otherwise is purely speculative and based on dubious—and in some cases, nonexistent—exegesis.

Sadly, our premillennial camp has its lunatic fringe—just like the amillennialists and other groups have their's. However, let's not throw the premillennial baby out with the extremist bath water. The fact that some prophetic teachers are misguided, or may have less than honorable motives, does not negate the biblical teaching of our Lord's imminent, premillennial return.

And finally, if you are concerned about President Obama, pray for him. He needs it! He's going to have a full plate when it's time to start keeping all of those campaign promises! Whether or not we agree with our new president politically, we are nonetheless instructed in God's Word to give him the honor that is due to officials who serve in positions of authority (see Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:17).



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Science, Discovery, and Exploration

It's unfortunate that much of the realm of science has fallen under the dominion of secular and Darwinian forces (just read anything written by Richard Dawkins if you have any questions about this).

In reality, most scientific progress during the past 500 years or so has been due to the work of scores of Christian thinkers like Galileo, Pascal, Boyle, and Newton. During the Millennium, science will make gigantic leaps forward. Mankind will explore not only our world, but possibly other worlds (space travel, as we discussed earlier). That is why God created us with an innate desire to explore and to learn about our world.

This is all part of the dominion mandate that God gave man in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 1:26). Adam was instructed to exercise dominion over the cosmos and to "subdue" it (see Verse 28). This included harnessing the forces of nature (electricity, nuclear power, and others) for the benefit of all mankind. We have done some of this up to now; however, our scientific achievements sometimes outstrip our ability to use them wisely—as in the case of nuclear power. The secrets of the atom can be used to provide electrical power for an entire city, or they can be used to build a bomb that can destroy the same city.

Scientific inquiry and achievement will be greatly expanded during the coming Kingdom and its results will be a blessing to all nations.

Medicine

Nothing is more heartbreaking than visiting a children's hospital and witnessing first hand the ravages of cancer, birth defects, and other devastating diseases on precious little children. But it's not just the children who suffer—we all do. All of us experience the degenerative aging process that occurs because of Adam's sin.

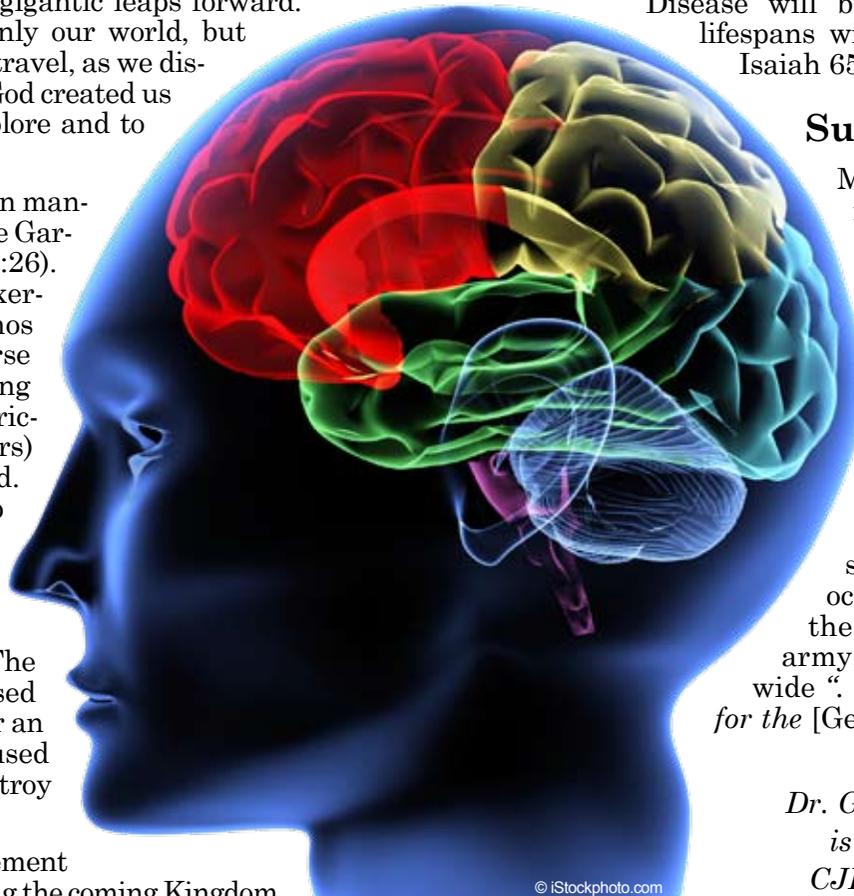
But again, this will change during the Millennium. Disease will be virtually eradicated and lifespans will be greatly increased (see Isaiah 65:20).

Summing It Up

Make no mistake about it: A new world is coming! That is bad news for the evil forces that have been dominant up until now—because they will be deposed!

But it is wonderful news indeed for those of us who know the Lord and continue to look for His return. And until that *day* comes, let's not content ourselves with merely being an occupation force. Let's go on the offensive, like a mighty army, taking the Gospel far and wide ". . . for the Jew first and also for the [Gentile]" (Rom. 1:16).

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