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Messianic Perspectives®

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

DARK BEFORE THE DAWN

By Dr. J. Randall Price

Israel lives in a bad neighborhood. One reason it is bad is that the Palestinian people have had a long run of execrable leaders, leaders who supported Adolf Hitler in World War II, the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf War.¹

— George Will

“The future isn’t what it used to be!”

This paradoxical saying, which captures the feelings of failed expectations in troubled times, might well voice Jerusalem’s present dilemma. The Bible prophecies of a brighter tomorrow for Jerusalem, which since 1967 have seemed to be moving toward fulfillment, have today been dimmed by the failure of the peace process and a growing international opposition to a Jewish-controlled Jerusalem.

On every side, the enemies that historically opposed a Jewish return to Jerusalem have now been joined by many of Jerusalem’s former friends. And recently, for the first time, the superpowers of civilization have interceded, demanding that the Israelis relinquish their sovereignty over the city, even as the Arab states stand ready to invade Jerusalem and remove its Jewish presence. This removal may appear to focus mainly on the Muslim holy places in East Jerusalem,* but ultimately the Palestinian goal is for the Jewish people to be driven from the entire country. These dark clouds seem to cast a shadow of doubt over the promises of peace and prosperity made by the prophets, leading many people to ask, “Has prophecy failed? Is the dream about to become a nightmare?”

In truth, prophecy has not failed, but is about to be fulfilled. With prophecy, as with life, the darkest hour is just before the dawn; and the rise of Jerusalem’s enemies is a difficult but assuring prelude to the accomplishment of God’s promises. Let us, therefore, first look at how the Scripture presents the drama of Jerusalem in the end times, and from there, look at what will happen when God’s promises are fulfilled.

Jerusalem and International Opposition

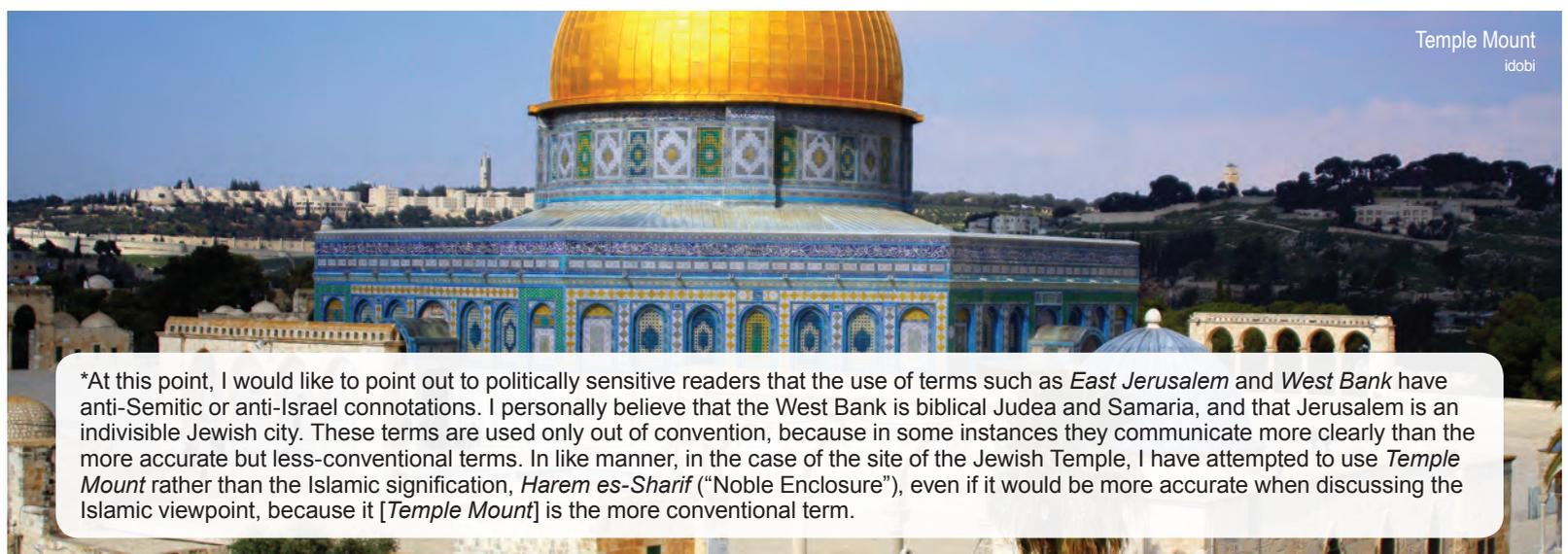
Scripture has predicted that initially Jerusalem will face mounting opposition by the Gentile nations of the world. Psalm 2 prophesies concerning this end-time conflict prior to the second advent:

*Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take
counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed
[Messiah]. . . . “Yet I [the LORD], have set My King On My
holy hill of Zion” (vv. 1-2, 6).*

This Psalm presents God’s plan to have the Messiah return to earth and reign over the world from Jerusalem (vv. 4-6). The nations have always opposed this plan because they do not want Messiah’s rule, but their own (v. 3). As time runs out in the last days, the nations will unite to launch an assault upon the city. This is predicted in Zechariah 12–14:

*Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all
the surrounding peoples . . . in that day . . . I will make Jerusa-
lem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave
it away will surely be cut in pieces, . . . For I will gather all the
nations to battle against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:2-3, 14:2).*

These verses announce that a time is coming when the long history of hostility against Jerusalem will have caused the Gentile nations to become intoxicated with possessing the city. They will all want to internationalize and legislate its future, but those who attempt to drink of it will only find disaster. Attempting to carry off Jerusalem for their own purposes, they will instead find it a heavy and jagged burden that will cut them to pieces. Yet, the nations that attack Jerusalem will not realize these consequences until it is too late—and when God’s judgment falls heavy upon them (Zech. 12:9, 14:3, 12, see also Daniel 2:44).



Temple Mount
idobi

*At this point, I would like to point out to politically sensitive readers that the use of terms such as *East Jerusalem* and *West Bank* have anti-Semitic or anti-Israel connotations. I personally believe that the West Bank is biblical Judea and Samaria, and that Jerusalem is an indivisible Jewish city. These terms are used only out of convention, because in some instances they communicate more clearly than the more accurate but less-conventional terms. In like manner, in the case of the site of the Jewish Temple, I have attempted to use *Temple Mount* rather than the Islamic signification, *Harem es-Sharif* (“Noble Enclosure”), even if it would be more accurate when discussing the Islamic viewpoint, because it [*Temple Mount*] is the more conventional term.

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Jerusalem in the Tribulation

Whatever happens to Jerusalem affects the rest of the world. God's plan for the future of the earth hangs upon His purpose with Israel, and the timetable for God's purpose with Israel hangs on Jerusalem. This timetable is a predetermined period of domination over Israel that Scripture calls "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). The beginning and ending of this period are governed by events that occurred and will occur in Jerusalem. This Gentile rule began in 586 BC when the Babylonian army invaded the city. Ever since, except for brief periods of independence, Jerusalem has been under Gentile control. The seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks (each week being a period of seven years) will end the "times of the Gentiles" with the coming of the Messiah to defeat the Gentile armies of earth at the climax of this week in the campaign of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-16).

Daniel's seventieth week is referred to by many terms in both the Old and New Testaments,² but the term Jesus used in the Olivet Discourse, "the Tribulation," is the one that's used most often when speaking of this period.

The Old Testament presents at least five purposes for the Tribulation:

1. The Tribulation will complete the decreed period of national Israel's judicial hardening as punishment for her rejection of the Messianic program, which the partial return from exile did not remove, and which culminated in the national rejection of Jesus (Isa. 6:9-13, 24:1-6, see also John 12:37-41, Romans 11:7-10).
2. The Tribulation will produce a Messianic revival among the Jewish people scattered throughout the world (Deut. 4:27-30, Rev. 7:1-4), and will also result in a massive return of Jews to the Land of Israel (Ezek. 36:24, 37:21, Zech. 8:7-8) in preparation for national repentance.

3. The Tribulation will convince the Jewish nation of their need for the Messiah in order to produce a national repentance and regeneration (Dan.12:5-7, Isa. 59:20-21, Jer. 31:31-34, Ezek. 20:34-38, 36:25-27, 37:1-14, Zech. 12:9—13:2).
4. The Tribulation will effect the deliverance of the Jewish people from Gentile dominion by bringing about the judgment of the nations and ending their rule in the coming of Israel's Messiah as universal king (Isa. 24:21-23, 59:16-20, Matt. 24:29-31, Mark 13:24-27).
5. The Tribulation will purge the earth of wicked people in preparation for the coming Messianic Kingdom, which will be characterized by righteousness (Isa. 11:9, 13:9, 24:19-20, Ezek. 37:23, Zech. 13:2, 14:9). This violent reduction of the world's unbelieving population will result from the divine judgments unleashed throughout the Tribulation (Rev. 6—18), climaxing with the Battle of Armageddon under King Messiah (Rev. 19) and His purge of both rebellious Jews and Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation (Ezek. 20:33-38, Matt. 25:31-46).

Jerusalem and the Antichrist

During the Tribulation, Jerusalem will occupy a prominent position that will cause its enemies to multiply against it. According to Daniel 9:27, at the beginning of the Tribulation, a covenant will be made with the Antichrist that will initiate a three-and-a-half year period of pseudopeace (1 Thess. 5:3, Rev. 6:4) and provide for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple and the restoration of Jewish worship. At this time, Jerusalem will not only serve as Israel's capital, but most likely as the center of governmental authority for the Antichrist. We can only speculate that his seemingly benevolent occupation of the city will be in keeping with the international concerns stipulated in the covenant.



Aerial view of Tel Megiddo
israeltourism

Those in Jerusalem who sign this covenant, according to Daniel 9:27, are “the many,” which refers to the Jewish leadership of Jerusalem. Like the Jewish rulers in the past who unwisely rejected Jesus as Messiah because they felt it would threaten national security (John 11:47-50) and those in the present who have traded the Promised Land for the promise of peace, these leaders represent the city and effect consequences for it. Isaiah 28:14-15 calls these future rulers of Jerusalem “scoffers” rather than leaders, because they will “*Have made a covenant with death, . . . and made lies [their] refuge, And under falsehood . . . have hidden [themselves with deception].*” But, there will be a remnant of Jerusalemites (since “the many” does not mean “all”) who will reject the covenant, despite its benefits, as an unwise and unbiblical compromise. They will be proven right, for by peace “*He [the Antichrist] shall destroy many*” (Dan. 8:25).

That the Antichrist appears to occupy Jerusalem from the time of the signing of the covenant finds support in a text dealing with his war with the ten kings (the ten-nation confederation) at the midpoint of the Tribulation: “*And he shall plant the tents of his [royal pavilion] between the seas and the glorious holy mountain*” (Dan. 11:45). The two “seas” referenced here most likely are the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Dead Sea to the east, since between them is the “beautiful [glorious] Holy Mountain.” No other place qualifies as the “Holy Mountain” except the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The “royal pavilion” in Daniel 11:45 refers to the military command center of the Antichrist in Jerusalem. Why in Jerusalem? Because apparently he will already be there. It is for this reason that the attack by the other kings will be aimed at Jerusalem (Dan. 11:44) and why the Antichrist will be killed there—only to be resuscitated and promoted by the False Prophet (Dan. 11:45, Rev. 13:11-14).

It is probably the outbreak of this midtribulation war that ends the period of pseudopeace and causes the Antichrist to break his covenant (Dan. 9:27, Isa. 28:17-18) and put Jerusalem under his military command (Dan. 11:41). Because the rebuilt Temple appears to be a pivotal part of the peace agreement, it makes sense that the Antichrist’s desecration of the Temple at that time will be prompted by his decision to end the Jewish worship and sacrifices that his covenant made possible in the first place. In bringing about this defilement, the Antichrist, following the precedent of earlier Gentile conquerors (Antiochus, Pompey), will enter the Temple’s Holy of Holies (Dan. 9:27, 11:36-37, Matt. 24:15). But, the Antichrist’s actions will involve more than simply desanctifying the Temple and thereby stopping its sacrifices (Dan. 9:27, 12:11). At this same time, a war will break out in Heaven between the forces of the Archangel Michael and Satan, and Satan will be confined to earth (Rev. 12:7-9). Consequently, Satan will go after Israel (Rev. 12:13-17). One way he will do this is by having the Antichrist usurp the place of Israel’s God in the Holy of Holies. By this act the satanically empowered Antichrist will deify himself, magnifying himself above the gods of every religion (2 Thess. 2:3-4, Rev. 13:5-6) and forcing idolatry (“abomination”) upon the Jews (Dan. 9:27, Matt. 24:15) by requiring them, and all the world, to participate in satanic worship centered on his image (Rev. 13:2-4, 15-16). The Jewish remnant will resist this policy, which from this point onward will result in the Antichrist’s persecution of these Jews, starting in Jerusalem (Matt. 24:16-21, Mark 13:14-19), because now it seems that the Antichrist has made the city his religious (as well as governmental) capital.



The Two Witnesses and the Beast
Phillip Medhurst

Jerusalem and the Two Witnesses

The Antichrist's persecution of the Jewish people will be thwarted by two Jewish prophets who will be raised up at the beginning of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:3-4). Like the two olive trees and menorah (lampstand) in Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 4:11-14), these prophets will be lights in the world in testimony to the Lord, but they will also have the power to do miraculous works similar to those of Moses and Elijah (Rev. 11:5-6).

Unlike the 144,000 Jewish witnesses whose ministry is to both Jews and Gentiles worldwide (Rev. 7:1-17), these two prophets seem to have a ministry centered in Jerusalem and connected in some fashion to the Temple. In Revelation 11, this is implied by the word "and," which connects their appearance in Verse 3 with the desecration of the Temple in Verse 2. It is also implied in that the two witnesses will be put to death in "*the great city. . . where [also their Lord was crucified]*" (v. 8), which can only be Jerusalem. Their ministry is stated to be three-and-a-half years in duration (v. 3). The same time period is given in the previous verse for the duration of the Temple's desecration, which would imply that they begin their unique ministry at the midpoint of the Tribulation and continue it during this period (the last half of the Tribulation).³ This might also be supported by the fact that the seventh trumpet is sounded immediately after their translation from earth (vv. 14-15). If this is the case, their appearance would come in response to the Antichrist's desecration and the Temple's return to Gentile domination, and continue in a protected state in opposition to the Antichrist's persecution and the False Prophet's miraculous acts of deception. This would give a reason for their being in Jerusalem, especially at the time of their deaths.

If my chronological placement is correct, the two prophets' being resuscitated and translated after three-and-a-half days in full view of the city's inhabitants (vv. 9-12), simultaneous with a devastating earthquake, fits Jerusalem's prophesied time of regathering and regeneration. Support for this may be seen in Verse 13, where those in Jerusalem, assumed to be mostly a Jewish city, repent as a result of these two events. This repentance would correspond to the national repentance of Israel, centered in Jerusalem, to which the Messiah returns at His second advent (Zech. 12:10-14, 13:4, Rom. 11:26). In this case, the death of the two witnesses coincides with the final assault on Jerusalem, which will be one of the last battles of the Armageddon campaign (Zech. 14:2).



Jerusalem's Enemies Today

Our progression toward these future events is evident today as the enemies of Israel continue calling for its destruction. Every Arab country is in a declared state of war with Israel except Egypt and Jordan, and even with these two exceptions, the "peace" is only on paper—and just as thin. Both Egypt and Jordan support the PLO and their proposed Palestinian State, and most certainly are aware that the PLO has never revoked the clause in their charter calling for Israel's destruction. The PLO also sided openly with the late Saddam Hussein, who repeatedly sought Israel's annihilation.

Historically, Israel has not had many friends. To Islam, Israel is one of the foremost friends of Satan. Then there are Christians who believe Israel has been rejected by God and replaced with the Church. In addition, there are the White Supremacists, Neo-Nazis, the Nation of Islam, and other assorted anti-Semites who perpetuate the nonsense found in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a false document which teaches that all bankers and media elite are Jewish or are controlled by a conspiratorial, Rothschild-funded, secret Jewish society. To all of this applies this observation from Josh Billings: "The trouble with most folks isn't so much their ignorance as their knowing so many things that aren't so!"



Understanding Jerusalem's Enemies

It has been said that you cannot appreciate what another person feels until you wear his skin and walk around in it. It is one thing to hear about the hatred directed at the Jews, Israel, and Jerusalem, but another thing altogether to have that hatred pointed at you. I have had the unique experience of identifying with the Jewish and Israeli people on this level, even though I am neither Jewish nor Israeli. During the time I was living in Israel, I was among a handful of Israelis who journeyed into Egypt a few days after the borders were opened for the first time in 1980 after peace was made between Egypt and Israel. I was a student at the time and finances were in short supply, so I made the trip by hitching a ride with the Arab newspaper carrier who made the run between the Old City's Damascus Gate and downtown Cairo. The car was rusty, dirty, and of course had no air conditioner. I shared the backseat with newspapers stacked to the ceiling. The papers were being delivered to destinations along the way (via the Gaza Strip), so stops—and stares from the locals—were frequent. But it was not until I began to walk around in Cairo and talk to Egyptians that I began to realize that I was not perceived as a tourist but as trouble! When merchants asked me where I came from and I answered, "Israel," they made me understand what it feels like to be the object of so much hatred and fear. Added to the prejudice taught from birth toward Jews, the Egyptians had suffered significant defeats in their wars with Israel. I was probably the only person from Israel they had ever met outside the battlefield, and I remember especially the mixed look of loathing and suspicion in their eyes as they sarcastically said, "Well, now we are brothers!" After repeated encounters like this, I felt not only like an unwelcome stranger in this city of 14 million, but as if every eye was watching and plotting against me.

This experience, in a small way, helped me to appreciate what it must be like for the Jewish people to have enemies shouting on every side for their destruction and to have a watching world either turn away from or against their cries for support. So before you decide where you stand in the conflict, listen to what Jerusalem's enemies are saying.



Jerusalem's Enemies Speak

Many of Jerusalem's enemies today have gone on record with their hatred and hostility. The following statements are only a small sample of what has been said quite openly, but ignored quite willingly by the modern media:

We are announcing a war against the sons of apes and pigs [the Jews] which will not end until the flag of Islam is raised in Jerusalem⁴ (Hamas leaflet, September 1, 1993).

Our first goal is the liberation of all occupied territories . . . and the establishment of a Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem. . . . It is the only basis for interim solution and the forerunner to a final settlement, which must be based on complete withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian lands. . . . The Palestinian state is within our grasp. Soon the Palestinian flag will fly on the walls, the minarets, and the cathedrals of Jerusalem⁵ (the late Yasser Arafat, January 1994, and repeated frequently ever since).

We Palestinians will take over everything, including all of Jerusalem. . . . We plan to eliminate the State of Israel and establish a Palestinian state⁶ (Yasser Arafat to Arab ambassadors in Stockholm, January 30, 1996).

The Muslims say to Britain, to France, and to all the infidel nations that *Jerusalem is Arab*. We shall not respect anyone else's wishes regarding her⁷ (Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, Palestinian Mufti of Jerusalem at the Al-Aksa Mosque, July 11, 1997).

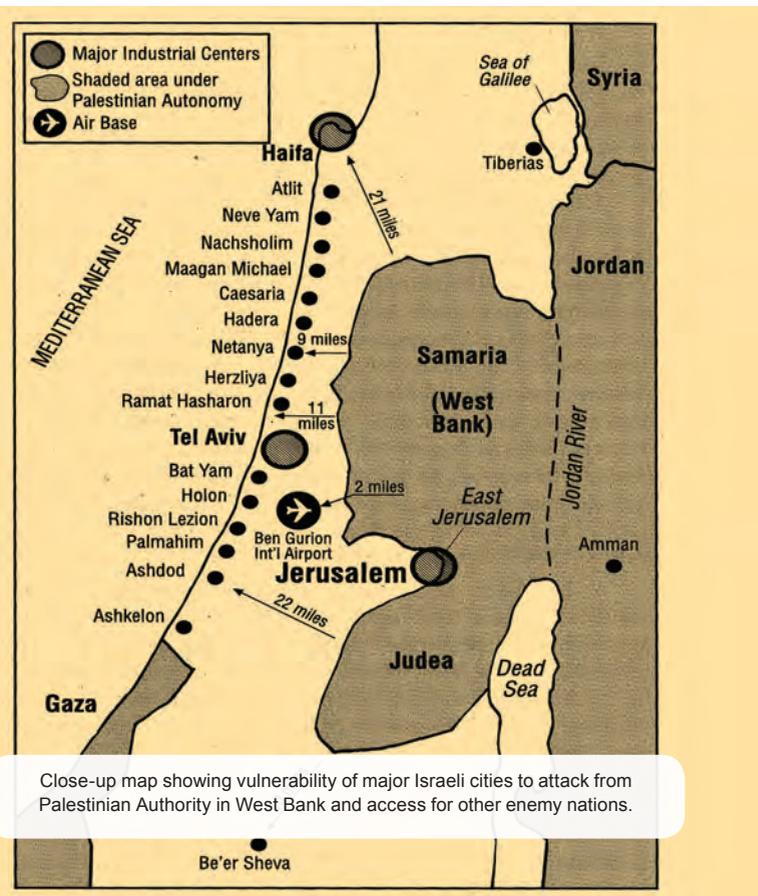
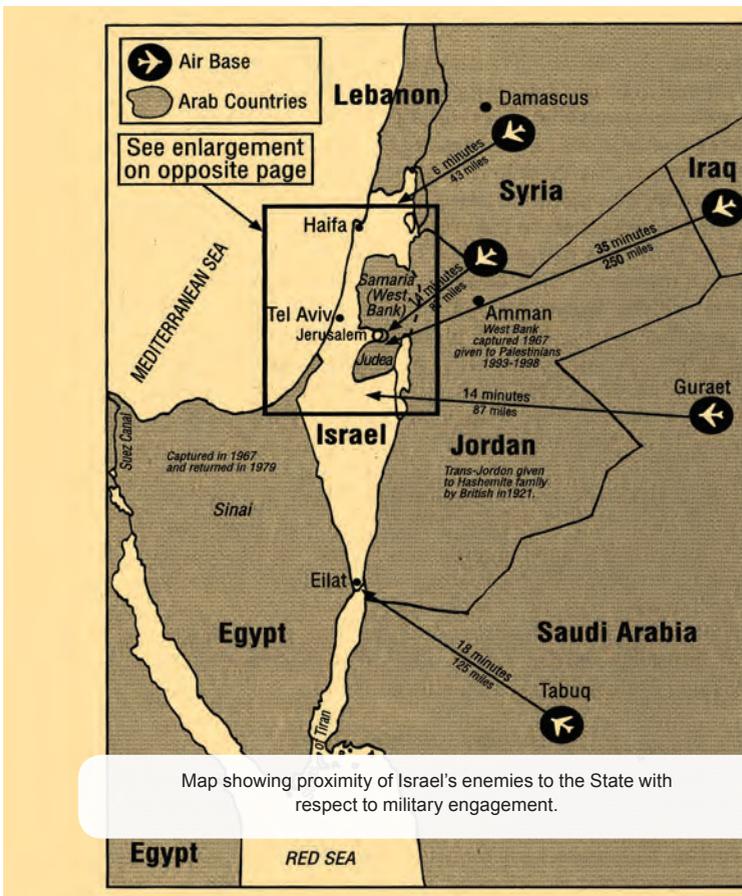
Our Palestinian nation will never forget Jerusalem, and will sacrifice half of its number to sanctify the holy name of Allah for the Arab, Palestinian, Islamic, and Christian character of occupied Jerusalem (*Voice of Palestine* broadcast, September 26, 1997).

If Israel persists in not recognizing Palestinian sovereignty in the eastern part of Jerusalem, it is the Palestinian side's right to demand its rights from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea⁸ (the late Feisal Hussein, November 28, 1997).

I am sounding the alarm against the Jewish scheme, which aims to establish the Solomon Temple in the place of Al-Aksa Mosque, after removing the mosque. . . . Delivering holy Jerusalem from the monster represented by this continuous and advancing settlement [*Har Homa*] and the threat of Juda-ization is a duty imposed upon all of us by Allah . . .⁹ (Yasser Arafat, speech to the Organization of Islamic Conference Summit in Teheran, Iran, December 9, 1997).

Everything within the Palestinian area [in Jerusalem] will be subject to Palestinian sovereignty, no matter who lives there¹⁰ (Feisal Hussein, December 26, 1997).

I have come to understand personally the accuracy of such quotes by my own conversations with the late Feisal Hussein, the Minister for Jerusalem Affairs in the Palestinian Authority, and Adnan Hussein, Administrator of the Wakf. I have also been at the Palestinian "governmental" offices located in the Orient House in Jerusalem. There I found a large, framed wooden map of Palestine, which depicted the entire country from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. However, the map depicted not a single Israeli city or town! In addition, the whole of the city of Jerusalem was referred to by its Arabic name *Al-Quds*, showing not only the intentions of the Palestinians to occupy all of the Land (including that now defined as Israel), but also that Jerusalem as a sacred city is above all other locations on the map as the real source of strife.



Finally, in seeking to understand Jerusalem's Arab enemies, we must ask why they are so intent on taking the city and why diplomacy and negotiation have failed in the political arena. For an explanation, I went to a 25-year resident of East Jerusalem, Clarence Wagner, who was then the International Director of the organization Bridges for Peace. He replied:

The agenda for Jerusalem in the Arab world really comes from a Muslim ideology. It has nothing to do with economics; it has nothing to do with tourism, it has everything to do with how the different peoples read their Scriptures. While Jews and Christians read the Bible to understand what God has to say about the city of Jerusalem and the significance both in the Old and New Testaments, the Muslims read the Koran.

The city of Jerusalem is not in the Koran, and the only allusion to it is to a mystical night ride of Muhammad. Interestingly, before [the 20th] century, Jerusalem was not as significant in the Muslim world as Mecca and Medina. When the Muslims come to pray on the Temple Mount, which they have now built a mosque over, they pray facing Mecca. Muslims have to go on a *Haj* as one of their tenets of faith and they must visit, it is said, Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. However, the *Haddith*, the writings of the Muslims, state only that they must visit Mecca and Medina. Jerusalem [was] brought into the picture [during the last] century as a direct opposition to the Jewish people's return to Zion, and the Land of Israel. Under Muslim authority. . . since the seventh century right up until 1917, Jerusalem was never a significant city, it was never a capital city, it wasn't even an important city in the Muslim world. In fact, we find that the main Muslim trade center was Ramleh, which is a small town very near to today's Ben-Gurion Airport. Jerusalem was a misbegotten little side street, and in the 1830s we find that Jerusalem only had a little population of about 15,000 people. Already by the 1840s, the majority of the population was Jewish and that population has increased.

Zion is significant to the Jewish people. Jerusalem was not significant to the Muslims until the Jews began to return and the Muslims saw, theologically if you will, that they were beginning to lose a hold over some territory, which before then had been Muslim.

Now, if we try to understand the Muslim theology or the Muslim tenets of faith, [we find that] they spread their religion by territorial conquests. And, therefore, we find that the Muslim world has reached out even into Europe in centuries past—up the Iberian peninsula and through the Balkans up towards even to Vienna. They stopped the Muslims at the gates of Vienna and the red flag of Austria is supposed to represent the blood of the Muslims, which they stopped at the gates of Vienna, and the Muslim hordes coming up centuries before into the European continent. However, in the last decade a book was written in the Muslim world called *Spain, the Emerald of the Muslim World, the Jewel of the Muslim World*. And when you read this, you find that the Muslims have never let go of the Iberian peninsula, even though they have not been there since 1492. To them, the land is still Muslim because it was once Muslim. And it will therefore again be Muslim if they wait patiently for Allah to give them an opportunity. Therefore, when you come to what they call the land of Palestine, what the Bible calls Israel, as the Jews began to return, as prophecies began to be fulfilled, and we see that Jewish sovereignty was granted over a land that was formerly Muslim, this is an affront to Allah. It is an affront to the Muslim people, and their mission in life is to avenge the cause of Allah and to establish for themselves a Muslim presence and sovereignty over all the Land of Israel—all the land west of the Jordan River. And the reason they are focusing upon Jerusalem is that it is a holy site for Muslims. It wasn't as significant throughout history, but it is the most holy site for the Jewish people. Therefore, if [the Muslims] can reach out and capture Jerusalem, then they have fairly well defeated the ideology of the Jewish people that seized Jerusalem.¹¹

Jerusalem, a Source of Strife

The question of the city of Jerusalem has been the most difficult point of contention in the Israeli-Arab peace negotiations: Jordan's late King Hussein made it clear that his country's peace with Israel was conditioned upon the resolution of Jerusalem's ownership. He declared: "Jerusalem is the essence of peace between us."¹²

Contention over Jerusalem is nothing new. Jerusalem has been the center of strife all throughout its history. The city has attracted its enemies by virtue of its unique identification as the capital of God's country. As the symbol of political and spiritual power, Jerusalem became the final prize of every conqueror. During the 2,545 years between the loss of the city to the Babylonians in 587 BC and its recovery by the Israelis in 1967, more than 20 conquerors—from different empires—have ruled over Jerusalem. These rulers, however, came from countries which had their own capital cities. Only for the Jews alone, for more than 650 years during the First and Second Commonwealths, and for the State of Israel since 1948, has Jerusalem served as a capital city. While the Crusaders attempted to make Jerusalem the capital of their Latin kingdom for the 87 years that they held the city (beginning in AD 1099), they were not a national entity, so technically it could not have been their "capital." This means that despite Muslim dominance over the city for 1,122 years, and the insistence today that Jerusalem is the third holiest site in Islam, the city was never in all of this history ever made the capital of any Arab government. By

contrast, for the Jewish people, it has been the only capital of their nation, the central point of their prayers, the subject of their songs, and the most sacred spot on earth! With the fiftieth anniversary of Israel's independence in 1998, Jerusalem passed the half-century mark as a city that has been partly or entirely under Jewish sovereignty as Israel's capital. [And now, 17 years later, except for the Dome of the Rock, it is still under Jewish control, but the enemies of Israel seem bent on disavowing the fact. In 2007, Israel celebrated the 40th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, but the yearly celebrations have been marked by violence.]

Thus, the historic Jewish right to the city continues to be a source of strife. The Palestinians claim it as the capital of their proposed Palestinian State. However, like the Crusaders, the Palestinians are not a nation and cannot claim a national right to the city or even its Eastern part, or declare it their capital. In addition, the Catholic Church opposes both Jewish and Arab control of Jerusalem, recognizing only those sites which they claim for the Vatican as the arbiter of Christendom. They want Jerusalem to be an "internationalized" city—a city for all the world, the very Gentile world which has been prophesied at present to be the enemy of Israel.

The Pattern of Pseudopeace

We have seen that when the Tribulation commences in the future, it will begin with the signing of a covenant that produces a false peace for Jerusalem and permits the Jewish people to fulfill their ambition to reestablish worship on

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the Temple Mount (Dan. 9:27). While we do not know the factors that will make this future covenant possible, the paradigm for this treaty has already been produced. The “peace” agreements between Israel and the Egyptians, Jordanians, and the Palestinians have all illustrated the type of covenant that will be made with the Antichrist. For one, those agreements show Israel’s willingness to enter into a covenant with a Gentile power (Antichrist will most likely be a Gentile power—Dan. 11:37, Rev. 13:1). For another, they have all been pseudopeace treaties. Although Egypt and Jordan have not directly fomented aggression, both have forbidden their citizens to travel to Israel or carry on economic trade with the country. Both have also actively supported Israel’s enemies, including the late Saddam Hussein.

The PLO not only openly supported Saddam Hussein and the Hamas terrorists (the suicide bombers), but also enlisted terrorist leaders in their Palestinian Police Force, fired upon Israeli soldiers and civilians, and continued other acts of aggression. In addition, according to the Institute for Peace Education (based in Tel Aviv), which has monitored every broadcast of the Palestinian Authority’s television and radio networks and scrutinized every statement released in Arabic by their Ministry of Information since the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993, they have never found in any Arabic speech or publication to the Arab people any words of peace!¹³

The Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel warned Israel on the eve of the destruction of its monarchy with these words: “*They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace*” (Jer. 6:14, see also 8:11); “*They have seduced My people, saying ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace*” (Ezek. 13:10). Israel had made unwise and unworthy alliances with enemies who had the potential to fight for Israel, but whose plan was to fight *against* her. The nation had moved away from trusting in God because of the fear of man (see Isaiah 7:1-9). As we have seen, a similar situation will occur when the Day of the Lord commences with the Tribulation Period. Israel will seek security with the help of the Antichrist’s governmental system (Rev. 1-3:4, 7, 16-17). At that time, people will be saying: “*Peace and safety!*” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3). The deception and disappointment of pseudopeace is that those who believe they have prevented future trouble only end up making it difficult to escape from it themselves.

The Consequences of Pseudopeace

Pseudopeace seems to offer the possibility of peace, but in fact only makes more probable the necessity of war. The Israeli agreement with the Palestinians has effectively turned

back the calendar to 1947 when Israel was contained within its least-defensible boundaries, only nine miles in width in some places. The agreement has removed the necessary buffer zone between Israel and its hostile Arab neighbors, and has made possible the establishment of an enemy army in the territories under Palestinian authority, which could cut off access to vital water resources and invade Israel. While the world hopes for peace in the Middle East, more seasoned analysts are now forecasting just the opposite. They see the peace process as part of a phased program devised to weaken Israel as its enemies prepare for the next and perhaps final Arab-Israeli war. It is probable that the failed peace process—because of Israel’s refusal to redivide Jerusalem—will force an invasion of the country. This invasion most likely would begin from the Palestinian-controlled areas and then would be joined by all the bordering Arab countries and supported by neighboring Arab nations and their foreign allies. The result will be the greatest war Israel has ever fought, and it is possible that the international community, fearing in Israel’s desperation the threat of a nuclear holocaust, will be forced to intervene and concede Israel’s sovereignty over Jerusalem, since that will be the issue that precipitated the war. The peace pact offered, with its inclusion of control over the Temple Mount, will be accepted by Israeli leaders who believe this internationally brokered treaty will finally guarantee the security they have long sought.

Jerusalem and the Future

The enemies of Jerusalem have arisen and are moving decisively toward the day of final conflict. The darkness is rapidly descending and the night will seem long, but the Light of the world is returning to Jerusalem, and the dawn is about to break. However, Jerusalem must first come to the very brink of ruin. 

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Dr. J. Randall Price (ThM Old Testament and Semitic Languages, and PhD Middle Eastern Studies) is president of World of the Bible Ministries. He lectures worldwide about Bible prophecy, directs tours in the lands of the Bible, and is a longtime friend of CJF Ministries.

¹ George Will, “Palestinian promises rest on violence, lies,” *San Antonio Express-News*, March 31, 1997, p. 13A.

² For a presentation of these terms, see the author’s chapter “Old Testament Tribulation Terms” in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, eds. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), pp. 57-83, and “NT Tribulation Terms” charts in Wayne House & Randall Price, *Charts on Biblical Prophecy & Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998).

³ For the arguments for this conclusion, see Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), pp. 86-100. For the argument that the two witnesses occupy the first half of the Tribulation and die at the midpoint, see Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Press, 1982), pp. 158-60, 168-70.

⁴ A similar statement was made by Yasser Arafat on *Voice of Palestine* radio, Algiers, October 24, 1993.

⁵ As cited by John Wheeler, Jr. in the *Christian American* 5:2 (February 1994). An earlier, more detailed version of this statement was given by Arafat in Arabic to the Palestinian people on Jordanian television on the day of the signing of the Declaration of Principles with the Israelis at the White House in Washington, D.C., September 13, 1993.

⁶ This excerpt was taken from the contents of the recorded speech first reported by the offshore radio station Arutz Sheva, February 7, 1996, and published in *The Jerusalem Post*, February 23, 1996.

⁷ As cited by Cal Thomas, “Preaching hate OK for one side,” syndicated column for Monday, July 28, 1997.

⁸ As quoted in an interview with Feisal Hussein in the Jordanian newspaper *Al-Aswak*.

⁹ As broadcast on the *Voice of Palestine* radio and cited in *Dispatch from Jerusalem* (January, February, 1998), p. 19.

¹⁰ Quoted in an interview with Feisal Hussein published in *Al-Quds*, the official newspaper of the Palestinian press.

¹¹ Interview with Clarence Wagner, Bridges for Peace office, Jerusalem, November 8, 1995.

¹² Statement made by Hussein in Amman, Jordan, and reported by the Washington Post Service on September 27, 1993.

¹³ See Jeff Jacoby, “In Arabic Not a Word of Peace from Arafat,” *Prophecy Update* magazine 2:1 (1998): 15, 23.

Fruit from the Harvest

by Violette Berger



The Mall Walkers

Once the heat of summer hits Las Vegas, **Richard Hill, CJFM representative (Las Vegas) and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation**, and his evangelism team cool off by visiting the malls of the city, looking for opportunities to share the Gospel. A favorite mall is one where many Israeli-Jewish people sell their products from kiosks (portable carts). After listening to the sales pitch, Rich and his team usually have an opportunity to share Yeshua (Jesus). Volunteers Brian and Melanie recently had the privilege of leading one young woman to the Lord. She prayed the sinner's prayer with Brian right there at her kiosk!

Mikvehs

Paul, a young Iranian-Jewish man whom Rich and his team met as a result of their outreach on the campus of UNLV, prayed to receive Jesus when he attended *Beth Yeshua*. Shortly afterwards, he had his *mikveh*, Hebrew for "water immersion." He then invited his friend Erica to a service at *Beth Yeshua*, where she also prayed to receive Yeshua as her Lord and Savior. She, too, is now looking forward to her *mikveh* (baptism). Pray for Erica and Paul's growth in the Lord.

Oanh Hill and the 4-H Club

Richard's wife, Oanh, and their children volunteer at the 4-H Club camps during the summer. This year, Oanh led eight campers to the Lord and had the opportunity to share the Gospel of Yeshua with four Jewish children. The children's Jewish Orthodox upbringing had trained them well in how to combat Oanh's Gospel message. As Oanh proceeded to refute their typical objections, the children told her that she "will have to talk to [our] parents about this Jesus." Please pray for the salvation of the four Jewish children and their parents, and for the growth of the eight precious souls who prayed to receive Jesus.

Spiritual Partnerships

Efraim Goldstein, CJFM worker and pastor of Or Hagalil Congregation (Israel), and their partners in the Lebanese Fellowship are blessed to have performed three baptisms: the two teenage daughters of the Lebanese Fellowship leader and a Lebanese man from a Muslim background who had prayed and committed his life to Jesus. Please pray that these fellowships will have an evangelistic impact in their respective communities.

Seeds Planted

Peter Parkas, CJFM Northeast representative (New Jersey), has had the opportunity to witness and have ongoing discussions with three unsaved Jewish people who are not particularly open to the Gospel. These encounters include Ricky, a childhood friend, whom Peter had not seen in 45 years. Peter invited him to attend a service at a Messianic congregation where Peter shared his testimony. Afterwards, they had lunch together, and despite Ricky's antireligion, anti-Judaism stance, Peter writes, "He cannot deny my testimony." The second encounter was a discussion with "E," who is Orthodox and the niece of Peter's wife. She claims to be very observant of the Law of Moses and says that "One must know Hebrew in order to understand the Scriptures." Peter hopes to continue refuting that argument in future conversations. The third encounter was Sam, someone whom Peter has been witnessing to for many years and who has finally agreed to look at the Scriptures rather than just the rabbinic interpretations concerning sin.

Through his ministry as **CJFM Director of Missions, Rob Styler** travels extensively. On a recent flight to Toronto, he happened to be seated next to a young man who lives in Rob's hometown. In the course of the conversation, Rob was asked what he did. When Rob said that he told Bible stories, the young man asked him, "Why the Bible?" Rob replied, "It's the most important book in the world." Following a stunned response, Rob discovered that this man was a devout Muslim, and a polite conversation ensued. Rob writes, "I was happy to have this interaction, and I hope a seed may have been planted." Please pray that this man will be curious enough to read the greatest story ever told.

The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge (Prov. 18:15). 🌱



Editor's Note:

As many of our readers already know, Vi's husband, Barry Berger, recently went Home to Glory after a long series of illnesses over a period of several years. Barry was a unique and powerful witness for Yeshua the Messiah, and he's already sorely missed—especially by Vi. Would you please keep her in your thoughts and prayers as she carries on without him? Emails of encouragement may be addressed to vib@cjfm.org.

Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at garyh@cjfm.org, or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

QUESTION: *I've been witnessing to a business colleague from India and gave him a Bible recently. He's been reading it and showed me a verse that says the earth is supported by "pillars" (Job 9:6). He says this harkens back to ancient myths about the earth being supported by Atlas or some other person, creature, or object. Of course, scientists have known for centuries now that the earth is supported by nothing. So what about it? Is the Book of Job in error on this point?*

ANSWER: Not at all. It's merely a figure of speech. If I were to say, "We should take the Gospel to the four corners of the world," would you think that I suffer from the delusion that the world is flat and shaped like a square? I hope not! You would understand that I was invoking a common expression that simply means the Gospel needs to be heard by everyone on earth. Likewise, Job's statement that the pillars of the earth tremble is intended to convey something about the awesome power of God as reflected in the elements of nature.

On the other hand, even if we take the statement more literally, it is indeed true that the earth has supporting structures or foundations that serve the same purpose as "pillars." The outer layer, the crust, is supported by the mantle. The mantle, in turn, is supported by a molten core. It's the shifting of the tectonic plates in the earth's lithosphere (i.e., the crust and upper mantle) that causes phenomena like volcanoes and earthquakes. So even though Job wasn't writing as a scientist, his use of the term "pillars" is very sensible, even in light of modern scientific knowledge. It's more a statement about the structure of the stratified earth than it is about our planet's position in space.

If you have any lingering doubts about Job's understanding of cosmology and the earth's position in the cosmos, check this out: "[God] stretches out the north over empty space; [He] hangs the earth on nothing" (Job 26:7). 

CORRECTION

In our May/June 2015 edition of *Messianic Perspectives* dealing with the effects of extreme weather and other tragedies, we inadvertently identified Joni Eareckson Tada as a paraplegic. Her diving accident in 1967 left Joni a *quadriplegic*—wheelchair bound and without the use of her hands.

Joni's life and ministry, however, continue to be nothing short of remarkable. An accomplished artist, Joni learned to paint by holding the brush between her teeth, and has created many beautiful works. These are available on greeting cards and highly sought-after, limited edition prints.

For nearly 50 years, despite the terrible tragedy that left her a quadriplegic, Joni has lived to glorify God and advance His kingdom around the world. She serves on numerous organizational committees and boards, has received multiple prestigious honors, and has been awarded several honorary degrees. Joni has also written several books—two of which we carry in our online bookstore. We encourage you to visit Joni's website (www.joniandfriends.org) to learn more about her and her amazing ministry. Many thanks to a longtime friend of Joni's who took the time to write and call this to our attention.



ISRAEL TOUR JUNE 13-24, 2016

For complete itinerary and more information, visit cjfm.org/tours.



HOSTED BY ROB STYLER



Rob is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute (Chicago), where he majored in Jewish and Modern Israel Studies. He was ordained by Associated Gospel Churches and served as a street evangelist and pastor in both New York City and Toronto. His current position is CJFM Director of Missions. He's been leading tours of all ages to Israel for over 10 years.

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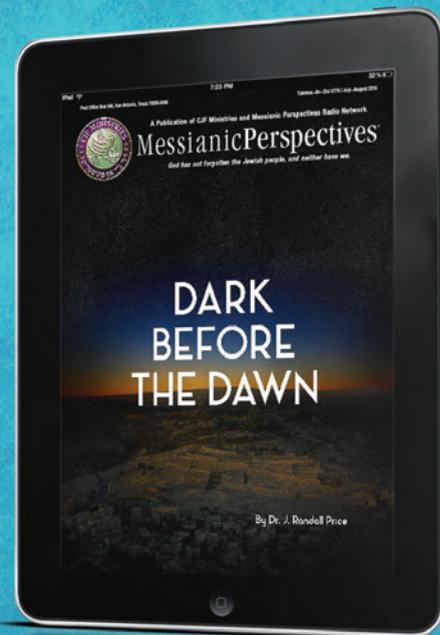
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