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# Messianic Perspectives®

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

## **THE NEW JERUSALEM IN BIBLE PROPHECY**

*An Interview with Janet Willis,  
Author of What on Earth  
Is Heaven Like?*

**PART 1**

**BY DR. GARY HEDRICK**

Every Yeshua-follower wonders about Heaven and the afterlife. After all, the Lord himself promised us an eternal home in the New Jerusalem (John 14:2-3). But where is this heavenly City? What will it be like? Whom will we meet there? Will we know each other? In the next two issues of *Messianic Perspectives*, we interview Janet Willis, a retired pastor's wife who has more reason than most to wonder about Heaven; after all, six of her nine children have been residents of the Holy City since November of 1994. How did it happen and what might it mean for each and every one of us, believer and unbeliever alike? Read on to find out!

**Dr. Gary Hedrick:** Janet, welcome to *Messianic Perspectives*. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us.

Janet Willis: Thank you for this opportunity, Gary.

It's not often that someone (particularly a layperson) writes a book that plows up new ground on a major doctrinal theme. And yet you've written a book about the New Jerusalem that does just that.

I appreciate that very much.

Well, it's true. You've challenged some of the old, conventional thinking about Heaven and the New Jerusalem—and I, for one, find your work not only biblical but also refreshing. Before we get into the theology, though, could you go back to the beginning and tell us how you became so intensely interested in this topic in the first place?

Yes, of course. In the early 1990s, my husband Scott (a Baptist pastor) and I had a fairly normal life. We were busy Christian parents with a ministry in the Chicago area. We were happy and content. On November 8, 1994, we were on our way to a family birthday party in Watertown, Wisconsin. We were headed north in our minivan on I-94 with our six younger children, ages 13 years down to six weeks, when suddenly, in a matter of seconds, our lives were changed forever. There was a terrible accident on the freeway in Milwaukee when a large chunk of steel fell out of a truck ahead of us. A spark ignited the fuel tank on our van, and in the blink of an eye, we were engulfed in an unbelievable inferno. Five of our six children died at the scene. Our 13-year old, Ben, died the next day. Scott and I were also injured, but we survived. In the aftermath, the worst scars were emotional rather than physical. I loved being a mom, so the depth of my pain was indescribable. It drove me closer to the Lord and into His Word more than ever. Verses about Heaven and the New Jerusalem seemed to jump off the page as I read my Bible.

I can't imagine what it must be like to lose a child—let alone losing six precious little ones all at the same time! But not all of your children were with you that day, right?

That's right. Our three older children were married and out of the home by then. So they weren't with us at the time.



## Messianic Perspectives®

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*Messianic Perspectives* is published bimonthly by C.J.F. Ministries, P.O. Box 345, San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345, a 501(c)3 Texas nonprofit corporation: **Dr. Charles Halff (1929-2000), Founder; Dr. Gary Hedrick, President; Brian Nowotny, Director of Communications; Erastos Leiloglou, Creative Director.** Subscription price: \$10 per year. The publication of articles by other authors does not necessarily imply full agreement with all the views expressed therein. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). Visit us online at [cjfm.org](http://cjfm.org). Toll-free OrderLine: (800) 926-5397. © 2016 by C.J.F. Ministries. All rights reserved.

So it was the tragic loss of your six younger children in that car accident that prompted you to focus on the reality of Heaven like never before.

Yes, that's right.

I think that's what intrigues me most about the research you've done on Heaven and the New Jerusalem—I mean, just the fact that you have no agenda and no theological axe to grind. You're not a theologian or a seminary professor. You're a mom who set out 20 years ago to learn all you could about where your children had gone and what they're experiencing in the next life.

Yes, that's right. God had prepared me before my accident by giving me the long view of life and that includes eternal life as referred to in Psalm 73.<sup>1</sup> But my concept of the New Jerusalem was pretty basic.

Well, even though we believe there's a Heaven, very often the image in our minds is one of our departed loved ones floating around somewhere in the clouds and strumming their harps. But that kind of ambiguity didn't satisfy you. This tragedy propelled you straight into your Bible to find out as much as you could about where the Lord took your children when they died. What passages spoke to you the most?

There were many helpful passages, but Hebrews 12:22-24 was one that assured me that my children were in the heavenly Jerusalem. Here's what it says: *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than [that of] Abel.*

BUT YOU HAVE COME TO MOUNT ZION  
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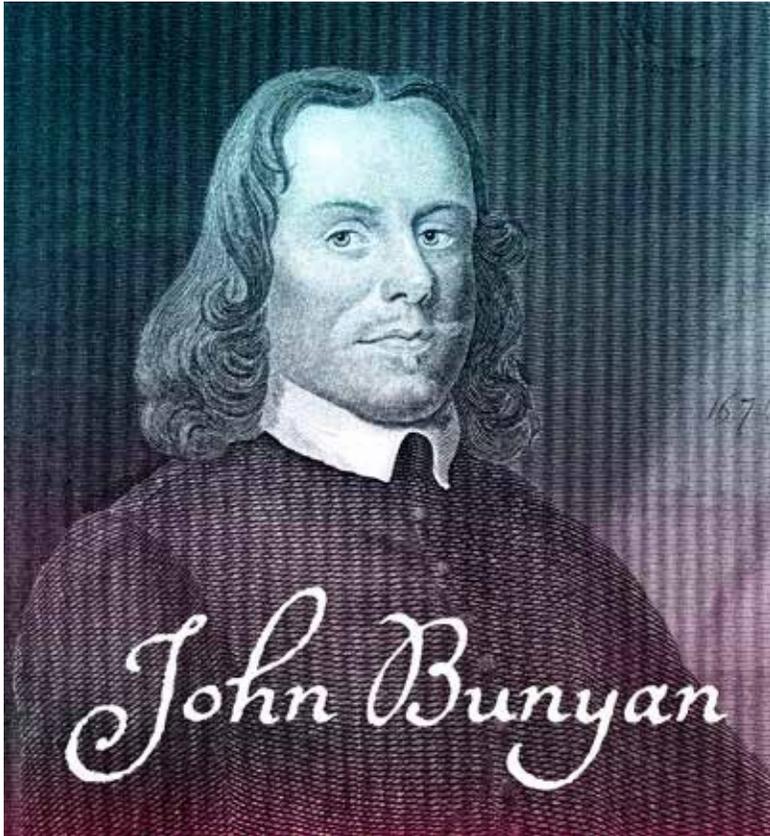
## HEBREWS 12:22-24

That's a good passage. Lots of good things packed in there.

It's a great passage. Notice that reference to "the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." I believe it's a literal City with gates and streets and dwellings for God's people. It's the same City described by John in Revelation 21 and 22 that will someday come down and sit on the earth.



Scott and Janet Willis at the Half House in Mevasseret Zion, Israel, in August 2015



Yes, it will. It's really too bad that some Christians fail to grasp these literal truths about Heaven. Like John Bunyan, for instance. Not long ago, I was reading his book, *The Holy City: the New Jerusalem*, considered a classic, where he goes into great detail trying to prove that the Holy City is really just a very detailed and sophisticated symbol for the Church.<sup>2</sup>

That's replacement theology.

Exactly. And it completely misses some amazing truths about our eternal home. I realize that John Bunyan is a notable figure in Christian history, and many of us have enjoyed books like *Pilgrim's Progress*; but he sure missed the boat on this one. By reducing the New Jerusalem to a symbol, he robbed himself of one of the most precious truths in God's Word—the fact that we're waiting for a literal City whose builder and architect is God himself!

So true!

It seems to me that some Christians, without even realizing it, have bought into a form of Gnosticism—the notion that the physical world is essentially evil. So they think that means Heaven can't be a real, actual, material place.

Well, they're forgetting that God created the physical world. And when He was finished, He said it was "good," not evil.<sup>3</sup> Evil came later because of the devil's deception and Adam and Eve's disobedience.<sup>4</sup>

So there's nothing inherently bad or evil about this world we live in. Evil is more like a disease that has infected the world.

Yes, and someday it will be cured!

Amen to that! So as you began to think more deeply about Heaven, it became more than just a wistful, emotional reaction to the tragedy, but rather a biblical reality. This was a real, tangible place and your children were there.

Definitely. It was a strong comfort to know they were in a real City with Jesus. It wasn't just pie-in-the-sky wishful thinking. It gave me a strong incentive to learn more about that City.

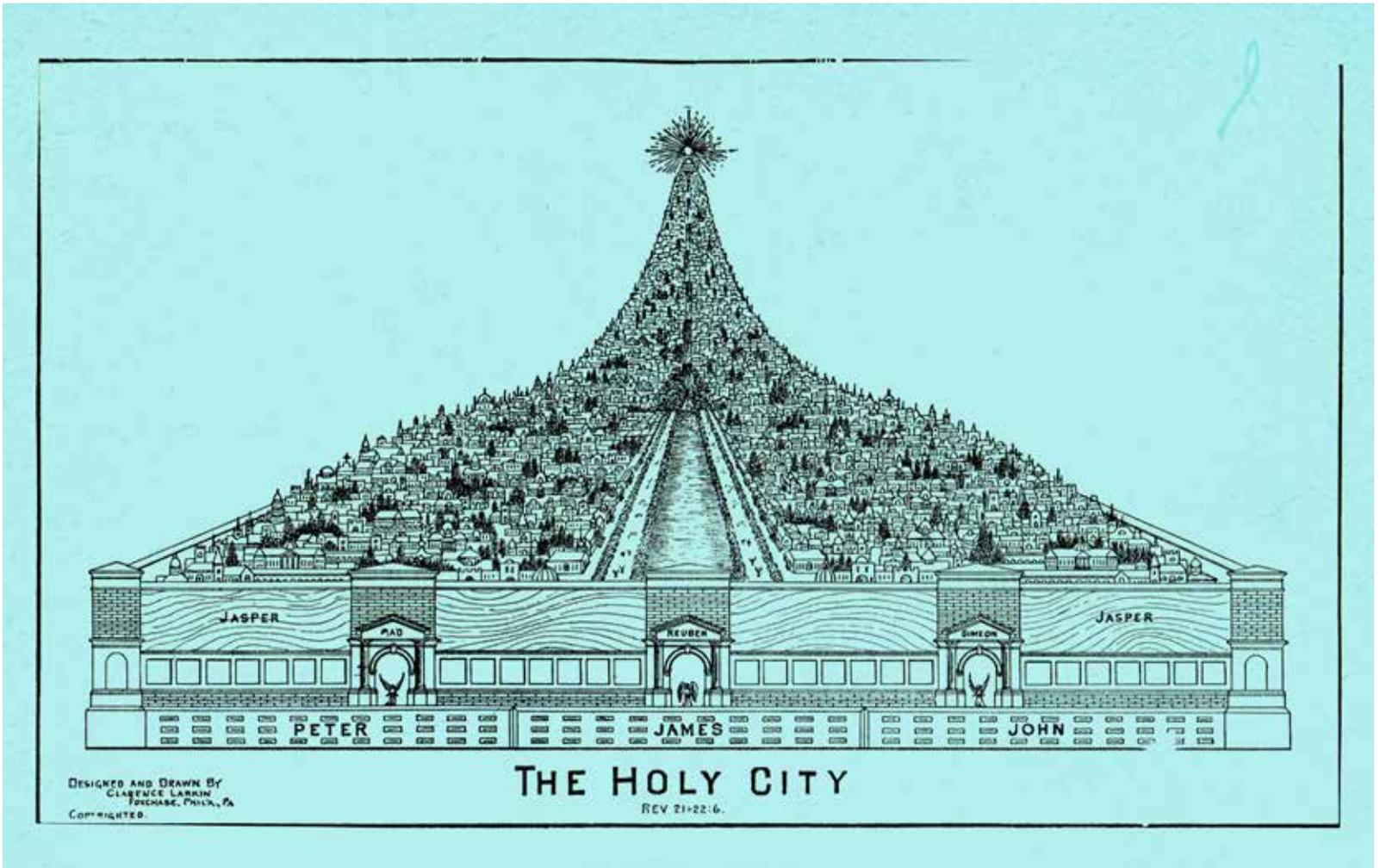
And if the New Jerusalem is a literal reality—a beautiful, functioning City—that raises a number of interesting questions. Like, where is the New Jerusalem right now? And who lives there? You deal with many of these issues in your book, right?

Yes, I do. The chapter just prior to the one we've been discussing [i.e., Hebrews 11, often called "the Hebrews Hall of Heroes"] says that Abraham "was looking forward to the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."<sup>5</sup> God seemed to be saying that not only were my children with Jesus, but they were getting to meet the heroes of the faith in that City. I know they don't have resurrected bodies yet, but the Bible seems to indicate that they have some sort of intermediate body.<sup>6</sup> Scriptural truths helped me picture reality. And eventually, as I began to trace things about this City through God's Word, I found that He had revealed far more about it than I had ever realized.

What discoveries did you find particularly significant? Were there any surprises?

Oh, yes, there were surprises! Let's start with the Book of Ezekiel. It talks about a City<sup>7</sup> that sounds amazingly similar to the New Jerusalem described by John in the Book of Revelation.<sup>8</sup> I have a chart in my book that shows these similarities. The surprise was finding out how the size of both cities matched up!

EZEKIEL'S VISION to Israel: the Jews	JOHN'S VISION to the Church: Jews and Gentiles
<b>THE CITY</b>	<b>THE CITY</b>
1. is on elevated land.	1. is on elevated land.
2. has no temple in it.	2. has no temple in it.
3. has a square base.	3. has a square base.
4. has 12 gates, 3 on each side.	4. has 12 gates, 3 on each side.
5. gates named: 12 tribes of Israel.	5. gates named: 12 tribes of Israel. (foundations named: 12 apostles)
6. is on land that is most holy.	6. is holy.
7. will be the capital of the world.	7. will be the capital of the world.
8. The LORD will be there forever.	8. The LORD will be there forever.



So are they the same size?

Before we get into details comparing the measurements of the two cities, could I mention something briefly about the timing?

**Absolutely. Go right ahead.**

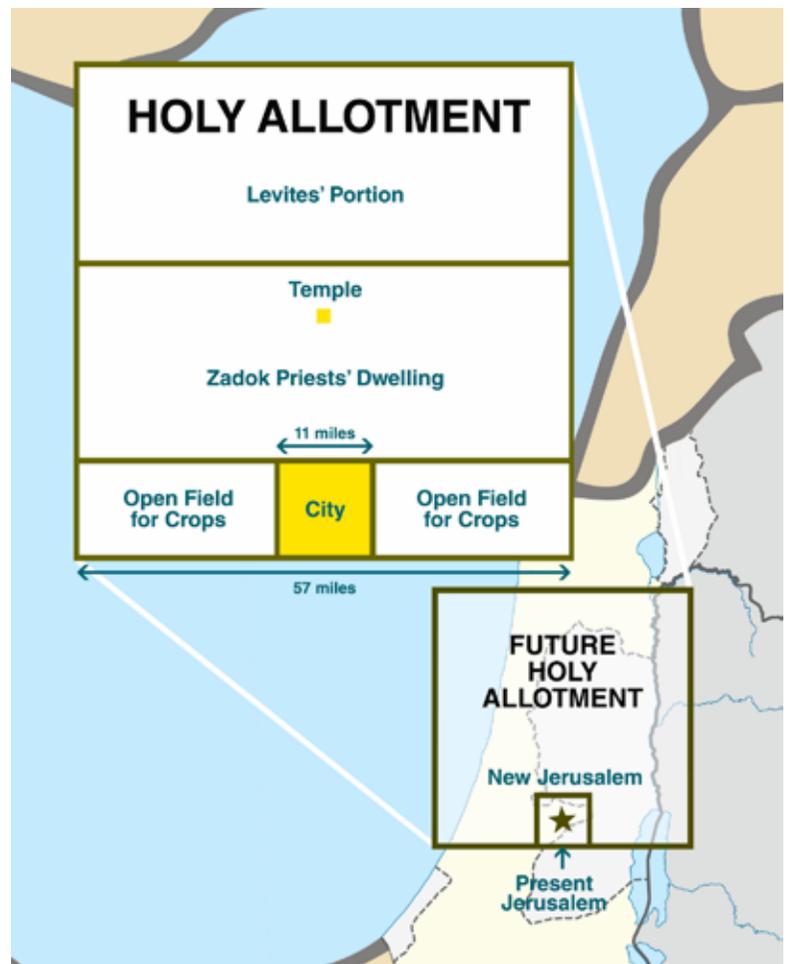
Well, among Bible scholars, there has never been unanimous agreement about when (or even if) the New Jerusalem actually touches down on earth. A number of prophecies in the Old Testament point to the New Jerusalem being present during the Millennium—like Isaiah 54:11-12 and Isaiah 60, for instance. For those of us who are premillennialists and believe it's a literal City, that's significant.

**That's true.**

Yes, but there's more. Here's why I was surprised when I started comparing the two cities. First, I noticed how both Ezekiel and John are escorted by an angelic guide to an area of elevated land. Each of them sees a City with a square base, with three gates on each of the four sides named for the twelve tribes of Israel. Both cities [i.e., Ezekiel's and John's] have no temple in them. Both are said to be the location of God's throne. Furthermore, Ezekiel says, "The name of the city from [that] day [shall be]: THE LORD [IS] THERE." He says the City is 11 miles in length and 11 miles in width, and he specifically gives the total perimeter: 44 miles all around.<sup>9</sup>

Well, if the LORD is really "there," like the name says, it certainly lines up nicely with what you said earlier, because in the Old Testament, God's dwelling place was the Tabernacle—and later, His Presence dwelt in the Holy of Holies in the Temple.

Yes.



The Bible says there's no Temple in the New Jerusalem,<sup>10</sup> but some people are going to have a problem with your idea that the Millennial Temple will be *outside* the New Jerusalem and God will dwell in the City itself rather than in the Temple. That seems like a bit of a paradigm shift because of the idea that God's Presence will dwell somewhere other than in the Temple.

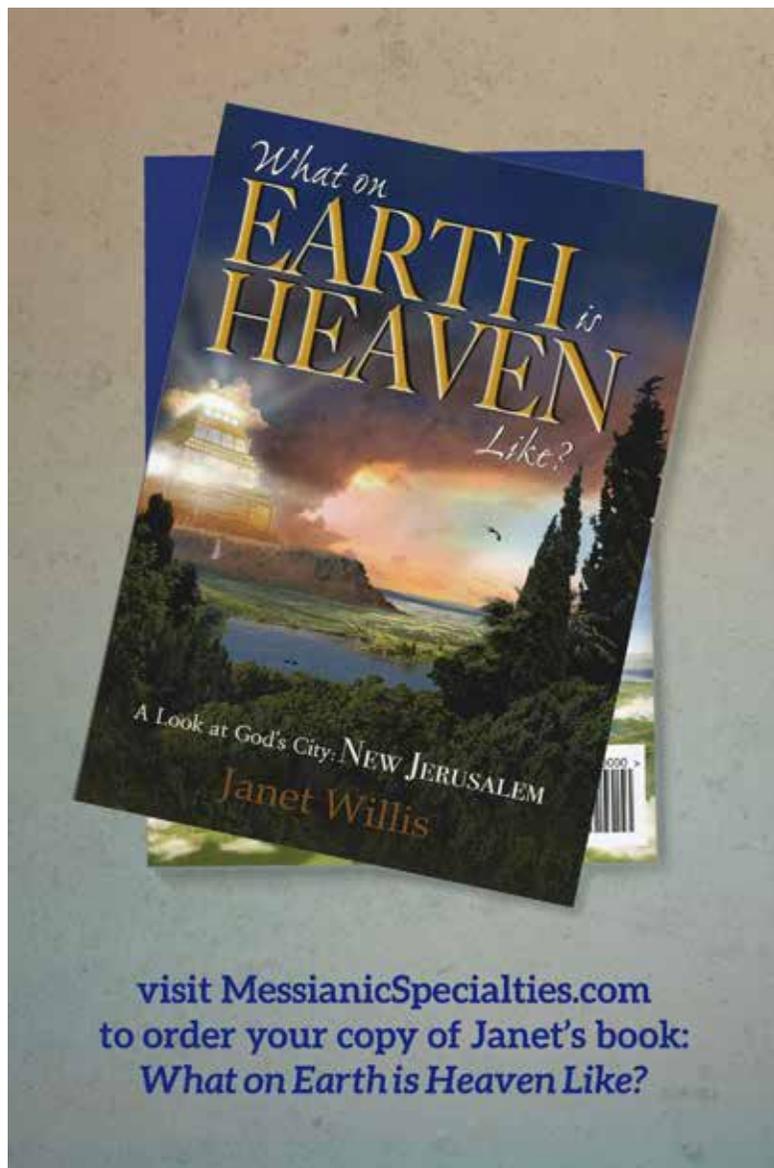
That's a critical point, Gary. In the context of the Millennial Kingdom, Ezekiel 37 talks about the two different places. God says, "I will . . . set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place **also** will be with them."<sup>11</sup> So it sounds like two distinct places [i.e., "My sanctuary" in the Temple and "My dwelling place" in the New Jerusalem]. However, this distinction really isn't new. Even in the Old Testament, the manifestation of God's Presence moved around quite a bit. God's *Shekinah* came down from the pinnacle of Mt. Sinai to the Tabernacle, then went before the Israelites to show them the way as they traveled. Ezekiel even describes, in great detail, how the glory of God departed from the Temple and went over to the Mount of Olives!<sup>12</sup>

So since Heaven is where God dwells, and He dwells in the New Jerusalem, does that mean the New Jerusalem is Heaven? And if the New Jerusalem is on earth during the Millennium, does that mean there's a sense in which the Millennial reign of the Messiah is "Heaven on earth"?

I think it is. That's why I titled my book *What on Earth Is Heaven Like?*

Does that mean Heaven isn't really a perfect place? We know the Millennium won't be perfect, just like the Garden of Eden wasn't perfect; and that's how sin found its way, through the Serpent, into the Garden. So the Millennial Age won't be perfect, either; in fact, it ends with a final world war.<sup>13</sup> So it's pretty clear. And if the Millennial Age isn't perfect, how can it be Heaven?

The New Jerusalem is the only perfect place during the Millennium. Angels guard each gate,<sup>14</sup> and nothing unclean can enter.<sup>15</sup> It is the home base for resurrected saints who at that point will have their immortal bodies. They are out and about exploring, interacting, and administrating and reigning with the Messiah.<sup>16</sup> The Millennial Temple is where mortals worship. Similar to the Israelites' encampment around Mt. Sinai, the glory of God comes down from God's dwelling place (in the New Jerusalem) to the sanctuary (the Temple) at specific times such as the new moon and the Sabbath.<sup>17</sup>

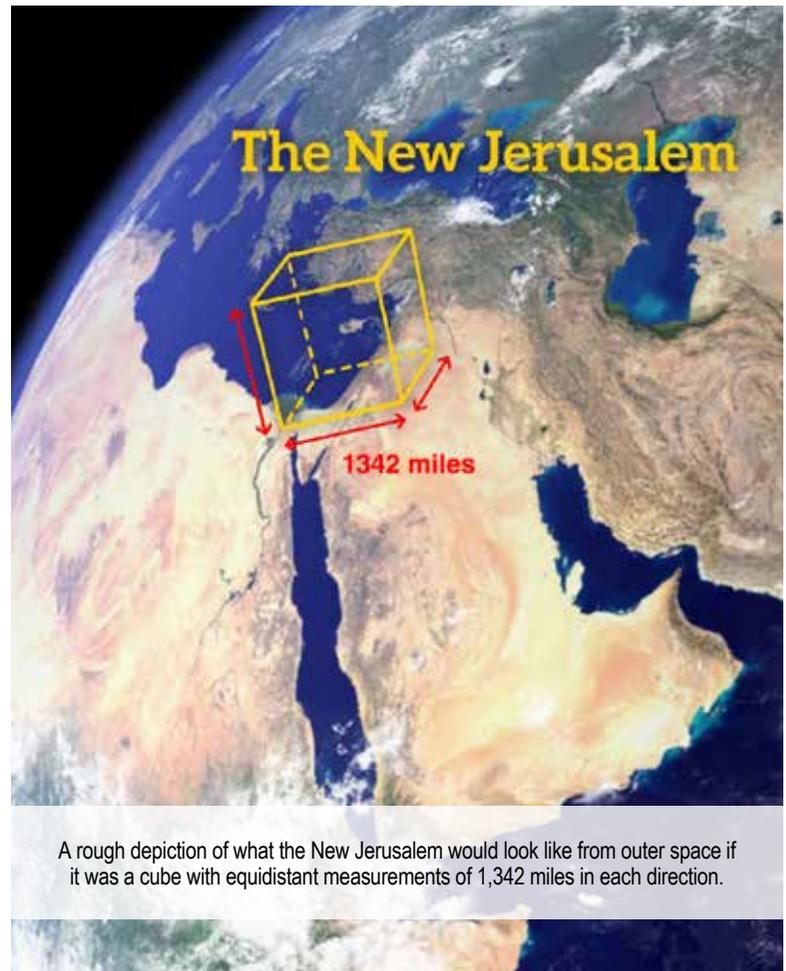
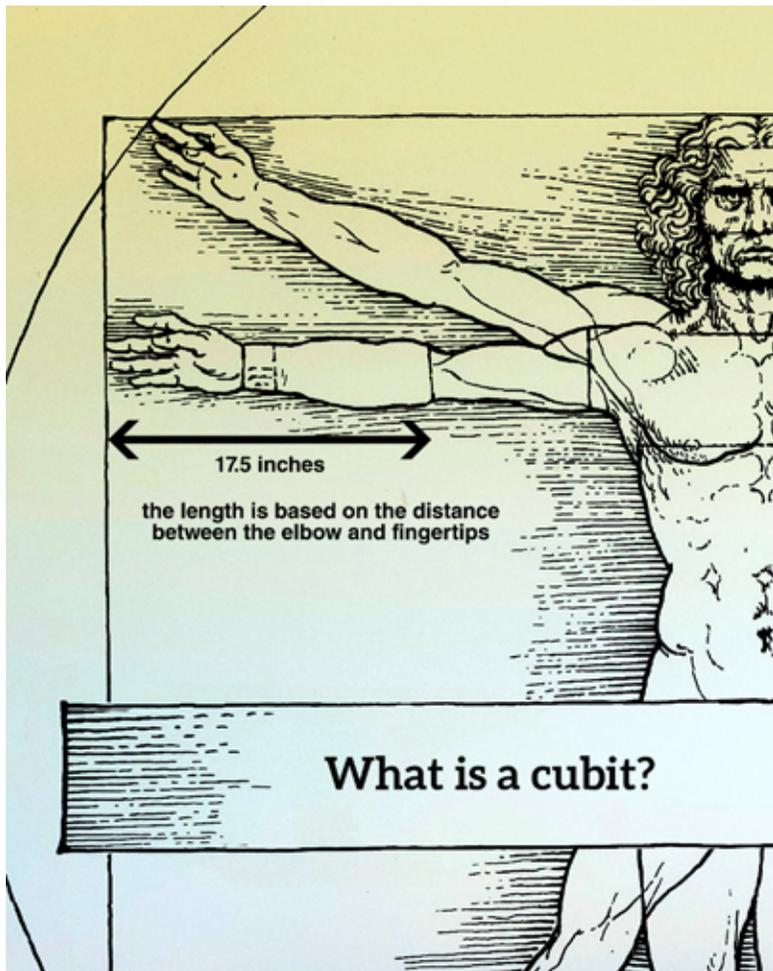


Also, John says the leaves of the Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem are "for the healing of the nations."<sup>18</sup> Wouldn't this indicate that the process of fixing what's wrong with the world will be ongoing throughout the Millennium?

It certainly seems that way. Though the fruit from the Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem enables one to live forever,<sup>19</sup> apparently the leaves from that same tree will have curative properties and will be shared with mortals for healing.<sup>20</sup>

Some people have asked us why it's necessary for angels to guard the gates of the New Jerusalem since there are no threats in Heaven. But what you're saying here would explain it, wouldn't it?

The mortal inhabitants who will be born during the Millennium will have a sin nature and will need to accept Yeshua as Messiah and Savior, just like we do in this age.



**So you're saying that evil will lurk in the shadows during the thousand-year Kingdom Age much like it did in the Garden of Eden.**

Yes. That's why Revelation 19:15 says the Messiah will rule the nations "with a rod of iron." Rigid enforcement will be required, evidently, due to an undercurrent of rebellion during the Kingdom Age. At the end of the thousand years, there will be a final world war.<sup>21</sup>

**A war to end all wars.**

Yes, and thank God for that!

**This is all so fascinating, but let's get back to those measurements. The Bible gives some pretty specific details, doesn't it?**

It sure does. The problem is that the unit of measurement is only implied in verses 30-35, rather than actually stated, so there is disagreement among scholars about whether those measurements are cubits or rods.

**You're talking about verses 30 to 35 in Ezekiel 48.**

Right.

**And that's where the prophet uses just the numbers without mentioning either cubits or rods, which means it's up to us to figure out what unit of measurement he's using. And it's important because there was quite a bit of difference between a cubit and a rod.**

Yes, there was. Ezekiel 41:8 states that a rod was equivalent to six "long cubits" and according to Ezekiel 40:5 each "long cubit" equaled a cubit plus a handbreadth.

**But most of the commentaries render the measurements in Ezekiel 48 as cubits rather than rods.**

That's true—but not all of them. Some commentaries give good support for the view that it's rods, citing passages like Ezekiel 42:20 and 45:2, for example. I explain this further in my book, but there's another way to look at it.

**What's that?**

Well, if the unit of measurement is only cubits and not rods, then the City Ezekiel is describing (at the south end of the Holy Allotment) is only slightly larger than the Temple area (at the center of the Holy Allotment).

**You're right. And that doesn't make sense. Even from earliest times, the city of Jerusalem was always considerably larger than the Temple.**

Yes, it was.

**And many of Ezekiel's details line up with John's vision. But John's measurements are different, aren't they? How can Ezekiel and John be talking about the same City if the dimensions are different?**

Good question—and the answer is that they're not as different as you might think. In fact, they are amazingly similar. In Revelation 21:16, right after giving the number 12,000 *stadia* (approximately 1,342 miles), John adds the phrase "its length and width and height are equal." I always assumed (and many others have also assumed) that this means 1,342 miles in each direction—length, width, and height.

**Like a cube, then.**

Exactly. That's been the conventional wisdom—that it's a huge cube that extends almost 1,500 miles up into outer space. But what if we haven't been looking at this in the right way?

**How so?**

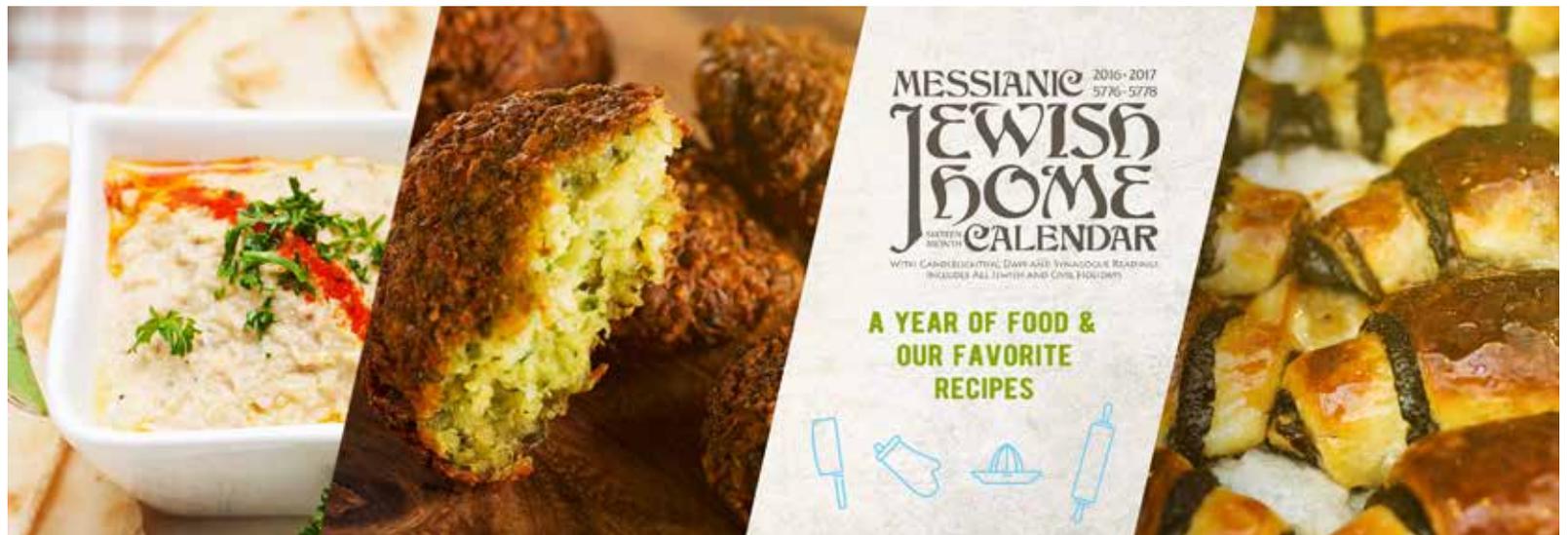
Well, what if John meant to give us a total measurement? Since John specifically provides three dimensions right after giving the number, maybe he meant for us to take the cube root of 1,342. If that's the case, it comes out to be approximately 11! And remember what we said earlier—Ezekiel says the City is 11 miles in length and 11 miles in width.<sup>22</sup> So if my assumptions are correct, the two sets of measurements are in perfect agreement. That's another reason I believe Ezekiel and John are talking about the same city!

**That is just amazing!**

Yes, I was amazed, too. And it gave me a greater appreciation for the precision and unity of God's Word.

I'm sure it did. But don't you think it's strange that Ezekiel didn't say anything about the height of the city, since the height certainly would be extraordinary? Why was John the only one who mentioned it?

I wondered about that, too.



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## Did you come up with an answer?

The short answer is that we don't know. A longer answer would be that maybe God, for His own reasons, didn't want Ezekiel to share that information. John, after all, was told not to mention certain things he had heard in a vision,<sup>23</sup> so there's a precedent.

## Interesting.

And there are other possibilities. Maybe the height, 11 miles, was obscured by clouds, which I have seen a number of times looking at the skyscrapers of Chicago, which are much shorter than the New Jerusalem! However, looking at the larger context of Ezekiel 40-48, God seems to have Ezekiel focused on the future as it pertains to Israel. He reveals a lot about the future Temple and relatively little about the future City. John, on the other hand, reveals much about the City, giving us information that relates to both Israel and the Church, like the gates that are named for the twelve tribes and the foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles.

In other words, the visions of John and Ezekiel aren't identical, but they're complementary.

Yes.

So it's like taking the pieces of a puzzle and dividing them into two piles. You need both piles in order to put the puzzle together.

Good analogy. After all, if the descriptions of John and Ezekiel were identical in every respect, one of them would have been unnecessary. When we consider Revelation and Ezekiel together, they complement each other and we see everything better. This fuller picture, with Jewish and Gentile emblems, gives both Jews and Gentiles a visual manifestation of how non-Jewish believers are grafted into God's precious promises to Israel.

You said earlier that several Old Testament prophecies show us that the New Jerusalem will be present on earth during the Millennium.

Yes, I did.

And you mentioned that Ezekiel places the Holy City in the southern part of the Holy Allotment during the Millennium. But there are other passages that refer to the current city of Jerusalem as "eternal." So if it's eternal, how can it be done away with? Or will the older city also be here during the Millennium? I guess what I'm asking is, can there be two Jerusalems on earth at the same time?

No, I don't think so. But that's not a problem. Just prior to the Millennium, there will be great upheaval, destruction, and topographical changes, specifically related to Jerusalem—as described in passages like Zechariah 14:10-11 and Jeremiah 31:38-39. We are also told that the City of Jerusalem will be "rebuilt on its ruin."<sup>24</sup> The word "rebuilt" can mean *set up* and the phrase "on its ruin" is the single Hebrew word *tel* which is now used as an archaeological term meaning *the site of a ruined city*.

So you're saying that the New Jerusalem will replace the old one during the Millennium.

Yes.

And Jerusalem is "eternal" in the sense that the new one is rebuilt over the foundations of the old one. But it's still Jerusalem.

Exactly.



To be continued in the next issue of *Messianic Perspectives*



Dr. Gary Hedrick  
is president of  
CJF Ministries.

<sup>1</sup>In *What on Earth Is Heaven Like?*, Janet refers several times to her "long view" of life. For her, the "long view" means seeing tragedy and injustice as unfortunate (and sometimes hard-to-understand) episodes in God's longer-term plan. Here she refers to Psalm 73, for instance, where Asaph says he is "envious" when he sees "the prosperity of the wicked" (v. 3). He can't understand why "the ungodly . . . increase in riches" (v. 12) while poor Asaph is "plagued . . . every morning" (v. 13). But when Asaph goes "into the sanctuary of God" and listens to the Lord, he comes to understand the long view of life. He learns that even though the wicked might appear to prosper for a time, their ultimate end is ruin and misery: *Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction* (v. 18). Then Asaph continues: "You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me [to] glory" (v. 24). The psalmist is greatly encouraged thinking of the future he will enjoy. This extended perspective teaches us that we can't evaluate the true impact of an apparent tragedy without considering the long-term outcome. Even Jesus had this long view. The Bible says, "For the joy that was set before Him, [He] endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2).

<sup>2</sup>From *The Works of John Bunyan*, Vol. 3, George Offor, Ed. (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1853), 395-459.

<sup>3</sup>*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed [it was] very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day* (Gen. 1:31).

<sup>4</sup>Gen. 3:6

<sup>5</sup>Heb. 11:10, NIV

<sup>6</sup>In Revelation 6, John has a vision of saints who have been martyred during the Tribulation: *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both [the number of] their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they [were], was completed* (vv. 10-11). Irrespective of the symbolic nature of much of John's vision, we should remember that the symbols represent literal realities. The fact that these Tribulation martyrs (1) possess audible speech, (2) wear clothing ("robes"), and (3) can benefit from physical "rest" strongly suggests some degree of corporeality in the intermediate state, rather than their being disembodied spirits.

<sup>7</sup>Ezek. 40:2; 48:30-35

<sup>8</sup>Rev. 21:10-16

<sup>9</sup>Ezek. 48:30-35

<sup>10</sup>Rev. 21:22

<sup>11</sup>Ezek. 37:26-27 NASB

<sup>12</sup>Ezek. 10:18 and 11:23

<sup>13</sup>Rev. 20:8

<sup>14</sup>Rev. 21:12

<sup>15</sup>Rev. 21:27

<sup>16</sup>Note the parable in Luke 19:11-27, where the Lord alludes to his followers being rewarded in the Kingdom with rulership and responsibilities.

<sup>17</sup>Ezek. 46:1, 3. Also, the textual note at Psalm 68:17b in *The New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1998) offers this alternate reading: "The LORD came from Sinai into the sanctuary" (אָדֹנָי בָּרַךְ בְּסִינַי בְּקִדְשׁ). Note that it's Verse 18 in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>18</sup>Rev. 22:2

<sup>19</sup>Gen. 3:22

<sup>20</sup>Ezekiel provides a precedent for this when he mentions trees bordering a river that flows from the Temple (47:12). He distinguishes between the respective uses of the fruit and the leaves, much like John does (Rev. 22:2).

<sup>21</sup>Rev. 20:7-9

<sup>22</sup>Ezek. 48:30-35; cp. 45:1-6

<sup>23</sup>Rev. 10:4

<sup>24</sup>Jer. 30:17b-18

# Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

## Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at [garyh@cjfm.org](mailto: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:** *Years ago, I read your book about the year 2000 (Y2K), in which you were critical of people who were preparing for a meltdown on January 1, 2000—a potential tragedy that didn't happen (thank God). I've noticed over the intervening years, however, that you continue to regard with skepticism survivalists and others who are preparing for a sudden, catastrophic collapse of our country. Doesn't the Bible tell us to remain ready at all times?*

**ANSWER:** Great question! Yes, I was one of a small handful of voices that tried to quell the panic during the Y2K scare in the late 1990s. When Michael Hyatt (the Thomas Nelson executive who authored several Y2K-scare tomes) went on the radio talk show circuit to promote his books, the panic shifted into high gear—despite our pleas for calm and restraint. As Y2K approached, one distraught woman called us from Indiana and said her elderly mother was spending her entire life savings building an underground bunker in her backyard and stocking it with military-style MREs (meals ready to eat). This poor woman was at her wit's end!

When the Bible tells us to maintain a posture of readiness for the Lord's return, it's speaking more about spiritual readiness than about making physical preparations (e.g., underground bunkers, power generators, weaponry, and MREs). In 1974, Corrie Ten Boom, the well-known concentration camp survivor from Holland (who was a post-Tribber, by the way), wrote a letter entitled "How to Prepare for Tribulation." Her advice was (1) to feed on the Word of God, (2) to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, (3) to be filled with the Spirit of God, and (4) to be ready to help and encourage one another as believers. Note that this sweet woman said nothing about spending a fortune on survivalist preparations. Here's how she closed her letter:

No, you will not be strong in yourself when the tribulation comes. Rather, you will be strong in the power of Him who will not forsake you. For seventy-six years I have known the Lord Jesus and not once has He ever left me, or let me down. Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him, for I know that to all who overcome, He shall give the crown of life. Hallelujah!<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, there's nothing wrong with taking reasonable precautions just in case something unexpected happens—like the 1973 Arab oil embargo, for instance. Even if the Rapture doesn't happen for another 50 years, we all know that in the meantime, the United States' economy is susceptible to worldwide forces of supply and demand; and when supply chains are disrupted, like they were in 1973, it can affect all of us. When the Arabs slapped us with that embargo after the Arab-Israeli War, I'm old enough to remember the gasoline shortages when we had to wait in line for hours just to put ten gallons of gas in our car! There was also a run on the grocery stores and the shelves were quickly stripped bare.

Supply chains, then, can be fragile; and political/economic developments can be unpredictable. If you have concerns along these lines, a few common-sense steps may be in order:

1. Keep at least a month's supply of bottled water on hand at all times.
2. Never let the gas gauge on your car drop below half a tank.
3. If you rely heavily on electrical power, consider investing in a backup power generator (readily available from retailers like Home Depot or Lowe's). Honda is one of the better-known brands.
4. Devote a shelf in your pantry to canned goods (like soup) with a shelf life of 2-3 years. Be sure to rotate your stock to maintain freshness. If you're really serious about storing food, you can purchase a one-week food supply for one person (with a seven-year shelf life) from Walmart for under \$90 ([walmart.com](http://walmart.com)).<sup>2</sup>
5. A couple of lanterns and a can of kerosene could come in handy in the evenings if your local power grid goes down for any length of time.

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# Fruit from the Harvest

by Violette Berger



## A Daughter's Prayer

**Jenya Drazman, CJFM representative and Hebrew and Russian translator (Canada),** writes: "My father survived the Holocaust in Ukraine as a child and then for almost 50 years worked on the Pacific coast of Russia—as a sea captain for most of the time. I prayed for his salvation for 25 years. He joined us in Canada six-and-a-half years ago; and at the end of summer this year, he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He spent a month in the hospital during which he did a lot of soul-searching. One evening, after he came home from the hospital, he agreed to have us read the Gospels to him. I had talked to him about faith over the past 25 years, but he was never open to it.

"The next morning I went down to help him and wanted to talk to him about the Lord again. However, he told me right away that he had not slept the whole night and was feeling poorly. I thought, 'wrong timing again,' when all of a sudden my father said: 'I want to talk to you about last night. When you guys read, I understood everything. I don't really have any questions. Should I just keep listening without asking any questions?' I said: 'Would you like to pray?' And he said, 'Yes, but I don't know how.' I told him I'd help him and sat next to him. He prayed the sinner's prayer and broke down in tears, saying, 'Thank You for dying for my sins.' I cried too, but we got through the whole thing! My mom was there as well and also repeated a few words. The next thing he did after we prayed was to sleep a little—he was so relieved!

"He is a lot more peaceful now. This is a real miracle. I had told my husband out of despair one day that if God does not answer my 25-year-long prayer and lets my father die in his sins, my faith would be shaken. He did not let him die in sin! It's like I had a whole different father for a short time. A little over a month later, the Lord called this tough sea captain home. He answered my prayer for my father's salvation, but on the other hand—what it took to break him. . . ."

*The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit (Psalms 34:18).*

## Grocery Clerk Checks In

During the past year, **Peter Parkas, CJFM northeast representative (New Jersey),** has developed a friendship with "Brett" (not his real name), a grocery clerk at the supermarket where Peter shops. As he approaches the busy checkout counter, Peter always asks a quick question about some spiritual truth he has recently shared with Brett. On one particular day, the question dealt with Judgment Day. Peter asked, "Does it make sense to you that we will have to give an account on Judgment Day of how we lived our lives on earth?" Brett's answer was "No!" When Peter asked, "Why not?" Brett responded, "Because I'm

forgiven." Clearly, Brett thought that all he needed was to be forgiven. But Peter explained to him that "sin incurs a penalty, a price that has to be paid—and that restoration has to occur." And then Peter used this analogy, "If I punched you and broke your jaw, you may forgive me, but you still have a broken jaw."

Brett had a Catholic background and knew that Jesus died on the cross, but did not know Him as his personal Savior. As Peter proceeded to share the biblical path to salvation by explaining sin, the victory of Jesus's Crucifixion and Resurrection, the need to be born again, and the role of the Holy Spirit; Brett's heart softened. He said that he now understood. He agreed to pray with Peter, right there, to receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior—a day that was surely ordained for him, *since there was no one else waiting in the normally busy checkout line.* Please pray that Brett would be open to Peter disciplining him.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17).*

## La Familia

**Richard Hill, CJFM representative (Las Vegas) and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation,** was preparing to teach on "Israel in Prophecy" at a local church when he met Pedro, who was eager to help Rich and his son, Isaak, setup for the service. Since he was by himself, Pedro sat with the Hill family during the service and shared that he had recently been adopted by a Spanish speaking family, although he does not speak Spanish (but was quickly learning). The family attends the Spanish ministry at the church. Rich shared the Gospel in his message, and much to the Hill family's delight, Pedro responded to the salvation call at the end of Rich's message. Rich spoke with Pedro afterwards to confirm that he understood the significance of his salvation. Pedro now not only has a new physical family, but also a new spiritual family. Please pray for Pedro's growth in the Lord.

*So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:7).*

*T'vilah* is the Hebrew word for "water baptism." At *Beth Yeshua* recently, Rich was privileged to baptize three young men and three young women. He had the opportunity to explain the significance of baptism—that it does not determine salvation (as one young man had been falsely taught). Another young man actually prayed to receive Jesus during the pre-baptism class. Praise God that all of them had a desire to be baptized and follow the Lord the right way—through God's grace!

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).*

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## CJF Ministries®

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In Luke 12, Yeshua the Messiah told His disciples not to be anxious about the future because God would take care of them. Here's what He told them in this remarkable passage:

1. They shouldn't worry about the prospect of persecution at the hands of religious or political enemies (v. 11).
2. They shouldn't worry about their physical needs—like food or clothing (vv. 22, 29).
3. Pagans may have reason to worry and fret about the uncertainties of the future, but not believers (v. 30).
4. As followers of Messiah, we should live confidently and fearlessly because the Father is giving us the Kingdom (v. 32).

Remember: we may not know what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future! Yes, it's trite; but it's also true. There may be tough times ahead for many of us; but even when those times come, God is still on His throne! Even when we are called upon to "suffer for righteousness' sake," God promises to turn that persecution into a blessing (Matt. 5:10; 1 Pet. 3:14). Besides, the worst our enemies can do is kill us; and if they do, we'll be with the Lord in Heaven "which is far better" (Phil. 1:23)! 🙏

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus Returns by David Pawson (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2003), 199.

<sup>2</sup>The "Emergency Essentials One Week Food Supply" includes three entrees per day, side dishes, snacks, desserts, and drinks for seven days.

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