



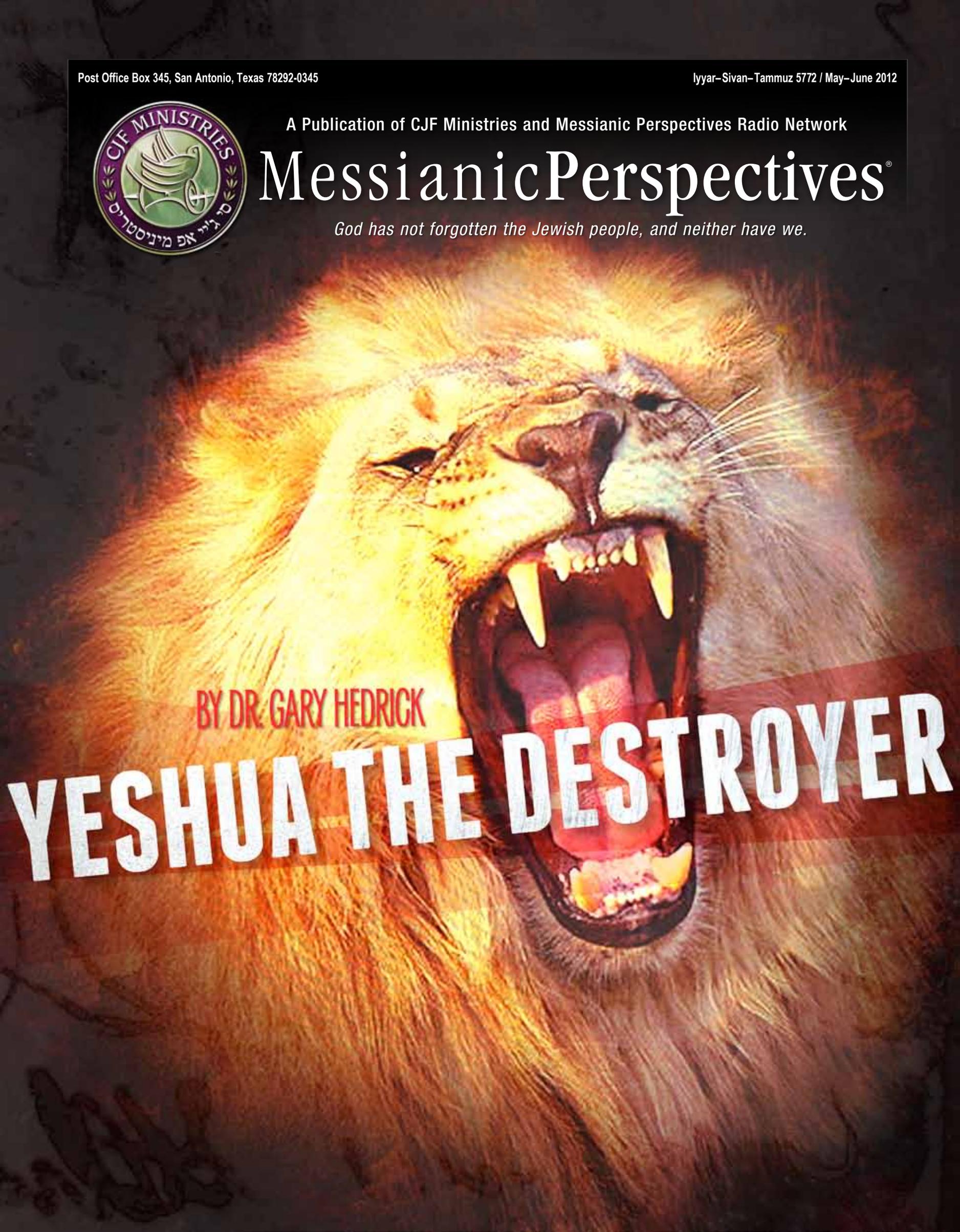
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Messianic Perspectives®

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

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK

YESHUA THE DESTROYER





Philippe Jacques De Louthembourg | Paule Patterson

Yeshua of Nazareth is, without a doubt, the best-known figure in history.

Even today, 2,000 years after He was here, multitudes know Him as the Savior, the Messiah, and the Son of God.

In the pages of the New Testament (NT), He is revealed as Teacher, Rabbi, Healer, and Creator of heaven and earth.

Children were attracted to Him (Matt. 19:13-14), which tells us something about His personality and disposition. After all, little ones don't generally gravitate to dour, stern-faced adults.

But did you know that this gentle, likable Carpenter from Nazareth is also a destroyer?

That's right—Yeshua is a *destroyer*.

The Bible tells us that there are certain things He has already or will someday destroy.

You might say, “Wait a minute—I thought the devil was the destroyer.” And you're right—he is. In fact, one of Satan's biblical names is Apollyon, which means “destroyer” (Rev. 9:11).

But the Lord Jesus (*HaAdon Yeshua*) is also a destroyer.

You might think that's out of character for Him, but it's really not.

The divine personality—like the God-head itself—is multifaceted. Yes, He's a loving and merciful God. But He's also a God of justice and holiness—and there are times when He moves swiftly and unrelentingly against His enemies.

Is this a sort of divine schizophrenia, as some skeptics claim?¹ Of course it's not. It simply means that God adapts to different circumstances and responds accordingly. Sometimes we're the same way. Under normal circumstances, we may be passive and gentle; but when we're threatened, we adapt.

It's like the young, single mom whose story appeared on a news program several years ago. She shot and killed two armed hoodlums who had broken into her house. Friends and family members said she was a mild-mannered and soft-spoken woman; they were amazed that she was capable of acting so quickly and aggressively when she and her babies were threatened. They said it was a side of her personality that they had never witnessed before.

The Lord, likewise, is normally kind and merciful. It's His character to be that way (Psalm 118:1-4). But when His loved ones are threatened, or His plan is otherwise placed in jeopardy, He can bring down judgment and destruction unlike anything you could ever imagine.

So, then, what does the Bible say about the Messiah's role as a destroyer? Who or what are the targets of His wrath?

Messianic Perspectives[®]

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Saint-Martin de Florac

1. The spiritual agents of evil.

Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:23-24).

First, the Lord will someday destroy the demonic agents of evil who work behind the scenes in this world. In this passage, Mark recounts an incident that took place in the synagogue at Capernaum. Our tour groups, over the years, have visited the site of the Capernaum synagogue many times.²

Two thousand years ago, whenever the Lord was in the area, that synagogue was where He attended Sabbath services. On this occasion, His teaching provoked an “unclean spirit,” or demon, to speak out against Him.³ Clearly, the forces of darkness saw Him as a threat—and they also knew He was the Messiah.

How ironic that even the demons recognized Jesus as the Messiah—but the Pharisees and other members of the Sanhedrin didn’t!

“Holy One” was a term King David applied to the Messiah when he spoke prophetically about the Resurrection: *“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption”* (Psalm 16:10).⁴

These evil spirits in Capernaum were afraid that the Lord might destroy them. They knew He was capable of doing just that!

However, this wasn’t the divinely ordained time to destroy the forces of evil—that’s yet in the future (2 Thess. 2:5-8, Rev. 20:7-10). So for now, the Lord commanded the evil spirit(s) to shut up and come out of the man—and it (or they) obeyed Him instantly (Mark 1:25-26).

This raises perplexing questions. Why didn’t God destroy evil long ago and be done with it? If He is really all-good and all-powerful, why does He allow pain and suffering to continue unabated? Philosophers and theologians have wrestled with these questions for millennia.⁵ Maybe the answer is as simple as this: God knows that evil—due to its very nature—must be allowed to run its course before it can be finally and completely eradicated.

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Whatever the answer is, we are confident of two important facts:

- a. God has a good reason for allowing evil to continue until now;⁶
- b. Someday, He will do away with evil and its effects once and for all.

In the meantime, we should remember that there are spiritual forces behind many events that happen in our world—and in our own lives. Sometimes we waste our time shadowboxing (1 Cor. 9:26); that is, we don't recognize our true enemy. We lash out at individuals and circumstances when the real culprit is lurking behind the scenes.

This doesn't mean that every time I stub my toe, it's a satanic conspiracy. But it does mean that unseen forces are active all around us, so it behooves us to counter this reality by putting on the armor of God (Eph. 6:13-17) and walking in His mighty power (v. 10).

Since the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden thousands of years ago, evil has brought untold misery and destruction on the human race. Pain, suffering, heartache, hopelessness, and grief have all become part of the human experience. None of us is exempt.

This sad state of affairs may be normative, at least for now, but it's definitely not normal. It's not what God intended. Sin has marred and scarred our world. Even the animal kingdom is now governed by brutal food chains in which only the fastest, strongest, and most cunning survive.

When Messiah returns, He will begin the long process of *tikkun olam*⁷—that is, restoring the world to its original, pristine condition. Paul said that this is when “creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).

2. Persistent, incorrigible rebels.

Nor let us tempt [Messiah], as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Cor. 10:9-11).

In this sobering chapter, the Apostle Paul presents a series of lessons from Israel's history. One of the warnings has to do with the danger of complaining and grumbling against God (v. 10).

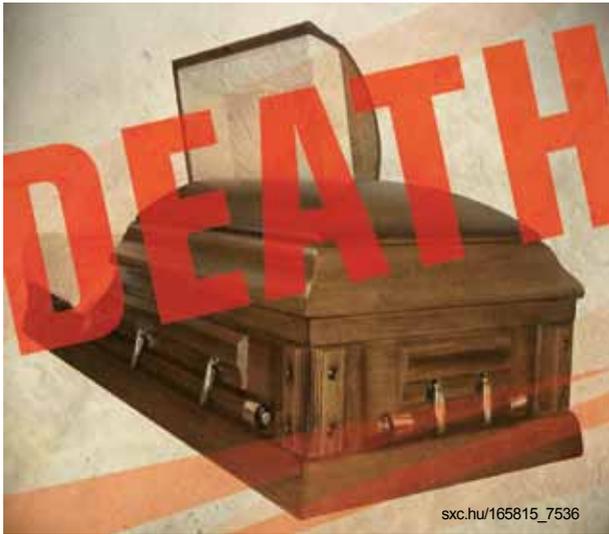
While in the wilderness, the Israelites wanted things done their way, and according to their own timetable, rather than God's. If water wasn't delivered on time, for instance, they quarreled with Moses (Ex. 17:1-3). On other occasions, they complained about the menu (16:3, 8).

Occasional moaning and groaning is understandable—especially under the harsh conditions the Israelites were experiencing in the wilderness. Even today, some believers live under a constant cloud of negativity, but they don't really mean anything by it. It may be due to childhood influences, personality types, or perhaps other factors. God made us and He knows all about us, so He understands our human weaknesses and frailties.

However, persistent and hardened rebellion is dangerous—and it can begin with grumbling and complaining. It posed a real threat to Israel's survival in the wilderness.⁸ That's why, in some instances, the Lord nipped it in the bud and destroyed the rebels.

Note that Paul says we should learn from their example (1 Cor. 10:11). Let's remember that the Lord knows what He is doing. There is no need to complain or second-guess Him. He will always be true to His Word: “let God be true but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4).





3. Death.

For as in Adam all die, even so in [Messiah] all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: [Messiah] the firstfruits, afterward those who are [Messiah's] at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:22-26).

People who have a Darwinian worldview say that death is a natural part of the never-ending “circle of life.”⁹

The Bible, on the other hand, views death as an anomaly. It wasn't part of the original blueprint. It came later. It resulted from sin, and sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Rom. 5:12-14).¹⁰

Every time I attend a funeral, I look down into the casket and think, “Something is very wrong here.” When I see brokenhearted loved ones—husbands, wives, or children—sobbing over their loss, I'm reminded very pointedly that this is not what God wanted.

Paul reminds us that death is the last enemy of the human race—and someday, death itself will be destroyed.

The Book of Revelation looks forward to a future era when “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

This future transformation will have profound repercussions for the entire created order, including the animal kingdom. For instance, some carnivores simply do not have the ability to digest vegetation or other cellulose-based material as Isaiah describes (65:25). However, just because we don't understand something, doesn't make it any less inevitable. We know that the changes in the created order will be sweeping and transformative. That's why God says He will make “all things new” (Rev. 21:5)!

WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT GRUMBLING?

During Israel's wilderness wanderings, there were times when God punished grumbling and complaining with death (e.g., Num. 16).

Were these instances of divine overkill? Did the Lord overreact? Or, did He recognize grumbling and insolence for what they really are—embryonic forms of rebellion and insubordination?

Grumbling demonstrates a depleted faith.

Some of the grumbling Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians took place in the wilderness even before the Israelites had reached Mount Sinai (e.g., Ex. 17). The memory of God's miracles in Egypt was still fresh in their minds. They had seen Him bring down 10 devastating, supernatural plagues on the Egyptians—including the house of Pharaoh. Yet here they were, not long afterward, complaining about their predicament in the Sinai Desert.

Wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that the God who parted the Red Sea, enabling them to scamper across dry ground to safety with their families, could handle pretty much any other obstacles they might encounter? They had trusted Him then—so why not now?

If their faith was already wavering after the passage of only a few weeks, how could they ever hope to pass that faith down to future generations (Ex. 12:24-27)?

It reflects a dormant vision.

God promised to lead them into “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Deut. 27:3), but the grumbling Israelites had lost sight of that goal. As they wandered through the wilderness, the vision waned. At Kadesh Barnea, the “giant” inhabitants of Canaan obscured it further still (Num. 13:33).

With Caleb and Joshua, however, the vision remained fresh (Num. 14). They believed God could and would give them the Land. But sadly, they were the only ones. Everyone else in that generation ended up perishing in the wilderness (Num. 26:65).

It exposes a deficient lordship.

What it really boils down to is this: Who is in charge—the Lord or me? Do I really trust Him?

The Lord welcomes honest and contemplative questions. After all, isn't He the One who said, “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18)?

However, when a spirit of grumbling and discontent gains a toehold in our lives, it can paralyze us spiritually. For Israel in the wilderness, such a condition could have proven disastrous.

The term “Lord” implies His sovereignty in our lives. Either He is our Lord or He isn't. We have to decide which it will be.

4. The earthly/physical agents of evil.¹¹

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. 2:8).

We began this study by saying that the Lord will someday destroy the spiritual forces of evil. There are invisible protagonists behind many events in our world (2 Kings 6:15-17, Eph. 6:12).¹²

However, this doesn't let the physical dupes of these spiritual forces off the hook. Judas, for example, was held responsible for his betrayal of the Lord, and suffered the consequences (Matt. 27:3-5), even though the devil had influenced him to do it (Luke 22:3). Also, the serpent in the Garden of Eden came under a curse because of its role in the Fall (Gen. 3:14).

Law and orderliness hold the universe together. God has ordained physical laws and spiritual laws—and when ever those laws are violated, things begin falling apart. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 500 BC) coined the term *logos* to express what he called the “message” of the universe.¹³ Later, it came to encompass the principles of divine reason, cohesion, unity, and logic. John says the Messiah is the ultimate *Logos* who holds everything together (John 1:1; cp. Col. 1:16-17).

In the Torah, God used Moses to deliver His Law to the nation Israel. The principles of that Law later became the legal and moral underpinnings of Western civilization. We're now witnessing a systematic deconstruction of Judeo-Christian civilization by forces in our world that despise that Law.

In 2 Thessalonians, Paul refers to the Antichrist as “the lawless one.” If the Messiah is the great *Logos*, the One who holds the universe together, it makes perfect sense that His end-time nemesis will be the anti-*logos*. He wants to turn the world upside-down so that right becomes wrong and nothing makes sense anymore.

Near the end of this age, certain specific (and prophesied) events will be set in motion by the diabolical forces of darkness. Their human puppets will include (among others) two people known in Scripture as the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Once their ignominious careers have run their course, these minions of evil will be destroyed (Rev. 20:10).¹⁴

5. The devil and his works.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14-15).

... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

There's an unmistakable irony here. God used death (that is, the sacrificial death of the Messiah) to destroy the works of the one who caused death to enter our world in the first place!

How amazing—and how wonderful that is!

The liberating mission of the Messiah was foretold in the Jewish Scriptures: “*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound*” (Isa. 61:1).

Only someone who has experienced a form of bondage can fully appreciate Isaiah's words. Bondage, fear, despair, hopelessness are all the devil's works. The Lord wants us to be free. He died to make that freedom a reality.

Someday, the Lord will usher in a new world in which there will be no more death (Rev. 21:4). The author of death will himself die—and it will be an eternal, unending death (20:10).



6. Lawbreakers.

There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? (James 4:12).

We saw earlier that Paul describes the coming Antichrist as the “lawless one” (2 Thess. 2:8).

God’s Law (*Torah*) provides the standard of right and wrong that holds society together. As we’ve already noted, it’s the foundation of our civilization. Today, it’s our light and compass in a world that has lost its way.

The NT says the unsaved dead will be resurrected at the end of time to stand before God, and He will judge them *according to their works* (Rev. 20:12). The objective standard against which their deeds will be measured is God’s Law.

This is why government and law enforcement officials are viewed in Scripture as agents of God (Rom. 13:1-7). Without them, civilization would quickly unravel due to the evil bent and fallenness of human nature.

Satan himself is the ultimate anarchist. He despises God’s Law. But he and his followers will be judged according to that same Law and, finally, cast into the Lake of Fire.¹⁵

7. Those who would destroy Israel.

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18).



In John’s description of the end of this age, God responds to His enemies in kind. The nations will heap their anger and hate on the saints and prophets,

and on the nation Israel; finally, when God has had enough, He returns it to them. He pours out His own wrath on a wicked and rebellious world system.

Note that John says God will “destroy those who destroy the earth” (v. 18). This may be a specific reference to attempts by nations during the Tribulation to destroy the Land of Israel.¹⁶

Even if “earth” here means the whole world, the meaning doesn’t change. After all, Israel (in the ancient, biblical worldview) is the center of the earth. The Prophet Ezekiel said that the armies of the world would someday descend on the Land of Israel. He predicted that they would come “against a people [i.e., Israel] gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in **the midst of the land** [lit., ‘the navel of the earth’]” (Ezek. 38:12).

Therefore, any international effort to destroy the earth—whether or not the nations themselves actually see it that way—would predictably be centered in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean region. From the earliest stages of world history, this area has been the epicenter of worldwide geopolitical activity. It’s where continents converge and trade routes have intersected.

Five Future Judgments

1. **The Judgment Seat of Messiah** (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10): For believers in Heaven during the Tribulation, it determines rewards and position in the coming Kingdom.
2. **The Judgment of OT and Tribulation Saints** (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:3-5): For believers at the close of the Tribulation, it determines rewards and position in the Kingdom.
3. **The Judgment of the Nations** (Matt. 25:31-46): A specialized judgment for the nations that survive the Tribulation (sometimes called the Sheep and Goat Judgment). The criterion is a nation’s relationship to God as reflected in its citizens’ treatment of persecuted Israel during the Tribulation. It determines which nations are allowed to enter into the Millennium.
4. **The Final Judgment of Satan and the Fallen Angels** (1 Cor. 15:24-26; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6-7; Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10): For fallen angelic powers at the end of the Millennium, it seals their fate once and for all.
5. **The Great White Throne Judgment** (Rev. 20:11-15): For all unbelievers, both the living and the resurrected dead, at the end of the Millennium. It is based on works and determines the level of punishment in the Lake of Fire.

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 you’re 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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The Prophet Zechariah confirms that the world's attention will be focused on Jerusalem in the last days: "And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it" (Zech. 12:3).

We've seen before that this phrase "in that day" (Heb., *B'yom haHu*) is often a clue that the writer is leap-frogging beyond the immediate historical context into a description of future Messianic times.¹⁷

Just as the nations of the world are about to deliver the knockout punch at Armageddon, the Lord will return and strike down the nations (Rev. 19:15).

Not long afterward, at the Judgment of the Nations, the Messiah will hold them accountable for their treatment of Israel and the Jewish people during

the Tribulation Period (Matt. 25:31-46). The nations who persecuted Israel will not be allowed to enter the Millennial Kingdom (v. 46).

Those who sought Israel's destruction will themselves be destroyed.

We don't hear much preaching or teaching about this aspect of the divine nature these days, do we? People who have "itching ears"¹⁸ would much rather hear about more pleasing themes—like the Christmas story, for instance, about the Baby who was born in the manger 2,000 years ago. It's a sweet and tender story with almost universal appeal.

But let's not forget that the next time we see Him, it will be under far different circumstances. There will be no Baby in a manger—and no Crucifixion. This time, no one will beat Him, spit on Him, or pluck out His beard. He will return as the King of kings and Lord of lords, and He will

unleash unprecedented destruction and devastation on God's enemies (Rev. 19:11-21).¹⁹

Yes, my friend, Yeshua the Destroyer is coming!

The nations of the world would do well to heed the warning of the psalmist: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).



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ENDNOTES

¹Some skeptics have suggested that the OT and NT characterizations of God are contradictory. The OT, they say, presents Him as mean and vengeful. The skeptic Robert G. Ingersoll famously remarked, "The Old Testament filled this world with tyranny and injustice" (*The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll, Volume 2: Lectures*, by Robert G. Ingersoll [New York: Cosimo Publications, 1900], 334). The NT, on the other hand (according to these critics), portrays God in kinder, gentler terms. However, we believe the OT and NT characterizations of God are complementary rather than contradictory.

²The original, first-century synagogue is gone, of course, but remnants of the one that replaced it (around the fourth century AD) still stand. Archaeologists have excavated portions of the first-century foundation directly beneath the present structure.

³Many societies, both ancient and modern, have recognized the existence of unseen, spiritual forces and their influence on human behavior. In classical Greek philosophy, *daimons/daemons* could be forces for either good or evil. The Apostle Paul describes an invisible hierarchy of evil spirits who seek—very often, with success—to influence human actions in our world (Eph. 6:12; see Endnote #12). In our modern technological age, appropriately enough, the computer industry has adopted the term "daemon" to designate a computer program that runs in the background (whether the user knows it or not) and prompts certain system processes.

⁴The close relationship between King David of Israel and the Messiah (his future Descendant) is seen here. Psalm 16 finds an immediate fulfillment in David himself, but it also provides prophetic glimpses of the coming Holy One—the Messiah. In the NT, both Peter and Paul recognized v. 10 as a prophecy of the Resurrection (Acts 2:25-28, 13:35).

⁵Theodicy is the term that describes the tension between God's nature and the existence of evil. If God is all-good, He presumably has the *desire* to do away with evil. And if He is all-powerful, He surely has the *ability* to do away with it. So then, why do evil and suffering exist? Does it mean that God is all-good but not all-powerful? Or is He all-powerful but not all-good? This is the dilemma theologians have grappled with for thousands of years.

⁶See "The Problem of Evil: C.S. Lewis Speaks to Life's Most Difficult Questions" by Art Lindsley in *Knowing & Doing: A Teaching Quarterly for Discipleship of Heart and Mind* (Springfield, VA: C.S. Lewis Institute, 2003), 2-3.

⁷*Tikkun olam* means "repairing (the) world" in Hebrew. The rabbis have long recognized that our world is tragically broken and desperately in need of fixing. In the NT, Paul, Peter, and John all dealt with the related themes of world-redemption and renewal (Rom. 8:18-25, 2 Peter 3:13, Rev. 21:1).

⁸The real threat went beyond the immediate danger of Israel's survival in a rugged Middle Eastern wilderness. What was at stake over the long term was the line through which the Messiah would be born. If Israel perished in the desert, the Messianic promise would die with her—and the entire human race would be lost forever.

⁹In the Disney film *The Lion King*, Simba asks his father why lions eat the antelope. Mufasa responds, "When we die, our bodies become the grass, and the antelope eat the grass. And so we are all connected in the great Circle of Life." It's a very Darwin-esque way of trying to normalize the tragic fact of death.

¹⁰Adam and Eve had been warned ahead of time that this would happen (Gen. 2:16-17). The Hebrew text literally reads, "Dying you shall die" (*mot tamut*). Those foreboding words foreshadowed the Adamic curse and its brutal cycle of life and death in which the strong survive at the expense of the weak.

¹¹Contrast with Point #1.

¹²In his classic work *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), C.S. Lewis imagines how unseen demonic forces might conspire and connive in their attempts to influence human behavior. See Endnote #3.

¹³Hussey, E., "Epistemology and Meaning in Heraclitus," in *Language and Logos*, edited by M. Schofield and M. Nussbaum (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 33-59.

¹⁴Note that the biblical idea of "destruction" doesn't always imply cessation of existence. Both the Hebrew and Greek words have a range of meaning that includes "blot out," "kill," "cut off," "erase (any memory of)," "distort," "to cause to be lost," "wreck," or "ruin," among others (for a summary of the Greek terms, see *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Kittel and Friedrich [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 394). In the Hebrew NT, the word for "destroy" in Revelation 11:18 is *lehashcheet*, which means "to mar" or "distort."

¹⁵See also Point #4.

¹⁶In the Hebrew NT at the end of Revelation 11:18, "the earth" is *ha-arets*. It's a term that can apply to land in general (e.g., Genesis 1:1) or to particular countries (like "the land of Egypt," *ke-arets mitzraim*, in Genesis 13:10). When *ha-arets* stands alone in the Torah, however, it very often (but not always) refers to Israel (e.g., Gen. 12:10, 13:15). In the Minor Prophets Hosea and Joel, *ha-arets* repeatedly means the Land of Israel (e.g., Hosea 4:1, 3). In the Hebrew text of Revelation, the translation should be determined (within the normal range of meaning) by the context of the passage. Since the focus in Chapter 11 appears to be on events that transpire in the Land of Israel, Verse 18 may well be a statement about the nations' attempts to destroy Israel ("the Land") during the ramp-up to the Second Coming. If that's the case, mentions of "the earth" in vv. 6 and 10 may also be references to "the Land" of Israel.

¹⁷"Zechariah next encouraged God's covenant people by contrasting initial judgment on them with their ultimate deliverance, restoration, and blessing. 'In [or "on"] that day' appears sixteen times in the second oracle, placing it, for the most part, in the eschaton. The oracle basically revolves around two scenes: the final siege of Jerusalem and the Messiah's return to defeat Israel's enemies and to establish his kingdom" (Frank E. Gaebelin, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Leon J. Wood et al., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 7: Daniel and the Minor Prophets* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986], 680-81.)

¹⁸See 2 Timothy 4:3.

¹⁹Sometimes people ask why the Lord will ultimately destroy His enemies since He Himself instructed His followers to forgive their enemies and to do good to them (Matt. 5:44). However, selfish squabbling between angry and embittered people is a far different matter from an encounter with pure, essential evil. Real evil is like a cancer. You cannot accommodate it or negotiate with it because it will never change. It can only be destroyed.

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Buckeye	KXEG	1280	10:15 a.m.	Minneapolis	KKMS	980	1:45 p.m.				4:15 p.m.
Bullhead City	KKVV	1060	10:00 a.m.	Northfield	KKMS	980	1:45 p.m.	Washington	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.
Goodyear	KXEG	1280	10:15 a.m.	Prior Lake	KKMS	980	1:45 p.m.				4:15 p.m.
Phoenix	KXEG	1280	10:15 a.m.	MISSOURI				Westerville	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.
ARKANSAS				Carthage	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	OKLAHOMA			
Bella Vista	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Chillicothe	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	Grove	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.
Bentonville	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Joplin	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Miami	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.
Forrest City	KJIW-FM	94.5	6:00 p.m.	Kansas City	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	Vinita	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.
Helena	KJIW-FM	94.5	6:00 p.m.	Monett	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	PENNSYLVANIA			
Marianna	KJIW-FM	94.5	6:00 p.m.	Neosho	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Philadelphia	WCHR	920	6:30 a.m.
West Memphis	KJIW-FM	94.5	6:00 p.m.	Sedalia	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.				12:15 p.m.
CALIFORNIA				Seneca	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.				9:45 p.m.
Bakersfield	KERI	1410	8:00 p.m.	NEBRASKA				Philadelphia	WVCH	740	10:45 a.m.
Delano	KRDU	1130	11:00 a.m.	Columbus	KLNG	1560	3:30 p.m.	Pottstown	WVCH	740	10:45 a.m.
Fresno	KERI	1410	8:00 p.m.	Falls City	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	Warminster	WCHR	920	6:30 a.m.
Fresno	KRDU	1130	11:00 a.m.	Grand Island	KLNG	1560	3:30 p.m.				12:15 p.m.
Hanford	KRDU	1130	11:00 a.m.	Omaha	KLNG	1560	3:30 p.m.				9:45 p.m.
Los Angeles	KERI	1410	8:00 p.m.	NEVADA				SOUTH CAROLINA			
Merced	KRDU	1130	11:00 a.m.	Las Vegas	KKVV	1060	10:00 a.m.	Batesburg	WFAM	1050	7:30 p.m.
Paso Robles	KERI	1410	8:00 p.m.	Pahrump	KKVV	1060	10:00 a.m.	TENNESSEE			
Porterville	KRDU	1130	11:00 a.m.	NEW JERSEY				Clinton	WITA	1490	10:45 a.m.
Santa Barbara	KERI	1410	8:00 p.m.	Browns Mills	WCHR	920	6:30 a.m.	Jefferson City	WITA	1490	10:45 a.m.
Visalia	KRDU	1130	11:00 a.m.				12:15 p.m.	Knoxville	WITA	1490	10:45 a.m.
COLORADO				Cape May	WJPH-FM	89.9	8:30 a.m.	Maryville	WITA	1490	10:45 a.m.
Boulder	KRKS	990	10:30 a.m.				9:45 p.m.	Maynardville	WITA	1490	10:45 a.m.
Colorado Springs	KRKS	990	10:30 a.m.	Cape May Ct.house	WJPG-FM	88.1	8:30 a.m.	Memphis	KJIW-FM	94.5	6:00 p.m.
Denver	KRKS	990	10:30 a.m.				4:00 p.m.	Oak Ridge	WITA	1490	10:45 a.m.
Ft. Collins	KRKS	990	10:30 a.m.	Cherry Hill	WCHR	920	6:30 a.m.	TEXAS			
DELAWARE							12:15 p.m.	Austin	KSLR	630	1:00 p.m.
Middletown	WVCH	740	10:45 a.m.	North Wildwood	WJPG-FM	88.1	8:30 a.m.	Austin	KBBW	1010	11:00 a.m.
Wilmington	WVCH	740	10:45 a.m.				4:00 p.m.	Bay City	KCTA	1030	10:30 a.m.
FLORIDA				Ocean City	WJPH-FM	89.9	8:30 a.m.	Beeville	KCTA	1030	10:30 a.m.
St. Petersburg	WTIS	1110	9:30 a.m.				4:00 p.m.	Brownsville	KCTA	1030	10:30 a.m.
Sarasota	WTIS	1110	9:30 a.m.	Port Norris	WJPG-FM	88.1	8:30 a.m.	Bryan / College Station	KBBW	1010	11:00 a.m.
Tampa	WTIS	1110	9:30 a.m.				4:00 p.m.	Corpus Christi	KCTA	1030	10:30 a.m.
Winter Haven	WTIS	1110	9:30 a.m.	Princeton	WCHR	920	6:30 a.m.	Corsicana	KKGM	1630	9:45 a.m.
GEORGIA							12:15 p.m.	Dallas	KKGM	1630	9:45 a.m.
Atlanta	WNIV	970	7:45 p.m.	Trenton	WCHR	920	6:30 a.m.	Denton	KKGM	1630	9:45 a.m.
Augusta	WFAM	1050	7:30 p.m.				9:45 p.m.	Gonzales	KSLR	630	1:00 p.m.
Cartersville	WNIV	970	7:45 p.m.	Trenton	WVCH	740	10:45 a.m.	Harlingen	KCTA	1030	10:30 a.m.
Duluth	WLTA	1400	7:45 p.m.	Vineland	WVCH	740	10:45 a.m.	Kerrville	KSLR	630	1:00 p.m.
Roswell	WLTA	1400	7:45 p.m.	Woodbine	WJPH-FM	89.9	8:30 a.m.	Killeen	KBBW	1010	11:00 a.m.
Sandy Springs	WLTA	1400	7:45 p.m.	NEW MEXICO				Mineral Wells	KKGM	1630	9:45 a.m.
INDIANA				Albuquerque	KXKS	1190	8:00 p.m.	Pearsall	KSLR	630	1:00 p.m.
Madison	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.	Santa Fe	KXKS	1190	8:00 p.m.	San Antonio	KSLR	630	1:00 p.m.
Oldenburg	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.	NEW YORK				Sherman	KKGM	1630	9:45 a.m.
Versailles	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.	Albany	WHAZ	1330	6:15 a.m.	Temple	KBBW	1010	11:00 a.m.
IOWA				Batavia	WDCX-AM	990	10:45 a.m.	Victoria	KCTA	1030	10:30 a.m.
Sioux City	KLNG	1560	3:30 p.m.	Buffalo	WDCX-FM	99.5	8:45 p.m.	Waco	KBBW	1010	11:00 a.m.
KANSAS				Dansville	WDCX-FM	99.5	8:45 p.m.	VERMONT			
Baxter Springs	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Glens Falls	WDCX-FM	99.5	8:45 p.m.	Bennington	WMNV-FM	104.1	6:15 a.m.
Columbus	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Jamestown	WBAR-FM	94.7	6:15 a.m.	Manchester	WMNV-FM	104.1	6:15 a.m.
Emporia	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	Niagara Falls	WDCX-FM	99.5	8:45 p.m.	WASHINGTON			
Kansas City	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	Rochester	WDCX-FM	99.5	8:45 p.m.	Bellingham	KARI	550	9:15 a.m.
Manhattan	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	Schenectady	WDCX-AM	990	10:45 a.m.	Blaine	KARI	550	9:15 a.m.
Parsons	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	Troy	WMYY-FM	97.3	6:15 a.m.	Everett	KARI	550	9:15 a.m.
Pittsburg	KNEO-FM	91.7	10:30 a.m.	West Syracuse	WHAZ	1330	6:15 a.m.	Mt. Vernon	KARI	550	9:15 a.m.
Topeka	KCNW	1380	9:30 a.m.	OHIO				WISCONSIN			
KENTUCKY				Cincinnati	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.	Hudson	KKMS	980	1:45 p.m.
Falmouth	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.	Columbus	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.	CANADA			
Frankfort	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.	Delaware	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.	Brantford	CFWC-FM	93.9	10:30 a.m.
Petersburg	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.				4:15 p.m.	Toronto	WDCX-FM	99.5	8:45 p.m.
LOUISIANA				Hamilton	WIOK-FM	107.5	11:15 a.m.				1:30 p.m.
Baton Rouge	WVOG	600	8:30 a.m.	Lancaster	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.	Vancouver	KARI	550	9:15 a.m.
Lafayette	WVOG	600	8:30 a.m.				4:15 p.m.	INTERNET WEBCASTS			
New Orleans	WVOG	600	8:30 a.m.	London	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.	You can hear "Messianic Perspectives" over the Internet by going to cjfm.org . You can also listen to our programs with your iPod (or other mp3 player) by subscribing to our podcasts or vodcasts (enhanced podcasts) using iTunes or other podcast client software. E-mail us at mpvideo@cjfm.org for further assistance.			
MISSISSIPPI				Marysville	WHKC	91.5	9:30 a.m.				
Biloxi	WVOG	600	8:30 a.m.				4:15 p.m.				
Clarksdale	KJIW-FM	94.5	6:00 p.m.				9:30 a.m.				
Jackson	WVOG	600	8:30 a.m.				4:15 p.m.				



by Violette Berger

Fruit from the Harvest



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A Ripened Heart

Peter Parkas, CJFM Northeast representative (New Jersey), writes about his conversation with “Mindy.” She attended his Bible study for the first time and told Peter of her lengthy struggle with drug addiction. It was little coincidence that Mindy would share this with Peter since drug addiction is also a significant component in Peter’s testimony. Mindy came to the Bible study because she wanted to learn more about the Bible. That night, Peter focused his teaching on the seven-year tribulation period from Matthew 24 and the Book of Daniel.

He was moved by Mindy’s reaction: “Mindy marveled at the end-time prophecies of upheaval and tumult, and the international regathering of the Jewish people back into the Land of Israel. At this point, I explained the Gospel to Mindy. She was literally fruit for the Lord’s harvest just waiting to be picked. Upon hearing the saving message of Yeshua, Mindy prayed to receive the Messiah into her life. We never know whose heart God has ripened and is ready to receive salvation until we ask.”

The Great Arranger

CJFM Southeast representative Michelle Beadle (New Orleans) had been working for months to get her first monthly women’s fellowship, *Tikvah Yisrael* (Hope of Israel), off the ground—then God brought everything together. First, He provided a meeting place. Lakeview Christian Center’s previous, smaller facility had been destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. The congregation wanted to share their beautiful, new building, and it was decided that *Tikvah Yisrael* fit their criteria. The new facility meets *Tikvah Yisrael*’s needs perfectly—they may even use their keyboard, sound system, projector, and screen at no extra cost. God then provided women to volunteer for childcare, refreshments, and the registration/book table; a music team was also formed by gifted women who sing, play flute, violin, and piano.

Michelle shares the miraculous way in which God provided two volunteers. The first woman showed up at Michelle’s garage sale last summer and ended up sitting and talking with Michelle because she wanted to learn about Jewish people. This woman had even visited a local synagogue to inquire if anyone would be willing to help her understand Jewish culture and traditions. After receiving a cool reception, she prayed that God would lead her to someone who could help. Michelle’s ministry was an answer to her prayers. She is now in charge of the refreshments for *Tikvah Yisrael*.

The second volunteer had just learned last summer that one of her parents was from a Jewish family. This created in her

a desire to get involved with a Jewish ministry, a desire she shared with a co-worker. Her co-worker just happened to be a dear friend of Michelle’s. The friend emailed Michelle, and now this woman is the leader of *Tikvah Yisrael*’s music group.

After the arrangements had been made, the various media announcements for *Tikvah Yisrael*’s first meeting were all that remained. What a blessing it was when 35 women—Jewish and Gentile believers, and women who are not yet believers—attended the first meeting. Michelle writes, “It’s wonderful to see how God is the Great Arranger!”

Schmoozing About Jesus

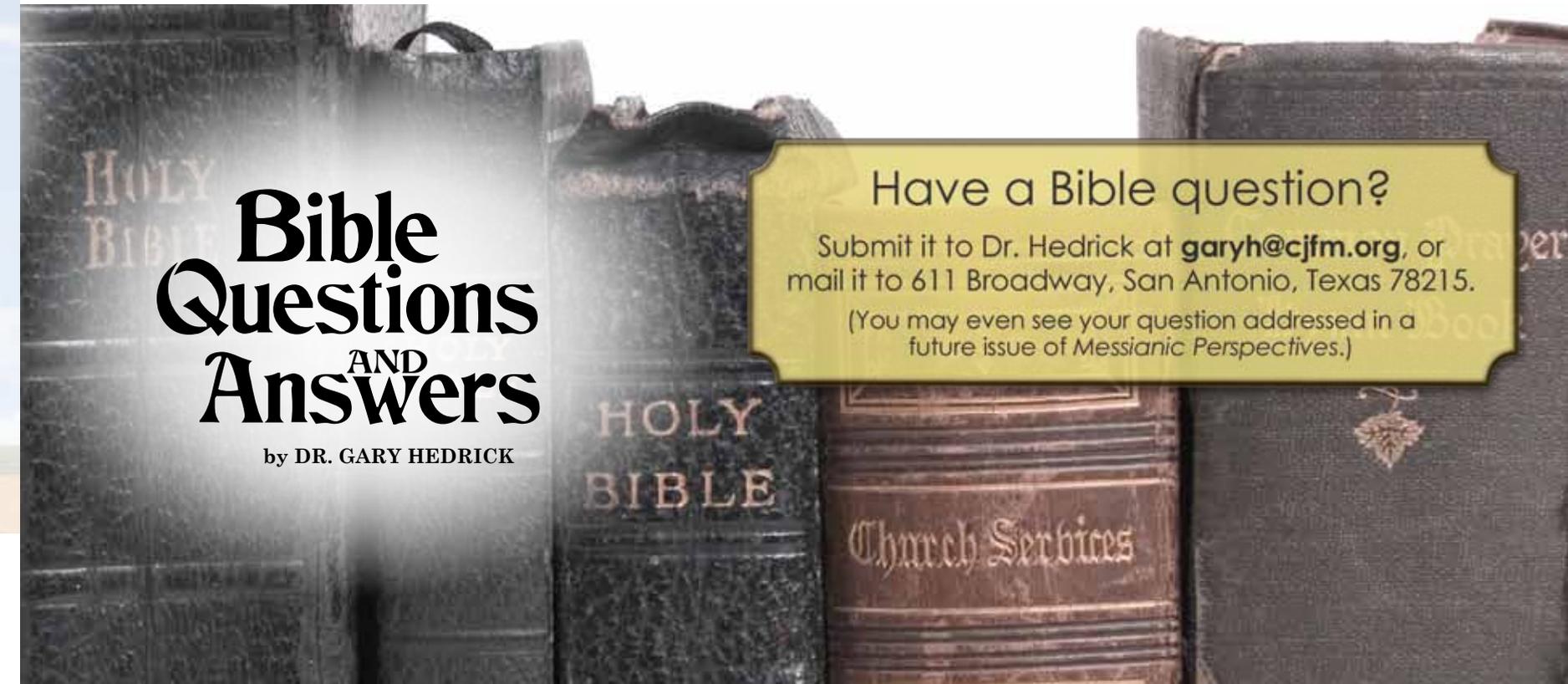
At the end of a great day evangelizing, **Richard Hill, CJFM representative and pastor of Beth Yeshua (Las Vegas)**, went to eat with his volunteer group. Rich was wearing his “Jesus Loves You” Star of David sweatshirt, which attracted the attention of an elderly couple. The woman was smiling at him, so Rich went over to say hello and give her a tract.

Following their meal, the couple approached Rich’s table, sat down, and spent the afternoon *schmoozing* (socializing/talking) about Jesus. “Joseph” is a 90-year-old Sephardic Jewish man, and “Mara” is a 65-year-old Israeli Jewish woman. Joseph had many questions about Scripture and was in awe of the answers, often responding with laughter, “That’s impossible!” After presenting the Gospel message to him, Joseph was asked if he wanted to pray to receive Jesus as his Messiah. He joyfully responded, “Yes!” He prayed with the group right at their table. Rich writes, “The extra good news is that Mara was already a believer in Jesus. Now they can live a life of faith together!”

The Way, the Truth and the Life

Pastor Yossi, CJFM worker in Israel and pastor of Kehilat Haderech (The Way Congregation), is excited to update us concerning recent events. A family of new immigrants who attended services became believers in Yeshua and joined the congregation. Pastor Yossi extends thanks to an evangelistic Messianic website that led a young man from a religious Jewish background to their Shabbat services and mid-week Bible studies. He had a desire to learn more about the Gospel and recently prayed “officially” to receive the Lord into his heart.

Through that same website, a couple who were led to attend the congregation also prayed to receive the Lord and were recently baptized. Pastor Yossi writes, “It’s a wonder to watch God work in the lives of these new believers who have found the way, the truth, and the life in Yeshua” (John 14:6).



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 even see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.)

QUESTION: *A large crucifix is prominently displayed at the front of our church. I'm not sure why, but after all these years, it's really starting to bug me. I googled it and found where John Calvin considered the crucifix, and even the cross itself, idolatrous. But Martin Luther evidently thought they were fine. So I don't know what to think.*

ANSWER: It's true that many believers consider the crucifix an idol because (1) it purports to be a representation of Deity (i.e., Jesus hanging on the Cross) and (2) it is the focus of worship, devotion, or veneration in certain religious traditions.

In the Torah, God told His people, “*You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth*” (Ex. 20:4). This prohibition, of course,

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth”

(Ex. 20:4)

doesn't apply to routine works of art, but rather to creating any image or likeness that might attract worship (cp. v. 5; also, Lev. 26:1, Deut. 5:8-9).

Defenders of crucifixes (and other religious objects that are used as aids to worship) point out that people don't really worship the objects or images themselves. They say they only worship what the object or image represents. However, the Torah makes no

such distinction. It doesn't say that images are okay as long as they only *represent* God. When the Lord (through Moses) uses terms like “bow down” and “serve,” He's clearly referring to acts or services of worship. And He says those acts or services of worship should not involve any man-made representation of God (or a god). In fact, we shouldn't even *make* such a likeness in the first place.

We worship only the Reality itself—the LORD God of heaven and earth—and nothing less. This is what the Bible says.

The *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995) acknowledges that “the portrayal of Christ on the cross was absent in the first centuries of Christian art. During the time of Constantine (early fourth century), the cross was presented as a sign of Christ's triumph over death at Easter” (p. 383). Crucifixes (that is, an image of a cross with the Son of God hanging on it) didn't become common until Medieval times (*ibid*).

The early, first-century Church was distinctively Jewish—and those Messianic believers knew better than to violate the second commandment. Later, however, as non-Jewish influences crept into the institutional Church, those OT prohibitions weren't taken so seriously anymore. By the time of Emperor Constantine, the transformation from a Jewish to a non-Jewish church was largely complete.

For instance, while the early Church had always celebrated the Resurrection of Messiah during Passover (a practice known in Church history as *Quartodecimenism*), the Council of Nicea (convened by Constantine) later declared: “If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon shall celebrate the holy day of Easter before the vernal equinox with the Jews, let him be deposed” (“Apostolic Canon 7” in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], p. 594).

This anti-Jewish polemic in the third- and fourth-century religious world spilled over into other areas, as well—including the use of icons and images in worship. That's why, in our teaching here at CJF Ministries, we make every effort to view the Scriptures through a first-century, Messianic (Jewish-Christian) grid. We call it our “Messianic perspective.” It helps us achieve and maintain clarity on important issues like this one. 

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by Dr. Gary Hedrick
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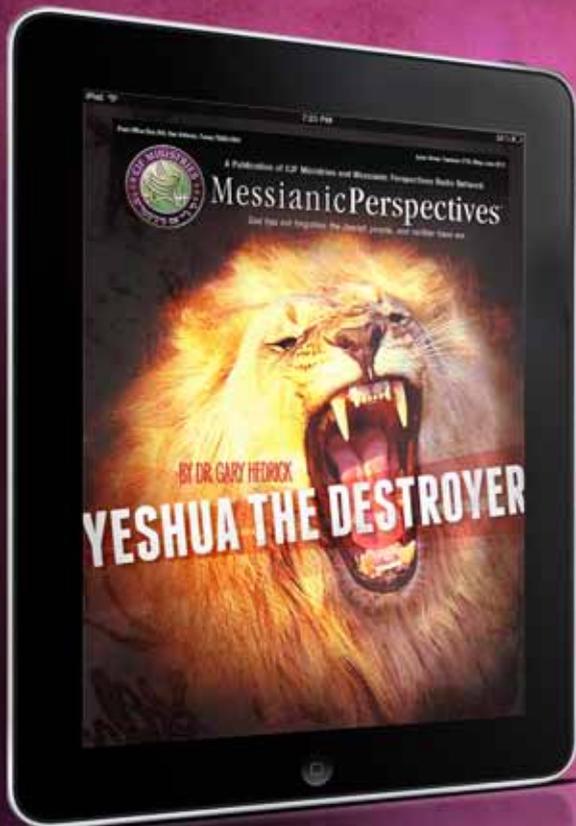
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