



A Publication of CJF Ministries® and Messianic Perspectives® Radio Network

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

Post Office Box 345, San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345

Elul—Tishri—Cheshvan 5767-5768 / September-October 2007

My Vendetta with Tim LaHaye

A Review of Hank Hanegraaff's Latest Book

By Gary Hedrick and Tommy Ice

The title of “Bible Answer Man” Hank Hanegraaff’s new book is *The Apocalypse Code: Find Out What the Bible Really Says About the End Times and Why It Matters Today* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

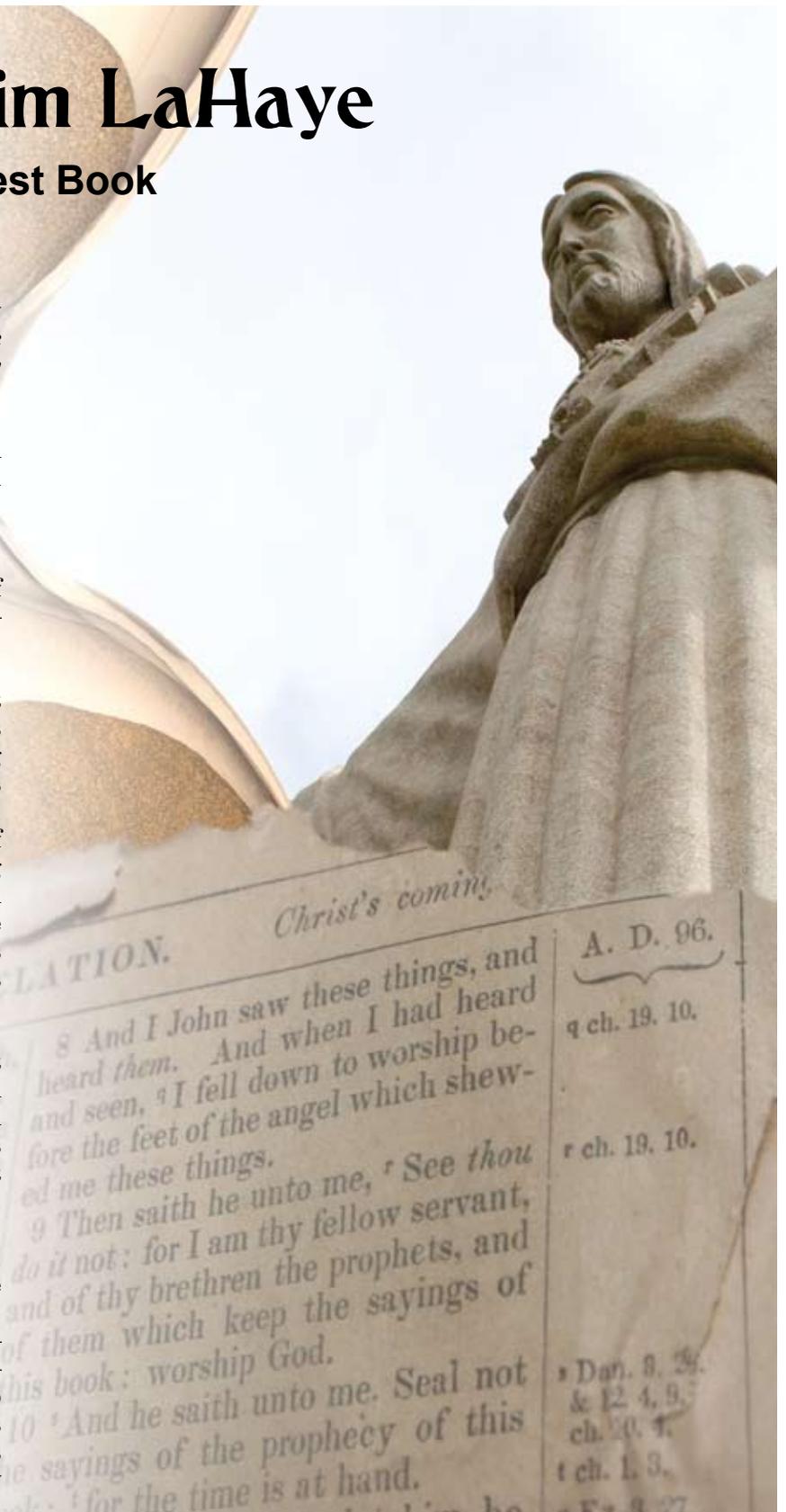
Hanegraaff acknowledges in the introduction that he borrowed the phrase “Apocalypse Code” from the title of a book Hal Lindsey wrote in 1979 (p. xv).

We suggest a more appropriate book title would have been, *My Vendetta with Tim LaHaye*. In its 300 pages, Hanegraaff cites, criticizes, and maligns LaHaye more than 350 times—an average of more than once per page!

The Apocalypse Code adopts a partial-preterist viewpoint without acknowledging it as such, and is riddled with attacks on futurists and misrepresentations about our beliefs. Among other things, Hanegraaff advocates: Most Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled, Nero was the Beast of Revelation (i.e., the Antichrist), the Messiah’s Olivet Discourse and most of the Book of Revelation were fulfilled by events surrounding the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem, the Book of Revelation was written in the AD 60s rather than the 90s, and the Tribulation took place in the first century. Hanegraaff’s denials notwithstanding, these are all tenets of various versions of preterism.

For years on his radio program, Hanegraaff has been reluctant to explain his prophetic views in any detail. He said he’d been conducting research in the field of eschatology and would announce his conclusions in a book someday. He has stated repeatedly that he’s not a futurist, so we knew at least that much; but anything beyond that was sketchy.

That is, until now. With the release of Hanegraaff’s book, our questions have finally been answered. But after all the fanfare and hoopla, we felt let down after reading the book. This is hardly the final, definitive word on Bible prophecy—the product of nearly two decades of painstaking research—that Hanegraaff promised. Hanegraaff really hasn’t come up with anything new. His position on prophecy, it turns out, is merely a warmed-over hybrid, which incorporates features of both partial preterism and idealism (see explanatory sidebar on Page 2).



We were disappointed, and judging from the book reviews on Amazon.com, we're not alone. At the very least, many of us were hoping Hanegraaff would plow up some new eschatological ground and give us something to sink our teeth into. But alas, it was not to be.

Even though Hanegraaff has insisted, at times, that he was open to various alternatives and had not settled on any specific eschatological view, this book shows that he does indeed have a specific opinion. It also shows a vicious bias against premillennialism and Christian Zionism.

Ice's earlier review of *The Apocalypse Code* resulted in a Hanegraaff response letter on the Christian Research Institute's (CRI) website (www.equip.org/atf/cf/%7B9C4EE03A-F988-4091-84BD-F8E70A3B0215%7D/PSN001.PDF). In Hanegraaff's response, he says he cannot understand why we associate his views with preterism. He complains that after his book's publication, he was ". . . summarily branded a 'preterist' and a heretic who believes the second coming of Christ has already come."

Evidently it hasn't occurred to Hanegraaff that we've come to this conclusion because he cites many preterist sources in his book. He quotes preterists like David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Kenneth Gentry, and R.C. Sproul as authorities, and incorporates key tenets of partial preterism into his e² "exegetical eschatology" scheme.

In Clintonesque fashion, Hanegraaff denies being a preterist "who believes the second coming of Christ has already come." But that doesn't mean he's not a preterist. Everyone knows that not all preterists insist the Second Coming has already happened. Partial preterists like R.C. Sproul do allow for the fulfillment of some future prophecies (see *Did the Messiah Return in AD 70?* by Gary Hedrick [San Antonio, Texas: CJF Ministries, 2006], p. 32). But it's still a form of preterism, and Hanegraaff knows it.

You know what they say: "If it waddles like a duck, has feathers like a duck, and

Major Views of the Book of Revelation

PRETERIST

Preterists believe the events described in the Book of Revelation took place during the days of the ancient Roman Empire. They say John was not prophesying about the future, but using a sort of code language to talk about events in his day. This view was developed by the ancient Jesuits, and is still held in some form by many Roman Catholics and some Protestants.

HISTORICAL

This view is associated with postmillennialism and says that the Book of Revelation presents a panorama of church history from the inception of the apostolic era to the consummation of the present age. This position was held by Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, and most of the other Reformers, with the notable exception of the Anabaptists (see "futurist" below).

IDEALIST

Closely associated with amillennialism, this view suggests that Revelation should not be interpreted as an account of actual, literal events, whether past or future, but rather as a metaphor for the grand, cosmic struggle between good and evil. This view can be traced to the heretical Alexandrian school (Origen, Clement, Dionysius) in the third century and was later adopted and legitimized by Augustine, who had formerly been a futurist.

FUTURIST

Premillennialists recognize that there are many symbols in the Book of Revelation, but they believe the main import of its message is literal and prophetic. They are regarded as futurists because they view the first three chapters of Revelation as a summary of church history, and from chapter four on as future prophecy about the Messiah's coming and the end of this age. Historical premillennialism was known in ancient times as "chiliasm." This was the view of several ancient church fathers (like Barnabas) and the Anabaptists of the Reformation era. Philip Schaff, the eminent 19th century church historian, concluded that this was the view of the apostles and the early church (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, AD 100-311, Chapter 12).

quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck." Likewise, if Hanegraaff's e² theory looks and sounds like preterism, then it must be a form of preterism—even if Hanegraaff doesn't want to admit it.

Messianic Perspectives®

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Messianic Perspectives is published bimonthly by CJF Ministries, P.O. Box 345, San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345, a 501(c)3 Texas nonprofit corporation: Dr. Gary Hedrick, **President**; Brian Nowotny, **Director of Communications**; Tommy Manning, **Managing Editor and Director of Publications**; Rachel Zanardi, **Assistant Editor**; Jonathan Singer, **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 www.cjfm.org. Toll-free OrderLine: (800) 926-5397. © 2007 by CJF Ministries. All rights reserved.

Factual Errors and Faulty Exegesis

Reading through *The Apocalypse Code*, it's amazing how fast and loose Hanegraaff plays with the facts. For instance, he states that LaHaye is "unlike early dispensationalists, who believed that the Jews would be regathered in Palestine because of belief in their Redeemer . . ." (p. xxii). He offers no documentation for this statement because there is none. It's a total fabrication.

In reality, John Nelson Darby (widely regarded as the founder of modern dispensationalism) taught just the opposite—that is, he said the Jews initially would return to their land in unbelief. He wrote, "At the end of the age the same fact will be reproduced: the Jews—returned to their own land, though without being converted—will find themselves in connection with the fourth beast" (John Nelson Darby, *The Hopes of the Church of God, in Connection with the Destiny of the Jews and the Nations as Revealed in Prophecy* [1840], Collected Writings [Winschoten, Netherlands: H. L. Heijkoop, reprint 1971], Vol. 2, p. 324).

In his Ph.D. dissertation, historian David Rausch wrote, "The Proto-Fundamentalist believed that the Jewish people would return to Palestine, the 'Promised Land,' without converting en masse to Christianity" (*Zionism Within Early American Fundamentalism 1878-1918: A Convergence of Two Traditions* [New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979], p. 64).

Hanegraaff's assertions beg the question: Is he deliberately misrepresenting the views of early dispensationalists to make them appear to be at odds with LaHaye? Or does he really not know any better? In either case, there's a serious problem.

But that's not all. Note what he says about James Balfour:

" . . . [He] was raised on a steady diet of dispensationalism [and] believed that the formation of a Jewish homeland . . . would be the key that unlocked the door of the biblical framework of prophecy" (p. 183).

Is Hanegraaff pulling our leg here? Surely he must know this is not only completely false, but actually borders on the ridiculous. Balfour was the British Foreign Secretary in 1917 when he issued an official letter to Lord Rothschild supporting the reestablishment

of a Jewish state in Israel. This statement became known as the Balfour Declaration. Balfour was a Zionist, but his views were not based on any view of eschatology, let alone dispensationalism.

Balfour's sister and biographer, Blanche Dugdale, wrote:

Balfour's interest in the Jews and their history was life-long. It originated in the Old Testament training of his mother, and in his Scottish upbringing. As he grew up, his intellectual admiration and sympathy for certain aspects of Jewish philosophy and culture grew also, and the problem of the Jews in the modern world seemed to him of immense importance. He always talked eagerly on this, and I remember in childhood imbibing from him the idea that Christian religion and civilization owes to Judaism an immeasurable debt, shamefully ill repaid (Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour: First Earl of Balfour, 1848-1906* [New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1937], p. 324).

Historian Barbara Tuckman tells us that Balfour was "not ardent but a skeptic, not a religious enthusiast but a philosophical pessimist . . ." (*Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* [New York: Ballantine Press, 1956], p. 311). So it is ludicrous to suggest that Balfour was influenced by dispensationalism, as Hanegraaff would have his readers believe.

In fact, it is more likely that none of Britain's early twentieth-century Christian Zionists were influenced at all by dispensationalism. Most of the Christian Zionists in Britain at that time were members of the Church of England. And as far as we know, the Anglican Communion has never been a hotbed of dispensational fundamentalism. (For an overview of the history of Christian Zionism, see Ice's article entitled "Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism" at www.pretrib.org/article-view.php?id=295.)

Not only does Hanegraaff make obvious factual errors, but he also engages in sloppy exegesis. One example is his attempt to identify the 144,000 individuals mentioned in Revelation 7:4-8 (pp. 124-129). Of course, we understand why Hanegraaff is troubled by the futurist view that this is a remnant of Israel consisting of 144,000 Jewish believers who will preach the Gospel during the coming Tribulation. This is problematic for anyone who says national Israel (which Hanegraaff calls "apostate Israel") has been replaced by the Church (which he calls "true Israel," p. 116). The problem is only compounded by the fact that choosing 144,000 Jewish evangelists for this task would, according to one of Hanegraaff's premises in *The Apocalypse Code*, make God guilty of "racial discrimination" (p. xx).

So Hanegraaff refers to Verses 9 and 10, which describe a great multitude *from all the nations* that no one can count, and concludes this is the same group as the remnant *from the twelve tribes* described in Verses 4 through 8.



Hank Hanegraaff, Courtesy Thomas Nelson

Hanegraaff: Jerusalem is the Capital of "Palestine"

"Furthermore, the accusation 'Hanegraaff is no lover of Israel' is flatly false. *The Apocalypse Code* clearly underscores my conviction that 'the modern state of Israel has a definitive right to exist.' What I object to is the notion of a racially exclusive state. Indeed, in light of the Incarnation, the Zionist suggestion that the modern land of Palestine, along with its capital Jerusalem, is to be reserved for a single ethnicity, or that the temple must be rebuilt and its sacrificial system reinstated, borders on blasphemy."

—Hank Hanegraaff
Position Statement PSN001
www.equip.org

There are numerous difficulties, both textual and exegetical, with Hanegraaff's interpretation, including the following:

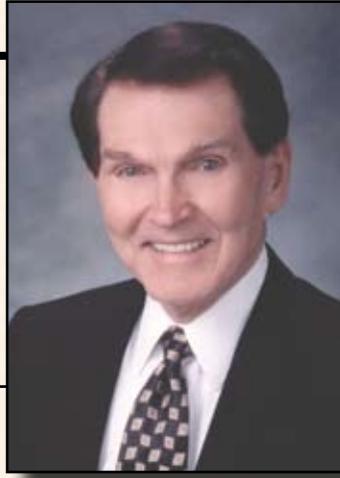
- **Language:** The Greek text strongly suggests a break after Verse 8 ("after this I looked," or *meta tauta eidon*, v. 9), making it extremely doubtful that the remnant and the multitude are one and the same. In fact, this same Greek formula is used in another section of Revelation to mark a change of scenes in the narrative (4:1).
- **Logic:** The text specifies the number of the remnant of Israel (144,000), while it says the multitude cannot be counted (v. 9). So if the multitude and the remnant are one and the same, isn't it a contradiction for the writer to tell us how many there are and then say there's no way to know how many there are?
- **Location:** The remnant consists of bond servants *on earth* who are "sealed," presumably to protect them from harm until their mission is complete (v. 3). The multitude, on the other hand, is seen worshipping before the throne of God *in heaven* (v. 15). We don't find the 144,000 in Heaven until later (Chapter 14).
- **Lineage:** The text specifies that *the remnant* is descended from the tribes of Israel, emphasizing their Jewish identity (vv. 5-8), while it says *the multitude* comes from every other nation, tribe, people, and tongue on earth, emphasizing a completely different line of descent (v. 9).

So what happened to e^2 , this exegesis on steroids that Hanegraaff espouses in his book? He is critical of LaHaye's and other futurists' views, but his own are based on extremely dubious exegesis indeed.

Humble Hank

LaHaye isn't Hanegraaff's only target in this book. He also takes repeated potshots at Lindsey (who, as stated earlier, published *Apocalypse Code* in 1997) as one who, according to Hanegraaff, claims to understand the Book of Revelation. "Until the present generation," declares the cynical Hanegraaff of Lindsey, "the encrypted message of the Apocalypse had remained unrealized" until Lindsey cracked the code (pp. xv-xvi).

Like other preterist tomes, it relies heavily on ad hominem attacks on futurists (especially LaHaye) and characterizes the dispensationalist movement in a way that makes it sound like a dangerous, aberrant cult.



Tim LaHaye, Courtesy Tim LaHaye Ministries

Without a doubt, it's presumptuous for anyone to claim that he or she has a complete understanding of every detail of the Book of Revelation. We have never heard Lindsey make such a claim. But even if he did, how would his arrogance differ from Hanegraaff's? Observe Hanegraaff's self-assessment of his book's influence: "I think it will create a major paradigm shift in our understanding of the end times that is long overdue" (www.gather.com/viewArticle.jsp?articleID=281474976960023). Isn't this also a bit arrogant and presumptuous?

Actually, Hanegraaff is right about one thing. When he says *The Apocalypse Code* represents a major shift away from the historic Christian view of prophecy and the end times, he's speaking the truth. And if Philip Schaff, the venerated church historian, is to be believed, Hanegraaff's view also represents a departure from the millenarian (chiliasm) beliefs of the apostles and the Early Church.

E^2 or C^2 (Confusion Squared)?

At the beginning of chapter one, Hanegraaff explains: "I coined the phrase Exegetical Eschatology (e^2) to underscore that above all else I am deeply committed to a proper method of biblical interpretation rather than to any particular model of eschatology" (p. 1).

This distinction between a *method* and a *model*, however, proposes a false dichotomy. The moment anyone applies a *method* of interpretation to prophetic Scripture, it becomes an eschatological model. Every *model* is based on a method and every method results in a model. You cannot separate the two.

Of course, it's wrong to adjust or compromise one's method in order to justify a preconceived model. If this is Hanegraaff's point, many of us would agree with him. But that's not what he says.

A few paragraphs later, he elucidates: "Just as in mathematics the squaring of a number increases its value exponentially, so too, perceiving eschatology through the prism of biblical exegesis will increase its value exponentially" (p. 2).

Again, this statement may sound logical, but it's essentially meaningless. Everyone knows that eschatology (or any other doctrine) must be interpreted through the grid (or prism) of Scripture. This is precisely the problem with *The Apocalypse Code*: Hanegraaff is looking at everything through the lens of partial preterism. There is precious little in the way of sound, biblical exegesis.

Perhaps we should revise Hanegraaff's thesis like this: "Perceiving eschatology through the prism of preterist presuppositions will decrease its value exponentially." Since Hanegraaff has a fondness for scientific notation, we could express it like this: e (eschatology) \times p (viewed through the preterist grid) = c^2 (confusion squared).

LIGHTS

"I have organized the principles that are foundational to e^2 around the acronym LIGHTS," Hanegraaff writes (p. 3). The letters of the acronym LIGHTS stands for the following principles: L refers to the literal principle, I represents the illumination principle, G stands for the grammatical principle, H for the historical principle, T means the typology principle, and S, he says, represents the principle of "scriptural synergy" (pp. 3-12).

Only half of Hanegraaff's principles can even be classified as interpretative methods; the other three are best classified as theological beliefs.

Illumination is a work of the Holy Spirit on the believer that enables him to see or understand God's Word. An unbeliever is blinded to the truth of God (1 Cor. 2:14); however, a believer is in a state in which he is able to see and understand God's truth (1 Cor. 2:9—3:2). This theological truth is not an interpretative method; it is a simple statement of fact. It is something we believe to be true.

Likewise, typology is not a method for exegeting Scripture; instead, as Paul says, some parts of the OT served as types, patterns, illustrations, or examples to help us live the Christian life (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). But recognizing symbols and types, while helpful, does not in itself constitute a method of biblical interpretation.

Hanegraaff defines his principle of “scriptural synergy” as a belief “that the whole of Scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages . . . [and] that individual Bible passages may never be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of Scripture” (p. 9).

In traditional theology, something similar to what Hanegraaff calls “scriptural synergy” has been known as “the analogy of faith”—that is, the idea that Scripture interprets Scripture. It’s a hermeneutical principle championed by the reformers. But this is a theological outcome and not a method. It was controversial even in Luther’s day because critics charged that when it was taken to an extreme, it became subjective and destroyed the principle of *sola scriptura*.

Hanegraaff’s “scriptural synergy” maxim, therefore, has its limitations. It presupposes a proper understanding of all of the other passages that are supposed to shed light upon the one in question. Such is often not the case, particularly in *The Apocalypse Code*.

Think of it like this. Someone may find five passages that he says confirm his interpretation of a certain prophetic passage; if he’s incorrectly understanding all six passages, the value of “scriptural synergy” is *negated*.

... Hanegraaff doesn't understand the difference between God's dealings with nations and His dealings with individuals. When it comes to someone's salvation, God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). No one is saved by race; we're all saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9).

Are Christian Zionists Racists and Blasphemers?

Of particular concern in *The Apocalypse Code* is its anti-Israel bias. Hanegraaff has really blown his cover here because he makes statements about the Israelis that border on anti-Semitism. He also leaves no doubt in our minds that he despises Christians who stand with Israel.

He declares, “Furthermore, there is the very real problem of *racial discrimination*” (p. xx, italics are Hanegraaff’s). Watch how he plays the race card. He takes LaHaye’s view, which is shared by millions of evangelicals worldwide, that states Israel has a future in God’s plan. He puts his own spin on it, and presto, LaHaye comes out looking like a racist.

So let’s talk about this charge of “racial discrimination.” In our culture, it’s a term that has strong, negative connotations—and understandably so, in light of the injustices that minorities have suffered for centuries. So let’s give Hanegraaff credit for the clever way he invokes this emotionally charged term in order to detract attention from his anti-Israel bias.

In fact, God has always discriminated (or made a distinction) between races. He has specific plans, blessings, and judgments for Arabs, Jews, and other ethnic groups. Take Egypt, for example. The OT prophets made it clear that God’s ultimate intention is to “heal” Egypt, to bring her people to a knowledge of Himself, and ultimately to reconcile the Egyptians with their Jewish cousins (see Isaiah 19:19-22).

No one besides the Egyptians can claim the promises God has made to them; the Egyptians cannot claim the promises He has made to the Jewish people, or to anyone else. God does make a distinction between nations, and He deals with each one uniquely to bring its people to Himself.

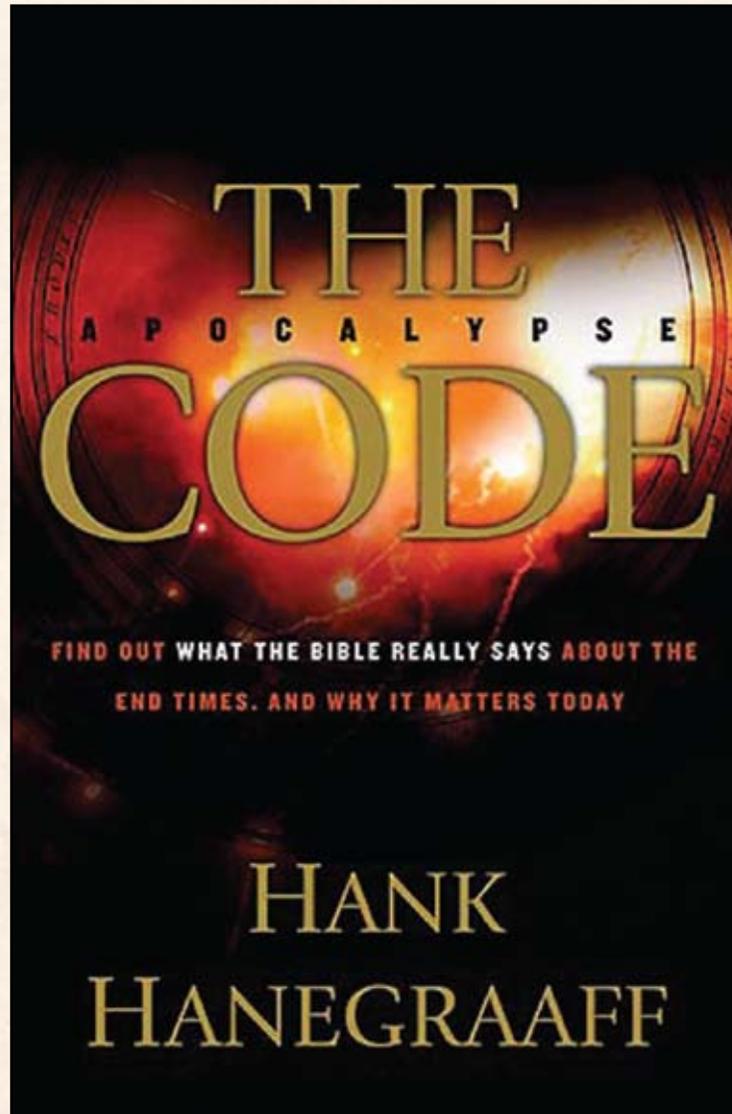
In the OT, He chose Israel “... *above all the peoples on the face of the earth*” (Deut. 7:6). So God most definitely made a distinction between Israel and the other nations. On that basis, would Hanegraaff call God a racist? We certainly hope not!

God’s sovereign choice of Israel was not based on any endearing personal qualities, but rather on the promises He made and confirmed to Father Abraham centuries earlier (Gen. 12:1-2, 15:1-21, 17:1-8).

Perhaps the problem is that Hanegraaff doesn’t understand the difference between God’s dealings with nations and His dealings with individuals. When it comes to someone’s salvation, God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). No one is saved

by race; we’re all saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). But He does distinguish between nations, dealing with them corporately in different ways.

Futurists believe God has made a distinction between Israel and the nations. We believe He has chosen Israel to be a light to the nations, so the non-Jewish peoples of the world are the beneficiaries. Through Israel, He gave us the Bible, the prophets, and the Messiah (Rom. 3:2, 9:3-5). The Children of Israel will be saved in the future, not merely by virtue of their Abrahamic lineage, but by the same gracious Gospel that is available to all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 11:26).



Courtesy Thomas Nelson

Anti-Israel and Pro-Palestinian

Whether it's inadvertent or deliberate, Hanegraaff puts forth a version of supersessionism (or replacement theology) that has the potential to blossom into full-blown anti-Semitism.

Oddly enough, in his response letter, Hanegraaff says that he has never argued for replacement theology; then he turns right around and argues for replacement theology:

... I have never argued for Replacement Theology . . . [but] the true church is true Israel, and true Israel is truly the church—one cannot replace what it already is. Rather than reason together in collegial debate, dispensationalists have coined the phrase "Replacement theologian" as the ultimate silencer.

In his book, Hanegraaff actually makes it very clear. He espouses the view that the Church is "true Israel," the Israelis are a horde of racist, murderous apostates, and national Israel has no prophetic future—all of which are tenets of replacement theology.

In *The Apocalypse Code*, Hanegraaff writes:

Just as Joshua was a type of Jesus who leads the true children of Israel into the eternal land of promise, so King David is a type of the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" who forever rules and reigns from the New Jerusalem in faithfulness and in truth (Rev. 19:16; cf. 19:11). In each case, the lesser is fulfilled and rendered obsolete by the greater (p. 201).

Statements like the above are typical of supersessionist writings. With an effortless series of strokes on his keyboard, he renders much of the OT obsolete upon the basis of his erroneous interpretation of the NT. Hanegraaff evidently doesn't understand that when the writer of Hebrews refers to obsolescence (8:13), he's talking about the conditional Mosaic Contract in the Book of Exodus, not the unconditional promises God made to Abraham in the Book of Genesis.

Hanegraaff says, "This relationship between the Testaments is in essence typological" (p. 170). Future prophetic promises, which usually relate to Israel, are rendered as metaphors, or mere types and shadows of something else, never meaning what they actually say, according to Hanegraaff.

Through alleged hermeneutical ideas, such as Hanegraaff's so-called "typology principle," he interprets future promises to Israel allegorically as fulfilled through the Church. He warns us about "hyper-literalism" (p. 20) and then proceeds to deconstruct the prophetic Scriptures and divest them of their literal import.

He says the "apocalyptic portions of Scripture . . . are replete with figurative language" (p. 23). He talks about metaphor (pp. 24-27), simile (pp. 27-30), and hyperbole (pp. 30-31). Then he explains "fantasy imagery" (pp. 32-34).

He actually says that some of the symbols in Revelation, such as the dragon (Rev. 12:3-17, 20:2), constitute fantasy imagery, similar to what we find in the

writings of J.R.R. Tolkien (pp. 32-35). Now let's make something clear here. We understand that Satan is not a literal, fire-breathing reptile, and that the Messiah doesn't have a literal sword coming out of His mouth (Rev. 19:15). These are obviously symbols, but not concocted merely in someone's imagination, like a ring-wraith, hobbit, warg, or smaug in *Lord of the Rings*. The biblical metaphors are not *arbitrary*. They are very *specific allusions* to spiritual and earthly realities.

When preterists claim futurists are encumbered by a literal hermeneutic that fails to recognize symbols and metaphors in Scripture, it's a straw-man argument. We have always acknowledged symbols and metaphors when they occur.

If the symbolic approach to the Bible goes unchecked, however, we run into rather serious difficulties. For instance, is the Creation account in the Book of Genesis an allegory? Was there an actual snake in the Garden of Eden, or was this merely an example of fantasy imagery? Did God really create the world, or is the biblical account of Creation based on a myth borrowed from some earlier, pre-Israelite culture?

You see, the real danger is not hyper-literalism, but hyper-symbolism—which someone with a specialty in apologetics like Hanegraaff—should understand.

The metaphorical/allegorical approach is taken too far when the conclusion is God's promises and future plans for Israel don't really mean what they say. Any hermeneutic that renders

Hank's Own Fans Speak Out

"I am a futurist when it comes to Revelation and biblical prophecy, but as a long-time listener to Hank Hanegraaff's radio show, I respected his opinions and bought this book hoping to read a detailed explanation and defense of preterist views. I was disappointed. Hank used to say on his radio program that while he disagreed with the futurist interpretation, he considered it to be within the broad scope of Christian orthodoxy, which I respected. He appears to have changed his opinion; at one point in this book, he refers to it as blasphemous.

"The book is more an attack on futurism than it is an explanation of preterism. While he brings up a few legitimate problems with futurism, he glosses over or dismisses what I think are bigger problems with preterism. He rightfully points out what I think is the biggest problem for futurists and that is the prophecies say these things will take place soon, but dismisses preterism's biggest failure (the obvious worldwide level of destruction prophesied) as 'prophetic hyperbole.' To me it seems like he is straining at the gnat while swallowing the camel. I also was disappointed with his constant sniping at Tim LaHaye.

"Hank is critical of the founding of modern Israel. While I don't believe Hank is anti-Semitic, he is most definitely anti-Israel. He is very critical of Jewish attacks against Arabs but is silent about Muslim persecution of Jews.

"If you are looking for a book that provides a detailed explanation and defense of preterism, I would recommend you look elsewhere. I found this book disappointing and unconvincing."

Book Review at Amazon.com
By "A Fan"
July 7, 2007

the promises of future blessing for Israel as being nullified, or perhaps transferred to the Church, is misguided.

Anti-dispensationalists like Hanegraaff, can wiggle and squirm all they want. But the fact remains that God made certain promises to Israel that have never been fulfilled. This is irrefutable. So we have to ask ourselves, Does God mean what He says, or not?

Later in *The Apocalypse Code*, Hanegraaff realizes his typological principle sounds a lot like allegorical interpretation, so he tries to explain—with only limited success—that it's really not the same thing (pp. 171-172).

We shouldn't be surprised, then, to learn that Hanegraaff does not believe the seventy weeks of years (490 years) in Daniel refer to literal years that actually elapse in specific historical periods. Instead, he says, "The seventy sevens of Daniel encompass ten Jubilee eras and represent the extended exile of the Jews that would end in the fullness of time—the quintessential Jubilee—when the people of God would experience ultimate redemption and restoration, not in the harlot city, but in the holy Christ" (p. 194).

Hanegraaff repeatedly calls Jerusalem "the harlot city," borrowing a term from James Russell's well-known defense of preterism entitled *The Parousia* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999). The original was published in 1887, and the foreword to the 1999 Baker edition is by R.C. Sproul.

In Hanegraaff's response letter, he takes issue with Ice's statement that Hanegraaff is "no lover of Israel." But anyone can read "Jerusalem and Israel" (p. 282) entries in *The Apocalypse Code's* subject index. Hanegraaff's statements (or misstatements)—including the ones about alleged "ethnic cleansing" by the Israelis (pp. 163-169)—reveal that his anti-Israel bias is quite evident.

He makes numerous references to alleged atrocities against Palestinians by the Israeli military, but he says nothing about the thousands of Israelis slaughtered by jihadists. He says nothing about the insatiable hatred of Jewish people that's ingrained in the Islamist culture. Incredibly, Hanegraaff portrays the Israelis as the bad guys in the ongoing conflict. He refers to the Land as "Palestine" and uses the term "Zionist" as a pejorative. And then, Hanegraaff says that he cannot understand why Ice said he is no lover of Israel!

Conclusion

We don't want to be unduly critical of Hanegraaff. Being "The Bible Answer Man" can't be an easy assignment. Expectations are high because people rely on him to have all the answers! And then there are all the difficulties Hanegraaff has had since 1989, when he assumed control of the CRI upon the sudden death of its founder, Dr. Walter Martin. There have been conflicts with the Martin family—various charges of plagiarism, various accusations from pesky former employees, and even allegations of business improprieties (see www.waltermartin.org/cri.html).

The Hyatt Connection

Something particularly interesting about *The Apocalypse Code* is that one of the driving forces behind its publication was Michael Hyatt of Thomas Nelson publishers (p. xiii). In the late 1990s, Hyatt was part of an army of religious opportunists who turned the Y2K scare into a short-lived but booming industry in the late 1990s. Hyatt's book, *The Millennium Bug: How to Survive the Coming Chaos* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1998), capitalized on the paranoia that was sweeping the country as the turn of the millennium approached.

Sales were brisk, and time was running out, so Hyatt quickly followed up with *The Y2K Personal Survival Guide*. The front cover read: "You know the Y2K threat is real, and less than a year away . . . But **DON'T PANIC**. Here's everything you need to survive" (emphasis in the original).

What, exactly, was this menace that was such a threat to our survival? It was a supposed glitch in the Windows operating system that some people thought wouldn't allow most computers to roll over from 1999 to 2000. At the stroke of midnight on January 1, 2000, the power grid was supposed to go down nationwide in a sort of cascading effect that would begin in major cities and then ripple out into the rest of the country.

Y2Kers warned that planes would fall out of the sky because power would be cut to air traffic control facilities worldwide, and the planes' onboard computers would shut down. GPS satellites would lose contact with the ground. The government would eventually collapse and essential services like 911, police, and ambulances would be unavailable. There would be widespread looting and rioting in the streets of our major cities, according to the purveyors of paranoia. On and on it went.

Hyatt was interviewed at least twice on Dr. James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* radio program, and also appeared on cable's CSPAN—all of which gave him even more national exposure and further fanned the flames of Y2Kism.

A few lonely voices of reason tried to warn us that Y2K would be, at best, a bump in the road (and as it turned out, most of us didn't even feel the bump). But the evangelical masses listened to the snake oil salesmen. Hysteria overcame logic, presenting an obvious opportunity for an alert religious entrepreneur to make a few bucks hawking his Y2K wares.

Sadly, some gullible Christians spent thousands of dollars stockpiling freeze-dried foods, gas-powered generators, battery-operated short-wave radios, and other unnecessary Y2K "precautions." Once Y2K came and went without so much as a whimper, the Y2K survival companies dried up and disappeared more quickly than an icicle at high noon in the Sahara Desert. There was no way to get a refund or file a complaint. The Y2Kers took the money and ran, leaving their naïve, gullible victims holding the bag.

And now Hyatt—one of the best-known Y2Kers—has helped Hank Hanegraaff publish a book in which futurists are characterized as kooks and misfits who traffic in sensationalism and paranoia. Go figure!



Michael Hyatt
Courtesy Thomas Nelson

But we're not really interested in CRI's internal issues. Our concerns with *The Apocalypse Code* are more theological in nature. There's nothing new in this book. Like other preterist tomes, it relies heavily on ad hominem attacks on futurists (especially LaHaye) and characterizes the dispensationalist movement in a way that makes it sound like a dangerous, fallacious cult. He repeatedly refers to John Nelson Darby as a "priest" (pp. 40, 183), as though Darby's former association with the Church of England somehow rendered him incapable of accurately interpreting the Bible later in his life. Perhaps someone should remind Hanegraaff that another disillusioned priest, Martin Luther, came out of Romanism and became the Father of the Protestant Reformation!

On the other hand, some of Hanegraaff's criticisms of our movement are valid. If we are wise, we will listen and learn from them. There has been too much shallowness and sensationalism among futurists, and sometimes we say and write things that are indefensible. There are crackpots in our camp, as there are in the amillennial/preterist camps. Every group has its lunatic fringe, and we should do what we can to rein in ours.

Furthermore, what Hanegraaff says about some of our Christian Zionist brethren (like his observations about John Hagee's erroneous dual covenant views on p. 180) is right on target. But let's not allow him to throw out the dispensational/Christian Zionist baby with the sensationalist/bad theology bathwater. Historically, most Christian Zionists have been on solid theological footing. Many of us today do not share Pastor Hagee's "non-conversionary" view that Jewish people have their own covenant and don't need Jesus.

Dr. Walter Martin did the Church a great service in 1960 when he founded CRI as a resource center for Christians needing information about cults and other aberrant groups. He was a scholar with several earned degrees, and was an outspoken defender of the futurist view of the Book of Revelation. It is unfortunate that Hanegraaff has taken CRI in a different direction.

It is doubtful, however, that Hanegraaff's book will precipitate any sort of evangelical paradigm shift away from futurism. It just doesn't pack enough punch to have such a profound effect.

Walter Martin On the Book of Revelation

Hank Hanegraaff's predecessor at the Christian Research Institute was a godly man named Walter Martin. Dr. Martin was a world-renowned expert on the cults and had several earned academic degrees. He died suddenly in 1989. He had gotten up in the middle of the night to pray and had a heart attack. His wife found him in the morning, still on his knees.

In "The Coming King," Dr. Martin gave his futurist view of the Book of Revelation:

In his great portrayal in the Book of Revelation, John the Apostle reminds us of this second aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ's coming in terms of great, glowing beauty:



Courtesy Walter Martin Ministries

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war . . . The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).

The Scriptures point out—in terms which few can fail to understand—that time does have an end; that God will intervene in the world of men; that God has a destiny for those who are willing to trust and believe in Him; and that the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of humanity will judge the world and sift the sons of men.

For believers there is a glorious destiny ahead. Scripture portrays it this way: "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it" (Rev. 21:22-24).

www.waltermartin.org/articles.html#king

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ, followed by His earthly reign from the Davidic throne in Jerusalem (2 Tim. 4:1, Rev. 12:10), as foretold by the prophets, continues to be the "blessed hope" of believers everywhere (Titus 2:13).

Maranatha!



Dr. Gary Hedrick is President of CJF Ministries in San Antonio, Texas.



Dr. Thomas Ice is Director of the Pre-Trib Research Center at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

QUESTION: *Does the Bible say that Christians cannot sin? I usually enjoy listening to your radio program, but I heard you say the other day that Christians still sin even though they're saved. This is a watered-down form of the Gospel known as "easy believism," and I am disappointed to learn that you embrace it. You need to read 1 John 3:9.*

Bible Questions AND Answers



By DR. GARY HEDRICK

Can Christians Sin?



ANSWER:

The Scripture you cited says, *"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."*

In the Greek text of this verse, the pertinent verbs are in a form that denotes continuous action. If John meant to point to a single sin, or an occasional sin, there's another form he could have used. But he used the present active indicative form. The meaning is that a true child of God cannot live in a state of ongoing sin and lawlessness with no evidence of conviction or repentance.

You're evidently defending a view known as "sinless perfection" or "complete sanctification," which is common in some denominations of Christendom. But we know the Apostle John was not advocating any such view here, because he stated in the previous chapter that when we sin, we have

an earthly father disciplines his children (Heb. 12:5-16). In other words, when we get out of line, and we won't listen to Him, He spans us! And it's for our own good, because God knows that sinful behavior is dangerous and ultimately destructive. In extreme cases, this disciplinary process can even result in a believer's physical death (1 Cor. 3:15, 5:5). Divine discipline is a very serious matter, as anyone who has experienced it knows.

But there's no such thing as a believer who doesn't sin. In fact, anyone who says he hasn't sinned since becoming a believer has already committed a sin by lying about it (1 John 1:8)! That's why God has a mechanism in place to deal with sin in our lives through cleansing (1 John 1:7) and correction (Heb. 12:5-16).

So it's very simple. The notion that believers never sin contradicts both the Hebrews passage regarding divine discipline and also John's teaching about the advocacy of the Lord Jesus—and any teaching that contradicts Scripture is wrong!



Where There's a Will There's a Way



We understand, as you do, that while we're here, there are always needs that take our time and resources. Though our intention is to remember the Lord's work with a financial gift some day, more immediate needs often divert our attention; and to our regret, that day of remembrance never comes.

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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By Violette Berger

Fruit from the Harvest



God's Providence

Michael Campo, CJFM missionary (Chicago), writes: "There can be nothing more worthy than to do as Jesus instructs: *' . . . Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest'* (John 4:35).

"One of the great privileges I have as a missionary with CJFM is in the participation of the fullness of both Gentiles and Jews, which Paul speaks about in Romans 11. A year ago, we were asked to pray for 'Sheldon' by his daughter who, though not a believer, nevertheless requested prayer for her father's healing. For an entire year, we prayed for this Jewish man."

Michael continued with his account of a recent hospital visit to see a friend. While visiting his friend, Michael became distracted by the gentleman in the next bed who was coughing and seemed to be in distress. Concerned about him and wanting to offer the man some comfort, Michael walked over to his bed and after conversing with him soon recognized that this seriously ill patient not only needed to hear the Good News, but that his heart was open to it.

Shortly after Michael had shared the Gospel message with him, the gentleman prayed to receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Michael said, "I must tell you that in all my years as a missionary, never have I so experienced the providence of God and His sovereignty as I did on that day. Not knowing who this man was until after we had prayed together, I soon found out that it was Sheldon! God had me in the right place—at the right time—to bring this Jewish man his Messiah, for Sheldon soon left this world and is now home with his Lord."

Jesus Invites Everyone

CJFM missionary **Richard Hill** (Las Vegas), who also leads an outreach ministry on the campus of the University of Las Vegas (UNLV), relates that "Students are not the only individuals we witness to. Sometimes teachers and campus employees stop by to receive our evangelistic tracts as well."

Recently, "Tom," a maintenance worker who drives a cart around the campus, stopped to inquire about what Richard

was doing, "out of curiosity." During their conversation, Tom stated that he attended church for most of his life, but had never received Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He also told Richard that he was going through some personal trials and was feeling "empty inside."

Richard explained how only Jesus could replace those feelings with love, joy, peace, and hope. He helped Tom understand the consequences of sin, the grace of Jesus, and the promise of eternal life. Without hesitation, Tom prayed the prayer of faith with Richard, who rejoices that "Tom admitted that he was a sinner, needed forgiveness, and trusted Jesus on the spot!"

Richard also praises God for those who have volunteered to minister with him on the UNLV campus. "Our newest volunteer, 'Esther,' has been such a great encouragement to all of us. She is a Jewish believer, who is confined to a wheelchair, but this does not stop her nor slow her down. She enthusiastically distributes tracts, engages in discussions, and has even led one student to the Lord thus far," he said. "Richard C., a long-time volunteer, has also had the privilege of leading a student to the Lord this quarter."

On the Streets of Phoenix

Richard Tovia, CJFM missionary (Phoenix), is spending mornings—as the opportunities arise—handing out tracts and sharing the Gospel message on the streets of downtown Phoenix. Richard is blessed to see that people are becoming more open to taking his literature and seem more willing to engage in conversations. He gets asked many questions pertaining to Iraq, Iran, and Israel.

He writes, "Recently, such a discussion came up with three teenagers. They asked numerous questions, yet were open and amazed at what the Bible had to say. This led me to share the Good News, explaining that Jesus is the only hope for forgiveness of sin, that they need not fret over the state of the world—for the Lord is in control, and He will come again to set things right. Following our conversation, these three teenagers eagerly prayed with me for their salvation. They departed, believing that hope is not in a philosophy, but rather in the Person of Jesus the Messiah!"

Abe's Story

The Fruit of Patience



By Michelle Beadle
(as told to Violette Berger)

Michelle Beadle, a Jewish believer, has been involved in Jewish missions for 23 years. She has been on the CJFM missionary staff for 13 years, working out of New Orleans, with the support of her husband, David, daughter, Monique, and son, Benjamin. The following is an account, in Michelle's own words, of how God used her to bring an elderly Orthodox Jewish man, "Abe" (pseudo name) to the saving knowledge of *Yeshua HaMashiach*, Jesus the Messiah.



As a result of the devastation, Abe was evacuated from his home in New Orleans to Houston, Texas. . . . He was one of the thousands of people, whom you may have seen on TV, waiting on the interstate for buses to take them out of the city.

Those of us involved in Jewish outreach know how important one of the fruits of the spirit is in our work—the fruit of patience. In my experience, I have noted that it may take years for a Jewish person, once having heard the Gospel message, to make a decision for the Lord.

Abe's story, *from my perspective*, began in 1997. A colleague of his, a Christian woman, was preparing to take her first trip to Israel. By word of mouth, she heard of our ministry with CJFM. She called me for information about Jewish culture, and to learn some basic Hebrew words. During our discussion, she also told me about Abe, a Jewish man she had worked with for some time.

She continued to remain in touch with him over the years, and was happy to hear that we could help her minister to him. Since it was around the Passover season, she invited Abe to join us for our Passover Seder, but he was unable to attend because his wife was very ill.

Every year thereafter, we mailed him a CJFM Messianic Jewish Art Calendar and invited him to our local Passover Seder. Every year, though, he declined because his days were fully occupied with his work and his wife's illness.

Abe's wife passed away just before Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. As a result of the devastation, Abe was evacuated from

his home in New Orleans to Houston, Texas. (Although his house was not flooded, all of the streets in his neighborhood were submerged in water.) He was one of the thousands of people, whom you may have seen on TV, waiting on the interstate for buses to take them out of the city.

Abe told me that after being rescued by the boat, he and thousands of others literally lived and slept on Interstate 610—which is on high ground—for two days in the miserable New Orleans heat waiting for buses to arrive. The evacuation process was a horrible experience, especially for the elderly. When the evacuees were eventually driven to Houston, the bus driver dropped them off two miles away from the Astrodome.

While walking there by himself, Abe fell and broke his ankle. Upon finally arriving at the Houston Astrodome, Abe met a woman from a local Methodist church (Abe calls her his angel). A friendship was formed and she invited him to her house, where Abe stayed until he could make arrangements to go to New York City and be with his family. From there, he made his way to Madisonville, Louisiana, and stayed with his daughter for two months before finally returning home.

Continued on Page 12



James Nielsen/AFP/Getty Images

The buses took Abe and thousands more to Houston, but the bus dropped him off two miles from the Astrodome. During the walk, Abe broke his ankle.

Once Abe returned to New Orleans, I visited him at his office and brought him one of our Messianic Jewish Art Calendars. He was very kind, cordial, and quite appreciative of the visit. After visiting him a few more times, I suggested we study the Scriptures together, but he was not interested. As I prayed about the situation, it became apparent to me that Abe might be willing to watch some Messianic Jewish videos that addressed the topics I wanted to share with him.

By the grace of God, he was open to this idea, and we began a tradition of video sharing. The first video I gave him was *Jerusalem the Covenant City*. (I highly recommend this documentary. Copies are available through CJFM's online bookstore at www.messianicspecialties.com.)

While at home, Abe prayed that prayer and became a new creation! A few days later, we picked him up to attend a home fellowship meeting at our house, and noticed that he seemed much more peaceful and content.

Abe commented that he found the video to be very interesting. I subsequently gave him the following videos, from various sources: *The Rabbi*, *My Search for Messiah*, *Messiah in the Passover*, and *Survivor Stories*.

During this time of video sharing, Abe came to our Passover Seder in 2006 and again this year. We also invited him to our monthly messianic fellowship meetings, and he has been attending them ever since. Following our Passover Seder this year, he confessed: "I almost asked Jesus into my heart. I'm getting very close."

Soon afterwards, I gave him our *Chesed (Lovingkindness)* tract (also available through CJFM), which presents the Gospel message in both English and Hebrew, and concludes with the prayer of faith, inviting the reader to ask Yeshua into his life.

While at home, Abe prayed that prayer and became a new creation! A few days later, we picked him up to attend a home

fellowship meeting at our house, and noticed that he seemed much more peaceful and content.

Since then, Abe told me that he has read the *Chesed* pamphlet a number of times. He even told his neighbor, who is a born-again Christian, about his decision. He has also discussed it with his family. Since his decision to follow the Lord, we have been reading the Bible together over the phone. We just finished the 23rd chapter of Matthew.

Abe loves reading the Bible now, and is amazed at how down-to-earth Yeshua's teachings are. What a blessing to see this man, who is in his 80s, begin to grow in Messiah! Recently, we also learned that a minister friend of his Christian neighbor led Abe's wife to the Lord shortly before she passed away.

How wonderful for Abe to know that one day he will be reunited with his wife in Heaven. And what a privilege it is for me to witness how God's Word will not return void—as we patiently wait upon the Lord. "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).



Dave Einsel/Getty Images

Abe was one of the thousands of New Orleans residents displaced to the Houston Astrodome after Hurricane Katrina.

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