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Hebrew Spice Issue

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Jesus, The Messiah
The Gospel of Genesis
The First Fruit Principle
Biblical Respect for Our Elders
Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem
Renewing the Spirit of Prophecy
Immutability: The Ultimate Unifying Constant

"Spices for Anointing Oil and for Fragrant Incense." (Exodus 25:6)

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RESTORE!

“The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake;
he will exalt the Torah and make it honorable.
But this people have been robbed . . . and no one says, *Restore!*”
(Isaiah 42:21–23).

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Restoration Foundation

Hebraic Christian Global Community is an international, transdenominational, multiethnic teaching, publishing, and fellowship resource to the body of Christ. We promote the restoration of Christian unity, the recovery of the Hebraic foundations of Christian faith, and the renewal of Christian love and support for the international Jewish community and the nation of Israel.

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Great blessing is God’s solemn promise to everyone who blesses Abraham’s children!

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**SHOFAR
SOUNDS**
Thoughts from
the Editor

Spice and *Veritas Hebraica*

THE SWEET SMELLING SAVOR OF HEBRAIC INSIGHT


Veritas Hebraica (Hebrew truth) is such a delight! For those who have been blessed by God to engage the Holy Scriptures with the same Hebrew insight that the authors of Scripture used when they penned those pages, it is a fulfillment of the invitation: “O taste and see that the LORD is good. Blessed is the person who trusts in him” (Psalm 34:8). Those who have delved deep into the Hebrew foundations of the Christian faith can say like both Ezekiel and John when they “ate the scrolls” of prophecy, “It was in my mouth as sweet as honey” (Ezekiel 3:3; Revelation 10:9).

Descriptions of the beauty and richness of God’s Word is wide and varied in Scripture, where words like *aroma*, *sweet savor*, *spices*, *perfumes*, and such are common similes and metaphors through which the biblical authors exult in their utter delight at receiving insight from the heavenly Father. King David exclaimed: “I delight to do your will, O my God, and your Torah is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8). The sweet Psalmist said this to the Lord: “When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, your consolations delight my soul” (Psalm 94:19). Again, David exulted: “Let your steadfast love come to me . . . I can answer anyone who taunts me, for I trust in your word” (Psalm 119:41–42). Then, the “man after God’s own heart” implored the Lord: “Do not snatch the word of truth from my mouth, for I hope in your instructions. I always obey your Torah forever and ever” (Psalm 119:43–44).

The sweet smelling savor and the delights of good taste are not, however, a unilateral expression of delight from the believing community to the Almighty. When the bride of the Messiah walks in the truth of his Word, he also exults over her in the same way as Solomon heaped effusive praise upon his beloved: “She is a garden . . . with cam-

phor, with spikenard, saffron, calamus and cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the finest spices” (Song of Songs 4:12–14). Likewise, the prayers of God’s saints are like the sweet smell of burning incense: “May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening offering” (Psalm 141:2). “The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God” (Revelation 8:4). Indeed, Paul declares that the saints themselves, as well as their prayers, “are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved.” The apostle contrasts this Christ-like fragrance with that of the unbelievers: “To those who are perishing an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life.” (2 Corinthians 2:15–16). With the smell of death and destruction everywhere in the realm dominated by the evil one and his minions, it is even more important that the righteous exude the aroma of life through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the message of all Holy Scripture, including the Torah where God says, “Choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The incense that was offered on the golden altar in the Tabernacle of Witness was comprised of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense. After the temple was destroyed, the sages concluded that prayer and study of God’s Word substituted for the temple offerings and sacrifices. Prayer, therefore, was recognized as the incense of the spiritual sanctuary, the church. Just like the incense in the tabernacle was offered before the Lord with fire, so the prayers of the saints must ascended into the heavenly sanctuary accompanied by passion and intensity of focus that the sages call *kavanah*. This is why James declared that “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person avails much” (James 5:16).

It has been said that “variety is the spice of life.” This is certainly the case with the study of *Veritas Hebraica* in which a superabundance of delights can almost overwhelm the one who makes it his delight to “search the Scriptures.” David declared, “Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens . . . your justice is like the deepest sea. . . . How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! . . . They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (Psalm 36:5–9, author’s rendering). No wonder Jeremiah exulted: “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning” (Lamentations 3:22–23). The Word of the Lord is like a mountain of spices to the one who delights in God’s truth. His mercies are, indeed, new every morning, and his faithfulness is great, and his truth endures to all generations (Lamentations 3:23; Psalm 100:5). Hebrew truth continues to unfold to those who open their hearts to hear the Word of the Lord. O taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who trusts in him. 




John D. Garr, Ph.D.
Founder and President

In this issue, we present an array of interesting articles that underscore the spectacular wealth of knowledge that can be gained from the study of Christianity’s Jewish roots. May this “spice” issue extend the blessings of truth to you like the *Besamim Spice* offering of the *Shabbat Havdalah* causes the peace of the Sabbath to linger in the Jewish home.




READERS' RESPONSES


Comments and Criticism

 Dr. Garr, Shalom blessings! I was so blessed by the Mishkan issue of *Restore!* Truly my understanding of the tabernacle and its furniture has been increased. Like every issue, it was a Bible study and a Hebrew lesson all in one. I am so grateful for *Restore!* It is a great help in growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.


Frank Garcia
Torrington, WA

 Peace be with you. Thanks for the magazine *Restore!* I enjoy the different articles. They certainly are informative and inspirational.


Donald Young
Carlsbad, NM

 Dr. Garr, just a few words to express my sentiment and appreciation for you and your ministry. I have been privileged to watch you on television as you speak about current events dealing with Israel in prophecy. It is so exciting and encouraging to have the marvelous blessing to hear you expound Hebrew truth. It is knowledgeable, entertaining, and enlightening to the soul.

Kevin Cornish
Martinez, CA


 I thoroughly enjoy reading your most wonderful and informative articles between the covers of *Restore!* Your issue on the Divine Messiah was very powerful. I have highlighted that issue and use it for sharing Hebrew truth.

Jackie Moorehead
Jackson, NC


 I surely appreciate receiving *Restore!* magazine. When I was unable to afford to renew my subscription, I missed it so much. Thank you for the amazing work you are doing.

Euberta Ledbetter
Centre, AL


*Editor's Note: We do not want any of our readers to miss *Restore!* because they are financially challenged. If you need assistance, we will scholarship your subscription.*

 Thank you so much for the edition of *Restore!* that focused on antisemitism. I always love the articles in every issue as well as the beautiful cover art. *Restore!* is such a blessing.

Mike & Barbie Porter
Midland, TX

 I would like to say that I am grateful to you for sending me *Restore!* magazine. It is such a blessing to me, and I pass it along to others who are interested in deep study of the Bible.

Charles Merriman
Navasota, TX

 Dr. Garr, I just received the complimentary gift copies of three of your books for our prison community library. I cannot tell you how wonderful it is to receive high quality biblical material. No one can possibly read your material and not learn! Through the years *Restore!* magazine and other books you have authored have helped me grow in so many ways.

Scott Carmell
Tennessee Colony, TX

***Restore!* welcomes letters, faxes, and e-mail from all of our readers. This page is dedicated to sharing as many of your comments, criticisms, and questions as possible.**

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Renewing the Spirit of Prophecy

EMPOWERING THE RESURGENCE OF FIRST-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

BY JOHN D. GARR, PH.D.

In order to understand God's purposes, each generation must ask itself the same questions that were posed to the leaders of Judah by their threatening neighbors when they returned to Jerusalem following the Babylonian exile: "Who in the world are you, and what on earth do you think you're doing?" These questions penetrate to

the very core of human existence, for they require conclusions first to identity and second to function—the first, to being, the second, to doing.

Much of humanity is simply clueless. They stumble blindly about with no clear sense of personal identity or purpose in life. When asked who they are and what they are doing, they often demonstrate both ignorance and apathy, glibly and exasperatedly exclaiming, "I don't know, and I don't care!" These are the blind who lead the blind in a staggering lurch toward the yawning ditch of oblivion. Their faceless anonymity is played out on the stage of purposeless existence, and they are destined for interment in an unmarked grave.

Unfortunately, this pitiful appraisal of humanity in general is all too often descriptive of the Christian church which is sometimes anointed with blissful ignorance and saunters along in apathetic stupor. Those who are both ignorant and religious are doubly dangerous both to themselves and to the world about them, for they can cloak their ignorance and prejudice in the holy garments of religiosity, and they can mask their sloth as "waiting on the Lord."

A strong and anguished cry arises from the hearts of a small remnant of believers who not only know about God but also know the living God in a face-to-face relationship. They want to understand God's purposes for the time in which they live, and they are determined to align themselves with those purposes. In order to do so, they seek to understand who they are and what God has called them to do, and they demonstrate singleness of vision and purpose by discovering what God has done, what he is doing, and what he will yet do on planet Earth.



When applied to divine purposes and assignments, questions of identity and purpose can be answered only in the context of a third question, "What has the Lord said?" These anxious words were posed by Balak, the Moabite king, to Balaam, the prophet for hire (Numbers 23:17, NRSV). Taken from a tiny microcosm of the macrocosm of human anguish, this interrogative echoes the groaning cry of virtually every human being who has ever lived upon the face of the earth. Since the time that God discontinued his evening dialogues with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, human beings have experienced the pain of separation from God—a pain most noticeably manifest in the loss of continual communion with the Creator.

GOD'S SEARCH FOR HUMANITY

The very idea of contact and communion between the infinite and the finite, between the immortal and the mortal, between the divine and the human is patently absurd! Certainly there is no possibility that man, with the limitations of his being, could ever initiate contact with God. The truth is, however, that humanity is and has been God's unique personal project, the intense focus and object of his eternal plan.

Humankind was the crowning achievement of God's creation, the last thing that he made in that primeval six-day explosion of divine creativity. This was the first creation that God had declared to be "*tov me'od*" (*very good*). Humanity was and is God's grand experiment with the transcendence of love, the very essence of his own nature. It is an ongoing experiment, the end of which is as certain as the immutability of the Creator himself; however, it is an experiment that has been playing itself out on the ever-unfolding stage of time.

Since Adam, human beings everywhere have been engaged in the quest to hear from God; however, in most cases, they have sought to hear from God on their own terms or to hear from a god that they have created in their own image. History is not, however, the record of man's search for God, nor is it an account of man's attempts to hear from God. It is the record of God's intense preoccupation with what Abraham Heschel called God's search for man. And man's passion for God pales in comparison with God's passion for man.

In truth, man's search for God is unendingly futile without God's search for man, for the only way in which anyone can learn anything about God or his will is for God to choose by his divine sovereignty to reveal himself to humankind. All that can be known about God today is what he has chosen to reveal to humanity. It is never the product of man's acumen, nor is it the result of human investigative skills. It is only by the Spirit of God through the act of divine self-disclosure that understanding from and about God is imparted to men.

A FORMAL INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The good news is that God has further taken the

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initiative and has chosen to communicate with man and to fill the void in the human heart. Holy Scripture is the record of God's ongoing search for those who would share personal relationship with him during history's first forty-one centuries. "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). God's election of those to whom he would impart his Word and will followed no clear pattern except one: they were all holy men and women. They were kings and shepherds, the rich men and the poor men, the educated and the ignorant, but they all had one thing in common: "... holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV).

The problem has been that people have not wanted to hear what God has said, just as Balak did not want to hear the message when Balaam informed the king that he had good news and bad news from Yahweh: the good news was blessing for Israel, and the bad news was that no one could curse what God had blessed. And despite the fact that Balak was prepared to expend enormous wealth to hear a different word, God's communicate remained consistent and immutable.

When people decide not to hear God's word, he simply stops speaking. And when God stops speaking, the silence is deafening. When people stop listening to the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12), nothing remains but the futile quest for

At every important juncture in human history, God has had men and women with a prophetic anointing on their lives to whom he has communicated his will and pleasure for the ages and for their own particular segment of human history.

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insight in an earthquake, a fire, a tempest, or some other spectacular phenomenon. When God stops speaking, men can exhaust themselves searching for another word, but they will never find it.

Is it any wonder, then, that God told Amos, "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. People will stagger from sea to sea and from the north even to the east; they will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it" (Amos 8:11, 12, NASV). While this was speaking of historical Israel's coming discomfort, its principles apply to every people who turn their backs upon the already revealed Word and will of God. When they stop following his bidding, he stops bidding. Then they are hopelessly lost in a vortex of self-doubt, wildly scrambling to gain their equilibrium, crying out vainly in the dark for a ray of light, and overwhelmed with an ever-increasing sense of impending doom.

Failure to hear the voice of God's bidding does not, however, handcuff God. When people refuse to listen, God moves—on! God's very nature precludes inactivity. He is ever active, never static. He *is* (not was) the Creator, and he is still creating. He is still making all new things by making all things new. He is ever restoring by reforming. He is ever building by rebuilding. Likewise, God is ever "sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Hebrews 1:3, NIV), speaking the same creative words that summoned the totality of existence from nothing at the beginning of time (Romans 4:17), maintaining the creation by con-

tinuing to speak the word of re-creation.

Even in the face of humanity's greatest efforts to destroy and thwart his purposes, God ever snatches victory from the jaws of defeat, builds a sparkling jeweled city out of the debris of an earthquake, brings pure gold out of a consuming fire. Man's infidelity never obviates God's fidelity. Man's deafness never mutes God's voice. He will speak to those who have engaged their hearts to listen. For a moment, the heavens may seem like brass, but in God's own time, they will echo with the resonance of the divine Word.

GOD'S SERVANTS, THE PROPHETS

Amos also declared that "the Sovereign Lord surely does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7, NIV). It is always God who takes the initiative to communicate his will to man, and he always does it through those enigmatic voices of prophetic insight and their incisive, provocative clarion call. At every important juncture in human history, God has had men and women with a prophetic anointing on their lives to whom he has communicated his will and pleasure for the ages and for their own particular segment of human history. God always looks for those to whom he can entrust the understanding of what he is doing in the world and whom he can trust to be instruments in his hands to bring about his good pleasure. More often than not, these divine messengers do not understand the prophetic spirit that moved on them. They have no grandiose vision of self-importance. They are simply impassioned with a divine Word, and they speak it without fear or favor.

It is a simple fact of history and the scriptural record that God has done nothing with regard to humanity in any generation until he has revealed his plan to men and women of prophetic insight. Before he destroyed the earth with a flood, God announced the impending deluge to Noah, who, as a "preacher of righteousness," became his prophetic voice in the earth (2 Peter 2:5). Before God rained fire and sulfur on Sodom, he revealed his coming wrath to his friend Abraham. Before he brought Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem and take the Israelites captive, he revealed both the impending destruction and the duration of Judah's captivity to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11–12). Before he sent his only begotten Son into the world, he predicted that event through hundreds of prophetic utterances, finally setting the greatest of all prophets, John the Baptist, on the stage of history to "to prepare in the desert the way of the Lord" (Matthew 3:3). Even on a more personal level, he revealed to both Anna and Simeon that the Christ child whom they held in their arms would be for the glory of Israel and the light to lighten the Gentiles (Luke 2:25–38).

In many, if not most occasions, the men and women whom God chose as channels of his Word did not fully understand the extent or concept of their message. They simply spoke as they were carried along by the Holy

In many, if not most occasions, the men and women whom God chose as channels of his word did not fully understand the extent or concept of their message. They simply spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). More often than not, their words were cryptic, designed to conceal a message from their own time but to reveal it in another era. They, therefore, did not attempt to impart their own interpretation of their prophetic words (2 Peter 1:20). Often, they were unaware of the prophetic nature of their calling, understanding only that they were impelled by an inner passion that could not be quenched to speak the divine Word that was committed to them (Jeremiah 20:9).

Prophets, whether male or female, do not always come from the most illustrious backgrounds. Indeed, they are often farmers like Elisha and shepherds like David, emerging from the *am ha-aretz* (the “people of the land” or the common folk). A shining example of this is the account of the manifestation of prophetic insight in the days of David: “The Issacharites . . . knew how to interpret the signs of the times, to determine how Israel should act” (1 Chronicles 12:32, TNK). Kings and priests do not have a monopoly on insight. It is not always the illustrious, the erudite, or the noble who understand. More often than not, it is the obscure, the ignorant, the humble who are sufficiently dependent upon God that they can hear his voice. This is the truth expounded by the prophet Joel who declared that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit upon “all flesh,” influencing “sons and daughters” to prophesy (Joel 2:28). The prophetic increase of knowledge (Daniel 12:4) has resulted from the flash of inspiration that God introduces into the minds of *all flesh*, so that his purposes are fulfilled in both the spiritual and the secular dimensions (Job 32:8).

LEADERS WITH INSIGHT

One of the great needs in the church today both locally and translocally is for the manifestation of true apostolic and prophetic ministry to complement its evangelistic, pastoral, and didactic ministries. Both of these gifts are given for insight into the purposes of God and for establishing and strengthening the church. The function of the apostle is described by the Greek word ἀπόστολος (*apostolos*), which translates the Hebrew word שְׁלִיחַ (*shaliach*), meaning “one sent.” This word was used to describe Jerusalem’s water source, the Pool of Siloam (*Shaliach*). The term *apostle*, therefore, was not an innovation created by Jesus for the first-century church. Moses was designated as the “apostle (שְׁלִיחַ-*shaliach*) of the True One, faithful one of the house of God, and his servant.” Since Moses was an apostle “sent” by God, it was only reasonable that Jesus should also be called *shaliach*, “the apostle and high priest of our confession” (Hebrews 3:1). The connection of the word *shaliach* with the Pool of Siloam should give an indication of the importance of apostolic ministry for providing the church with the life-sustaining water of fresh insight into God’s purposes. Apostles are, therefore, individuals who

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have a ministry and message that paralleled the Jewish institution of the *shaliach*.

In similar fashion, the word *prophet* in Hebrew is נָבִיא (*nabi*), which literally means “a bubbling up” or “a pouring forth,” indicating an effervescent water source such as a spring or artesian well. In their older forms, both the noun נָבִיא-*nabi* (prophet) and the verb נָבַח-*nabab* (prophesy) related to speaking in “an ecstatic state” of “religious ecstasy.” This idea springs from the word נָבַע-*naba*, which is cognate with *nabi* and means “to bubble up” or “to pour forth.” The implication by the Hebrew word *nabi* itself, then, is that the prophet is one who effervescently speaks words from God by making “ecstatic pronouncements.” He or she is, literally, “carried along by the Holy Spirit,” as Peter declared (2 Peter 1:20). Again, the idea of fresh water, emblematic of the insight of the Holy Spirit, is clearly implied in both apostolic and prophetic ministry.

The *nabi* in Israel was the prophet, who, whether male or female, provided leadership that featured an ongoing outpouring of the words of God through the agency of the Spirit. As Martin Buber noted, “*Nabi* is originally the attribute not of a class or profession, but of a condition . . . which from time to time seizes the men exposed to the *ruah*, gathering them and driving them over the land. . . . The single *nabi*, when he is called not to ‘declare’ his message, but to ‘perform’ it, is subject to the influence of the power that precedes the word.” Following the leadership of a *nabi* is not always comfortable, especially for the followers who prefer a

Prophets do not always come from the most illustrious backgrounds. Indeed, they are often farmers like Elisha and shepherds like David, emerging from the common folk. It is not always the illustrious, the erudite, or the noble who understand. More often than not, it is the obscure, the ignorant, the humble who are sufficiently dependent upon God that they can hear his still small voice.

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more structured—and, therefore, “safer”—environment.

THE NEED FOR PROPHETIC INSIGHT

Instead of searching the Scriptures for prophetic insight, however, communities often crystalize around the knowledge of the past so that corporate structures, systems, or doctrines become sacrosanct objects of adoration. When the original vision that spurred devotion to God and the excitement of walking in the light becomes enshrined in inalterable programs, practices, and teachings, men have created an idol that blocks their view of the light that shines increasingly unto the perfect day. When this occurs, religion becomes insipid, irrelevant, dull, and oppressive. When faith is replaced by creedalism, worship by routine, and love by mechanics, the visual acuity that permitted far-reaching vision is clouded by the cataracts of crystallization.

The need for ongoing revelation through prophetic insight is seen in the fact that God has not chosen to manifest all of his will for all of mankind in one moment of history. He himself tells us that “the path of the just is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day (Proverbs 4:18, NIV).” The pleasure of God is revealed “from faith to faith” (Romans 1:17). The Word may have been cryptically encoded in the words of prophets of a previous era; however, it is not fully understood until it is time for that particular segment of God's plan to be unfolded. That is why even Paul confessed that he then saw through a darkened mirror but anticipated the day when everything would become clear and apparent (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The continually unfolding revelation of God's intended activities and his quest to find men and women of vi-

sion and insight to whom he can reveal his will was described by Solomon in this manner: “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out” (Proverbs 25:2). It is a simple biblical fact that God has hidden understanding in his Word, encoding insight in both events and pronouncements that are not readily apparent in a cursory reading of the text. This is why it is incumbent upon all those who fear the Lord to “search the Scriptures” which “testify of the Messiah” (John 5:39).

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TODAY?

What are the words of the Lord for this day? What is the prophetic vision that can help us understand our own segment of God's plan for the ages? Is there a word for us today, or are we hopelessly adrift in a black expanse of nothingness? Fortunately, we have God's own personal word and signature on the document that gives us hope. “I am Yahweh, I change not,” he says (Malachi 3:6). If he has ever sought for man, his search is still ongoing. If he has ever communicated his vision to humans, he still is the enlightener of the soul.

If we are living in the time of the end of the age and the return of Jesus is approaching, what should be the prophetic vision for our time? What has the Word of God predicted for God's people in this time? What should believers in YHWH be doing in preparation for the consummation of the age? What is to be the prophetic vision for this time? Peter gives us this clear answer: “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:20, 21). The apostle emphatically concludes that the heavens will retain Jesus until the time of restoration of all things.

If we are living in the time immediately preceding the coming of Jesus, then the key word for our day is restoration, and not just a minimal restoration but a restoration of all things. Jesus will bring about the ultimate restoration at his return; however, his coming will be preceded by a time of restoration, a day of preparation for the Sabbaical Millennium. The sign and prophetic watchword for the times of Messiah, therefore, is restoration, and the people who are in touch with prophetic insight for that time will be a people inflamed with a passion to restore all things.

FACILITATING PROPHETIC RESTORATION

Now is the time for men and women of vision to stand up and be counted. It is not time to take our ease in Zion, resting on and boasting in the laurels of past accomplishments. It is not time to cloister ourselves in ghettoized communities with the Elijah syndrome of isolationism

RESTORE!

***It is time to remain
on the cutting edge
of prophetic insight
for our time, ever
following the light
that shines more
and more unto the
perfect day,
knowing that we will
come to know only
if we follow on to
know the Lord and
his Word and will for
our day.***

and separatism, focusing on the part of the restoration that God has already imparted unto us. It is not time to create bureaucracies that make memorials of the ashes of yesterday's fire and deify yesterday's—or even today's—prophets by making their teachings sacrosanct and unimprovable. It is not time to be infected with the insidious disease of self-exaltation and self-righteousness that is manifest in legalism and closely followed by judgmentalism in which we roundly denounce everyone and everything that is not doing what we are doing. It is not time to be swept up in soulish, ego-inflating tangential concepts that exalt peripheral ideas and external, fleshly forms over the prime commandments to “love” and “make disciples.” It is not time to fall prey to Satan's devices that marginalize in extremism so that our witness to God's revelation of restoration is rendered ineffective.

It is time to shake ourselves and move forward, following the cloud of divine revelation where God is leading and feeding his people. It is time to remain on the cutting edge of prophetic insight for our time, ever following the light that shines more and more unto the perfect day (Proverbs 4:18), knowing that we will come to know only if we follow on to know the Lord (Hosea 6:3). It is time to walk circumspectly, keeping our eyes focused on the centrality of Christ in which Yeshua has preeminence in all things (Colossians 1:18).

It is time that we redouble our efforts in research and development of the Hebraic heritage of our Christian faith, realizing that we probably have just scratched the surface in the restoration. We must take our cue from the prophets, sages, and kings of Judah who heard God's call to restoration following the Babylonian captivity and returned to Jerusalem to dig through the rubble of the Nebuchadnezzar debacle, find the foundation stones for the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, and complete the process of restoration. Like those leaders, we must have a clear vision of who we are and what we are doing: “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth,” and we are restoring “the city which a Great King in Israel built” centuries ago (Ezra 5:11).

Like the reformers of the sixteenth century, we must see ourselves as Christian Hebraists, dedicated themselves to *Veritas Hebraica*, so we must make *Sola Scriptura* not just a motto, but a commitment to reinterpreting the Scriptures in the light of the grammar of the text and the history and culture of the people who wrote them and to whom they were given. We must fully recover the rich legacy from Judaism that has been lost to the church by being covered over with the rubble of human teachings by the centuries of Hellenization and Latinization that gripped the church at the

God and Israel



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close of the apostolic era. We must strip away the accretions of church tradition to expose the foundational stones of Judaeo-Christian teaching that was established by the prophets and sages of Israel and perfected by Jesus and the apostles of the church.

It is time to go boldly into the future, holding high the banner of truth alongside the banner of love for our fellow man who may not yet share our insight. We must redouble our efforts to continue “marching to Zion,” leaving behind the dust of Babylon in our quest to restore the New Jerusalem. Like our father Abraham, God has called us out of Babylon to journey to the land of promise. We must ensure the fact that we are not “hung up in Haran” in some compromised middle ground between Babylon and Jerusalem. We must hear God's voice calling us “all the way” out of Babylon. We must understand that this restoration is a recovery and renewal of “all things spoken by the prophets since creation.” The mercies of God are “new every morning” so the searching heart can never find itself “at ease in Zion.” We are a pioneering people, constantly pressing the edge of the envelope. It is an uncomfortable position in which to find one's self; however, it offers the exhilaration of knowing that one is on the frontier, pointing the way for others to walk into the move of God for our time. 

It is time to go boldly into the future, holding high the banner of truth alongside the banner of love for our fellow man who may not yet share our insight.

Dr. John D. Garr, founder and president of the Hebraic Christian Global Community, has pioneered research, writing, and teaching on the Hebraic foundations of the Christian faith for more than forty years, helping believers understand the theological emergence of Christianity from the matrix of biblical Judaism. John's wife Pat and their sons, John, Timothy, and Stephen, share in advancing the widespread work of Hebraic Christian Global Community.



Jesus the Messiah

UNDERSTANDING THE JEWISH LORD OF THE CHURCH

BY TERRIL D. LITRELL, PH.D.

Nearly two thousand years ago, a man walked the earth who had a greater impact than any other person in history. Lowly born, he rose to prominence as he spread his vision of the redemption of the world. He attracted the attention of faithful disciples and suspicious civil and religious authorities. Eventually, he was tried, convicted, and executed. His crucifixion, ignominious and degrading, ended his life in a way that was reserved for the lowest of criminals.

Today, the story is known the world over. Yet, some two millennia later, great thinkers and everyday people still struggle to answer a single, simple question: "Who was Jesus Christ?" Was he a wise sage who called powerful teachings from centuries of Jewish tradition to create a new world vision of peace and love? Or was he God himself, the embodiment of divinity on earth, sent to bring salvation and redemption from sin to all humankind? How did Jesus come to be seen by millions of believers worldwide as God?

Since the earliest days, these questions have been the heart of debate. Over the centuries, they have led to fierce disputes and have produced deep divisions among religious people. These questions have driven profound acts of faith and worship, and they have incited war



and persecution. They have contributed to the building of nations and the shaping of lives, and they have deeply influenced some of the greatest thinkers of Western philosophy. To ponder questions like these is to understand the very shape of the Western world and to comprehend the remarkable power and influence that Jesus has had in the lives of believers.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS

The faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in new covenant order began with Jesus Christ. The effects of his life, a response to his teachings and experience of his death and resurrection were the beginnings of a new community within the Jewish world called “The Way,” a sect of Judaism. Even the name that the earliest believers in Jesus chose to represent their movement was deeply entrenched in Judaism, for “The Way” bespoke the *halakhab* of the Jewish community, “the way in which one should walk before God.” (In modern Hebrew, the phrase *havah halak* means, “Let’s go” [literally, “Let’s walk”]). The earliest Christian believers, therefore, were determined to walk in “The Way” that the Hebrew Scriptures prescribed as explicated by their Messiah Jesus. Paul confirmed this: “After the Way that they call a sect, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing everything written in the Torah and the prophets” (Acts 24:14).

Jesus was a Jew, born of a Jewish mother, the blessed virgin Mary. He was a member of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). The earliest beginnings of his teachings were, in fact, a movement *within* Judaism, not a program in opposition to the faith of his ancestors. Jesus was not a “Christian,” nor did not come to start a new religion called “Christianity.” As a matter of fact, the first “Christians” were identified at Antioch at least a decade after Jesus’ resurrection. And Jesus himself declared that his mission was to fulfill the law, not destroy it (Matthew 5:17). He, therefore, set forth on a ministry of reformation for God’s ancient system of praise, worship, and service (Hebrews 9:10). His reformation was not an innovation to form a new religion but a work of restoration to renew the faith of God and restore it to its original foundations and core values.

The very acknowledgement of Jesus as “the Christ” is a confession that he is the fulfillment of the promises that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: the Messiah Yeshua! When the apostle Peter was represented in the new covenant as confessing that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” he spoke for the ages to come, but he also spoke in context of his ancestral faith which expected the Messiah to come and restore

A Continuing Quest



This excellent book from the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies features the Dwight A. Pryor Legacy Collection, an anthology of challenging, informative articles by Dwight A. Pryor, edited by Keren H. Pryor. For those who are searching for truth about the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, Dwight Pryor’s books, articles, and audio/video messages are an absolute must. For complete information on this superb resource and a host of other invaluable materials, contact

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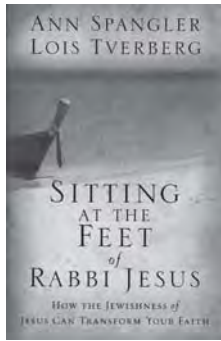
all things as God intended them to be (Acts 3:21). When Peter made his confession that acknowledged the Messiahship and deity of Jesus, his Lord responded, “On this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

But the gospel of Jesus encountered opposition from within Judaism, just as Jesus had. “He came unto his own [the Jews] and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (John 1:11–13). Within most of Judaism, there could be no question that Jesus was not the long-awaited Messiah, for the Messiah was envisioned to be a powerful king!

Among the followers of Jesus, attention was given very soon to the Gentile world (Acts 13:46), where Jesus’ disciples for the first time in history were nicknamed “Christians” at Antioch (Acts 11:26). Ideologically, Greco-Roman Christian thought defined the gospel of Jesus Christ as both the correction and fulfillment of Greek and Roman philosophy.

Gradually, the Gentile nations began to recognize that the coming of Jesus divided history into two distinct eras. The terms *BC* (“Before Christ”) and *AD* (*Anno Domini*—the “Year of our Lord”) came into being and the printing of annual calendars began to reflect how many years had transpired since that night when the angels sang, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Eventually, this crucified “enemy of Rome”

Jesus brought a reformation that was not an innovation to form a new religion but a work of restoration to renew the faith of God and restore it to its original foundations and core values.



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was named the only begotten Son of God, and Savior of the world, and within four centuries, he was believed upon by millions to be co-equal and coeternal with God the Father.

Since Jesus made such an impact upon the world, one might think that all people would know about him, would recognize his name, and explain his mission on earth. On the contrary, the vast majority of people today live in spiritual ignorance. It is said that one-half of all people on earth have never heard of Jesus. Among many of those who claim to believe in him, controversy often blurs his person and work. Scholars dissect his words, weigh his

inflections, and question his authority. Among philosophers, historians, and nominal Christians, the question still is "who was Jesus Christ?" If those who claim to be his disciples are unclear about him and his mission, how shall the world understand who he is or what his purpose is?

KNOWING WHO JESUS IS

Knowing who Jesus is connects us with God in a vital relationship, rather

than in a religious observance or a philosophy of life. This relationship cannot be understood merely by logical conclusions or natural laws of physics. Jesus Christ is beyond the material world and our finite understanding. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10).

It is only by faith that we grasp and appropriate the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Faith transcends history, both secular and biblical. Faith lifts Jesus out of the pages of the past, brings him into the present, and projects him into the future. He transcends time: "Before Abraham was, I am," Jesus said (John 8:58). He did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was," or "I will be," but "I am"—present tense.

History alone, therefore, does not prove the deity of Christ: that is left to our faith. The Bible records and affirms it, experience confirms it, but only faith decides and embraces it. Drawing on biblical revelation, confirmed by two thousand years of history, reason, and personal experience, disciples of Jesus today emphatically proclaim that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. He is unique in the universe. He came as a man, and yet he was God. He is both God and God's means of redeeming fallen, sinful humankind.

TWO NATURES

Messiah Jesus is one person with two distinct natures. He has a distinct human nature and a distinct divine nature. As a result, Jesus has perfect humanity and undiminished deity. These two are united in one person as 100% God and 100% man. Christ added humanity to deity. He became the God-man, not God and man. Christ is the invisible God and God is the visible Christ. This is not a paradox but a mystery of our faith.

Sadly, in the first three centuries of church history, the humanity of Christ and the deity of Christ were both often denied from time to time. In our day, however, the deity of Christ is denied.

HIS HUMILIATION

The two natures of Christ must not be confused with his divine state of humiliation (Philippians 2:5–8) and exaltation (Philippians 2:9–11). It was necessary for Christ to have two natures. It was necessary for him to have a human nature in order that he might die to provide the sacrifice necessary for human redemption (Hebrews 9:22). Yet, in order for him to be effective in his total ministry, he had to have a di-

There is none other like Jesus Christ. He came, but he was already here (John 8:58). He went away, but he never left (Matthew 28:20). He became a man, but he never ceased to be God (Colossians 2:9). He was the creator who became the creature (Colossians 1:16). He was the first to become the last, but he did not cease to be the first (Revelation 1:1).

vine nature, without which he could not have redeemed humanity.

Christ, therefore, took on human nature, but not our sinful, fallen human nature. The incarnation was necessary because God could not die, and man could not atone for his sins. Jesus remained who he was, and he became what we are so we might be redeemed from who we were and become like him (Philippians 3:21).

There is, therefore, none other like Jesus Christ. He came, but he was already here (John 8:58). He went away, but he never left (Matthew 28:20). He became a man, but he never ceased to be God (Colossians 2:9). He was the creator who became the creature (Colossians 1:16). He was the first to become the last, but he did not cease to be the first (Revelation 2:13). "He made himself of no reputation, took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man . . . he humbled himself . . . but God highly exalted him and gave him a name above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is LORD" (Philippians 2:7-9).

OUR MEDIATOR

Jesus Christ, the son of God, was indwelt by God (2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 10:5). He spoke as God (John 7:46) and he spoke as man (John 19:28). He knew why he was in the world (Luke 2:29). And, he completed the work for which he was sent (John 17:4; 19:30). As Son of God, he is qualified perfectly as the mediator between God and man. Paul wrote of "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5), but he also called Jesus "the only God" (1 Timothy 1:17). A true mediator must have the qualities of both God and man. That is why Jesus fully qualifies as our mediator. He is both God and man!

Sin separates us from our Creator. Only Jesus Christ, God's Son, can bridge that gap. God sent his Son to be born of a virgin. He grew into manhood and proved his deity by healing the sick, raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, and ultimately resurrecting from the dead. Later he ascended into heaven to serve as our advocate, mediator, and priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Jesus established a new and better covenant on the promises of mercy, forgiveness, and assurance of salvation by faith in his atonement for sin (Hebrews 8:6).

OUR COMING KING

In his earthly ministry, Jesus was our prophet. In his heavenly ministry, he serves as our priest. In his yet to come return to earthly ministry, he will serve as our king. Paul wrote: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the

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seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel (2 Timothy 2:8). This reveals that Jesus was true man, descended from King David, and that the promise is made that he will reign on David's throne so that of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end (Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-36; Isaiah 9:7). Systems of human government will come and go; kingdoms and empires will rise and fall; but the kingdom of Jesus Christ will abide forever (Daniel 7).

This is the real Jesus Christ. Any other is a man-made Jesus who is helpless and worthless. The real Jesus will some day reign as the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). To him be glory for ever and ever (2 Timothy 4:18; Jude 1:25). 

Systems of human government will come and go; kingdoms and empires will rise and fall; but the kingdom of Jesus Christ will abide forever.

Dr. Terri D. Littrell is a minister and educator with over fifty years of experience in instructing believers in biblical faith. Based on the Judaic model of acceptance and affirmation, he has long been an advocate of positive biblical ecumenism, restoration principles, liturgical renewal, and racial reconciliation. Terri lives in Cleveland, Tennessee where he serves in various capacities as educator, minister, and counsellor.



Biblical Respect for Our Elders

REVERENCE FOR ELDERS IS A COMMANDMENT FROM GOD

BY KARL D. COKE, PH.D.

As a boy growing up in the woods of Coos Bay, Oregon, my parents taught me to stand when older people entered the room. It was just part of being obedient. I had no knowledge they had based their request upon Holy Scripture. The procedure is Biblical. The LORD Himself has impressed Leviticus 19:32 upon my heart. I now know this simple obedience to a *mitzvah* pleases Him, not just my parents. The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:10 to “find out what pleases the Lord.” Why? Respecting the elderly is a way one learns to revere the LORD.

about ratings tell us that their programming has no impact on our youth. Yet, following a recent student-shooting of parents and classmates, a Chicago newspaper refused to put the article on the front page. They felt it might “influence a copycat” to repeat the crimes.

What has happened to our society? How has our society changed since I was taught to respect the elderly in the 1940's? What influences have diminished respect in my lifetime? Disrespect did not come instantly, yet it seems to have become pervasive quickly. Who is to blame? Religion, politics, education, films, television, books and music must share the blame. Religion continues to allow Freudian psychoanalysis to replace the preaching of and subsequent obedience to God's Word. Politicians promise “rights” rather than doing what is right. Educators throw God out with their new-found “age of reason” curriculum. Films portray sex in place of romance, murder in place of solving problems. Rather than report news, television has institutionalized itself as the fourth branch of the USA's federal government. Books are written without righteous heroes. Music? Music is so rare today that one has to search for it. Subliminal messages intended to be pounded into mindless individuals are passed off as music today. Psychologists blame our parents! Politicians threaten to take away or save social “security.” Educators teach all to “question” the authority of their parents. Films portray people as sexual objects which can be exchanged for any reason as one ages. Popular books and music teach disrespect as well. It should be painfully obvious why there is little respect for the elderly today.

An example of a bestselling book is *The Nurture Assumption*. It's author, Judith Rich Harris, an author-ess of psychological textbooks, attempts to explain why children turn out the way they do. Her premise

There is apparently little respect for elderly people today. Personally, I am frequently pushed aside by children in public places, rarely called “sir,” and never have anyone younger than me rise when I enter a room. Since today's society seems to place little value on life, disrespect is considered normal. We are all victimized daily by television programs whose hate-filled scenes strip society of Biblical values. Now, children shoot parents and fellow classmates while those same television networks ask each other, “What is wrong?” Media executives concerned



is that parents have no real impact on their children's development. She alleges that the people who actually form children's development are their peers at school and in the neighborhood. On page 351 she says, "Parenting has been oversold. You have been led to believe that you have more of an influence on your child's personality than you really do." On page 352 she further states, "There is no evidence that the nurture assumption (that parents influence children) has done any real good. But it has done some real harm." This position is exactly opposite that of the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Freud taught that his dream analysis led to his discovery of the infantile sexuality complex known as the Oedipus complex, which constitutes the erotic attachment of a child to the parent of the opposite sex together with a hostile feeling toward the other parent. Freud taught that parents do impact their children. His students have kept people on couches for two generations telling psychiatrists why they "hate" their parents. Well, Harris seems to want to relieve the accused parents by telling them they had no influence in the establishment of their children. Freudian psychology has obviously failed, so, Harris is trying the exact opposite explanation! Freud gave disturbed children their parents to blame. Harris takes blaming parents away from disturbed children.

The reason neither Freud nor Harris can solve the dilemma facing disturbed people is that they offer no lasting answers. Harris is an evolutionist who asks us on page 2 to join her on a visit to a "chimpanzee" society, a feminist who always lists "Mother" before "father" (notice even the capitalization), a socialist who wants kids to determine the rules, an educator who very much believes in situation ethics and a fatalist who leaves all up to heredity (genes). Nowhere in her book does she acknowledge God or His Word. Recorded in Section D, *USA Today*, Monday August 24, 1998, are words with which I agree. Of Harris' book it states "Eileen Shiff a child development education teacher at Paradise Valley Community College in Phoenix, is 'incensed.' She calls the Harris book an 'attention getter' ungrounded in research. This book is going to sell big time because it's absolution for parents who are having trouble with their kids. It's 'don't blame me, blame their friends,'" she says. However, the larger and more permanent danger is that it is one more step in the diminishing of children's respect for their parents.

Sharon Begley's article "The Parent Trap" in the September 7, 1998, *Newsweek* magazine has many poignant statements regarding Harris' book, *The Nurture Assumption*. On page 54, she quotes Steven Pinker of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who "predicts that 'The Nurture Assumption' will come to be seen as a turning point in the history of psychology." On the other hand, also quoted is Jerome Kagan of Harvard who said of Harris' work, "I

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am embarrassed for psychology." On page 56 Begley says, "many of the nation's leading scholars of child development accuse Harris of screwy logic." Of these researchers she further states on page 57 about Harris' logic of children growing up in the same environment, "even children who grow up with the same parents do not have an identical environment." Harris' bottom line: "The world that children share with their peers determines the sort of people they will be when they grow up" (p. 56). According to Harris, parents have no impact on their own children. With respect for the elderly almost gone, now Harris offers a theory that nothing your parents ever did for you made any difference. Now, according to Harris, there is no reason to either love or hate them!

All of this utter nonsense continues while our society heads toward self-destruction in part caused by the loss of respect. Society is like a fabric. When one removes any threads of Biblical, Godly behavior from the fabric of society, that fabric is weakened proportionately. Nietzsche, a German philosopher (1844-1900) taught that traditional values (represented primarily by Christianity) had lost their power in the lives of individuals. He was convinced that traditional values represented a "slave morality." He claimed that new values could be created to replace the traditional ones. He told people that they could be liberated from all values except those they deemed valid. In short, he gave permission to destroy the fabric of society. Once before, a society self-destructed because men forsook God's Word and "did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6). Did Nietzsche, a

When one removes any threads of Biblical, Godly behavior from the fabric of society, that fabric is weakened proportionately.



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***Eliminating
the threads of
God's
morality from
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not free
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God! These
things only
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Lutheran pastor's son, think it would not happen again? Nietzsche is wrong! Society dies when you remove any threads which hold it together. Removing one of God's threads (such as standing in the presence of the elderly) does not bring life to society! Eliminating the threads of God's morality from society does not free society from God! These things only insure society's destruction.

What is our society (without God and His threads of morality) faced with today? Atomic proliferation, AIDS epidemic, divorce, war, starvation and financial collapse, to name a few. Will any of these major problems be solved with a society without morals? Which world political leader stands today with the morality to guarantee his word? Today's world leaders, educated in Nietzsche-infested universities, are without morality. They are without hope. How can I say such a thing? It is simple. None is calling the world back to God. The news media must share in this silence by telling righteous people to "leave their leaders alone!" "They are doing a good job!" "Morality does not matter!" Obviously the media must defend the immoral because they are defending the champions of their own causes. The feminists cannot speak against a predatory leader who passes their legislation. Religious leaders cannot condemn a morally bankrupt politician due to the fear of self-exposure.

Respect for righteousness is gone. Television networks openly attack churches. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, has accused ABC of a pattern of attacks upon the Catholic Church. On ABC, a talk-show host ridiculed the Pope, a commentator bashed Mother Teresa during her funeral, an investigative special on cults included pictures of the Vatican, a situation comedy ran during Easter showing a boy obsessed with the

bloodiness of the Crucifixion, and a heavily promoted dramatic series features a young priest questioning fundamental church teachings. This is all being done by a Walt Disney Company-owned television network, ABC.

If you remove respect for righteousness, society breaks down. Respect for righteousness is a thread worth having in the fabric of every society. If you wish to know if any particular thread has been removed from any society, simply look at that fabric. That fabric will not have changed color. It will have gotten weak. Removing threads doesn't remove color, it removes strength. In today's Nietzschean society, there is not just less respect, there is no respect. We are not just in a "colorless" society. We are in a "weakened" society. All our senses are telling us we have lost our strength! Since Nietzsche declared himself God, one no longer "hears" the sweet melody of "yes sir" or "yes ma'am." One no longer "smells" the perfume of youth giving way to the elderly. One no longer "sees" the smile caused by a man giving his place to a lady. Gone is the "sweet taste" of "Thank you," "May I" and "Please." We are all bankrupt of the "touch" of helping another across a busy street. In their place we have the senseless pounding of loud drums coming from automobile sound systems which prevent anyone from "hearing" an urgent siren of an emergency vehicle. What we now "smell" is mind-numbing pot, crack cocaine and the incense of the gurus. Our eyes are now forced to "behold" graffiti, pornography called art and endless murders on television. The only "taste" today is "tasteless." "Touch" today carries with it the notion of children and spouses being abused.

Can man live without God? Is it too late to bring respect back into the fabric of society? Have things gone too far? I say it is not too late. I say, "Bring back the thread of rising in the presence of our elderly." Let society know that there are key threads which hold its fabric together. "Reverence for the elderly" is Jewish *mitzvah* number 206 from the 248 Mandatory Commandments and is recorded in Leviticus 19:32. We need the sound of God reweaving that thread into our fabric. Respecting our elderly leads to respecting the Ancient of Days. Eliminating the one eliminates the other. Restoring the one will restore the other. Oh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bring us back to our senses! 

Dr. Karl D. Coke is a Hebrew teacher whose understanding of the original languages, history, geography and cultures of Holy Scripture enables him to make the Bible come alive for his audiences and readers. As Chancellor of the Timothy Program International, he offers the world a high quality, accredited Bible college curriculum. Karl travels extensively and teaches internationally. He and his wife, Lori, live in Charlotte, North Carolina





Resh

BY KARL D. COKE, PH.D.

ראש השנה



The *Resh* is the twentieth letter in the Hebrew alphabet. As a numeral, it stands for the number 200. The sound that it makes as an English equivalent is the sound of the letter R. According to Gesenius, on page 748 of his *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, “The name רִישׁ, i. q. Chald. ראש and Heb. ראש, denotes *the head*, . . .”

The shape of the letter forms the top and back of a human head (see photograph at right). Figuratively, this is what the Jews call the first day of their legal calendar—“*Rosh*” (*Resh*) *HaShanah*, or, the “Head” day of their year. It is part of the first word of Scripture as well. Genesis 1:1 begins with the Hebrew word *BeReshith*. This is translated, “In the beginning.” One can see the form of the word *resh* in the midst of this first Bible word. A case has been made by some scholars to translate this first word “In beginnings.” They wish to include the idea of God’s “head” or “first” day in creation.


Rosh HaShanah is the first day of the Jewish calendar month called *Tishrei*. *Tishrei* corresponds to the calendar month of September/October. In his book *Day by Day in Jewish History*, Abraham Bloch lists the following traditions associated with *Rosh HaShanah* (*Tishrei* 1): 1) Creation of Adam and Eve; 2) Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden; 3) Birth of Cain and Abel; 4) Noah dispatched the dove and removed the cover of the ark; 5) Sarah, Rachel and Hannah prayed for offspring and their prayers were granted on this day; 6) Joseph was released from prison; 7) Pharaoh freed the Jews from slavery; 8) Satan was granted permission to test Job’s character; 9) Elisha prophesied the birth of the son to the Shunamite (II Kings 4:16); and, 10) Ezra read the Torah to the Jews at the water-gate in Jerusalem in 444 B.C.E.

Among the most powerful passages in God’s Word is Deuteronomy 28:1–14. This passage contains the blessings put upon those by the LORD when they obey His commands. In verse 13, the LORD says He will, “make thee the **head**” (Hebrew: וַיְהִיְהוָה לְרֹאשׁ). In the Hebrew text we see the word *rosh*. The LORD says that He will make the obedient one the “head” and not the “tail.” Gesenius says

the following on page 751 of *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, “to be the head or leader, to be over . . . whatever is *highest* and *supreme*.”

Rosh HaShanah is called “The Feast of Trumpets” in Leviticus 23. It is the time of year to announce the coming of Messiah. In 1967, Rabbi Shlomo Goren stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and blew the shofar.

“**The Shofar.**” The essential ritual of *Rosh HaShanah* is the sounding of the *shofar*. The Mishnah rules that the horn of any animal (e.g. sheep, goat, antelope), except the cow may be used as a *shofar* on *Rosh HaShanah*. . . . It is considered meritorious to use a curved *shofar*, symbolic of man bowing in submission to God’s will. . . . There are ten frequently quoted reasons (why the *shofar* is blown), which scholars

have attributed to Saadiah Gaon: (1) Trumpets are sounded at a coronation and God is hailed as King on this day; (2) The *shofar* heralds the beginning of the penitential season; (3) The Torah was given on Sinai accompanied by the blasts of the *shofar*; (4) The prophets compare their message to the sound of the *shofar*; (5) The conquering armies that destroyed the Temple sounded the trumpet blasts; (6) The ram was substituted for Isaac; (7) The prophet asks, “Shall the horn be blown in a city, and the people not tremble?” (Amos 3:6); (8) The prophet Zephaniah speaks of the great “day of the Lord” (Judgment Day) as a “day of the horn and alarm.” (Zephaniah 1:14, 16); (9) The prophet Isaiah speaks of the great *shofar* which will herald the messianic age (Isaiah 27:13); and (10) The *shofar* will be sounded at the resurrection.” (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 14, p. 308, Jerusalem, 1978) 



Top:
This graphic says in Hebrew (right to left) “*Rosh HaShanah*.” This is the Jewish “first” or “head” day of their legal year. In the Bible, this day is also called the “Feast of Trumpets.” Notice the “shofar” in the graphic.

Above:
Top and back of young Israeli’s head clearly shows outline of the letter *resh*.

The Gospel of Genesis

THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S TRUTH FOR HUMANITY

BY DR. JOHN A. LOOPER

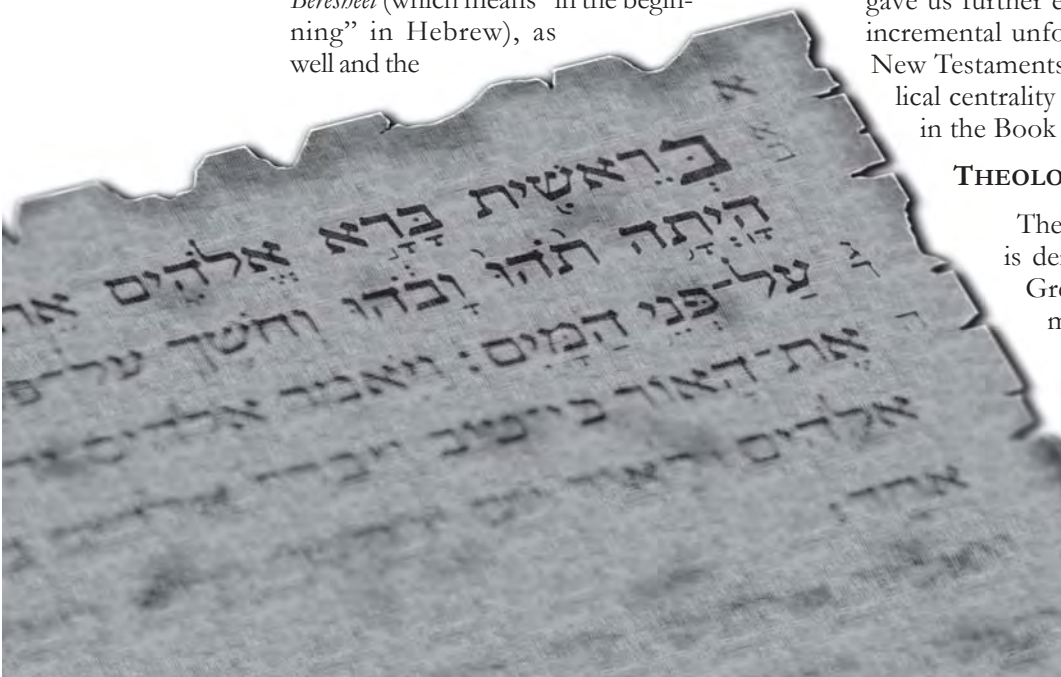
The Gospel of Genesis, as it should be rightfully called, is the foundation of all that follows in the entire volume of the Holy Scriptures—the Bible. Concerning the biblical Gospels, we often think of just the Four Gospels in the New Testament and forget to include the *Gospel of Beginnings*, Genesis or *Beresheet* (which means “in the beginning” in Hebrew), as well and the

summary gospel of the Books of Moses that is called Deuteronomy.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing new in the entire Bible after Genesis in terms of foundational doctrines, the Gospel, and other rudimentary revelations and eternal principles. The Prophets (*Nevi'im*) and the Writings (*Ketuvim*) only gave us further explanations, clarifications, and incremental unfoldings—be they in the Old or New Testaments. Every major doctrine of biblical centrality and consequence has its origin in the Book of Genesis.

THEOLOGY

The etymology of the word *theology* is derived from both the Latin and Greek term *theologia*. First and foremost, theology is the beginning of all biblical doctrines as they relate to the divine *Elohim*—his character, his divine nature, and his eternal attributes. We often use this term loosely in the Christian church, relegating it largely to the litany of our various religious communions' Articles of Faith and cultural interpretations. As the etymology



of the word implies—*Theo* (God) and *Logos/Logia* (Word)—is the revelation of *Elohim* which he has revealed concerning himself—in all of the created universe and by his spoken and recorded words in the Holy Scriptures. In the creation account alone, the phrase *God said* is used ten times (Genesis 1, 2; Psalm 19). The revelation of the *One Triune God—Elohim*—is revealed clearly in the first three verses of Genesis 1:1–3 and in John 1:1–3. The three persons in the one *Elohim*—the plural form of *El* or *Eloah* in Hebrew—is the God of all creation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There is a word in Hebrew that means a singular one *re'shiyth* (*ray-sheeth*), meaning the first in place, time, order or rank—i.e. the first one; however, when the LORD *Elohim* speaks of himself, of the first day of creation, of the first union of man and woman as one flesh, as well as in the *Shema*: “Hear O Israel, The LORD your Elohim is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4), one LORD does not use the term *re'shiyth*, but rather the term *'ehad*, meaning “the same or of the same,” “a composite oneness.” In essence, the first day of creation (*'ehad*) contained in *embryonic form* all of God's created universe.

This was confirmed at the end of the creation story, when the narrative states, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created *in the day* (*yom* [*yome*], singular) that Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens” (Genesis 2:4, MKJV). This was done in the same manner as with the conception of a child. At conception—when the X and Y chromosomes unite and create a unique set of DNA—all that that person is to ever be physically, mentally, emotionally, and otherwise is determined precisely at that moment.

My home-spun definition for the divine persons of the first three verses of Genesis, is as follows: “the Father willed it, the Holy Spirit conceived it and gestated it and the Son, the Person of the Word brought it forth and revealed it when he said, ‘Let there be light. . .’” Why is *Elohim* first revealed as light? No matter how intricate and glorious the universe may be, it is hidden and unrevealed without light! In the Gospel of Genesis, the Lord is revealed as the *Aleph* and *Tav*, the First and the Last, the first and last letters of the Hebrew *aleph-bet*, and, more appropriately, all that has ever been divinely spoken since before creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims his handiwork” (Psalm 19).

ANTHROPOLOGY

This term rightfully implies the study of mankind (*anthropos*) and all of the various factors regarding man's history, generations, races,



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ethnicities, and social constructs from antiquity until contemporary times. The Bible clearly speaks about the creation of Man (*Adam*)—both male and female—in *the image and likeness of Elohim* (Genesis 1:26–28). The Scriptures also describe mankind's fall from grace and the earthly initiation of God's Plan of Salvation for all of humankind. The accounts of Genesis include the anthropology of Adam and Eve, to the flood of Noah, to the postdiluvian world, to the dispersion and the appointed times and inheritances of all the continents and nations of the earth. “And two sons were born to Eber. The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided” (Genesis 10:25, MKJV).

These histories are all clearly set forth in the Book of Genesis and in various other Scriptural and extra-biblical accounts, but especially in Genesis 1–8, Deuteronomy 32:8–9, and Acts 17:22–31. After sin entered the picture through our original parents (Adam and Eve), the Genesis account records that man for the first time was *formed in his own image and likeness*, when it states, “Adam . . . fathered a son in his own likeness, after his own image” (Genesis 5:3) From man's fall forward, the sins of humankind became our misfortune and dilemma (Genesis 3).

The Plan of Salvation was *Elohim's* prescription to redeem man and to spiritually restore humankind back to God's original *image and likeness* through the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of his one and only Son, Jesus. The Jewish people call him by his Hebrew name *Yeshua—God is salvation*” (Acts 26:14–15).

SOTERIOLOGY

It often surprises many Christians that the fall of man and the Plan of Salvation were foreseen and prepared for before the foundation of the earth and of the universe.

There is nothing new in the entire Bible after Genesis in terms of foundational doctrines, the Gospel and other rudimentary revelations and eternal principles.

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This was done within the Lord God's infinite foreknowledge by which he predestined his plan through his Son, Jesus the Messiah (1 Peter 1:19–20; Romans 9; Revelation 13:8). The promise of the Savior Messiah begins with the accounts and promises found in Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22; and Genesis 37, just to note a few of the Gospel of Genesis' historic and prophetic messianic proclamations.

Salvation is more than a personal experience. It is a plan! I often like to say, "I am saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, it is the gift of God the Father. I am being saved from myself, from the temptations of the world, and from the devices of Satan, the evil one himself, so that I will be made more like Jesus daily. I shall be ultimately saved through the redemption of my body, when I put on immortality at Jesus' second appearing to live with him forever." This could be more simply stated by saying, "I am saved, I am being saved, and I shall be ultimately saved." Once again, salvation is more than one's personal experience: it is an eternal plan of God which involves so much more than meets the eye at first glance.

In the Gospel of John is the most famous verse of the Holy Scriptures: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, MKJV). In the Greek text of this passage, the Apostle John could easily have used a Greek term for *man* or *mankind* (*anthropos*) in the place of "for God so loved the *world*" This is a very important point, because John chose instead to use

the Greek term *cosmos*, which is translated as *world* in our English versions. The word *cosmos* literally means the universe. The reason for this use is because the Apostle John had a revelation of the Lord God's ultimate Plan of Salvation, which involves the reclamation and restoration of both the *heavens and the earth* (Isaiah 65; 66; Revelation 21; 22).

My personal view of cosmic history, past and future, is as follows: I consider that God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, has redeemed and is redeeming believing mankind (who were made lower than the angels) for his eternal purpose of restoring the third-part of the sons of God or angels of heaven that fell from heaven (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:13–15; Luke 10:18–19; Revelation 12:7–17). Simply stated, God is not a loser! Subsequently, the Lord will cast the Devil, the angels that fell with him, and those of the human race who do not believe in Christ, as Savior and Lord, into the Lake of Fire to perish forever, ages without end (Revelation 20:7–15). After all, did not Jesus say that in the eternal age to come we "shall be as the angels"? (Mark 12:18–27, esp. 25). This is why both the Old and New Testaments have much to say about the Lord's creation of *a new heaven and a new earth* upon which *the Holy City, the bride the Lambs wife* will dwell with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, forever (Isaiah 65, 66; Matthew 22:29–32; 2 Peter 3:12–13; Revelation 22:16; Revelation 20, 21–22).

ECCLESIOLOGY

The very design for family and community on earth was crafted after the three-dimensional family in heaven itself—God the father, mother Jerusalem, and the angels or sons of God. This picture is clearly set forth in the Gospel of Genesis. The biblical *nuclear family* is also three-dimensional. This family is comprised of man (*ish*), woman (*ishah*) and children (*yeled*) or offspring (*ben* [son] and *bat* [daughter]). Man is a type of God the Father and of Christ. Woman is a type of *Heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all* (Galatians 4:26). Children are a type of the sons and daughters of the Lord God's New Testament Kingdom, in Christ, on earth.

Adam, is the rightful name of all human beings (both male and female) who were made *in the image and likeness of God* (Genesis 1:26–28). The name *Adam* means to be red, reddish or literally *to blush*. This definition has to do with the life-giving blood of the body, which can be visibly seen inside the capillary veins, just beneath the skin. This allows human beings to blush. As a matter of fact, mankind is the only one of God's cre-

The promise of the Savior Messiah begins with the accounts and promises found in Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22; and Genesis 37, just to note a few of the Gospel of Genesis' historic and prophetic messianic proclamations.

ations with the ability to blush, as when young people are in love or when someone is embarrassed. And regarding sin, we are the only ones of the Lord's great creation who have a need to blush!

All the other animals live by instinct and not by self-awareness, intellectual choice, or conscience, and are therefore innocent beings. This is the reason they were used as sacrifices until Jesus, the one true sacrifice, would come—the innocent for the guilty. Eve, meaning “life-giver” or “the mother of all living” was so accurately named, because *the life of all flesh is in the blood* (Leviticus 17:11) and women bleed or menstruate as a part of the ability to give life. All human beings, other than Adam, himself, were and are born of a woman. The reason for this special formation of the first man was to portend the *second man Adam*, conceived and formed supernaturally in the womb of the virgin Mary (Miriam). The spiritual application of Eve, the *life-giver*, in the New Testament is that the church, the bride of Christ, spiritually gives birth to sons and daughters into the Kingdom through the power of the Gospel and the life-giving atoning blood of Jesus the Messiah (Romans 1:16–17).

ESCHATOLOGY

The Doctrine of *Last Things* has its foundations in Genesis. There were seven generations from Adam to Enoch. “Enoch the seventh from Adam walked with God and was not for the Lord took him” (Genesis 5:24). Today, we do not have the true book of Enoch, only a spurious one named in his honor and which was written during the Intertestamental Period. Jude, the half-brother of Jesus records that “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 1:14). It is no coincidence that the Book of Revelation records that “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he should begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, saying . . . the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15–19).

It is also noteworthy that in the Matthew 24 and Luke 17, Jesus is recorded as saying that both Noah and Lot are “signs of the Last Times.” Another point of interest from the Gospel of Genesis is that ten is the number of

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judgment in Hebrew numerology. There were *ten generations* from Adam to Noah. The Lord required at least *ten righteous men* in order to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. It is also important to note that the *Decalogue* or the *Ten Commandments* was the moral and righteous judgments of God for humankind. There is not a greater eschatological picture from Genesis than the story of Joseph, especially comparing Genesis 37 with Revelation 12. By these two prophetic scenarios of Noah, Lot, and Joseph are revealed both the first-century incarnation of Messiah and the Second Coming of Jesus, in the *eschaton*, the Last Times.

Genesis, then, can easily be seen as the Gospel of God, the foundation of God's instructions from creation to the time of the new heavens and new earth. It is the good news of God for humanity that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). 

Dr. John A. Looper is president of Restoration Fellowship International, a network of ministries and congregations that promote a return to biblical principles for translocal fellowship. He has served the body of Christ as teacher and administrator, helping believers implement the practices of embracing a biblically Hebraic lifestyle. John and his wife Jean live in Cleveland, Tennessee, where they pastor Restoration Fellowship.



**The Doctrine of
Last Things
(Eschatology)
has its
foundations in
Genesis.**

The First Fruit Principle

A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY

BY VICTORIA SARVADI, TH.D.

God's intention is that man lives a life of true blessing. However, realizing this divine desire depends on trusting in his promises and consistent obedience to his instructions, one of which is the giving what the scripture calls the first fruit offering.

We are not here to make as much money as we can and acquire as much stuff as possible. We are here to manifest God's ultimate cosmic purpose.

Just as Yeshua carried out God's plan of redemption and reconciliation by the resurrection, we are told to continue advancing the Kingdom for his next great act. We are called to be his feet, his hands, his mouth in order to continue the work he began. Part of the means to this cosmic end is the transference of wealth from the wicked to the hands of the righteous. Those who understand this Scriptural truth know they have a responsibility of bringing God's plans to fruition.

And because God is in the wealth-making process with the righteous, he has a fair plan of distribution for this partnership. ***It's a principle and command called the first fruit, a covenant agreement that consists of four profound principles that must be adhered to;***

1. Everything Belongs to God.
2. God Gives to Us.
3. We Give Back to God—God's Portion.
4. God Protects and Multiplies What He Provides.

EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD

"The LORD owns the earth and all it contains, the world and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). He created it all. He owns it all. Even his creation, man, belongs to him. He has provided to man instructions on dwelling in and among his world. He ad-



equately informs us of the principle inner workings of his creation and how his economy works.

GOD GIVES TO US

God showed me long ago that it is he who gives us the power to create wealth because of the covenant promises he gave to Abraham and to those who trusted as Abraham trusted. This power works in direct connection to our obedience to his holy instructions. If we obey and allow his heart to override our will, he opens up opportunities and downloads his wisdom into our heart, mind, and spirit. That is the covenant exchange, made clear in Deuteronomy 8:18: “Rather you are to remember *Adonai* your God, for it is he who gives you power to make wealth, to establish his covenant that he swore to your fathers—as it is this day.”

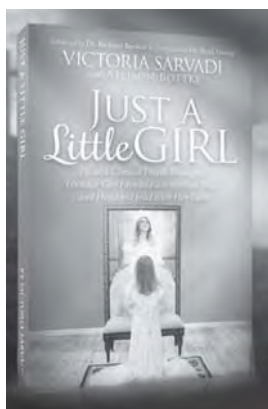
God and I are partners. He provides the environment (the place where I work), an environment that is his creation. He provides the tools and gives me the means through his wisdom, divine health, opportunity, protection, and resources. Through me, he manifests his purposes. His purpose is always the same, and that is the advancement of his kingdom. He purposes to take the kingdom of darkness down and prepare the world for his soon coming kingdom. This will end the governments of man and evil ruling dominions and powers allowing for his holy throne to finally appear.

Many people think that God just wants his children to be happy because they are “entitled children of a King.” Sadly, those who adhere to this somewhat limited point of view have missed the point completely. *Everything* that is written in God’s Word through his prophets and also through the words of Yeshua (which repeat the words of the prophets) must come to pass. It is his kingdom that is coming. And it is his will that must be done to bring it to pass.

WE GIVE BACK TO GOD – GOD’S PORTION

The Word declares that the first fruits are God’s—and they are holy. That means they are sanctified unto him and for his purposes. This portion cannot be used for my own benefit. It is God’s portion, and therefore it is *spiritual*—already ordained and committed by God for the use of providing for the workers of his kingdom and providing meat in his storehouse for the poor. Even though this first portion of wealth may be included in the gross numbers on my paycheck or dollar bills tangible to my touch, using them in my own business affairs is prohibited. ***First fruits do not belong to us, and we are not to use them on our own needs or wants.***

Offering first fruits when we receive an increase (or income) is a demonstration of our faith in



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God as the true source of our provision. When we consider what faith is, we need to acknowledge that faith is an action word. Giving what belongs to God back to him is a responsible reckoning of your collective business affairs and more importantly, an act of trust. Consider it is an act of faithfulness to your business partner. Would you cheat your business partner and take all the profits from your business all the while knowing it was your collective efforts that made your enterprise possible?

Leviticus 23:10 instructs: “When you come into the land which I give you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.” The words in Deuteronomy 18:4 echo this instruction: “The first fruits of your grain, of your new wine, of your oil, and the first fleece of your sheep, you are to give him.”

Clearly, our first fruit is to be set apart as holy unto God. The Word also tells us what the result is of giving God back his portion: “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Proverbs 3:9–10).

GOD’S ROI

In the world of business and commerce, monitoring the “Return on Investment” (ROI) is a wise practice, an act of fiscal responsibility. First and foremost, it is an acknowledgment of where the blessing of increase has originated. In our partnership with God, it is considered an act of worship. There is a principle of

Offering first fruits when we receive an increase (or income) is a demonstration of our faith in God as the true source of our provision. When we consider what faith is, we need to acknowledge that faith is an action word.



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return for the obedience of giving God his first fruit portion.

“So now, look! I have brought the first of the fruits of the soil that you have given me, *Adonai*.’ Then you are to set it down before *Adonai* your God and worship before *Adonai* your God” (Deuteronomy 26:10).

It must be understood that any attempt to spend the first fruits on yourself will immediately put your finances in a deficit as the devourer now has rights to the spiritual portion of your wealth.

PROTECTING AND MULTIPLYING WHAT HE PROVIDES

“If the part of a dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches” (Romans 11:16).

Giving the first portion of your finances to God will cause all the remaining portions of your finances to be holy. In other words, the giving of first fruits causes God to treat all your finances as holy, giving you favor with God because your finances are intimately and obediently connected to the sacred first fruit offering.

Your home is blessed, your car is blessed, the work of your hands is blessed—everything comes under the protective blessing of God. Having a blessing imparted on your home positions you to have healing in the physical, spiritual, and emotional areas of your life and that of your family. When you give first fruits not only do you and your family benefit but also all who enter your home for a visit.

ABRAHAM GAVE OFFERINGS TO MELCHIZEDEK

Interspersed with my paraphrasing, these instructions in the seventh chapter of Hebrews to the new believers in Yeshua exquisitely explain about the first fruit offering.

“Melchizedek was both king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He was the one who went out and gave Abraham his blessing when Abraham returned from killing the kings. Then Abraham gave him a tenth of everything he had. The meaning of the name Melchizedek is ‘King of Justice.’ But since Salem means ‘peace,’ he is also ‘King of Peace.’ We are not told that he had a father or mother or ancestors or beginning or end. He is like the Son of

God and will be a priest forever. Notice how great Melchizedek is! Our famous ancestor Abraham gave him a tenth of what he had taken from his enemies” (Hebrews 7:1–4).

Abraham knew there was someone who was making intercession for him. There was someone else involved in the supernatural favor he had received to overcome the enemy and then obtain the gain of wealth from his victory. It was a biblical act of worship to honor the mediators between God and man with the first fruit offering.

“Priests are given a tenth of what people earn. But all priests die, except Melchizedek, and the Scriptures teach that he is alive” (Hebrews 7:8).

Yeshua boldly said that *all* that is written in the Torah and the Prophets is about him. Melchizedek is about Him! In fact, he now *is* Melchizedek. The Word explains that Yeshua was appointed to be the Priest who makes intercession for us forever.

“The person we are talking about is our Lord, who came from a tribe that had never had anyone to serve as a priest at the altar. All of this becomes clearer when someone who is like Melchizedek is appointed to be a priest. That person wasn’t appointed because of his ancestors, but because his life can never end. The Scriptures say about him, ‘You are a priest forever, just like Melchizedek’” (Hebrews 7:13–17).

As Abraham honored Melchizedek, we, as Abraham’s children also give our honor to Yeshua, our Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the one who gives us all things according to his riches in glory! We follow in the trust of our father Abraham leaning on the promises of God’s Word. We must not be greedy and put our needs or wants above God—stealing from him the spiritually sanctified portion of wealth that is not authorized to function in our physical world. Instead, we are to give back to God, our business partner, his portion, sanctified to do his will in the kingdom of God.

THE STOREHOUSE

We are introduced to God’s “storehouse” in Malachi 3:10: “I am the Lord All-Powerful, and I challenge you to put me to the test. Bring the entire ten percent into the storehouse so there will be food in my house. Then I will open the windows of heaven and flood you with blessing af-

We must not be greedy and put our needs or wants above God—stealing from him the spiritually sanctified portion of wealth that is not authorized to function in our physical world. Instead, we are to give back to God, our business partner, his portion, sanctified to do his will in the kingdom of God.

ter blessing.” The storehouse was also known as the Temple, and the Temple was the hub of worship. It was the place where the hearts of the righteous came to meet with God. The offerings were given to God to provide for his priests who had no other income other than what God provided to them from worshippers. Provisions contained in the storehouse were also intended for the poor. The meat and grain that was given as offerings were distributed among the poor and widows. In this way, it was the community that cared for the poor and not the government.

“You search the Scriptures,” Jesus says, “because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (John 5:39). The word *Scriptures* here refers to the Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians call the Old Testament or what the Jewish people call the *Tanakh* (there was no New Testament at the time of Christ).

Everything written in the *Tanakh* was about Yeshua. He was the Rock in the desert. He was the cloud by day and fire by night. Yeshua is the Temple, and he is the storehouse. In essence, when we give to the plans and purposes of Christ, we are giving into God’s storehouse. We are giving it unto him. And for being obedient to this command, according to Malachi, God promised supernatural blessings.

BALANCING OUR BLESSINGS

Without doubt, my husband and I have been greatly—even supernaturally—blessed over the years. Yet, there was a time when that was not the case, a time when we depended more on our financial security than on God. Thankfully, through some financially harrowing times, we learned to live by the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. We learned to walk through life on those terms. Both Paul and I had to learn to listen for God’s voice and to daily seek his calling for our lives. Sometimes, in order to learn to listen, God needs to get our undivided attention.

Whether your income is \$500 or \$500,000, the covenant exchange between you and God remains the same: the first portion belongs to him. Pray to find where God wants you to sow your first fruit offerings. There are many ministry efforts advancing his purposes to bring about his kingdom. There are workers on the frontlines of faith (like the priests during the time of the temple) who minister to the people of God. There are organizations that help the poor, widows, and orphans and even more that seek to save those who are lost in sin. It may be a church, ministry, or at times just someone whose personal need is desperate.

Remember the Lord’s powerful words in Matthew 25:40, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters


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of mine, you did for me.” For those who say, “I can barely provide for my own family, how can I give a first fruit offering to someone else?” Without doubt, many struggle to make ends meet, sometimes on a daily basis. Yet God’s Word remains the plumb line by which we measure how to live a life that brings him glory, honor, and praise. God’s economy is principle based; revolving around earning and tithing, giving and receiving, sowing and reaping, ownership and stewardship, and yes, even around wisdom and wealth.

Yeshua lives forever. It is he who is interceding and providing for you, all your opportunities, your talents, your wisdom, your resources, in essence, your every need. Don’t neglect to give him his portion of your increase that comes from him so that you too may enter into the promises of the harvest. “Test him,” he says, and have faith. 

Dr. Victoria Sarvadi is co-founder and vice president of The Nathaniel Foundation in Kingwood, TX. She received her doctoral degree from The Center of Biblical Research in Redlands, CA, and has served the Messianic community as teacher and administrator. As a licensed minister, she is also Director of the Bethany Center and Minister of the Nathaniel Fellowship, a Hebraic community in McKinney, TX. She and her husband Paul live in McKinney, TX.



**Whether your
income is \$500 or
\$500,000, the
covenant
exchange
between you and
God remains the
same.**

Review the extensive library of inspirational and informative materials that Dr. Sarvadi’s community offers by visiting www.thebethanycenter.org.

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

HOW TO FULFILL GOD'S PLAN FOR THE HOLY CITY

BY RICHARD BOOKER, PH.D.

Almost every pro-Israel Christian organization, as well as Jewish organizations, concludes their program by reciting one of the most known Psalms—one you know well: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; may

they prosper who love you. Peace within your walls, prosperity within your palaces. For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, ‘Peace *be* within you.’ Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek your good (well-being)” (Psalm 122:6–9).

I have heard this quoted so many times that it often seems like a ritual that you are expected to say. But I wonder if we really know what we are saying. Let’s look beyond the English words to see what the Psalmist really means when he says, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Then we will see some ways to do what the Psalmist says.

Now here is something very important. The English word “pray” is found in the Hebrew Bible 225 times. The normal Hebrew word translated into English as “pray” is *na*, pronounced *nan*; (Strong’s #4994). It simply means to ask. But the Hebrew word translated as pray in Psalm 122:6 is *sha’alu*, pronounced *shah-alu*



(Strong's #7592). Many of you know this word because we sing it in the song, "*Sha-alu Shalom Yerusalayim*." Now here is where this gets interesting.

Of the 225 references for pray in the Bible, this is the *only* time the Hebrew word *sha-alu* is used. Since *sha'alu* is not the normal Hebrew word for "pray," this means God is telling us something very important about praying for the peace of Jerusalem, something he wants us to understand and act on. So what does God want us to know? Much more than just asking, the word *sha'alu* means an earnest burden and heartfelt desire that motivates you to take action that will result in good for Jerusalem. It is a recognition that there will never be "world peace" until there is first peace in Jerusalem.

So the word *sha'alu* means to actively and earnestly seek the good of Jerusalem through works of covenantal love. It means to actually do something that will build up Zion and be a blessing to Jerusalem. The last part of verse nine clarifies what it means to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. It says of Jerusalem to "seek your good or well-being." Psalm 128:5 further clarifies, "The LORD bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life."

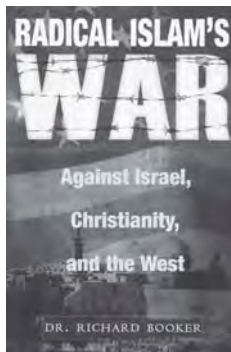
So how do we seek the good of Jerusalem? I want to briefly share 5 ways we can do so.

ORGANIZE A "CELEBRATE ISRAEL" EVENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

First, start in your own community by organizing and hosting a celebrate Israel event. One of the most relevant Scriptures for our time is Psalm 102:12–16 reads: "But you, O LORD, shall endure forever, and the remembrance of your name to all generations. You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her; yes the set time, has come. For your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth your glory. For the LORD shall build up Zion; he shall appear in his glory."

This Scripture says, "The Time of Favor Zion, yes the set time has come. And that when the LORD builds up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." We are living in the set time in history when the LORD is showing favor to and building up Zion. Zion here means the land and people of Israel.

Before the birth of Israel in 1948, most of Christianity never gave a thought to Israel being reborn. Centuries of replacement theology



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teaching, coupled with the false teaching that the "Jews killed Christ," actually encouraged a spirit of anti-Semitism in the Christian church. Even after Israel was reborn, this teaching has remained a core doctrine in many of the Christian denominations.

While more and more churches have awakened to a positive view of Israel, church leaders have so many local concerns that an Israel awareness weekend is just not a priority for them. We can get so burdened with needs of the congregation, old ways of thinking, past priorities and doing things that it is sometimes difficult to change what we are doing and why we are doing it.

While God never changes, his priorities change with new prophetic seasons. If we want God to bless us, we have to bless what he is doing—not ask him to bless what we are doing. And what is God doing? What is he blessing? He is building up and showing favor and mercy to Zion. When that is complete, he will appear in his glory. Then there will be peace in Jerusalem. Whether you believe Messiah's coming is his first or second time, he won't come until Zion is built up. Then there will be peace. Until then, we partner with God to seek the good of Jerusalem.

It is really simple. We see what God is doing and then we do what he is doing in partnership with him. So find yourself some like-minded people, and organize and host a Celebrate Israel

Praying for the peace of Jerusalem means to actively and earnestly seek the good of Jerusalem through works of covenantal love. It means to actually do something that will build up Zion and be a blessing to Jerusalem.

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it in order to be biblically nourished.

Please do not misunderstand what this perspective of the Bible means. It is not a matter of Christians trying to be Jews or getting “under the Law.” It is simply a matter of understanding Jesus and the Bible in its Hebraic culture and context. We must read and understand the Bible as a Middle-Eastern book not a Western book.

The apostle Paul wrote these words to the believers in Rome: “Do not boast against the branches [the Jewish people]. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root [the Hebraic origins of our faith], but the root supports you [Christianity] (Romans 11:18). We have many courses on the Hebraic roots of Christianity. Please go to our web site to see all the courses we have available and

how you can enroll as a student.

As far as Israel in prophecy, you can spend your entire life studying these Scriptures. You can find a good prophetic outline of Israel in Prophecy in Deuteronomy 4:23–31; 30:1–6. In these Scriptures Moses give a 10-point outline of the entire future of Israel and the Jewish people. All of history, past, present and future is God working out this 10-point prophecy. The prophets filled in the blanks with details and history fulfilled it. We are now between points 7–8 of this ten-point prophecy which you can read about in my book *Blow the Trumpet in Zion* available from my web store.

We cannot understand our world today or our place in God's redemptive purposes without understanding Israel in prophecy.

TOUR THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The third action step you can take is to tour the land of Israel. It has been said that a tour to Israel is worth a year of Bible college studies. One of the best investments you can make in your own life is to go to Israel and study the Bible in the land of the Bible. Christians who have been to Israel all say the same thing, “The Bible came alive when I was in Israel.” For our part, we have led tours to Israel for 30 years.

While it is good to tour Israel any time you can, your best investment is to go during the Feast of Tabernacles. Why is that? Because we are living in the prophetic season of Tabernacles, which is the Feast for all the nations. God is calling believers from all the nations to “Come up

event in your community. While we are currently taking a sabbatical, we have been blessed to do this for years in the Houston area.

**STUDY YOUR JEWISH ROOTS AND ISRAEL
IN PROPHECY**

The second action you can take is to study the Jewish roots of Christianity and Israel in Bible prophecy.

The Bible is a book written by Jews, to Jews, about a Jewish Messiah. In order to understand the meaning of their words for today, we must read them in the context of their world, not ours. Jesus and his early followers were all Jews deeply rooted in the rich Hebraic soil of their ancestors. They thought, taught and lived out of this soil. God planted Christianity in this soil and we must return to

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to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast.” Our friends at the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem started the Christian celebration of the Feast in Jerusalem in 1980. Today approximately 5000–6000 believers from 100 countries attend this joyous celebration. I was blessed to be a teacher at this Feast for 18 years.

We are practicing and rehearsing for the time when Zechariah 14:16 will be fulfilled, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of Hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 8:22 adds, “Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall seek the LORD of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pay before the LORD.”

HELP THE JEWS MAKE ALIYAH TO ISRAEL

Action number four is to help the Jews who want to return to Israel. The Hebrew word for returning to the Land is *Aliyah*. After nearly 2,000 years, of living in exile among the nations, the Jewish people are returning to their ancient Land. Jeremiah 16:14–15 reads, “Therefore behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that it shall no more be said, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt’ but, ‘the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and all the lands where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back into the land of their fathers.”

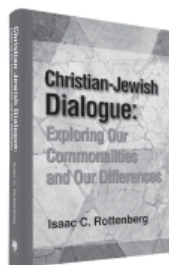
Ezekiel 39:28 God explains, “I will leave none of them captive any longer.” The rising anti-Semitism in Europe and England is causing the Jewish people in these countries to consider what was at one time unthinkable: making *aliyah* to Israel. Right now approximately 200,000 Jews from France are seriously considering making *aliyah*. The only thing keeping this from happening is that Israel is not ready to receive them. But recently Israel has formed a steering group of government leaders to make a plan to receive them. Is the US far behind?

It is God’s intention to bring all the Jews from all the nations back to Israel and Christians have a responsibility to assist them. Isaiah 49:22 reads, “Behold, I will lift my hand in an oath to the nations, and set up my standard for the peoples; they shall bring your sons in their arms and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.”

In the 1990’s over one million Jews made *aliyah* from the former Soviet Union. Christians had a major role in that massive return of Jews. Christian Zionists organizations working together brought 100,000’s of those one million to Israel. We brought them by bus to safe houses until they could be transported to Is-

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rael. We brought them by air and by sea. Our organization was blessed to pay for a busload of Jews to get safely out of the Ukraine until they could fly to Israel.

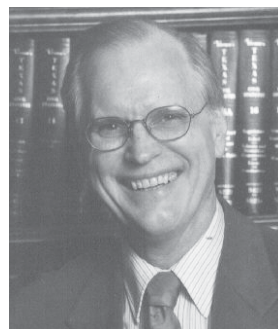
We will likely see in our lifetime, a large percentage of the 500,000 Jews in France and the 300,000 Jews in Britain make *aliyah*. This is a massive undertaking and one that Christians must support. So be looking for it to start and find organizations you can partner with to get involved.

PROVIDE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The fifth and last action we can take to seek the good of Jerusalem is to provide social assistance to the immigrants who return to their homeland. It is very difficult on the immigrants when they make *aliyah*. Those from the West are certainly more blessed financially but those coming from the rest of the world are not as fortunate. While the Israeli government helps as much as they can, the need is enormous. Once again, Christians have a responsibility.

Isaiah 40:1 is a word to Christians that says, “Comfort, yes, comfort my people.” 

Dr. Richard Booker is the President of Sounds of the Trumpet, Inc., and the founding director of the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies in Houston, Texas. He has written twenty-five books on Christian-Jewish relations, Israel, and the Hebraic heritage of Christianity. He teaches extensively on biblical and current issues relating to Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Richard and his wife Peggy live and work in the Houston, TX area.



In the 1990’s over one million Jews made aliyah from the former Soviet Union. Christians had a major role in that massive return of Jews.

To access Dr. Booker’s extensive range of resources for believers seeking to understand the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, visit www.rbooker.com.

Immutability: The Ultimate Universal Unifying Constant

THEOCENTRIC SCIENCE AND ANCIENT IMMUTABLE KNOWLEDGE

BY LEON MOHAMMED, PH.D.

Scientists are on a quest to discover the “Theory of Everything,” the mathematical equation that would explain how the entire physical universe works. It would explain how all things are connected and work together. For the realm of science and mathematics, realization of this quest would be the ultimate achievement that would explain all the whys and wherefores of physical existence, including that of humanity.

There are two schools of thought within the arena of the science of Physics. 1) There are physicists who adhere to Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, which focuses on gravity as the basis for explaining how everything interrelates in the material universe. 2) At the same time, there are those who adhere to Quantum Field Theory, which is centered on force, including “weak,” “strong,” and “electromagnetic” forces, as the basis for explaining the operation of the universe. While these two schools of thought often intersect at some points, they are not congruent.

The quest for an ultimate unifying formula can be traced to pre-Socratic times (460–370 BC) to Democritus, a Greek philosopher who argued that all of nature could be explained by the motions and interactions of tiny particles called “atoms” in what was essentially a Theory of Everything. The scientific and philosophical discussion of such a possible ultimate unifying universal constant has consumed many from time immemorial to the present day.

THEOCENTRIC SCIENCES®

Alongside these two extensively studied and researched scientific and philosophical theories (Relativity and Quantum Mechanics) is another point of view that is Theocentric Science, a position that begins with God as the source of the entire material universe. Theocentric Physics and Sciences is defined as “ancient immutable knowledge.” It is the practical application of spiritual knowledge and



divine principles that affect the natural realm, which encapsulate the motto of Eli College: "If God made it, he can tell us how it works." The universe was created by the ultimate Physicist, God himself. "In the beginning God created the heaven, and the earth (Genesis 1:1); "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1, 3). God is one and unchangeable, the supreme ultimate and only unifier of all things everywhere. He is the source and substance of all matter, energy, space, and time. Theocentric Physics, therefore, is God-centered science that is based on the premise that the laws which the Everlasting Father instituted to govern the natural realm are, like their creator, immutable.

The sun rises and sets every day in a display of God's unchangeableness. The hydrological cycle dispenses water across the planet in an endlessly repeated manner which always works the same. Ocean currents move as highways through the sea and never change. The seasons faithfully transition each year as they have throughout the millennia of material existence. All the laws involved with these natural phenomena were set in motion by our Creator.

The force that suspends, maintains, and drives the earth, sun, moon, planets, and stars was infused into the universe at the moment of creation and continues unto this day. Solomon recognized this fundamental truth and expressed it this way: "I know that whatsoever God does, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God does it so that men should fear before him" (Ecclesiastes 3:14, KJV edited).

The wise king prefaced this conclusion by noting: "The earth remains forever. Also, the sun rises and the sun sets. . . . Blowing toward the south, then turning toward the north, the wind continues swirling along; and on circular courses the wind returns. All the rivers flow into the sea. Yet the sea is never full. To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again" (Ecclesiastes 1:4–8, NASB). Then Solomon concluded, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9, NIV). Further, he recapitulated his conclusion this way: "That which is already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by (Ecclesiastes 3:15, NRSV).

IMAGES OF THE MESSIAH

The different references to the Messiah in the Word of God are not just similes and metaphorical images. They are material revelations of the Word as being the substance and the source of the various genres of epithets related to him. 1) That he is the "Lily of the Valley" (Song of Songs 2:1–2) is a revelation that the Word is the source

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of all vegetation and, therefore, of the science of Botany. 2) That Jesus is the "Rock" (1 Corinthians 10:4) indicates that he is the source of all the material earth and hence of the science of Geology. That Jesus is the "Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16) describes him as the creator of atomic energy and hence of the science of Nuclear Physics, both fusion and fission. That the Son of God is the "Lion of Judah" (Revelation 5:5) and the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36) bespeaks the truth that he is the source of all animal life on the planet and of the science of Zoology.

THE CREATOR AND THE SUSTAINER

When God created the universe through his spoken Word, he did so in a process that is very revelatory. This is how the author of Hebrews described God's Word-driven creation: "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he also made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Hebrews 1:1–3, NIV).

The Greek word translated "sustaining" here is φέρω (*phero*), which is defined by Strong's lexicon as "a primary verb; to bear or carry (in a very wide application, literally and figuratively: to be, bear, bring (forth), carry, come, drive, be driven, endure, go on, lay, lead, move, reach, rushing, uphold." Thayer defines *phero* as "to carry [as] to carry some burden, to bear with one's self, to move by bearing; to move or to be conveyed or borne, with the suggestion of force or speed;

***The force that
suspends,
maintains, and
drives the
earth, sun,
moon, planets,
and stars was
infused into the
universe at the
moment of
creation and
continues unto
this day.***

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to bear up, i.e., uphold (keep from falling) as of Christ as the preserver of the universe; to bring, bring to, bring forward as in to move to, apply and to bear, i.e., bring forth, produce, bring forward in speech.

The Greek word translated "word" in this passage is *ῥῆμα* (*rhema*), which Thayer defines as "that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, the thing spoke, the word as in any sound produced by the voice and having definite meaning."

The Greek word translated "powerful" in the NIV of this passage is *δύναμις* (*dunamis*) which means, "force (literally or figuratively); specifically miraculous power [usually by implication of a miracle itself]; ability, abundance, meaning, might, (worker of) miracle(s), power strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work. Thayer defines *dunamis* as "strength, power, ability [as in] inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature or a person or thing exerts and puts forth. In view of these definitions, we can say that the universe is driven by an intelligent electromagnetic frequency and force spoken by God when, at the beginning, "God said" (Genesis 1:3). And the intelligent energy and frequency from the voice of the *Logos/Memru* keeps everything fitly framed together.

Spoken words carry energy and emotion. Solomon declared that "anxiety in a man's heart weights it down, but a good word makes it glad" (Proverbs 12:25). The creative energy of words is even more powerfully demonstrated in the instance recorded in Matthew 21:19 when Jesus saw a fig tree that had nothing but leaves and lacked any fruit. The Master said, "Let no fruit grow on you henceforward for ever," and "presently the fig tree withered away."


THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

The ultimate universal unifying constant that sustains all of the universe in the order in which it was created is the immutable God. This constant is not a theory; it is truth, founded on the divine principles outlined in the eternal Word of God infused into the pages of Holy Scripture by the Holy Spirit. Simply stated, God never

changes. The Almighty says this of himself: "I am YHWH, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, shares the same immutable nature: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). James said that God himself is the "Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (James 1:17, NASB).

In this passage, the Greek word translated "shifting" is *τροπή* (*trope*) which, when combined with the Greek preposition *en* (in) forms the word *entropie* (literally "in turning") which means "confusion" or "shame." The English word *entropy*, which is a transliteration of the Greek *entropie*, summarizes the Second Law of Thermodynamics that says that any system which "turns in" on itself so that it becomes a closed system that does not draw information or energy from an outside source inevitably becomes less organized. Even though all of the universe is being conserved in quantity by God's Word, it is deteriorating in quality, winding down toward chaos.

God, then, created the universe with entropy, for if he had not done so, the universe would have been eternal and, therefore, God (pantheism). Though God imposed these laws on his creation, he is not bound by them. Not even a "shadow of shifting" or "variation" (entropy—confusion or disorganization) can be found in him. God, therefore, has no variableness. He does not change. He is immutable, and his immutability is most profoundly and clearly manifest (and proven) by his covenantal faithfulness, as his reference to the preservation of Israel as proof of his immutability affirms (Malachi 3:6b).

The constancy of God is also seen in immutable biblical patterns: Moses had twelve princes; Jesus had twelve apostles. Noah's flood of forty days changed the world; Jesus' wilderness experience of forty days also changed the world. According to the sages, the universe was created on *Yom Teruah* (the "day of blasting," the Festival of Trumpets). According to Peter, the reconstitution of the old universe into "new heavens and a new earth" will begin with a "loud noise" (2 Peter 3:10). When Jericho fell, it was with a loud noise (Joshua 6:20); when Jesus was baptized, there was a loud noise from which some heard God say, "This is my beloved Son" while others said they heard thunder. And on and on the parallel events go, confirming over and over again that God remains the ultimate universal unifying constant. 

Dr. Leon Mohammed has become an authority on the application of the Judaic heritage of the Christian church in the lives of various ethnic communities throughout the world. A trained scientist, he is also a scholar in the field of Theocentric Physics. His challenging and enlightening teaching has inspired audiences in various faith communities around the world. Leon lives in Asheville, North Carolina.

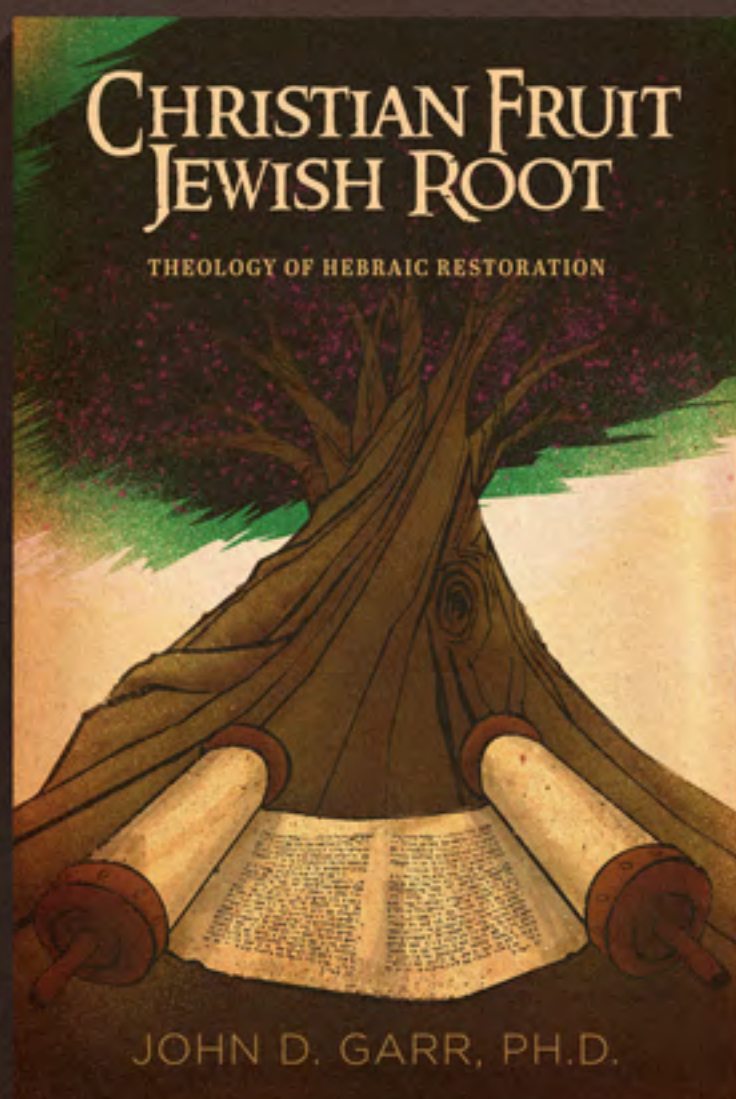


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