



Is Your Congregation a High-Value Target?

A high-value target is a military term. The US Department of Defense defines it this way: *A target the enemy commander requires for the successful completion of its mission. The loss of high-value targets would be expected to seriously degrade important enemy functions throughout the friendly commander.*

by **Adrian Davis**
Elder, Burlington and Ottawa



Adrian Davis

In plain English, knocking out high value targets significantly weakens the opponents' ability to function. This is highly relevant to us, as God's Word makes it clear that we are soldiers in battle.

Second Timothy 2:3: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Satan is working overtime to knock out the church's ability to function.

As soldiers, we are recruited into *God's* purpose, not our own. We have a clear mission, and we need each other to carry it out. In order to carry out this mission, God places each one of us in the body as it pleases Him.

First Corinthians 12:18: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

That means we are placed in our congregations by His design. For every one of us, there are things we can contribute to our congregation, and there are things that we need from our congregation.

When God evaluates His church, He does so congregationally.

As He evaluates each congregation in Revelation, He states, "I know your works."

Revelation 2:2 *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:*

- Revelation 2:9 *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*
- Revelation 2:13 *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*
- Revelation 2:19 *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*
- Revelation 3:1 *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*
- Revelation 3:8 *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

- Revelation 3:15 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

No doubt, it is the **works** of a congregation, or lack thereof, that determines whether or not a congregation is a high-value target. In Revelation, we can see that some congregations were distracted and ineffective, while others were engaged and dangerous to the enemy. We want to be the latter.

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Open Church Policy

The Church of God International is an open church.

We have many people attending who are *new* in the **faith**. Some will not always keep each of God's laws as they should, and some will not believe everything we teach. We pray that they may be strengthened through the services we render and the examples we set as they come to a closer walk with their God. **We request that you be neither judgmental nor base your standard for obedience on what you see your brother do.** Christ is our standard, not weak and sinful men. Always remember that you will be judged for what *you* do, not what others do. Your job is to pray for them, set the right example, and please the Father in all that you do. Ω

— 2019 Holy Day Calendar —

New Testament Passover

April 18, 2019
(Observed at sundown)

Feast of Unleavened Bread

April 20–26, 2019

Pentecost

June 9, 2019

Feast of Trumpets

September 30, 2019

Day of Atonement

October 9, 2019

Feast of Tabernacles

October 14–20, 2019

Last Great Day

October 21, 2019

Holy days are observed beginning sundown the previous evening and end at sundown on the days listed. Passover is observed at sundown on the day listed.

Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if *you*, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800–1000 words in ether .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson@cgi.org or lloyd Cary@gmail.com or, preferably, to *both*.

DEADLINE for the *next* issue is
November 15th 2019.



We look forward to seeing you soon... *in print!*

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Our Great Commission

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19–20).

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Reflection of Members

A congregation is a made up of individual members. This begs a few questions: What are we doing as individuals to contribute to the works of our congregation? Are we arm-in-arm on the firing line or strong supporters of those who are? Jesus makes it clear that those who support the soldiers on the frontline will be equally rewarded.

- Matthew 10:40 *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*
- Matthew 10:41 *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.*
- Matthew 10:42 *And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

Prison Ministry

This Sunday evening, Pastor Murray will be leading our Prison Ministry initiative. This is a joint initiative with Kitchener, Toronto, and Burlington. It's not too late to get involved. Please reach out to Pastor Murray here. Also, please pray for us that this ministry will be educational and edifying for our congregations and enlightening, encouraging, and inspiring for the people we will bring God's Gospel message to. Who knows how God is moving and how lives might be impacted by this open door?

Lack of Works and the Point of Access

Congregations like Laodicea or Sardis, that had no works to speak of, were made up of individuals—individuals who had no works. In taking out a high-value congregation, the enemy will first work to take out the individual members.

The key target, however, will be the ministry. The Scripture says, smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

- Zechariah 13:6 *And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*
- Zechariah 13:7 *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*
- Ezekiel 34:2 *Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?*
- Ezekiel 34:10 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.*

As in the Garden of Eden, where the high value target was Adam, Satan first took out Eve in order to get to Adam. In the same way, Satan will look for the point of access in a congregation. We must ensure that we are not that point of access.

Here are some questions we can ask ourselves to assess whether or not we might be falling into the enemy's strategy to become a point of access to take out a high-value congregation:

Are we:

- becoming discouraged?
- discouraging others?
- a source of division?
- seduced by false doctrine?
- promoting false doctrine?
- neglecting prayer and study and distracted by the cares of this world?
- forsaking the assembling of ourselves together?
- falling into sexual immorality?

While this is not an exhaustive list, it is a sufficient one to get us to begin to think more strategically about our deployment.

God's Word says that the good soldier does not entangle himself in the affairs of this life so that he can please the one who deployed him.

- 2 Timothy 2:3 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*
- 2 Timothy 2:4 *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*
- 2 Timothy 2:5 *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*
- 2 Timothy 2:6 *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.*
- 2 Timothy 2:7 *Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*

Let's not forget we are in a war. Let's put on the whole armour of God! Let's push ourselves and each other to see this battle we are engaged in from a higher plane and perspective.

- Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

The accelerated pace of news around us is good news as long as we stay committed to our course! Let's be sure to understand that the only reason the enemy identifies us as high-value targets is because he knows we are high value to our Father in heaven.

- Matthew 10:31 *Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

Let's work hard to make our congregations high-value targets and even harder to ensure we never get taken out! Ω

The Anvil Of God's Word
Does the Bible Change?



Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; then with a twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

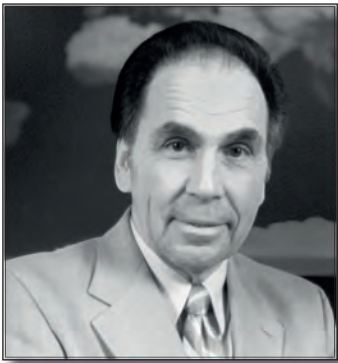
And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages, skeptics blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone. Ω

Author Unknown

So What Is Zionism?

The world today is witnessing a growing sentiment of anti-Semitism. This has been primarily due to the Zionist's Movement, resulting in millions of Jewish Hebrews returning back to Palestine. This has generated a resistance of violence for decades that is relentless. So, what is Zionism? Should we fear it, and therefore resist it?

by Bill Watson



Bill Watson

John Hagee claims to be a “Christian Zionist.” He is the Founder of an organization dedicated to helping Jewish people return to their homeland—it’s called Christians United For Israel (CUFI). It’s an organization that has donated millions of dollars to this cause. Mr. Hagee is a firm believer that all Christians should help the Jewish people return to Palestine. He has been both honored and criticized for organizing this initiative and what he believes to be the *prophetic fulfillment* of “Israel’s” return to its homeland.

Those who criticize this movement and are against the Jewish people returning back to their homeland is not new. It’s been going on since the 16th and 17th centuries and originally was known as the “Haskala” (Jewish Enlightenment Movement). But most recently, the more modern beginning of this *nationalist Zionist movement* is found in the late 19th century. It emerged due to the persistent yearning and ancient attachment the Jewish people have to Palestine, which gave energy to the Eastern and Central European Jews back in 1896 by a man credited with its genesis—Mr. Theodor Herzl.

He was an Austrian journalist who became very passionate about forming a Jewish nation because of the increasing anti-Semitism in Europe. He convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, authoring the “Basel Program” that established as its *mission statement*: “Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a *home in Palestine secured by public law*.”

Zionist Congress began appearing and meeting every year, early in the first decade of the 20th century. But soon thereafter, the Ottoman government refused Mr. Herzl’s appeal for Palestinian autonomy. However, due to the failure of the Russian Revolution of 1905, waves of pogroms (persecution of a particular ethnicity) against the Jewish people, and additional repressions, along with WW I, two Russian Jews living in England—a Mr. Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow in 1917—successfully helped negotiate the Balfour Declaration. This agreement promised England’s support for the creation of a Jewish Homeland.

By 1925, major settlements were established in Palestine, along with autonomous organizations that helped solidify the Jewish culture. And so, with the combination of previous “organic” settlements that commenced by certain Jews coming at their own discretion at the turn of the century and the Balfour Declaration of 1917—by 1933, close to a quarter million Jewish immigrants settled in Palestine. This became disturbing to the Arabs, and tensions began to grow in the area, resulting in Zionism becoming “politicized” into a very controversial movement.

In due time, multiple Arab uprisings occurred between the years 1936-1939. Compounding these contentions was the rise of Hitler’s Third Reich. British military forces endeavored to keep the peace, but sadly, lost heart to sustain its support of a Jewish state as was originally agreed to in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. This led the British, in 1939, to restrict the number of Jewish immigrants moving into Palestine. This *did not sit well* with the Zionists. They began to believe they were betrayed, intensifying the controversy of this movement.

The Zionists *violently resisted* this British policy, and opposed them with protests, terrorist attacks, and assassinations, organizing a clandestine illegal immigration program to settle Jewish immigrants into Palestine, regardless of Britain’s attempts to restrict the volume of Jewish immigrants. However, because of the enormous scope of extermination of European Jews conducted by the Nazis during WW II, Jews seeking refugee status migrated to Palestine—while, in combination, support of the Zionist’s objectives grew in acceptance, especially in the United States, with large numbers of people in other countries embracing Zionism’s *original intent*.

But tensions continued to grow among the Arab population, causing Britain to appeal for help from both the United States and the United Nations. This resulted in a proposal of partitioning the country into separate Arab and Jewish states, with internationalizing the city of Jerusalem. On May 14th,

1948, the United Nations formally announced Israel was a separate state. This triggered an Arab-Israeli war, resulting in Israel soundly defeating the Arabs. By the time the armistice documents were signed in 1949, Israel held more land than was originally partitioned under the UN’s arrangement.

Then, fast-forwarding 70 years to 2019, what do we find? We see this Israeli state, though a sovereign nation, remains surrounded by an armed camp of hostile Arabs and a variety of Islamic terrorist organizations, primarily sponsored by Iran, that are dedicated to and engaged in terrorism and the total annihilation of Israel—while still struggling to achieve the original United Nations agreement of 1948.

So What’s the Point to a Jewish Sovereign State?

In today’s world we find growing tension and large-scale disruption and violence from many sources that continue to threaten the peace and well being of the nations around the world. It seems regardless of what is done to settle the volatile conditions, we see it’s never enough. It’s as though senselessly, forces are constantly at odds and in conflict with what you know would solve mankind’s problems.

What we fail to realize is that we are in the midst of an agenda—an *active plan*—that is much bigger than ourselves and destined to play out in a specific way, *as per God’s expectations*. And that is a major “actuality” we must accept. This is God’s plan—He’s in charge and calling the shots (Romans 9:20-21). And unless mankind repents and accepts His terms, the plan will play out as described in the *voices of the prophets*.



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And therein lies the *answer* to why a sovereign state of Israel is so important—because *it’s significant to God’s plan* and has been written in His *prophetic writings*, recorded by multiple prophets over the course of Israel’s history. This embedded truth is found interwoven within the original story of ancient Israel. However, it concerns a very important *specific* that clearly needs to be understood for a few reasons. *First*: The present return of millions of Jewish people to Palestine *is not* the *biblical* definition of Israel’s return to their homeland. *Secondly*: The current Jewish migration back to Palestine is, indeed, for a “latter day” *specific reason*, which we’ll address later in the article.

But, notice first what the prophet Ezekiel has to say about the return of Israel back to its homeland in Palestine. “The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, you son of man, take you one stick, and write upon it **For Judah...** then take another stick, and write upon it, **For Joseph**, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And *join them one to another into one stick*; and they shall become one in your hand. ...Will you not show us what you mean by these? [Let the Bible interpret itself.] Say unto them, Thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is the hand of Ephraim, and the **tribes of Israel** his fellows, and will put them with him, even the stick of **Judah**, and make them one stick, and *they shall be one in mine hand*. ...And I will *make them one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel [Palestine]; and one king [Jesus Christ] to them all: and they shall be *no more two nations* [Israel and Judah], neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: ...And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd [Jesus Christ, from the line of David]: ...And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt [Palestine]; ...and my servant David shall be their prince for ever” (Ezekiel 37:15-25).

What Ezekiel just described is the *biblical* definition of Israel’s return to their homeland. And notice, this is an extremely *critical distinction*: it includes both houses—Israel and Judah—not *just the Jews*! It’s important we *understand* that Israel existed as a divided kingdom for over 225 years! Four books in the Bible document this arrangement—1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles. These four books identify the two nations of Israel with separate kingly lines as 1) *Israel*, and 2) *Judah*. Israel was made up of 10 of the 12 tribes, and Judah had the other two, which included the *Jewish* people. They are the only remaining tribe of the original twelve that retained its identity, validating the nation of Israel and making the connection to the Bible.

However, unfortunately this has led people to misunderstand the Jews to be all there is, when defining the nation of Israel. And though all Jews are Israelites, not all Israelites are Jews—that is a key differentiation and signifi-

JEWISH STATE FOR JEWS

Great Britain Offers Territory to the Zionists.

BASEL, Switzerland, Aug. 23-1903
Zionist Congress opened here to-day under the Presidency of Dr. Theodore Herzl of Vienna.

Dr. Herzl, in his opening address, referring to the collapse of the project to establish the Jews on the Sinai Peninsula, announced that Great Britain had offered the Zionists a large tract of territory in East Africa for colonization by the Jews, who would have an autonomous government under British suzerainty. The question of accepting the offer, he said, would be submitted to the congress.

The New York Times
Aug. 24 1903

U.N. Balfour Agreement

cant to the *biblical* definition of Israel’s return to Palestine. If we *recognize* this specific *nuance*, we can then *know* the present day Jewish people’s return to Palestine is *not* the described *biblical* return of Israel. Instead, Ezekiel revealed in chapter 37 that *both* houses, Israel *and* Judah, represent the actual *biblical* definition of the nation Israel’s return to their homeland. This is the actual biblical definition of Israel’s return. And unless both houses are in migration to Palestine, it cannot be considered the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy, described in chapter 37.

So then, what is it we are witnessing today that is defined as this Zionist movement? Is there any *biblical importance* to this present day migration of Jews returning back to Palestine? To what *biblical purpose* does this modern-day Jewish immigration back to Palestine really mean? Is it biblically *significant*?

Is There a Biblical Purpose For the Jews to Return?

Many are unaware, but the Bible is approximately 30 percent prophetic. That’s right, your Bible addresses many *future events* that are yet to happen. And arguably, though many will claim events construed to be applicable for the future are instead actually *already* fulfilled, the fact is, that’s just not true! They are wrong!

In Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus was asked by His disciples: “...and what shall be the sign of your [future] coming, and the end of the world [*cosmos*, “age”]?” Interestingly enough, as He proceeds down through a variety of events and descriptions of end time conditions, He comes up to a detail that causes Him to caution, “(*...whoso reads, let him understand*).” This detail is recorded as the “abomination of desolation, spoken by Daniel the prophet.”

History tells us that Antiochus Epiphanies, upon invading Jerusalem in and around 168 BC, desecrated the temple by erecting a statue of Zeus, while sacrificing pigs on the altar. He claimed he was Epiphanes—the visible god (that he and Jupiter were identical), but the people called him Epimanes, meaning the madman!

This event is a haunting “pre-type parallel” of what Jesus explains will occur just prior to His *future* return to earth. Notice what He says: “When you therefore shall see the *abomination of desolation*, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea [Palestine] flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. ...For then shall be great tribulation, such as was *not since the beginning of the world* [one of a kind] to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:15–21).

Obviously, this is talking about a one-time event that is horribly *unlike any other* time in human history, and “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:22). It is a time that is so crushingly *devastating* that if God did not intervene with Christ’s second coming, mankind would self-destruct!

This is the *worst of the worst*; never before has this occurred. This is *not* describing Antiochus’ invasion, but rather a time, yet in the future, when Judea will be *invaded again*, in the latter days, and a similar abomination will be set up in a *rebuilt temple in Palestine*, right prior to Christ’s return.

The apostle Paul describes this end-time event in similar fashion, corroborating what Jesus describes in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Notice what Paul says: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come,



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except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exaltes himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians. 2:3–4).

Since Paul was convinced Christ would return in his lifetime, he fully expected this “man of sin” to set himself up in the existing temple of *his* day. Little did he know he was speaking *prophetically* to the latter day abomination of desolation that Jesus said would happen *again*, at the time right before His return, as Daniel describes it. So, how does Daniel explain it, since Jesus references his narrative?

Notice: “And he said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the *time of the end*. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the *abomination that makes desolate set up* [set up right at the end], there shall be 1290 days” (Daniel 12:9–11).

Daniel is clear about the *abomination that makes desolate* will be set up near the end. Notice: “But go you your way *till the end be*: for you shall rest [die], and stand in your lot at the *end of the days*” (Daniel 12:13). The point is made that this occurs during the end times. This is confirmed in the context of this chapter by connecting us up with the “time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to the

same time” (Daniel 12:1). This parallels and locks in with Matthew 24:21–22, Mark 13:19–20, and Luke 21:22.

This Leads Us to the Second Point: The Reason Why

In Joel, we find an interesting *warning* to a people in Judah and Jerusalem, but notice the *time* for this warning—it’s right “*before* the great and terrible day of the LORD come” (Joel 2:31). This is the *same time* described as no other time of trouble, and if Christ didn’t return to stop the madness, humanity would destroy itself. Notice: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, *BEFORE* the great and terrible day of the LORD come. ...For behold, in those days [the day when this will occur], and in that time, when I shall bring *AGAIN* the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat [the battle of Armageddon, Revelation 16:16], and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land” (Joel 2:31, 3:1–2).

Clearly, what is being explained, is a nation of Judah and city of Jerusalem, *existing at the end time*, will *AGAIN* be brought into captivity right *BEFORE* the return of Christ. God’s prophetic word is *WARNING* the Jewish nation of impending captivity *AGAIN*.

Now the prophet Daniel, when describing the battle between the king of the North and the king of the South substantiates this and adds some back story to Joel’s reference. Notice how Daniel explains this: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the *glorious land* [Palestine], and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand...” (Daniel 11:40–41).

This invasion of the king of the North into Palestine (the “glorious land”) indicates they will occupy the area as was done previously by Antiochus, setting up this abomination of desolation; and according to Joel, put the Jewish people back into captivity. This fulfills these prophetic narratives God has planned for the future as He brings his salvific program to completion.

As we read further down into Daniel 11 and 12, we see it’s at this time Michael the archangel stands up to commence the “Day of the Lord,” which is described as a time of trouble like never before. Notice: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people [Christians]: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time [so great that no flesh would be saved alive if not stopped]: and at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book [Christians]. And many of them that sleep [dead] in the dust of the earth shall awake [the resurrection], some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt [abhorrence]” (Daniel 12:1–2).

So clearly, we see God’s prophetic Word *HERALDS* a *warning* message for the Jewish people of today that a coming *occupation* of Palestine will occur *AGAIN* by an invading king of the North who moves in to the glorious land and sets up an abomination of desolation as part of a *globalist empire* (Revelation 17:11–14). This globalist government will “sit [influence and control] on many people, multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15). It will be actively influencing the world right up to the return of Christ, and actually and literally, violently resist the returning Son of God—Jesus Christ Himself!

Notice again what Daniel says about the fate of this globalist empire. “...he [this beast] shall also stand up *AGAINST* the Prince of princes [Jesus Christ]; but he [this globalist government] shall be broken without hand” (Daniel 8:25). The apostle John corroborates this successful victory in Revelation 19:19–21. Read it, because it provides the details Daniel summarizes.

War is coming unless all of mankind repents and accepts Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Needless to say, that’s a tall order when realistically considering the state of humanity’s attitude toward the God of Israel.

So with that in mind, let our prayer be that those of us seeking a relationship with our Father through Jesus Christ can find comfort and mercy in these very desperately dire and evil times, praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) for His kingdom to come quickly, as the Feast of Tabernacles reminds and portrays for us our Lord’s victory and mankind’s rescue (Daniel 7:26–28)! Ω



City of Jerusalem

Anticipating the Kingdom

by George Roper



George Roper

In our modern world, the concept of the Kingdom of God has been relegated to an intangible ideal. In times past, the Kingdom of God was most commonly recognized as an ethereal sovereign state. Today, the notion of a heavenly kingdom that appropriates the governance of the world is seen merely as a fable. Current ideological perspectives, be they liberal or conservative viewpoints, do not esteem an established Kingdom of God as a viable resolution to our modern-day agendas. The need for government and society to be run under the auspices

of God has been supplanted by self-sufficiency. The perception that has quickly gained acceptance is that betterment is best brought about via efforts of our own means rather than reliance on God, whether it be through protest, social movements, the right to bear arms, the political process, protecting the environment, or eradicating bigotry. These approaches can be argued to have their merits in improving the human condition; however, none of these platforms can adequately address the spectrum of human shortcomings. In the court of public opinion, the Kingdom of God is not an integral part of the “solution.” Among the myriad of issues to contend with, the Kingdom of God is eschewed as a talking point. Anticipation for a coming Kingdom of Heaven which will supplant the governments of this world is simply not in vogue. However, those of first-century Judea saw things differently.

During the early part of Christ’s life, Judea was a territory of the Roman Empire. Overshadowed by the heavy hand of Rome, a dominant power in itself, the Jews eagerly awaited to be liberated by God. Many of that day carried a deep-rooted expectation of divine providence whereby God would act on behalf of the nation. The people were anticipating God’s intervention. This is reflected in the questions posed to John the Baptist by the religious authorities.

“Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, ‘I am not the Messiah.’

They asked him, ‘Then who are you? Are you Elijah?’

He said, ‘I am not.’

‘Are you the Prophet?’

He answered, ‘No.’

Finally they said, ‘Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, ‘I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, “Make straight the way for the Lord”’ (John 1:19–23, NIV).

The religious leaders’ questions mirrored public sentiment concerning the belief that God would appoint individuals to serve as the Messiah, Elijah, and the Prophet as a catalyst for change.

The first and most widely recognized of the three roles that John the Baptist was asked if he identified with, the Messiah, Elijah, or the Prophet, is that of Messiah. The Jews of that day saw the Messiah role as a military leader who would bring about a coup against Rome. Although the first century Jews placed their trust in God for deliverance, their personal expectations differed from how God’s plan would unfold. This proved to be a great stumbling block for many in recognizing and accepting those with whom God was working. The objectives that Christ sought to give his attention to as Messiah, at that point in time, were not the same objectives that the public was expecting Him to pursue. We find this further demonstrated in Luke.

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’ (Luke 4:16–21, NKJ)

Christ read from a well-known messianic prophecy found in Isaiah 61. The passages that He attributed to Himself characterized all that He had been doing in His ministry up to that point and all that He would seek to accomplish in His earthly ministry. Given the present expectations of the

day and the political climate, many would have been familiar with the passage that He read. What was unique about His actions was that He did not read what was customarily cited in its entirety. Instead, Christ ceased reading at a point that the hearer would find to be an awkward point to break at. Christ neglected to read the next verse which the hearer would have instinctively anticipated from recollection.

“...And the Day of vengeance of our God” (Isaiah 61:2b)

The verses that follow in Isaiah 61, which Christ was reading from, proceed to elaborate on how foreign adversaries would become subject to a dominant Israel. Christ omitted that portion when He spoke because He was not yet going to fulfill that aspect of the prophecy during His earthly ministry. Rather these aspects would come to fruition upon His return to usher in the Kingdom of God. This differed from what the people believed the Messiah would immediately accomplish, by way of defeating the Roman Empire.

The second role that many first century Jews anticipated to play a part in God’s intervention was that of Elijah. In Israelite history, Elijah was a prophet who worked with the northern Kingdom of Israel at approximately 864 BCE. After his service, prophecies emanated that detailed how a secondary party would appear in the future to carry out similar mandates as Elijah did during his tenure. We see one such prophecy exemplified in Malachi.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6)

Some of Jesus’s day believed that the original prophet Elijah would be brought back to life to accomplish God’s objectives. Others believed that someone would come onto the scene that embodied the prophet Elijah’s work ethic. Nevertheless, the title of “Elijah” came to refer to an individual that would fulfill that role.

When the religious authorities pressed John the Baptist for a statement, he declined to identify himself as Elijah. He denied being the original prophet Elijah of old. Furthermore, John the Baptist more than likely thought it premature to publicly identify himself as the fulfillment of the Elijah role at that time, instead choosing to classify himself by his actions—as a voice “calling in the wilderness.” Christ further addressed the role of Elijah when inquired by His disciples.

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:10–13).

Christ acknowledged that John the Baptist fulfilled the role of Elijah. The time dedicated to John the Baptist in the Gospel narratives is concise. As a result, the reader may not take away the enormous impact that John the Baptist actually had on his contemporaries. His ministry had a great influence, and he was widely known. His contributions in initiating a public dialogue on repentance and turning to God raised awareness extensively. These factors paved the way for reception to Christ’s message and initiatives that Christ would carry out towards the future fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.

The third role which those of that day expected to play a part in God’s intervention was that of the prophet. The prophet was an individual whom those of the first century were anticipating based on admonitions given by Moses.

“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die’

The Lord said to me: ‘What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him’” (Deuteronomy 18:15–18, niv).

Moses had an intimate relationship with God. Unlike other individuals whom God had worked with, Moses spoke with God one-on-one. Moses also had an unprecedented job description in bridging content from God to man. Moses recounted that in the future, an individual of the same ilk would appear. In Jesus’s day, many who observed him believed that he fulfilled the role of the prophet.

“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world’” (John 6:14).

In addition to public opinion leaning towards seeing Jesus as the prophet that Moses spoke of, Jesus Himself acknowledged that Moses’s proclamation was in reference to Him.

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:45–47).

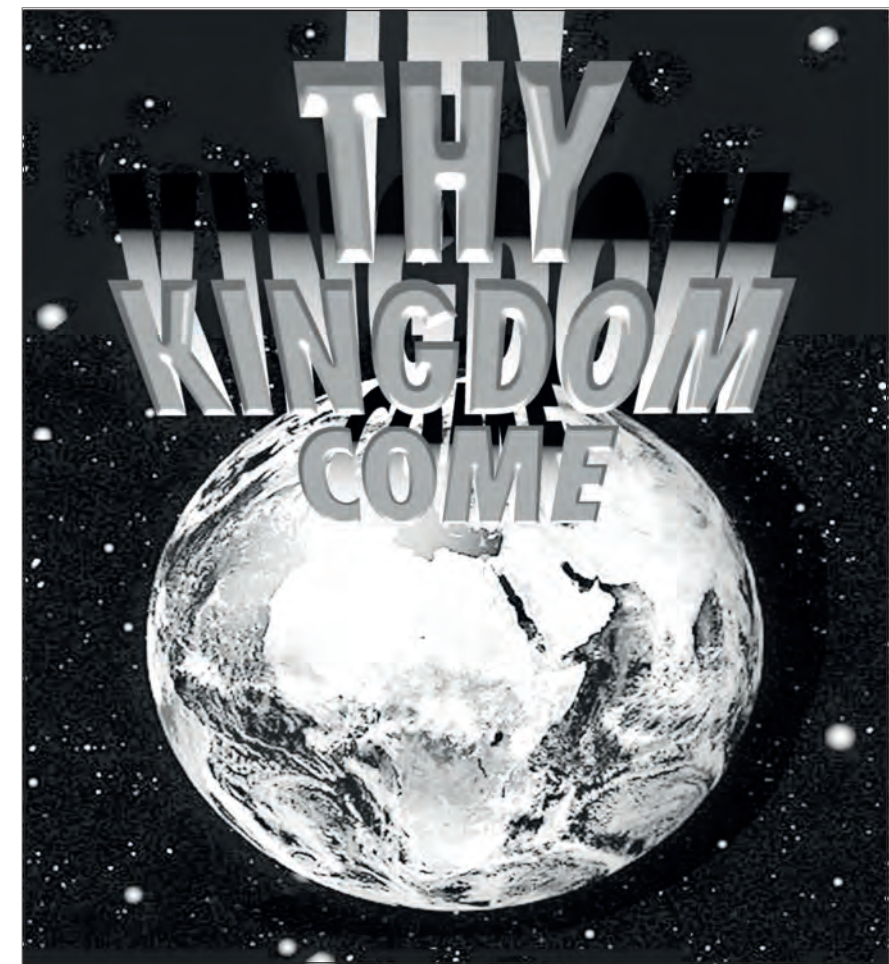
Although those of the first century looked to God to deliver them from Roman occupation, they didn’t always recognize those whom God sent.

Kingdom, continued on page 7

Of the individuals whom the Jews anticipated to appear, Jesus Christ fulfilled the role of both “Messiah” and the “Prophet,” whereas John the Baptist fulfilled the role of “Elijah.” These titles and the men of God who fulfilled them laid the groundwork in the plan of God that moves us ever closer to the Kingdom from above becoming a reality on earth. The men and women of yesterday were looking for the fulfillment of God’s promises. In contrast, today’s rationale appears ambivalent to God’s coming Kingdom. Christ, knowing how the public perception of the Kingdom of God would evolve over time, questioned how much support that Kingdom will receive when it does arrive.

“...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth” (Luke 18:8b, NKJ)?

According to contemporary impressions, God’s intervention is not as anxiously awaited as it was during the first century. Nonetheless, that does not diminish the gravity of our need for God’s involvement. Indeed, the world proves to have surmounting hardships that perplex and ensnare us as a people. In turn, let us recognize our need for God and greatly anticipate the future of His Kingdom on earth. Ω



What is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is the family of God ruling as the government of God. It is a future world-ruling government to be set up on earth by Christ at His return, with Jesus as King and the resurrected spirit-composed saints in positions of co-rulership with Him. The Kingdom of God—referred to as a “mystery” in the New Testament—was first preached and explained by Christ, then by His church; it shall be established on earth for a thousand years following Christ’s return, and shall be completely fulfilled when New Jerusalem and God the Father come down out of heaven to dwell on the New Earth. (See: Mark 4:11; Revelation 5:10; 20:4; 21:1–3, 7, 10.)

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Good News message preached by Christ and by His church about God’s coming Kingdom, the restoration of His government on earth, and how mankind can enter that Kingdom and government. It includes the message of what Jesus has done, is doing, and shall do—and ultimately is the message of the entire Old and New Testaments. The primary purpose and commission of the church is to “Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (See: Matthew 3:2; 24:14; 28:19–20; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:47.) lwc Ω



Question:

Dear Church of God International, I would like to know where you can find church ages in the Bible? I’ve looked but can’t find it.

If the churches were around at the same time in Asia, how can anyone call it church ages?

Some say we are the Laodicean era. Others say they are are the end-time Philadelphian church.

I’ve read about Church of God in history how it had many splits, down through time. It had a big split in the 90’s and now we have many Churches of God.

Can you shed some light on all this?

Thank you,

G.R.J.

Answer:

Dear G.R.J.,

Thank you for writing. We appreciate hearing from those we serve. We’ll be happy to help.

You asked, “I would like to know where you can find church ages in the Bible? I’ve looked but can’t find it. If all the churches were around at the same time in Asia, how can anyone call it church ages?”

Good question! The “church era” theory cannot be found in the Bible **BECAUSE IT IS NOT THERE!** Revelation locates the seven churches in Asia. Many well-meaning expositors have come up with various ideas and theories that are read into the Bible, instead of drawing facts from the Bible. By what authority would we draw lines in history between eras? Think a moment! When human nature is thrown in the mix and all is said and done, there is only ONE “era” people would want to be identified with—the zealous Philadelphians; and ONE nobody wants to be labeled as—the dreaded “lukewarm” Laodiceans. Beware of any church organization who claims they are the “one and only” true church! That is sure sign they are not. Often, strife has been engendered by labeling one group or another such as, “I’m a zealous, loving Philadelphian; you’re a lukewarm Laodicean!” Such vain judging and comparing is discouraged in the Bible, “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12).

The burden of proof is upon those who support the theory. The best we can do is believe—accept as fact—only those things that can be proven from the Scriptures (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and leave what cannot be proven in the vast realm of speculation. See what the Revelator—Jesus Christ—says, and what He does not say. We have an extensive article on church eras entitled, *The Seven Churches of The Apocalypse*. You can ask for a hard copy or you can download it at <https://www.cgi.org/the-seven-churches-of-the-apocalypse/>

Also be sure to request our free literature, *The Church of God In Prophecy*, [CGP]; *Can You Understand Bible Prophecy?* [UBP]; and *The Second Coming...and Beyond* [SCB]; as well as our Armor of God presentation, *End Time Prophecies* at <https://www.cgi.org/armor-of-god-end-time-prophecies>. These will take you deep into your Bible and the prophecies of things to come. You can find many relevant titles on our www.cgi.org website.

Whenever we may assist you further with your study of the Bible, we hope you will let us know. Thanks again for writing. Please keep in touch. It is our pleasure to serve you. lwc Ω

Personal Letter Answering Department

To Tattoo or Not to Tattoo —What Does the Bible Say?

by Michelle Algarra



Michelle Algarra

Tattoos, according to *Wikipedia*, is “a form of body modification where a design is made by inserting ink, dyes and pigments, either indelible or temporary, in the dermis layer of the skin to change the pigment.” According to the *Medical Dictionary*, it is “an indelible pigment under the skin or by production of scars.”

The process of tattooing involves the following: “The placement of pigment into the skin’s dermis layer of dermal tissue underlying the epidermis. After initial injection, pigment is dispersed throughout a homogenized damaged layer down through the epidermis and upper dermis, or both of which the presence of foreign material activates the immune system’s phagocytes to engulf the pigment particles. As healing proceeds, the damaged epidermis flakes away (eliminating surface pigment) while deeper in the skin granulation tissue forms, which is later converted to connective tissue by collagen growth. This mends the upper dermis where pigment remains without

successive generations of macrophages ultimately concentrating in a layer just below the dermis/epidermis boundary. Its presence there is stable, but in the long term (decades) the pigment tends to migrate deeper into the dermis, accounting for the degraded details of tattoos” (*Wikipedia*).

Tattoos are therefore permanent marks of body modification. Tattoo removal is expensive and long term, involving laser treatments. These involves dermabrasion, salabrasion (scrubbing the skin with salt), cryosurgery, and excision—sometimes used along with skin grafts for larger tattoos.

Experts on tattoos withhold information regarding significant health risks associated with tattoos, inclusive of skin lesions, infections, and blood diseases. Alarming, health risks are inclusive of the following: allergic reactions to the ink (such as skin infections and chronic skin ailments, psoriasis and dermatitis) which may be benign or even malignant, tetanus, HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B and C, syphilis, and even septic shock. In addition, ink injected into the skin contains metal filaments for which reason doctors and hospitals prohibit testing with life-saving MRI scans (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) for people with tattoos.

Adverse medical consequences are also inclusive of the following: granulomas/bursitis around tattoo ink, keloid scars, bacterial contamination (during the tattooing process), pruritus, deep or severe pyogenic infections, atypical mycobacterial infections, systemic or cutaneous viral infections, or (rarely) cutaneous fungal infections; infections range from cellulitis and small pustules to larger abscesses that require surgical incision and drainage. More severe pyogenic infections are rare. But there are case reports of endocarditis, spinal abscesses, erysipelas, gangrene, and amputations. Many case reports include acquisition of nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM)—(ranging from mild inflammation with lesion rash, papules, or nodules to severe abscesses requiring extensive and multiple surgical debridements), infections with mycobacterium chelonae and mycobacterium abscesses. Herpes compuncturum may develop, and other bloodborne pathogens (Hepatitis B and C transmission, as mentioned earlier). Case reports of neoplasms, keratoacanthoma, squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and leiomyosarcoma. Chronic skin disorders: sarcoid, keloid scarring, allergic dermatitis, photosensitivity reactions, psoriasis, and benign or malignant tumors.

The negative medical effects of tattoos are usually irreversible, incurable, and may even be fatal.



Tattoos as a form of body modification has been practiced for centuries. In primitive society it has been intrinsically associated with pagan religions. A Satanic ritual dedicated to pagan gods and evil spirits, documented evidence proves it was regarded as a religious ceremony performed by shaman/priests or priestesses of occult mysticism. It is mainly a rite underlying Baal worship. The tattoos is used as a point of contact, or vehicle, for pagan spiritual and religious invocations into the su-

pernatural world. Tattoos are a channel for spiritual and demonic possession. It also has a lot of superstitious connotations associated with paganism. According to Ronald Scutt, the following are the reasons why people get a tattoo: “to secure a place in heaven, to propitiate malignant spirits at time of death, to acquire special characteristics through totemism and ancestral worship, and to make the body sexually interesting” (*Art, Sex, and Symbol*, 1974, p. 13).

Tattooing actually has supernatural and ritualistic significance. It involves blood-letting in order for evil spirits to penetrate the human body. Anciently, and even by indigenous tribes at the present, shamans or witch doctors perform the rite of tattooing as part of demon worship under the most prominent idol Baalzebub, who is the personification of Satan. It is a religious ceremony, intrinsically part of mysticism and heathenism involving complex ritual and taboo. It is associated “with sun-worship, megalithic building, ear-piercing, serpent worship...worship of the sun-goddess Reith” (*Ibid.*) Tattoos were used as a means of identification in the next world and a passport to future happiness” (*Ibid.*, p. 63).

Tattooing also involves superstitious beliefs. According to historian and tattooist Dr. Hambley, “tattooing was supposed to: prevent pain; protect against gunshot wounds; cure illness; confer superstitious strength; preserve youth; enhance the supernatural powers of a shaman; ensure the survival of the soul in the hereafter; attract good luck; protect against witchcraft; ensure the protection of a deity; confer occult powers; prevent drowning; exorcise demons; ensure the protection of a totemic animal or spiritual guardian; record a pilgrimage to a holy place, etc...”

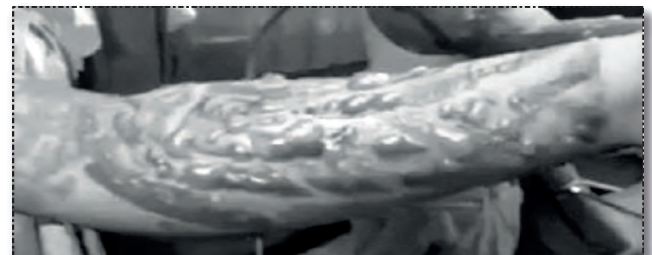
Civilized society has usually frowned upon tattoos as a form of perversion or deviant behaviour, relegated to the dregs or “scum” of society, such as criminals and prostitutes. Numerous times in the past, though, and profoundly in contemporary society, the ignominious significance of the tattoo has changed to that of a status symbol, and at present time a mere form of “decoration” without any sort of meaning attached to it. Evangelical Christians and the Pope of the Catholic church has given it credence in order to gain acceptability amongst the popular crowd, especially adolescents and young adults. According to them, it is the motive behind the implementation of tattoos and the kind of tattoo designs and what they represent that is important, and not their connotations rooted in pagan folklore, practices, and beliefs.

Based on the information given above, tattooing should not have gained prominence or acceptability as a mere form of decoration, much less “enhancement of one’s personality” for medical or health reasons, and most especially for their profound spiritual and psychological implications. It is a form of scarification or bloodletting, and should be better termed as skin graffiti. It is disfiguring, debasing, maltreating, and deforming of the physical body God gave the individual. Rational people possessed of common sense realize it should not have gained popularity even for aesthetic reasons alone. How can destroying the skin God gave the person be considered “beautiful”? By its very nature, tattoos are a sign of impropriety, of shame and regret, because it is permanent or indelible.

The Bible does not sanction, and severely prohibits this form of body modification. Commonly called a “tramp stamp,” tattoos also glamorize fornication and promiscuity. It is a mark of harlotry or prostitution, which the Scriptures condemn. A symbol of harlotry, murder, and demonism, it does not and cannot glorify God. Spiritually, it can be likened to spraying God’s temple with graffiti. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and should be treated as such. Ω



“Beauty” mark



Ouch!
Infected Tattoo



“Religious” tattoo



Scriptural References:

Leviticus 19:28 (KJV)
Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you. I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:28 (ESV)
You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo your selves. I am the Lord.

Deuteronomy 14:1
Ye are the children of the Lord your God. Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

Jeremiah 41:5
That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the LORD.

Jeremiah 47:5
Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?

Leviticus 19:29
Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.

Ephesians 5:5
For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:16–18
What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body.

1 Corinthians 5:19–20
What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Leviticus 20:7; 20:24	James 3:17
Exodus 33:16	1 Corinthians 10:31
Acts 15:10	Romans 14:23
Galatians 5:1	Matthew 5:14
1 Peter 3:3	Jude 1:8–10
1 John 2:15–17	1 Peter 2:9
James 4:4	

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- Mark of Death
- Mark of Blood
- Mark of Regret
- Deadly Little Secret
- Mark of Rebellion
- Tattoo or Not to Tattoo
- Tattoo and the Bible



The Right Kind of Giving

Is there a right and a wrong way to give?

by Michelle Yvonne Algarra

There are some individuals with a thirst to be generous, even if they are having egregious financial problems. They envy millionaire philanthropists who donate inordinate amounts of money to their particular church organization and/or charitable groups. Those who follow tithing practices give away so much money to their churches that their churches become materially wealthy.

The common notion being propagated is that giving to others is a way to increase wealth; that whatever you give away will be replenished because it is a natural law. According to this premise, “giving” material things and money to others is not profligate, but will lead to greater personal wealth because one’s coffers will continually be replenished.

Supposedly, through tithing, God will make people prosperous or wealthy. The “stingy” ones or more parsimonious and pragmatic believe, though, that it will only teach people to “budget” their resources.

In the Bible, the poor widow is considered the most generous among all the “givers” compared to wealthy Pharisees. The poor widow gave out of her needs, namely everything she possessed, while the wealthy only out of their increase (Matthew 12:42–43; Luke 21:2–4).

It is not a requirement of God to force one’s self to reach the pinnacle of success by society’s standards, to become prosperous materially just so you can give a lot to others, just to prove your generosity and altruism. God loves a cheerful giver, to give without asking anything in return, and only because it feels good to give to others.

But the Bible also says that sacrificing one’s possessions and even one’s life is all for naught without charity, or love. Even if you give away all your possessions and submit your body to be burned, without charity or love, it is all just a meaningless exercise in futility.

Who doesn’t want to receive material gifts? There will always be takers if there are always so-called givers. No matter how much you give away, without fruits of character development, proper attitude, and the fruits of the Spirit, giving may only be profligacy and waste. You cannot buy friends by throwing away gifts. The only thing this will buy is temporary loyalty dependent on satisfaction of insatiable greed.

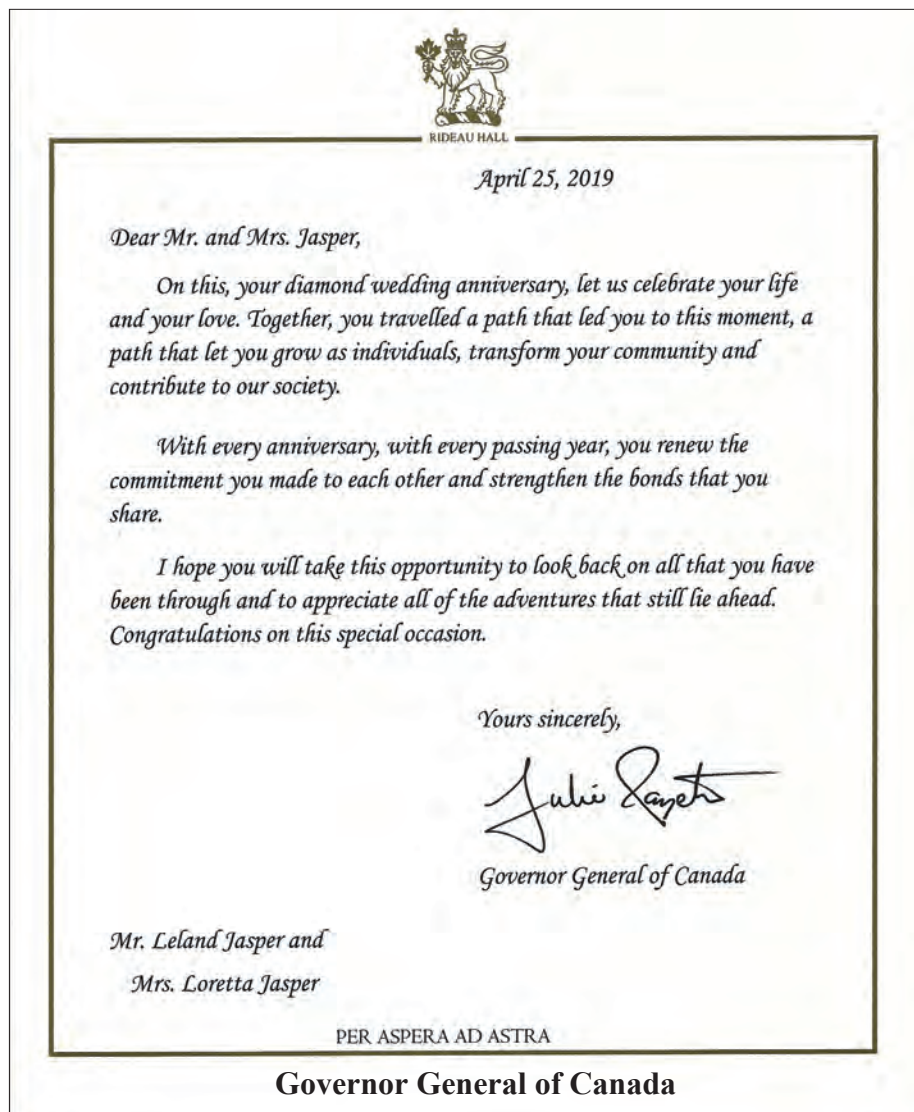
To digress a little bit, this is also the case not only with material wealth, but even issues of morality. Insecure women buy the favors and friendship of their paramours by sacrificing their purity in varying degrees. Compromising with one’s morals as a sign of self-sacrifice, in order to buy the favors of a male “friend” is a form of harlotry and not real love. They “buy” favours and male friendships by sacrificing moral purity, with devastating consequences. Lonely young women and aging spinsters sacrifice their “wealth” or moral chastity by violating God’s commandments against fornication and adultery, for male companionship.

God’s love involves proper concern for oneself equivalent to concern for others, and love, honor, and respect for God above all. Giving should be done within the right parameters, without denigrating or degrading one’s self. Appropriate esteem or value should be given to one’s self based on how one has striven to be obedient to God’s commandments, not seeking the esteem of fallible human beings.

Consider Matthew 10:8: “...freely ye have received, freely give” and Acts 20:35: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” along with Luke 10:27: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.” “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8).

The prime consideration is seeking to please God, to be willing to sacrifice to and for God first and foremost, not to try to satiate the lust and greed of others.

Happy 60th



– April 25, 1959 –

Leland and Loretta Jasper celebrated their 60th “Diamond Wedding Anniversary” with a family dinner on May 5. Their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, a total of 32 family members, were in attendance. Written congratulations were received from the Governor General of Canada, The Prime Minister of Canada, Queen Elizabeth, and the Local M.P.

My parents, Lee and Loretta, are long-time members, from WWCG through CGI, and have served in both Canada and the U.S. Mom has been a Director on the Canadian Board since its establishment in 1996. In 1999 she was ordained to the deaconate to serve in both London Ontario, Canada and Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. Together, my parents worked closely with Bronson James and John Coish in the start-up and hosting of congregations in both cities. They have also lent their assistance co-ordinating the music program and festival activities at the Niagara Falls, Leamington, and Collingwood Feast sites.

On August 29, 2015, the Detroit congregation held an awards dinner honouring their deacons, where each, including Mom, received a trophy inscribed with their achievements.

It might be appropriate at this time to provide a little back story on my parents. Growing up in the country, I fondly remember the “jam sessions” on the lawn, barn dances with live bands, and Dad on the CB radio warning truckers of road conditions and weather dangers. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Loretta is an accomplished musician, playing the accordion, guitar, and keyboard. She began by volunteering her time and musical talents in the local senior homes and hospitals in Chatham, Wallaceburg, Tilbury, and Blenheim. She was presented with awards and gifts in recognition of her community service, but there was also an unexpected blessing yet to come.

In the 70s, her public performances caught the attention of a talent scout, placing her in a 25-minute segment on the *Jerry Lewis Telethon*. Encouraged by the experience, she was inspired to form a Country Western band. For a little more than two years, “Blue Horizon” was featured in a regular monthly half-hour musical show on two local TV stations, each in Chatham and Wallaceburg. The station entered the band’s sound track into a talent contest for southwestern Ontario where they won first prize!

If you ask my mother, she will explain the unexpected success the band experienced was a blessing for obeying God’s laws in refusing to work on the Sabbath. “With God as your *partner*, you can do anything!”

Throughout her life, Mom has taught grandchildren and neighbour children to play a variety of instruments, and equally dedicated her time and musical skills to encouraging the talented youth in the church to perform. She still expresses her love of music by accompanying the song service and performing special music: accordion instrumentals and vocals.

Anniversary!



– April 25, 2019 –

But Mom will be the first to admit that, “None of this could have happened without the support of Leland.” And Dad is still Mom’s “roadie,” driving her to Sunday afternoon jams, making sound checks, setting up and tearing down... always the last one to leave.

In his youth, my father worked as a transport driver, gas jockey, toy factory machine operator, and finally secured a long-lasting position with the Ministry of Transportation, Ontario, maintaining the 401 Highway.

Leland was trained in Emergency Response, Electrical and Hazardous Chemical Safety, operated the snow plow, grass chopper, and other heavy equipment. During his 37-year career, he was recognized for his achievements and contributions to safety on the highway; a 37-Year Safe Driving Record and Proficiency Award for training others in the safe operation of highway equipment are just a couple.

Dad has always been an outdoorsman with a respect for nature, a guarded love for wildlife, and a healthy dose of adrenaline. I happily recall hours spent helping him rebuild common appliances to run with a bit *more power*, watching him cook the hot dogs in the *Pitts* at the local race car track, and walking the ditch banks in search of asparagus. In truth, Dad was the ring leader of his tribe of five children, so... now you know who to blame.

Celebrating my parents’ 60th anniversary was a joyful and memorable day. It’s rewarding to know that your Mom and Dad still have a song in their hearts and a hop in their step. Love ya!

Ω
Lu Jasper Copeman
CGI London, Ontario, Canada



Queen Elizabeth



Justin Trudeau



Local MP for Chatham-Kent

One Proof of the Messiah

by Rick Dubler

Elder, Kitchener and London



Rick Dubler

It is no wonder those outside of the Christian community too often find themselves puzzled at the doctrinal disparity between different Christian factions all of whom claim to have the truth. Often times it is the result of not applying the Berean principle, i.e. to search the Scriptures daily with an open, receptive mind to see if what was being taught was in harmony with the Word of God (Acts 17:11). All too often, traditions are so deeply rooted that it not only prevents us

from seeing the truth of the matter, but can in fact nullify the commandments of teachings of Scriptures (Mark 7:8–9).

The timing of the crucifixion and resurrection is one such tradition with the large majority of the Christian community believing that Jesus died on Friday afternoon (Good Friday), and was resurrected (Easter) Sunday. Others claim that Jesus rather died on a Wednesday afternoon, put in the tomb just at about sunset that day, and was resurrected Saturday (Sabbath) just at about sunset. Does it really make a difference? No doubt this discussion should in no way marginalize or diminish in any way our deepest appreciation for the sacrifice of the Son of God, but Jesus' own words would make this matter one of great importance; in fact, the timing of His death and resurrection was one of three proofs that authenticated that Jesus was in fact the real Messiah that mankind was waiting for.

Paul addresses those three proofs in 1 Corinthians 15:1–5. The first is alluded to in Paul's statement that Jesus died "according to the Scripture." That refers to a plethora of prophecies that were fulfilled in the way Jesus died. The second proof Paul offers authenticating Jesus as the Messiah is that He died was buried and rose the third day "according to Scripture." This is what we are going to explore in this article. And the third proof is the host of individuals who personally witnessed Jesus after His resurrection, more than 500 in fact. These are three distinct irrefutable proofs showing that Jesus was and is that Messiah. We will only review one of these for now.

Let's begin by reading Jesus' own words as He was taunted by the Pharisees to give them some clear proof that He is in fact the Messiah that they have for millennia been waiting for. He gives them only one. Turn in your Bible to Matthew 12:39–40. Jesus makes a definitive statement that seems indisputable, and one would wonder why anyone would even question it. He says that just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, He, Jesus would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. The sign of the prophet Jonah was the only sign Jesus was going to give them. What is Jesus saying? This would be the sign that would prove He was the Son of God. This is so important that if He failed to fulfill that sign, then they had every right to reject Him as the Messiah. But instead of questioning their tradition of a Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection, theologians come up with some of the most imaginative if not incredible arguments to support their traditions. Most of those arguments are founded on the theory that any part of a day can be considered a day. But Jesus was most specific. He didn't just say three days, but three days *and* three nights. Those arguing for a Friday crucifixion say that any part of a day constitutes a day. Even with the application of this theory, you can at best come up with just three days and two nights.

So let's look at what Scripture has to say about what a day consists of.

If we look at Genesis 1:5, we get a good sense of what God considered a day. We know during the creation week, we have seven days that consisted of evening and morning—that is, a day is made up of a night-time portion beginning with evening, and a day-time portion beginning with dawn.

We also know from Scripture, Leviticus 23:32, that the days begin with evening and end with evening. That is scriptural. So now let's hear Jesus' own words.

In John 12:9, Jesus asks a rhetorical question: "Are there not 12 hours in the day?" It seems at least to Jesus that a day had 12 hours of daylight, and the implication there are 12 hours comprising the night-time portion of the day. So one can conclude that a full day consists of 24 hours, 12 hours of daylight, 12 hours of night. So by that definition, Jesus had to be in the grave 72 hours, or He was a false messiah.

So clearly the way of calculating a day based on biblical evidence supports a day as being 24 hours, 12 of daylight and 12 hours of night time.

Why is it that many have concluded that Jesus was crucified on Friday? It is founded on the misunderstanding that the Sabbath always refers to the weekly Sabbath, but it doesn't. Those who keep God's holy days recognize this truth.

Few understand that a Sabbath can refer to what we call Saturday, and it can also refer to a holy day. Let's look at Leviticus 23:34, 39. There are actually two Sabbaths to consider. The first Sabbath was just after the preparation day for the First Day of Unleavened Bread. John tells us this was a high day (John 19:14, 31). It is generally accepted by commentators that the high day it speaks of is the holy day, not the weekly Sabbath. If the preparation day was Wednesday when Jesus was crucified, and the holy day was Thursday, a Sabbath, not a weekly Sabbath, but rather the *annual* Sabbath, then we see that this would indeed fulfill the three days and three nights. *Bullinger's Commentary* agrees with this.

So how do we prove that in fact that First Day of Unleavened Bread, the 15th of Nisan, was a Wednesday? We can by putting together the various Gospel accounts to find solid ground to substantiate this assertion.

We do that by comparing Mark 16 and Luke 23; we will be able to piecemeal things so as to be able to prove that there were indeed two Sabbaths, an annual holy day and a weekly Sabbath.

So we turn to Mark 15:45–16:1. Here we see that after they observed Joseph laying the body of Jesus in the tomb, they rested for the Sabbath, and we read here when the Sabbath was past, they bought all of the necessary things to embalm Jesus. We know for sure that this Sabbath was a high day from John 19:14 and 31. The answer is unavoidable; they rested on the holy day, waiting until that Sabbath (high day) was past, then they bought the oil and sweet spices the following day, which was Friday, and then rested on the weekly Sabbath as identified in Luke.

When we look at Luke 23:52–56, we can see that the women here watched as Joseph of Arimathea laid Jesus' body in the tomb. This was at the very end of the preparation day that is just before the first holy day of Unleavened Bread. Then they purchased the spices and ointments—that was after the annual Sabbath as we read in Mark 15, and they then rested on the weekly Sabbath as pointed out here in Luke 23.

When we look carefully at this, we see that there were in fact two Sabbaths, one an annual holy day Sabbath, and secondly a weekly Sabbath. And so we see that in fact Jesus was in the tomb three days and three nights, even as the prophet Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, showing indeed that Jesus was and is our true Messiah.

Traditions can be either good or bad, but when they nullify the teachings of God, and in this case the very validation of Jesus as the Messiah, then we need to eradicate such traditions. We as God's people, who claim to be defenders of the truth, or as Jude writes, we are those who contend for the faith once delivered, rightly dividing the Word of God so as never needing to be ashamed. Brethren, to this you and I were called. And it is a high calling.

For further details, be sure to send for our free booklet, *The Three Days and Three Nights*. You can also view it online at: <https://www.cgi.org/three-days?rq=three%20days>.

Ω



Watch the *Armor of God* on your computer or I-phone at:

www.cgi.org

Words

by Mark Long

Most people feel that they have a pretty good handle on what it means to be Christian. We all have a belief system that we've built up over time that sustains us in times of trouble; this is a type of confidence that we all hold dear. However, this belief system is not enough, because in addition to this, we must cultivate faith that is backed up by truth, and the only way to gain truth is to devote oneself to the One who is "truth." Once this is discovered, it then becomes time to take the next step and prove that what you have come to believe is in fact, true. But how on earth can anyone be expected to do that? The simple answer is, you can't, unless you take the time to study, love, and believe in yourself enough to prove that what you believe is worth believing in; otherwise, you can remain uncertain, and therefore you can become swayed by various deceptive powers that are extant.

Having said that, we must look to *WORDS*, for they are the foundation on which we must build our belief, faith, and finally truth. The "words" that I speak of are the words of Christ, which paves the way to knowing the "Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). After all, Christ is the "Word" (John 1: 1). So with that, I must ask, "Words"—what do they convey? do we accept, or do we reject them? They describe a great many things to be sure, but unless we act upon *His* words, they merely remain words and end up dying a silent death. As Christians, we cannot afford to allow this to happen; otherwise, if we ignore His words, they will die that same death, as many authors' words have died in the past. Therefore, I offer what I have come to understand, with the hope that those who read this will take time to investigate and be challenged to understand that there is far more to words than that which welcomes us every day we read and hear them. This lesson comes by way of a metaphor that my Dad gave me long ago: *While standing on the bank of life's river, he stood watching as his children were being swept away by the rushing current, frantically calling to them, "Look out for the boulder on the right, and dodge the one on the left," but sadly he knew his words were falling on deaf ears. He was trying to be the best father he knew how to be. Trying desperately to protect his love ones, but at the same time knowing that he was helpless—helpless because he knew in his heart that they refused to listen to him as they always had—especially when he gave warning about the dangers they would experience in life's struggles and undertakings.*

This metaphor touches on many realities that surround each of us every day. It tells us to watch out for the pitfalls that can and will happen to us unless we learn to listen to the Father. Our Father in heaven lovingly created us and gave us the words and the "Word" that is necessary for us to avoid the difficulties that we face every day. After all, we are His children, and His love for us will always abound.

His Word not only instructs, but also gives warning, warning of what is at stake if ignored. I find the word "warning" to be quite significant, because it has the power to change bad into good if listened to and acted upon. Change must be made to correct behavior that causes problems. In short, this article holds much of the same message as the metaphor mentioned above. For those who read this, it is a warning about incompleteness that has taken place all too often in today's world. This incompleteness has unfortunately left many confused and lost by lack of devotion. This short article strives to have those who read it investigate the past against the backdrop of today's world and against the mysteries of tomorrow. Because at the end of the day, and through it all, His words will safeguard us and continuously show how the Father is desperately trying to save His children.

All that has gone before, all the problems that have been faced and are being faced, could be avoided, along with all the recklessness that is going on in the world today. If we would just learn to listen and apply His words to our lives, life would be decidedly better. We need to listen to the wise and prudent council of the Creator of all things, for if we did, then much could be avoided, if not all. All the devastation that is in the world today has been because of our refusal to apply His simple instructions. Our stubborn ways need to stop. There are lessons to learn, so that the consequences that happened back in the dusty pages of yesterday can be avoided today, as well as in the future. You see those same consequences that took place yesterday are still promised for those of today's world if we continue to ignore His words. What is at stake is far too great to avoid. So my request is, please read this with an open heart and mind, and know that it is with the greatest love that He gave us His words. After all, He is the "Word."

Ω

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. (James 1:26)

Achieving Success

by Michelle Algarra

One of the laws of success is education. Much value is placed on academic credentials for obtaining a white collar job or preparation for a profession. The only basic requirement in times past was learning how to read and write and do arithmetic. In contemporary society, the dream of college students is to have a doctorate, which is the ultimate goal in obtaining academic recognition.

Success in school depends on a number of factors—time management, diligence, resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility, and the main goal of choosing the career one wants to prepare for. Basic research decades ago was rather difficult or tedious—searching through various hardbound books in libraries and bookstores. With the appearance of the Internet, possessing millions of bits of information on almost anything under the sun, research has become a much easier routine. The computer has become a valuable asset integral to progress in an information-saturated society.

The main element involved in developing one's mind is the love of reading and learning. Gaining basic knowledge on a variety of important subjects, and extensively on a specific one, is the objective of obtaining one or more degrees, so one will be qualified for a specific job or profession.

Many times, students do not fulfill their academic potential due to a number of reasons—health and financial constraints, lack of drive or initiative, no persistence, and no interest in studying.

Inability to succeed in finishing school, though, should not be considered a hindrance to fulfilling one's dream of finding a good job with adequate, or even more than adequate, financial compensation. Learning a trade or vocation and enhancing one's innate skills and talents in various fields or areas is preparatory to finding a niche in the job market.

The prime intellectual commodity that formal schooling intends to develop is communication skills, which should be continually enhanced or improved. Along with this is interpersonal or relationship skills, learning to associate with different types of people of varying cultural and educational backgrounds.

Productivity is a lifetime goal, not retirement or the so-called "bliss of idleness" after so many decades of labor.

As each day passes, setting priorities in the activities of the day, focus and concentration, and the inspiration the Holy Spirit provides in making important decisions, should motivate one in overcoming the stresses and pressures of daily living. The commitment to educating and improving one's self, formally or informally, is a task each individual should strive to attain.

Finally, success should be dependent on a commitment to God and the right Christian values. Fulfillment does not necessarily have a monetary equivalent. It is the adequate use of skills and talents God has given, and striving to be a good example unto others, that makes work meritorious; and that should motivate one to succeed.

- *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* (Proverbs 1:7 KJV)
- *Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.* (Proverbs 24:27)
- *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.* (Ecclesiastes 9:10)
- *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15)

Ω



Graduation Day... at last!

A Turning Point For Mankind!

The Covenant with Abraham—a turning point for mankind. This is the next installment in our continuing series on the Story of the Bible.

by Murray Palmatier



Murray Palmatier

Welcome back! Throughout the course of history, we find many events that could be described as turning points. You probably can look back in your personal lives and reflect on such times. As we continue going through the story of man's history as told by the Holy Bible, we left off last time with the introduction of a man named Abram, a descendant of Noah's through his son, Shem. We first find Abram living in what would be modern-day Iraq, in a place called Ur. Abram was a wealthy man, married to his wife Sarai. Genesis 12 details for us a turning point in the life of Abram – which, in retrospect, becomes a major turning point in the story of God's redemption of man. God's unconditional promise to bless the entire world through Abram's family is short, to the point, but far reaching in magnitude.

Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Genesis 12:1–3).

When you read the story of Abraham (God changed his name, as He would for several of His servants), take note of the many incidents that reflect his faithfulness in God as a “keeper of covenant.” From his settling in the land of Canaan (after allowing his nephew Lot to choose his settlement first), to his rescue of Lot who was taken captive during a rebellion, we see Abraham's faith played out. After he helped finance and provide fighters to end the warfare, he encountered a High Priest named Melchizedek. Much later in the book of Hebrews, we are told this High Priest was none other than the one who became Jesus Christ—and Who sealed the covenant through sacrifice which likely occurred around the time of year that would later be known as Passover.

However, Abraham and his family were still human beings, subject to sin, fault, and failure like the rest of us. Rather than wait for God to provide a son to him and Sarah (whose name was also changed), they took matters into their own hands. Abraham had a son named Ishmael with Hagar (Sarah's handmaid), but this was not the son of promise. Later, God fulfilled His promise by blessing the much older Abraham and Sarah with their long-awaited son, Isaac. Later on, when Isaac was a little older, Abraham was faced with one final test of his faith when God told him to take Isaac into the mountains and sacrifice him. A bewildered but obedient Isaac, while his dad was preparing the sacrifice, asked where the lamb was. Faithfully and prophetically (which you'll see when you get through the entire biblical story), Abraham answered simply that God would provide one. When God watched Abraham raise the knife in the air, that was all He needed to see. God was assured that Abraham would never betray Him, and neither would God betray Abraham. As the story continues to unfold, we'll see that “in your [Abraham's] seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:18).

The torch of the covenant passes on to Isaac, the son of promise. He and his wife, Rebekah, have twin boys named Esau and Jacob. Despite being twins, they could not have been more different. The older and more rugged Esau loved the outdoors, and was closer to his dad. Jacob, the younger, was closer to his mom. As brothers sometimes do, they became competitive as they grew. This came to a head when one day when Jacob caught Esau in a moment of extreme physical weakness and traded a bowl of stew for Esau's prized birthright. For a second generation in a row, a younger brother would receive inheritance blessings that typically go to the eldest. In both cases, history shows that this would lead to millennia of never-ending conflict. Before Isaac died, the transfer of birthright was confirmed with even more deception, as Rebekah helped Jacob trick his dad.

As you are likely coming to see, God is faithful to His plan. He ensures it moves forward, and does so in spite of our human limitations, mistakes, and sins, all to His honor and glory as Creator and Almighty God. We'll continue next time with the account of Jacob's family. The story will pick up the pace and involve more characters, beginning with Jacob's 12 sons. Until then, keep reading the greatest story ever told—it will not disappoint!

Ω

A Weapon No Man Can Tame!

by Jeremy A. Brown



“The tongue is a fire.” James 3:6

As a kid we had this saying: “STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES, BUT WORDS WILL NEVER HURT!” *Haa....*we quickly learned that is the furthest statement from the truth we have ever heard. In many cases, most of us would rather have a physical bruise that heals than an emotional bruise caused by the tongue and lips of another human being crushing our spirit. An emotional bruise can cause some unforgettable damage. The Bible even states that a perverse tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4). We live in a world where a Tweet, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media messages can send the world into a tailspin. It seems that not only are average people unable to tame their tongues, but even world leaders lack the ability to control their tongues. Can this weapon be controlled by any man? What does the Bible say?!

God says we praise Him with the same lips that we use to curse other men that are made in the likeness of God (James 3:9–10). We have to remember, when we curse and crush the spirits of other men/women we are attacking other human beings who are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). I understand that it is a daily struggle to maintain this attitude toward your fellow men/women in a society where there is so much pent-up anger. In our society today you are odd if you are not angry about something. Just stop when that bout of anger hits you after that car cuts you off during rush hour traffic. Ask yourself before you get so worked up: Is it truly *worth* all of the conflict that will happen if you escalate things to the *next* level?! We should guard our mouths against speaking evil/malicious words to our fellow brethren. God plainly states it will help us to avoid calamity (Proverbs 21:23). You don't have to go any further than your daily news or social media to see how the tongue leads to the following situations such as the calamities of road rage, physical assaults, mass shootings, etc., caused by another human being using his/her tongue to crush another human being's spirit.

God says we should work our hardest to keep our tongue from deceitful speech and from gushing evil words like the wicked (1 Peter 3:10; Proverbs 15:28). It is not what goes in our mouth that ruins us; it is what we allow to come *out* of this mouth that does the most damage (Matthew 15:11). Only a reliance on God can help us to tame our perverse lips and tongue in a world that has completely let their tongues run wild. We should pray that God will put a guard over our mouths, so we can keep watch over what we say to each other (Psalm 141:3). Lastly, we must remember to build up others and not to tear others down as is common in our world today (Ephesians 4:29). All of us, including myself, have to work on this daily, and realize we can tame this powerful weapon with the help of God.

Ω



Don't say anything that doesn't help!



Question:

I am inquiring as to the CGI's stand on the current presidential administration and the president in particular. This is not a political question, but a moral one. Please respond as soon as possible as I am deciding whether to consider your ministry seriously or not. Thank you in advance—Mr. H.

Answer:

Dear Mr. H.,

Thank you for your inquiry. You asked about the CGI's stand on the current presidential administration and the president in particular. We do not tell anyone how or how not to vote, or even whether or not to vote. That it between you, your conscience, and your God. We are, indeed, very blessed to have the legal right to participate in the voting process. It was not always so.

If one decides to exercise his right, I would recommend that he or she carefully examine the issues presented and compare them with the Bible. I would ask the question, If Jesus was born in our time and in our culture today, how would He advise one to vote? I think He would ask, *"What is written in the law? How readest thou?"* (Luke 10:26). He would address *issues*, not looks or personalities.

To address a few issues, do you think He would be in favor of overthrowing our Constitution and Bill of Rights in favor of Socialism or Communism, which would negate the very right to vote at all?

The *Church of God International* believes life begins at conception. How does that square with the issue of abortion? (Exodus 20:13; Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 71:5–6; 139:13).

Illegal immigration is definitely a controversial issue today! It is a very emotional, politicized issue laden with lies, exaggerations, and political bias. While illegal immigration is a complex issue, it is not biblical to violate a law to achieve a "good." Caring for the poor, orphans, and widows is something the Bible commands us to do (Galatians 2:10; James 1:27; 2:2–15). However, the biblical fact that we are to care for the unfortunate does not mean we should violate the established law in doing so. Supporting, enabling, and/or encouraging *illegal* immigration is, therefore, a violation of God's Word. What is the biblical solution to illegal immigration? Simple—don't do it; obey the laws (Titus 3:2). Illegal immigration is, quite simply, a sin (1 John 3:4) but the politicians dare not say it.

One political party seems to advocate, "no borders, everybody is welcome, and everything is free," while the other says we need to stick to our constitution and the law. Which is closer to what the Bible says? The God of the Bible *established* landmarks, borders, division, and parameters (see Deuteronomy 13:14; 27:17; Proverbs 22:28; 23:10, Job 24:2).

Is our president a perfect man? No way. "As it is written, There is *none* righteous, *no*, *not one*." (Romans 3:10). Moses was a murderer. David was an adulterer and a murderer. Peter denied Christ three times. Yet God USED them and many other sinners to further His Plan!

To repeat, if you choose to exercise your voting rights, you should choose the person who is closest to the biblical example.

We invite you to peruse our updated web site, www.cgi.org, and especially our web chats addressing *Politics and the Bible*, Parts 1, 2, and 3. These will take you much deeper into the issues than can be gone into in a mere email. If have any further questions, do not hesitate to write. That's why we are here. Ω

I hope this helps. *Thanks again* for writing, Mr. H..

In Christ's service,

Personal Correspondence Department



Teddy Joe Standley



Teddy Joe Standley

(August 31, 1941 – March 11, 2019)

TEDDY JOE STANDLEY was born in Koshkonong, Missouri, the son of Joseph Hooker Standley, Jr. and Mabel Edith Winn Standley, on August 31, 1941, and departed this life on March 11, 2019, at Shady Oaks Healthcare in Thayer, Missouri, at the age of 77 years.

He was united in marriage to Esther Lone in Yangon, Myanmar on January 1, 1973. She preceded him in death on September 13, 1997.

He is survived by his son, Ted. L. Standley (and wife, Diana) of Katy, Texas, and two granddaughters, Ethan and Elena, both of Katy, Texas.

Teddy was a member of the *Church of God International* in Willow Springs, Missouri. He was a veteran of the United States Army, with over 20 years of dedicated service, retiring as a Sergeant.

He was very involved in his church and enjoyed the activities held there.

Teddy was very active in his community. He was always willing to help out wherever he was needed. He also served as a volunteer firefighter in Koshkonong, Missouri for many years. He was well respected and a friend of all.

Teddy will be remembered as a loving and caring husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He will truly be missed by all who knew him. Ω

Want *more* Q&A's from our readers?

For more Questions and Answers, send for our free books, *The Q & A Book—Questions an Answers—Volume 1* (99 pages) [QE], and *The Q&A Book—Volume 2* (183 pages) [QE2].

Available in hard copy or download on our web site at: <https://www.cgi.org/literature?rq=questions%20and%20answers>

You can also see Bill Watson answer questions on our web site located on your computer at: <https://www.cgi.org/the-qa-book?rq=questions%20and%20answers>.

Words About the Word

- Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. (Psalm 119:160)
 - The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (Psalm 12:6–7)
 - I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. (Psalm 138:2)
 - Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)
 - The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isaiah 40:8)
 - Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5–6)
 - Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:17)
 - Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth. (Psalm 119:142)
 - Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth. (Psalm 119:151)
- Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. (Psalm 119:127–128)
 - It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)
 - It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)
 - For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. (John 3:34)
 - The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. (Jeremiah 23:28)
 - He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. (John 8:47)
 - Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)
 - What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32)
 - For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (Revelation 22:18)

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