



A Publication of CJF Ministries and Messianic Perspectives Radio Network

# Messianic Perspectives®

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

## THE TOP 15 LIES ABOUT THE JEWISH PEOPLE ANTI-SEMITIC MYTHS DEBUNKED PART 3 BY DR. GARY HEDRICK WITH JOHN W. TURNER

**INSIDE:  
FOUR BLOOD MOONS—  
A SIGN OF THE END?  
BY DANNY R. FAULKNER, PH.D.  
(SEE PAGE 7)**

In previous installments, we discussed anti-Semitic claims regarding:

1. The Talmud and other ancient Jewish writings;
2. The role of the Khazars in Jewish history;
3. A forged document known as The Protocols of the Elders of Zion; and,
4. The Jewish influence on societies where they reside.

In this issue, we continue with lies #s 5–8.

These next three lies (#s 5, 6, and 7) are all related to the issue of supersessionism, which says the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Is this claim true? Let's find out.

## Lie #5: The Church has replaced Israel as God's Chosen People.

Most Christian theologians and clerics today accept supersessionism as fact because it's what they were taught in their denominational seminaries, and they've never questioned it. The underlying ideas are that God has forever rejected Israel because she rejected His Son, Yeshua of Nazareth, and that the New Covenant has cancelled out the Old.<sup>1</sup>

So the issue is this: Which entity is God's Chosen People today—Israel or the Church?

Let's remember, first of all, that this isn't a horse race. It's not a matter of two peoples (Israel and the Church) vying for special status, recognition, and benefits. In fact, did you know that some Jewish people would gladly give up their "chosen" status to the Church—or to anyone else, for that matter? That's right; they wish God hadn't chosen them! Why? Because they believe their chosenness has been a burden, or maybe even a curse. It's why they have been persecuted, pursued, and hounded to the ends of the earth.

That's what some of them think. So they would say, "You would like to be the Chosen People? Please, be our guest!"

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye echoes these sentiments when, in an honest conversation with God, he blurts out, "I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?"<sup>2</sup>



Zero Mostel as Tevye, 1964.

Graphic House

Tevye is actually onto something here. He understands a truth that the anti-Semites miss completely: namely, that being "chosen" by God isn't really about privilege or preferential treatment. Neither does it make God a "respector of persons" (Acts 10:34). Rather, it's a matter of great responsibility for the Jewish people—and as such, it's not something to be taken lightly. And in a way, it has painted a big, red bull's-eye on their backs.

How so? Well, God's enemies know that He has chosen the People of Israel to be a light to the nations, and to provide earthly evidence of His promise-keeping power. That's why those adversaries have tried over and over again to destroy them.

It's not really so much that the forces of darkness don't like Jewish people—so in that sense, it's nothing personal. It's more about the fact that they don't like *what the Jewish people represent*—namely, God's promises (and His power to keep them), the authority of the Bible as God's Word, God's kingship, and a biblical worldview that sees a supernatural hand guiding history to its prophesied conclusion.

Whether anyone likes it or not, then, the Bible is clear: The People of Israel are God's Chosen People. In the OT, the LORD told His people Israel, "*For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth*" (Deut. 7:6).<sup>3</sup>

In this context, how could such a specific statement apply to anyone other than Israel? Some Christian theologians in the early years of the Church came up with the idea of supersessionism to explain how the Church inherited Israel's promises—and it caught on. Seventh-Day Adventist theologian W.G.C. Murdoch, for instance, suggests that the NT Church is a continuation of OT Israel—that is, we are "spiritual Israel." That's how Israel's promises have become ours! He explains:

Israel was God's chosen people in the OT era. They were called to do a special work, but failed in their commission. In the NT God called another people, who were free from ethnic restrictions. Their faith and commitment centered in Christ. The OT promises are now fulfilled to them who are Jews inwardly (see Rom. 2:29). The commission to take the gospel to all the world will be fulfilled by them. The church (spiritual Israel) consists now of those who will proclaim Heaven's last message of mercy to the world.<sup>4</sup>

Murdoch's explanation is clear and succinct, but is it right? And if you think it's right, how do you explain these words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 9:3-5?

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

## Messianic Perspectives®

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Notice that Paul speaks here in the present tense. As he was writing these words (c. AD 56), the Messiah had already been rejected by national Israel—and He had long since died, been resurrected, and returned to Heaven where He was seated at the right hand of the Father. And even then, what does Paul say still belongs to the Israelites? “The promises” (v. 4)!

He doesn’t say the promises *used* to belong to Israel (in the past, before they rejected Yeshua as a nation). He says, in the present tense, “. . . to whom *pertain* . . . the promises.” So even after the nation had fallen into apostasy, the Apostle says the promises were still theirs.

If the Church had replaced Israel, as supersessionism claims, how could the divine promises still have belonged to Israel in Paul’s day?

Furthermore, our faith as NT believers is based on the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 (see 1 Corinthians 11:25). Yet this covenant is clearly made with the two houses of Israel (Jer. 31:27-28, 31)—not with the Gentiles.<sup>5</sup> One cannot help noticing the very specific, Israeli geographic benchmarks scattered throughout the New Covenant chapter in Jeremiah 31:

- “Samaria” (v. 5)
- “Mount Ephraim” and “Zion” (v. 6)
- “Rivers of waters” (v. 9)
- “The height of Zion” (v. 12)
- “A voice was heard in Ramah” (v. 15)
- “Your children shall come back to their own border” (v. 17)
- “Turn back to these your cities” (v. 21)
- “In the land of Judah and in its cities” and “mountain of holiness” (v. 23)
- “Judah itself, and all its cities together” (v. 24)
- “The land of Egypt” (v. 32)
- “The city shall be built for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate” (v. 38)
- “The hill Gareb” and “Goath” (v. 39)
- “The whole valley of the dead bodies,” “the Brook Kidron,” and “the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east” (v. 40)

It’s as though the Holy Spirit foreknew that someday people would try to spiritualize this chapter and make it apply to someone other than Israel. So He inspired the Prophet to sprinkle the entire passage with these geographical references, making it abundantly clear that He is talking about a physical land and a literal people—the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

Once He’s established whom He’s talking about, the LORD emphasizes His point with this powerful and unwavering promise:

Thus says the LORD,  
Who gives the sun for a light by day,  
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,  
Who disturbs the sea,  
And its waves roar  
(The LORD of hosts is His name):  
“If those ordinances depart  
From before Me, says the LORD,  
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease  
From being a nation before Me forever.”

Thus says the LORD:  
“If heaven above can be measured,  
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,  
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel  
For all that they have done, says the LORD” (vv. 35-37).

Our opponents in this debate will say, “But wait a minute. How can you condone Israel’s faithlessness? In effect, you’re ‘enabling’ Israel to remain in rebellion while retaining the benefits of the promises. You’re justifying her sin—and that’s just wrong.”

Really? Would we be enabling or justifying a child’s disobedience by pointing out that he or she is still the parents’ child? Of course not. And what happens when a child misbehaves? The child is disciplined. The same principle applies to Israel.

So yes, except for a small, faithful Messianic remnant, Israel as a nation is largely secular—and most of its religious communities are in unbelief. And she continues to be chastised for it. But does that predominant unbelief nullify the promises God made to them? Some might say it does, but the Apostle Paul disagrees: “*For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar . . .*” (Rom. 3:3-4).



Cry of Prophet Jeremiah on the Ruins of Jerusalem

Ilya Repin

Further, in Romans, the Apostle declares: “*I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew . . .*” (11:1-2).

He also writes in 11:29, “*For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*” How could it be any clearer? God’s special calling on the Jewish people remains in effect because it is *irrevocable*.

And finally, notice how Paul (in yet another NT passage) divides the entire human race into three groups. He says, “*Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God*” (1 Cor. 10:32). So the three broad, Pauline categories are (1) the Jewish people (Israel), (2) non-Jews (“Greeks,” a term encompassing the Gentile world), and (3) the Church (Gk., the *ekklesia*, or “called-out” ones, a term for the Messianic community). Everyone on the planet, then, is either (1) an unsaved Jewish person, (2) an unsaved Gentile, or (3) a Jewish or Gentile believer in Jesus.

None of those three groups has replaced any one of the others. God has a distinct and ongoing plan for all three entities.<sup>6</sup>

Are all supersessionists anti-Semitic? No! But whether they realize it or not, they hold views that are compatible in many ways with anti-Semitism.

## Lie #6: God has already fulfilled His promises to Israel, so no future promises remain.

Most Bible-believing evangelicals understand that God made promises to Israel that have not yet been fulfilled. Assuming that He always keeps His promises (and we most assuredly believe He does!), the most logical conclusion is that there will be a yet-future fulfillment.

But some people disagree. They argue that God has already completed all His intentions concerning the Jewish people and their Land. These folks typically claim that the restoration promises were fulfilled when the Jewish people returned to the Land under Zerubbabel, at the close of the Babylonian Captivity in c. 536 BC (recorded in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah). According to them, God owes the Jewish people nothing further!

Some traditional, amillennial (Reformed) Protestants<sup>7</sup> follow this line of reasoning, but they're not alone. There are also Catholics who say there are no promises to Israel left to be fulfilled:<sup>8</sup>

Zionism is based on the faulty assumption that God still owes the Jews the land He promised to give to Abraham's descendants. Scripture, however, teaches that God has already fulfilled His promises to the Jews. For example, regarding the land in question, God says through Joshua: "Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land which he swore to give to their fathers; and having taken possession of it, they settled there" (Josh. 21:43).<sup>9</sup>

God also declares through Solomon that all his promises to Israel have been fulfilled: "Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised; not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he uttered by Moses his servant" (1 Kings 8:56).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, those who believe that God still owes the Jews land and protection by divine decree deny the plain meaning of Scripture and make God a liar.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the loss of Israel's ancient holdings is a sign of God's divine judgment against the Jews for rejecting His Son, Jesus Christ, their Messiah. God warned Israel in the Old Testament Scriptures:

But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight; and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone passing by it will be astonished, and will hiss; and they will say, "Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?" Then they will say, "Because they forsook the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this evil upon them" (1 Kings 9:6-9).<sup>12</sup>

Scripture is clear that God owes the Jews nothing more, and suggests that the Jews are suffering the ramifications of rejecting Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> They have been "broken off" of the root of Christ "because of their unbelief" (Rom. 11:19-20). However, Paul says that the Jews can be grafted in again, "if they do not persist in their unbelief," for God has the power to do so (Rom. 11:23).<sup>14</sup>

This writer's claims reflect not only the views of segments of Catholicism,<sup>15</sup> but also numerous streams of Protestant Christendom today.<sup>16</sup>

He says that God owes nothing more to the Jewish people because He already fulfilled His promises to them. Others take a different approach and say that the Abrahamic promises—even if they remain unfulfilled—have been transferred to the Church (see Lie #7 on the next page).

Either way, the net effect is the same: There are no future promises left for the Jewish people. Individual Jews, of course, can still convert to Christianity and be saved; but God has no future plans for *Am Yisrael*, the nation or People of Israel, according to these folks.

There are numerous difficulties with the view that the promises were already fulfilled (note that we deal with several of them in endnotes 4–7). Perhaps the biggest problem, though, is that we can easily show that unfulfilled promises remain. One glaring example is God's promise that the Jewish people will someday dwell in the Land permanently and securely (without oppressing enemies), never to be uprooted again: "*Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them any more, as previously*" (2 Sam. 7:10; repeated in 1 Chron. 17:9). Another prophecy declares, "*And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid*" (Ezek. 34:28; see also 37:25).

These statements are problematic for anyone who says that the Abrahamic promises were fulfilled in the OT era. *The promise of security, safety, and permanence was NEVER fulfilled at any time in the past.* Everyone knows about the tragedy in 586 BC that brought the First Temple period to an abrupt end. Then during the Second Temple period, Israel was under the heel of foreign powers (in Yeshua's time, it was Rome). Even today, with the Jewish people dwelling in their Land for the first time in 2,000 years, and having their own autonomous government for the first time in 2,600 years, they are surrounded by enemies who constantly harangue and attack them! And it remains to be seen just how permanent their current possession of the Land will be.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, the promise that the Jewish people will dwell securely, safely, and permanently in their ancient homeland—with no more enemies—has yet to be fulfilled!

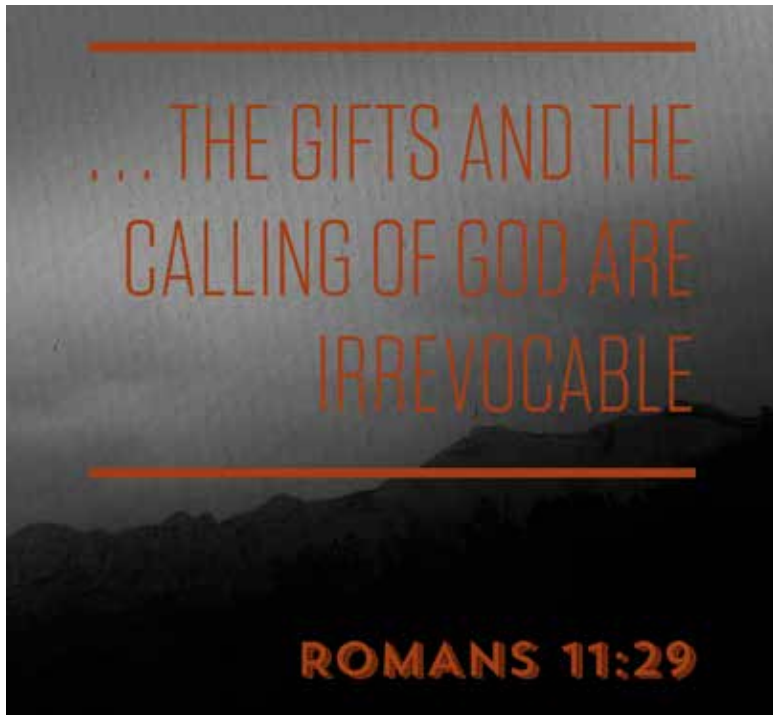
This means the return to Israel after the Babylonian Captivity did not fulfill the OT restoration promises. It may have fulfilled some of those promises, but certainly not most of them. Old Testament scholar Walter C. Kaiser clarifies it like this:

But if the postexilic returns to the land fulfilled this promised restoration predicted by the prophets, why then did Zechariah continue to announce a still future return (10:8-12) in words that were peppered with the phrases and formulas of such prophecies as Isaiah 11:11 and Jeremiah 50:19? Such a return of the nation Israel to the land could come only from a literal worldwide assemblage of Jews from "the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:12). The God who promised to bring spiritual and immaterial blessings will also fulfill the material, secular, and political blessings in order to demonstrate that He is indeed Lord of the whole earth and all that is in it.<sup>18</sup>

## Lie #7: The Abrahamic promises have been transferred from Israel to the Church.

Some of Israel's enemies are biblically astute enough to know that God did indeed make promises to Israel that have not been fulfilled (in contrast to Lie #6). So then, how do they avoid the conclusion that God still has a plan for Israel and will keep His promises to Abraham in the future? Their solution is to claim that the Church has inherited those promises. Israel lost them because of her stubbornness and unbelief.

Is it true that the Church has inherited Abraham's promises? Well, there are some elements of truth in this assertion. For instance, Paul says that non-Jewish believers partake in the blessings of Israel's New Covenant when they are "grafted in" to the root of Abrahamic faith: *"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all"* (Rom. 4:16).



That much, then, is correct. Non-Jewish believers do inherit some aspects of the Abrahamic promises when they place their faith and trust in the Jewish Messiah. However, here's where the supersessionist train jumps the tracks: The blessing of the Gentiles doesn't exclude the Jewish people themselves. On the contrary, they are very much included!

They are included, first of all, in the sense that there is (and has always been) a remnant of Jewish believers. Even in the worst times of apostasy, God never leaves himself without a testimony among His people Israel (e.g., 1 Kings 19:18). When the Apostle Paul talked about "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), many of us believe he was referring to this persistent minority of believers among the People of Israel (*Am Yisrael*).<sup>19</sup>

The Apostle Paul says very clearly that his Jewish kinsmen will someday come en masse to faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Rom. 11:26)—and when they do, they (the original or "natural" branches on the tree of Abrahamic faith, which were temporarily broken off because of unbelief) will be grafted back in again (v. 23).

Paul elaborates a few verses later and explains that the reason for this recovery and restoration of the Jewish people (i.e., ethnic Israel) is that *"... the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"* (v. 29).

Then he concludes the chapter with an amazing doxology that acknowledges the miraculous nature of this end-time work of God among the Jewish people:

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable [are] His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him [are] all things, to whom [be] glory forever. Amen (Rom. 11:33-36).*

So then, have Israel's promises been transferred to the Church? No, according to the Apostle Paul, they have not.<sup>20</sup>

And here's another inconsistency in the "transference" position. Isn't it a bit inconsistent to claim Israel's promises but not her judgments and curses? How is it that the same people who are fond of claiming that Israel's promises now belong to the Church never seem to get around to saying that Israel's judgments and curses also belong to the Church? How exactly does that work? The Church inherits the positive promises but not the negative ones? So we get to pick and choose what we want?

Suggesting that the unfulfilled promises have been transferred to the Church sidesteps the obvious problems associated with saying that they've already been fulfilled. But this view has its own set of problems, not the least of which is that it runs contrary to what the Apostle Paul says about Israel's ultimate restoration and blessing in Romans 11.<sup>21</sup>

## Lie #8: The Zionist movement is evil.

Several years ago, we received a letter from a radio listener (whom we'll call "Jim") who had been shocked by our favorable references to Zionism (which he knew as "the Z word") on one of our programs. Jim had been raised in an anti-Semitic, white supremacist, fearmongering home where copies of *The Spotlight* tabloid were always stacked up on the coffee table in the living room.<sup>22</sup> He had been taught from his childhood that the evil, ever-scheming Jewish "Zionists" were responsible for virtually everything bad that happens in the world. During the Clinton Administration, *The Spotlight* even blamed the Monica Lewinsky affair on a conspiracy orchestrated by "the Israeli lobby."<sup>23</sup>

Before writing to us, though, Jim decided to look up the word "Zionism" in a dictionary. When he did, he was surprised to learn that it simply refers to the movement to restore Israel as a nation in its ancestral homeland in the Middle East—a Land from which they had been forcibly expelled millennia ago. He told us later (in the letter he finally sent) that when he read the definition, his first thought was, "What's wrong with that?"

That new understanding launched this brother on a fact-finding trajectory in his life—one that eventually caused him to revise his thinking about the Zionist movement, Israel, and the Jewish people in general. Today, Jim proudly considers himself a Christian Zionist!

One of the most ardent Zionists of all time was King David, who quoted the Lord as having said, *"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion"* (Psalm 2:6; see also 9:11, 14; 14:7; 20:2; 50:2; 65:1; 74:2; 76:2; 84:7; 99:2; 102:16, 21; 128:5).



Our longtime friend Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Jewish believer, writes:

Zionism describes a feeling. It is an expression of the longing and yearning that the Jewish people have had in the past and still have for their homeland . . . Zionism is neither a conspiracy nor racism. It is an expression of a yearning placed into every Jewish heart by God Himself. Unfulfilled Zionism is being outside the Land of Israel. Fulfilled Zionism is being in and living in the Land.<sup>24</sup>

Dennis Prager, a popular Jewish radio show host, college professor, and columnist in the Los Angeles area, offers this perspective on Zionism:

A modern secular movement called Zionism was founded in the 19th century, but the belief that Jews belong in Zion (the biblical term for Jerusalem) is as old as the Jewish people . . . Judaism has always consisted of three components: God, Torah, and Israel, roughly translated as faith, practice, and peoplehood. And this Jewish people was conceived of as living in the Jewish country called Israel . . . When anti-Israel Muslim students demonstrate on campus chanting, “Yes to Judaism, No to Zionism,” they are inventing a new Judaism out of their hatred for Israel . . . You can criticize Israel all you want. That does not make you an anti-Semite. But if you are an anti-Zionist or advocate the destruction of the Jewish state, then let’s be clear: You are an enemy of the Jews and of Judaism, and the word for such a person is *anti-Semite*.<sup>25</sup>



In the next issue of *Messianic Perspectives*, we will conclude this series with the fourth installment, which will address the final seven anti-Semitic lies.



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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>There are several forms and degrees of supersessionism, so it can be misleading to paint all supersessionists with the same, broad stroke of the brush. Evangelical scholars like Michael Vlach, for instance, have suggested punitive, economic, and structural varieties of supersessionism with adherents ranging from “strong” to “moderate” in their views. Dr. Vlach’s Ph.D. dissertation has been adapted and published under the title *Has the Church Replaced Israel?—A Theological Evaluation* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010); see his discussion of the varying types of supersessionism on pp. 12–17. For our purposes in our publications, however, we typically respond to the more general notion that the Church has replaced Israel forever and that the New Covenant nullifies the promises of the Old Covenant.

<sup>2</sup>*Fiddler on the Roof* is a classic stage musical by the famed playwright Sholem Aleichem. It’s about a Jewish milkman (Tevye) and his family’s life in Tsarist Russia. It was originally written in Yiddish and published in 1894.

<sup>3</sup>See also Isaiah 43:10–12: “You [are] My witnesses,” says the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I [am] He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, [even] I, [am] the LORD, And besides Me [there is] no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, And [there was] no foreign [god] among you; Therefore you [are] My witnesses,” Says the LORD, “that I [am] God.”

<sup>4</sup>“Interpretation of Symbols, Types, Allegories, and Parables” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. G.M. Hyde (Washington, DC: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974), 215. Quoted by Michael Vlach, *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>5</sup>Non-Jewish believers participate by faith-adoption in God’s covenant with Israel (Gal. 3:26; 4:5–6). When we exercise faith as Abraham did, we are grafted into the Olive Tree (Rom. 11:17–19).

<sup>6</sup>Eschatologically, one could say that the first two categories will ultimately be merged into the third. At the end of time, when the heavens and the earth are transformed in what we call the Eternal State, there will be no more Jews or Gentiles, per se, but only believers in Yeshua, king of the universe. Perhaps that’s why Jeremiah 31 ties Israel’s existence as a nation to the continuation of the present created order (stars, moon, sun, etc.), which is destined to pass away (Matt. 24:35; 2 Peter 3:10). The current four-dimensional universe will give way to a completely new mode of existence.

<sup>7</sup>The three major views of prophecy (and about how the Book of Revelation should be interpreted) are amillennialism, premillennialism, and postmillennialism. The view of the early Jewish church, according to historians like Philip Schaff, was historic premillennialism (also known as chiliasm), which sees in the millennial passages a promise of a future, earthly Messianic Kingdom that endures for a thousand years before transitioning to the Eternal State. A later view was amillennialism (from the Latin meaning, “no millennium”), which takes the position that the Kingdom passages in the Bible (e.g., Isa. 61; Rev. 20) should be taken figuratively rather than literally. A third view, postmillennialism, says the Lord will return *after* the Millennium. This third view lost many adherents after the Second World War, and today it has a much smaller following than the other two.

<sup>8</sup>The lengthy excerpt that follows is taken from Catholic apologist John Salza’s article “Zionism” on his Scripture Catholic website ([scripturecatholic.com/zionism.html](http://scripturecatholic.com/zionism.html)). Salza has written several books in defense of Catholicism, including *The Biblical Basis for the Catholic Faith* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2005). He very kindly gave us permission to quote this extended passage.

<sup>9</sup>Note the distinction between *ownership* and *possession* in Joshua 21:43 (cf. 1 Chron. 28:8). Even in modern jurisprudence, it is possible to own something (e.g., a piece of real estate) without physically taking possession of it. In fact, some people own land they have never walked on or even seen! Likewise, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob *own* the Land of Israel “forever” by divine decree (Gen. 13:15; Ex. 32:13; Josh. 14:9; Jer. 31:21–26, 38–40). However, their *possession* of the Land, at various times in their history and solely at God’s discretion, has been tied to their obedience (Ezra 9:12; Jer. 25:5). For Israel, then, ownership of the Land is unconditional but possession of it is conditional. Just because Israel doesn’t possess the Promised Land (or all of it) at any given point in time doesn’t mean it doesn’t belong to her.

<sup>10</sup>When Solomon prayed this great prayer at the dedication of the Jerusalem Temple, “all” of God’s promises had been fulfilled up to that point. However, even replacement theologians acknowledge that God’s promises are not all positive. They also included negative aspects, mostly warnings about judgment for disobedience (cp. Josh. 23:14–16). Since most of the judgments were still in the future when King Solomon uttered these words in 1 Kings 8:56, the phrase “all that He promised” cannot be understood in a comprehensive sense. There were many more promise-related developments after Solomon, both positive and negative.

<sup>11</sup>Ironically, it’s precisely the other way around. Those who say God will not keep His promises to Israel are the ones who, in effect, make Him out to be a liar!

<sup>12</sup>Again, note the distinction between *ownership* and *possession*. God says, “I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them” (v. 7). The “cutting off” suspends possession but not ownership. Note that the same verse still says it’s a Land that He has given them.

<sup>13</sup>God owes the Jewish people (i.e., the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) the same thing He owes the Church—namely, the fulfillment of His promises (Jer. 33:14). Those promises were real, so the question becomes very simple: does God keep His Word, or not? Even the geographical markers for the New Covenant are in the physical Land of Israel, not in some far-off, Never-Never Land in the clouds (e.g., 31:38–40). Legally, the parties to the New Covenant are the two houses of Israel (Ephraim and Judah), with non-Jewish believers being grafted in when they exercise faith in God as Abraham did (Rom. 4:1–16).

<sup>14</sup>Note that the writer here ignores the context of the passage. He quotes Verse 23 but fails to continue on to Verse 26 where Paul says that in the Eschaton (at the end of this age), “all Israel will be saved.” The issue, then, is not merely *if* Israel will be “grafted in again,” but more a matter of *when*. Also, as an aside, note that the term “Israel” in Romans 9–11 cannot refer to the Church (sometimes called “New Israel”). It simply doesn’t make sense to say that the Church, after a long period of stubborn unbelief, will finally come to faith at the end of time. The Church (not necessarily the institutional church, but the Messianic Community or the Body of Messiah), by its very definition, is already saved!

<sup>15</sup>We say “segments of Catholicism” here, rather than all of Catholicism, because there are Catholics who oppose supersessionism—some of whom are quite outspoken about it. See, for instance, “Why Catholics for Israel?” at [www.catholicsforisrael.com](http://www.catholicsforisrael.com). Catholics for Israel is the ministry of Ariel Ben Ami, who left Catholicism to become an evangelical Protestant, then dabbled in Messianic Judaism for a time before converting back to Catholicism with a Messianic twist. Mainline Catholic scholars like Robert Sungenis have vigorously condemned this fledgling “Catholic Messianic” effort as being misguided and “erroneous” (see [catholicintl.com](http://catholicintl.com)).

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# WILL LUNAR ECLIPSES CAUSE FOUR BLOOD MOONS IN 2014 AND 2015?

by Danny R. Faulkner, Ph.D.

Mark Biltz is the founder of El Shaddai Ministries, a Hebrew roots resource and teaching ministry located near Tacoma, Washington. Recently, Biltz has attracted attention in presentations and YouTube videos about end-time prophecy and the Lord's return. He discusses the significance of four total lunar eclipses that will fall on the dates of Passover and Sukkot in 2014 and 2015. The Crucifixion of Jesus was at the time of Passover, and Biltz believes that the Second Coming of Christ must happen at Sukkot, so he argues that this relatively unusual event of four lunar eclipses on these four dates has great significance. He also mentions two solar eclipses in 2015 as having prophetic implications. Because total lunar eclipses often appear red, people sometimes call a totally eclipsed moon a "blood moon." Therefore, Biltz suggests that these eclipses are a fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:31 of the sun being darkened and the moon turning to blood and further contends that they may presage the Lord's return. Others, such as John Hagee, have begun speaking about this subject as well. Let us examine some of these claims.

## Why do total lunar eclipses often appear red?

A lunar eclipse occurs when the earth's shadow (the umbra) blocks out the moon. If the earth's shadow completely conceals the moon, it is a total eclipse. But a partial lunar eclipse happens if the earth's umbra only partially covers the moon. Because the earth has an atmosphere that bends light around its edge, the earth's umbra is not completely dark. So, the totally eclipsed moon will reflect the color of the light contained in the earth's shadow. The earth's atmosphere scatters out shorter wavelength light (green through violet) leaving mostly longer wavelength light (red, orange, and yellow) in the earth's umbra. This is why sunsets and sunrises generally are red, and why most lunar eclipses are red.

Yet, a wide range of color and brightness can be found in lunar eclipses based on atmospheric conditions at the time, including dust and humidity levels. While the color of some total lunar eclipses could be compared to blood, others are more orange, similar to that of a pumpkin. Still other eclipses look yellow, while some are very

dark—virtually black. One of the most unusual total lunar eclipses was the very long one on July 6, 1982. Half of the earth's umbra was as dark as coal, but the other half was rather bright and had a peach-like color. No one alive could remember such an unusual-looking lunar eclipse, nor were there any reports of past eclipses that were similar. In short, most lunar eclipses don't appear blood-like, so it is presumptuous to assume that any particular future eclipse—or, in this case, four eclipses—must of necessity be "blood moons."

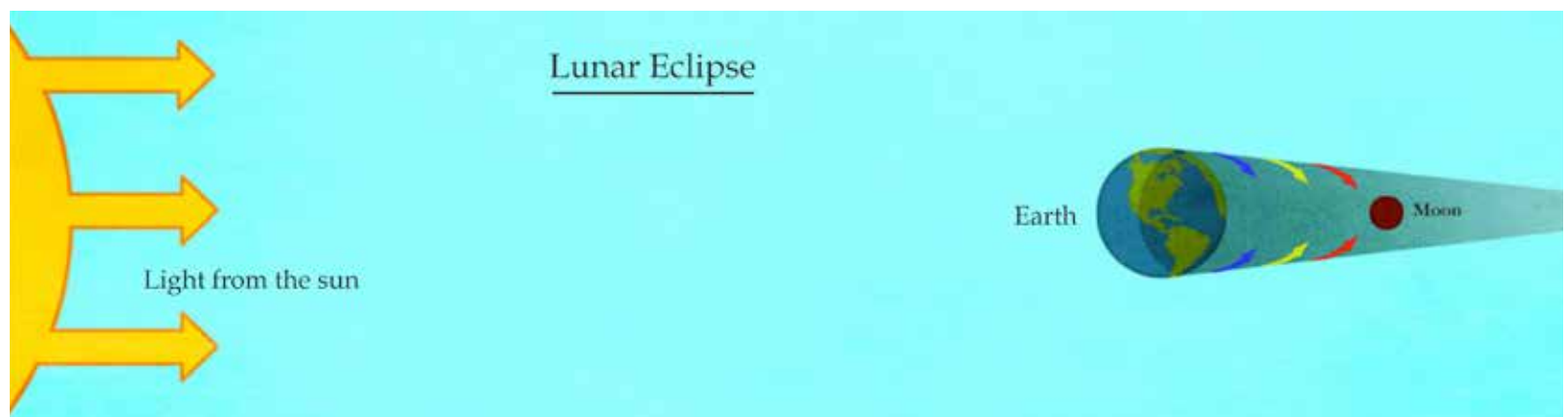
## How unusual are total lunar eclipses?

Total lunar eclipses aren't that unusual; there will be 85 total lunar eclipses in the twenty-first century. The greatest length of time between two consecutive total lunar eclipses is only three years. In between these "droughts" will be occurrences of three or even four total lunar eclipses, each separated by about six months. A little more than half the earth's surface can witness at least a portion of a particular eclipse. So, from any given location, total lunar eclipses aren't quite as common as these statistics might suggest.

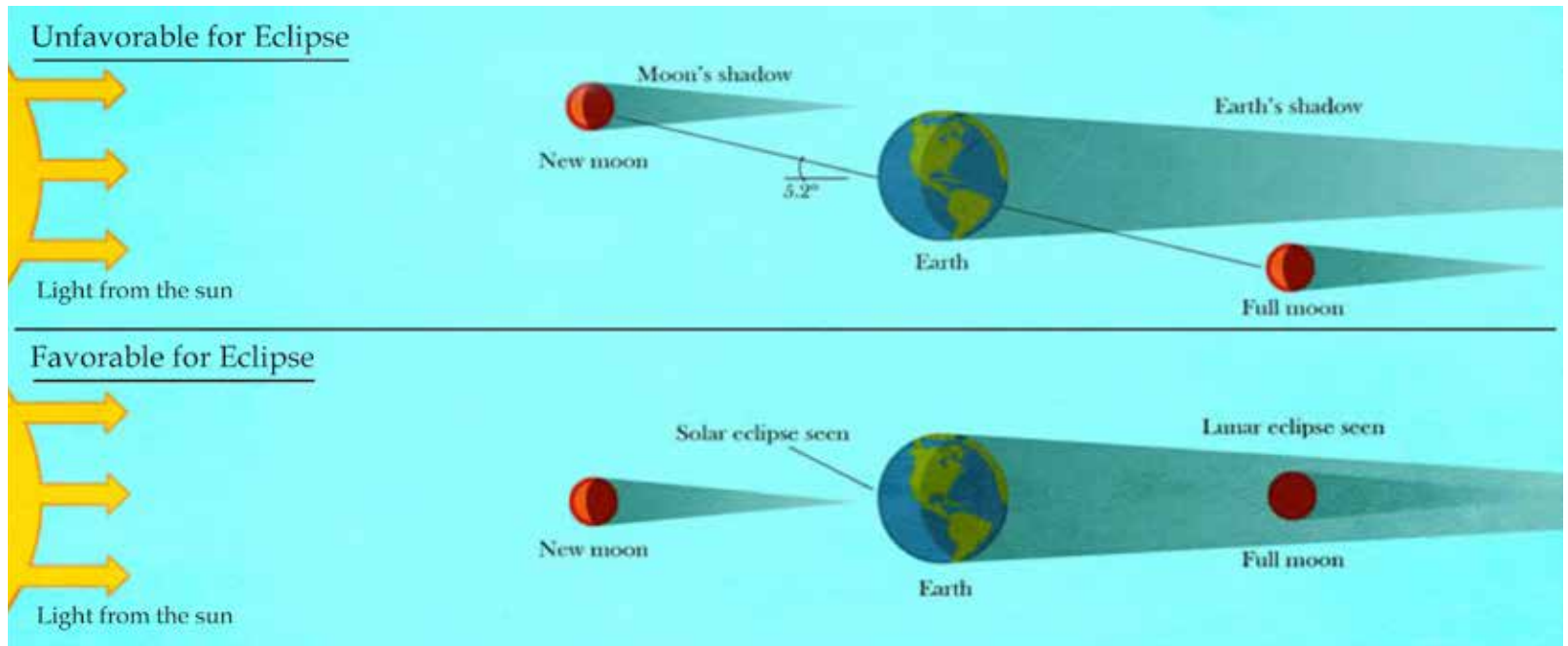
## But what about the coincidence of the four eclipses of 2014–2015 with Passover and Sukkot?

This too is not as remarkable as has been claimed. Since a lunar eclipse occurs when the shadow of the earth is cast upon the moon, a lunar eclipse can happen only when the earth is between the sun and the moon. This happens once each month when the moon's phase is full (fully illuminated as viewed from the earth). But there is not a lunar eclipse at full moon each month, so there must be more to consider.

The moon's orbit around the earth is tilted a little more than five degrees with respect to the plane of the earth's orbit around the sun (known as the ecliptic). Normally, a full moon is above or below the earth's umbra, and no eclipse occurs. Each month the moon's orbit crosses the plane of the earth's orbit around the sun in two places, points that we call the lunar nodes. If a full moon occurs when the moon is near a node, there is a lunar eclipse. (Conversely, a new moon at this time results in a solar eclipse.)







There are two times per year when the nodes are roughly aligned with a full moon. These eclipse seasons are a little more than a month long and are separated by a little less than six months. The moon's orbit precesses (travels in a gyrating manner) in an 18.6-year period, so the eclipse seasons shift about 20 days earlier each year.

The result is that the possibility of lunar eclipses happening around the times of Passover and Sukkot (which are six months apart) repeats roughly half of this 18.6-year period. For instance, in 1995–1996, there were four lunar eclipses (not all were total)—two that fell on Passover and the other two within a day of Sukkot.<sup>1</sup>

I set up a telescope for public viewing during the total lunar eclipse in September 1996, and to the people who showed up, I pointed out Joel's prophecy and the timing of the eclipse with Sukkot.

### But isn't it unusual to have a lunar eclipse on the same day as Passover or Sukkot?

No, it's really not that unusual. Remember, a lunar eclipse happens only at full moon. We don't follow a strictly lunar calendar today, but most ancient people, including the Hebrews, did. Their months began with the first appearance of the crescent of the new moon, which is a day or so after our modern definition of a new moon (when the moon and sun are in longitudinal conjunction). Reckoning from this point, fourteen days later, or the fifteenth of the month, *always* coincides with full moon.<sup>2</sup>

The civil year began near the autumnal equinox on the first day of the first month, and Jews today still celebrate Rosh Hashanah (New Year) then. At Sinai, however, God established that the ceremonial year would begin in the spring, six months earlier. The festivals that the Hebrews were to observe on this ceremonial calendar are recorded in Leviticus 23. Passover is the fifteenth day of the first month and Sukkot begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, six months after Passover. Thus, Passover and Sukkot are always at full moon and always six months apart.

There are roughly 29.5 days in a lunar month and thus 354 days in 12 lunar months. This contrasts with about 365 days in a solar year, so some adjustments must be made to keep solar and lunar calendars synchronized. The easiest adjustments are to alternate between 29 and 30 days per month and to add an additional, intercalary month about every three years. Eventually the Hebrews adopted the Metonic cycle, a method of adding intercalary months appropriately in a 19-year cycle, but it is doubtful that they adopted this immediately.<sup>3</sup> The first of each month initially may have been observationally determined, but eventually, as today, a formula determined when the first of each month occurred, and that algorithm nearly always matches what one would normally observe as the beginning of the month.

A lunar eclipse must happen *exactly* at full moon. On a lunar calendar, the fifteenth of the month falls on or within a day of exact

full moon, so any lunar eclipse must be on or within a day of the fifteenth of the month. Hence, any lunar eclipse that happens near the equinoxes must fall on or within a day of Passover (spring) or Sukkot (autumn). Therefore, the coincidence of these festivals with lunar eclipses is not as rare as Biltz implies.

### Illustrating the Recent Coincidences of Lunar Eclipses with Passover and Sukkot

To illustrate the frequency of the coincidence of lunar eclipses with Passover and Sukkot, consider the 230 lunar eclipses of all types (total, partial, and penumbral) during the twentieth century (1901–2000). Table I lists the 37 lunar eclipses in the twentieth century that coincided with Passover or Sukkot (Passover is always in March or April, and Sukkot always occurs in September or October). Many of the dates of lunar eclipses exactly match the dates of Passover or Sukkot. Others are off by one day, and a few are off by two days.

There are at least five reasons why these eclipses don't exactly match the dates of the holidays. First, the algorithm for determining the beginning of the Hebrew months results in the first of each month falling one or two days after astronomical new moon. This difference of a day or two causes the fifteenth day of each month to vary by a day or so from astronomical full moon, which is when a lunar eclipse must occur. Second, the moon doesn't move in its orbit at a uniform rate, so the time between new and full phases varies slightly. Third, the date of each eclipse is listed for the Universal Time (UT, which for our purposes can be treated as the same as Greenwich Mean Time [GMT]) of mid-eclipse. This means that many of the eclipses span two days in UT.

Fourth, since lunar eclipses are seen at night and we change our calendar day at midnight, lunar eclipses must span two days as reckoned locally. Fifth, there is a little ambiguity as to the date of Passover and Sukkot. In our modern convention, we begin our days at midnight, but in Hebrew reckoning the day begins at sunset. On most calendars, the dates of Passover and Sukkot are listed as the conventional date on which sunset would commence the respective observances. For instance, in 2013 we said Passover began on the evening of March 25, but in Israel it began on March 26, for there it already was March 26 at sunset. The dates in Table I were listed according to the modern convention, not the dates in Hebrew reckoning.

With these caveats, we can say that all 37 of these lunar eclipses coincided with Passover or Sukkot. This is about one-sixth (37/230) of the twentieth-century lunar eclipses, which is what we would expect because Passover and Sukkot happen in two of the 12 months. The relatively high frequency is a result of the definition of the fifteenth day of the month on a lunar calendar. Therefore, again, the coincidence of lunar eclipses with these two observances is more common than Biltz realizes.



## From what vantage point must one view these eclipses?

There also is a question of from what portion of the earth one ought to view these eclipses for them to constitute a sign. One might think that Jerusalem would be a key site, but the first three total lunar eclipses in 2014–2015 won't be visible from there, and only the beginning of the final eclipse will be. One must ask whether a sign that few people notice is really much of a sign.

## What about the two solar eclipses in 2015?

Biltz claims that the two solar eclipses in 2015 may be a fulfillment of the prophecy of the darkening of the sun. In one of the videos, Biltz states that the first eclipse (March 20, 2015) is on the first day of the ceremonial year, attaching great significance to this fact. While this is technically incorrect, since the eclipse is on the last day of the previous month and year, this discrepancy can be explained similarly as discussed above for lunar eclipses.

As with the coincidence of lunar eclipses with Passover and Sukkot, the occurrence of solar eclipses with the beginning of the Hebrew ceremonial year is more common than Biltz realizes since both must happen at new moon. The ceremonial year begins close to the vernal equinox, so when a solar eclipse occurs near the vernal equinox, the solar eclipse must fall on or within a day of the first day of the ceremonial year. Table II lists the 19 of the 228 solar eclipses in the twentieth century that match the beginning of the Hebrew ceremonial year. Some of the caveats on the dates previously discussed apply here as well. The ratio of 19 to 228 is exactly one-twelfth, which is what we would expect since by definition any solar eclipse near the vernal equinox must coincide with the Hebrew ceremonial New Year.

Date of Lunar Eclipse	Type of Lunar Eclipse	Date of Jewish Holiday
APRIL 22, 1902	TOTAL	APRIL 21
OCTOBER 17, 1902	TOTAL	OCTOBER 15
APRIL 12, 1903	PARTIAL	APRIL 11
OCTOBER 6, 1903	PARTIAL	OCTOBER 5
MARCH 31, 1904	PENUMBRAL	MARCH 30
SEPTEMBER 24, 1904	PENUMBRAL	SEPTEMBER 23
APRIL 1, 1912	PARTIAL	APRIL 1
SEPTEMBER 26, 1912	PARTIAL	SEPTEMBER 25
APRIL 22, 1921	TOTAL	APRIL 22
OCTOBER 16, 1921	PARTIAL	OCTOBER 16
APRIL 11, 1922	PENUMBRAL	APRIL 12
OCTOBER 6, 1922	PENUMBRAL	OCTOBER 6
APRIL 13, 1930	PARTIAL	APRIL 12
OCTOBER 7, 1930	PARTIAL	OCTOBER 6
APRIL 2, 1931	TOTAL	APRIL 1
SEPTEMBER 26, 1931	TOTAL	SEPTEMBER 25
APRIL 22, 1940	PENUMBRAL	APRIL 22
OCTOBER 16, 1940	PENUMBRAL	OCTOBER 16
APRIL 13, 1949	TOTAL	APRIL 13
OCTOBER 7, 1949	TOTAL	OCTOBER 7
APRIL 2, 1950	TOTAL	APRIL 1
SEPTEMBER 26, 1950	TOTAL	SEPTEMBER 25
APRIL 4, 1958	PENUMBRAL	APRIL 4
APRIL 13, 1968	TOTAL	APRIL 12
OCTOBER 6, 1968	TOTAL	OCTOBER 6
APRIL 2, 1969	PENUMBRAL	APRIL 2
SEPTEMBER 25, 1969	PENUMBRAL	SEPTEMBER 26
APRIL 4, 1977	PARTIAL	APRIL 2
SEPTEMBER 27, 1977	PENUMBRAL	SEPTEMBER 26
APRIL 24, 1986	TOTAL	APRIL 23
OCTOBER 17, 1986	TOTAL	OCTOBER 17
APRIL 14, 1987	PENUMBRAL	APRIL 13
OCTOBER 7, 1987	PENUMBRAL	OCTOBER 7
APRIL 15, 1995	PARTIAL	APRIL 14
OCTOBER 8, 1995	PENUMBRAL	OCTOBER 8
APRIL 4, 1996	TOTAL	APRIL 3
SEPTEMBER 27, 1996	TOTAL	SEPTEMBER 27

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>I.e., April 15, 1995; October 8, 1995; April 4, 1996; and September 27, 1996.

<sup>2</sup>While we can precisely define the instant of a full moon today, observationally the moon appears full for two to three days.

<sup>3</sup>There is some suggestion that the Metonic cycle was adopted during the Babylonian Captivity at the earliest.

## Who will witness the two solar eclipses in 2015?

The first eclipse (March 20, 2015) is total. Having personally experienced one total solar eclipse, I can attest that a total solar eclipse is stunning and awe-inspiring. Therefore, a total solar eclipse could be interpreted as a great sign to those who witness it. But how many people will witness this particular eclipse? The eclipse path is in the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. The only landfalls that the eclipse path will make are the Faroe Islands and Svalbard. The population of the former is 50,000 and the latter less than 3,000. The eclipse is of short duration, and the weather can be overcast much of the time at that latitude. There is a good chance that few people, if any, will actually see this eclipse.

The second solar eclipse (September 13, 2015) is partial and falls on Rosh Hashanah. Though many people have experienced a partial solar eclipse, most of them had no idea that anything unusual was happening. This is because unless a partial eclipse is very close to being total, the sun is not appreciably dimmed. Not actually witnessing these events but instead just knowing that somewhere some sort of solar eclipses are occurring seems to fall far short of being specific and spectacular signs of end times.

## Summary

Mark Biltz has an engaging style, and judging by the response of those in attendance in the videos, he makes a very persuasive case for his audiences. But most of those in attendance probably know little, if anything, about the circumstances and appearance of lunar and solar eclipses, so they are easily impressed. Biltz makes two key observations. First, he notes the coincidence of these eclipses with major Jewish festivals. Second, he points out that these four eclipses are in a row (a tetrad). Admittedly, bringing together such factors is rare, though not unique, but there is no suggestion that these eclipses will be otherwise exceptional. The biblical passages that refer to the dimming of the sun (Matt. 24:29; Joel 2:31) and the moon turning to blood (Joel 2:31) speak in very apocalyptic terms, emphasizing frightening things that men experience. The timing of the eclipses that Biltz draws attention to, while interesting, falls far short of the sort of signs that will cause the heavens to shake (Matt. 24:29). 🌩️

*Dr. Danny R. Faulkner is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina, Lancaster. Now retired, he joined Answers in Genesis and its Creation Museum in January 2013. He has published more than a hundred papers in various astronomy and astrophysics journals and has published one book, Universe by Design.*



Date of Solar Eclipse	Type of Solar Eclipse	First Day of Ceremonial Year
APRIL 8, 1902	PARTIAL	APRIL 7
MARCH 29, 1903	ANNULAR	MARCH 28
MARCH 16, 1904	ANNULAR	MARCH 16
APRIL 6, 1913	PARTIAL	APRIL 7
APRIL 8, 1921	ANNULAR	APRIL 8
MARCH 28, 1922	ANNULAR	MARCH 29
MARCH 17, 1923	ANNULAR	MARCH 17
APRIL 7, 1940	ANNULAR	APRIL 8
MARCH 27, 1941	ANNULAR	MARCH 28
MARCH 16, 1942	PARTIAL	MARCH 18
MARCH 18, 1950	ANNULAR	MARCH 18
APRIL 8, 1959	TOTAL	APRIL 8
MARCH 27, 1960	PARTIAL	MARCH 28
MARCH 28, 1968	PARTIAL	MARCH 29
MARCH 18, 1969	ANNULAR	MARCH 19
APRIL 7, 1978	PARTIAL	APRIL 7
APRIL 9, 1986	PARTIAL	APRIL 9
MARCH 29, 1987	ANNULAR/TOTAL	MARCH 30
MARCH 18, 1988	TOTAL	MARCH 18

# Fruit from the Harvest

by Violette Berger



As we welcome the year 2014, CJFM missionaries look back and recount some of God's blessings during the past year. On their behalf, we thank you for your faithful prayers and financial support that make these divine appointments possible.

## From Facebook to the Lamb's Book of Life

**Michelle Beadle, CJFM representative (New Orleans),** was contacted on her "Messianic Jewish New Orleans Facebook" page by a Christian man who is married to a Jewish woman. He had heard Michelle speak at his church and sought her help. He explained that his wife sometimes attended church with him over the years, but that he was "unable to reach her for the Lord." Michelle and her husband met the couple for lunch and then invited them to their house for their annual celebration of the Jewish holiday of Rosh HaShanah (New Year). During this special dinner, Michelle shared on the Book of Life and the prayer of salvation. That evening, the woman prayed with Michelle to receive *Yeshua HaMashiach* (Jesus the Messiah) as her Lord and Savior. On the very day Jewish people all over the world were praying that their names would be written in the Book of Life, this woman's name was written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. Much to the delight of the husband, the couple is now meeting with Michelle on a weekly basis for discipleship Bible study. Michelle invites you to indicate a LIKE on her Facebook page.

## The Name Above All Names

**Michael Campo, CJFM area director (Chicago),** chose the title "Who Is That Baby in the Manger?" for his message at a local church. For the answer, he expounded on his text, Hebrews 1:1-4. He stressed the complete uniqueness of Jesus—that throughout the history of the world there was no one else *like* Him—and if you knew Him you would know that! He concluded with an altar call, and two women came forward and prayed with Mike to receive Jesus.

## One, Two, Three

Blessings also abounded last year for **Richard Hill, CJFM representative (Las Vegas) and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation.** The Lord began a chain reaction: "Bethany" began attending services at the congregation. She liked what she heard, so she invited her daughter, "Rachel," to a service. It happened to be the service for the Jewish holy day, Yom Kippur: Day of Atonement (see Lev. 23:26-28), the *annual* atonement for Israel's sins through the blood of animal sacrifices. Rich taught how this offering, *kapporah* (covering) of sin, foreshadowed the sacrifice of Yeshua (Jesus) on the tree (cross). However, *His* sacrifice would not only atone for (cover) our sins but completely *forgive* them once and for all! Rachel gave her life to the Lord at the altar call. Rachel was so blessed that she invited her friend "Debbie" to the next service, which happened to be Sukkot: Feast of Tabernacles. The congregation built a *sukkot* (3-sided booth) to commemorate how the Lord met the needs of the Jewish people and was "with them" in the desert for those 40 years. Debbie gave her heart to Jesus that night. Shortly thereafter, Rich had the privilege of baptizing all three women.

## Fruit Ready to Be Picked

**CJFM Northeast representative Peter Parkas (New Jersey)** was early for a doctor's appointment, which provided an opportunity to chat with "Trina," the receptionist/secretary. She was so friendly that Peter decided to get a sense of where she was spiritually, so he asked: "If you were to die right now, why should God let you into Heaven?" Trina replied, "I don't know." So Peter shared the Gospel message with her, and she responded immediately, praying with Peter to receive Yeshua (Jesus) right there in his doctor's office!

While hospitalized last year, **Barry Berger, CJFM Director of Missions Emeritus,** had numerous opportunities to share. On separate occasions, a surgeon and three nurses prayed with him to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

*"Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest"* (John 4:35). 🌾



# Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

## Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at [garyh@cjfm.org](mailto:garyh@cjfm.org), or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

**QUESTION:** *I have two questions that I hope you can help me with. First, do all babies who die go to Heaven? And second, do babies who go to Heaven grow up there, or do they automatically become adults?*

**ANSWER:** Questions like these are more than just academic exercises. For many moms and dads who have tragically lost their little ones, these are serious, heartfelt concerns. They want to know where their children are and under what circumstances they might expect to see them again.

First, the Bible does not directly address the question of infant salvation. Furthermore, verses commonly cited to support the notion of an “age of accountability” are a stretch at best. Babies are cute and adorable, so many people see them as being “innocent” (that is, not guilty of conscious sin), and therefore saved. However, there are a number of problems with this view—including the fact that we are not only condemned by what we *do*, but also by what we *are*. Even an adorable, little baby is a fallen descendant of Adam and Eve who’s in need of redemption.<sup>1</sup>

So what happens to babies who die? My predecessor, Charles Halff, resolved the issue by appealing to God’s sovereignty. He said that God, in His omniscience and wisdom, knows who His elect (“chosen ones”) are, even before they are born. When a baby dies, then, the Lord knows what that baby would have done if he/she had lived long enough to hear the Good News of Yeshua and make a decision either to accept or reject it. If this is the case, it means that the scope of Messiah’s redemption is wider than most of us realize. God made provision, through the shedding of His Son’s blood on Calvary, for the salvation of babies (even the unborn), based

(as Dr. Halff said) on the dictates of His own grace, sovereignty, and omniscience. It may go against the grain of much of current evangelical theology, but many Reformed theologians embrace a hermeneutic that says when the dust settles at the end of time, there will be many more people in Heaven than in hell. So even from a mathematical perspective, grace wins!<sup>2</sup>

Second, I am of the opinion that babies who die will be resurrected as fully developed men and women.<sup>3</sup> It’s true that Isaiah 65:20 talks about “infants” living in the Kingdom Age, but they are most likely the offspring of believing mortals who will enter the Kingdom with their families at the conclusion of the Tribulation Period. It’s doubtful that they are individuals who died in infancy throughout the ages only to be resurrected and glorified at that same stage of development. If you’re a mom or grandma who’s wondering if you’ll miss rocking and cuddling with your precious baby who died, don’t despair. Computers can simulate reality in a variety of ways—so why can’t God do the same thing, only infinitely better? Gene Roddenberry (of *Star Trek* fame) imagined a “holodeck” where people could experience computer-generated realities. But don’t you think that man’s technology (even if it’s imaginary) must be primitive compared to God’s? So who says that you’ll never have another opportunity to hold that baby and gaze down into those big, round eyes? Rest assured that the Lord loves us and is well able to provide the desire of our hearts—and even more (Psalm 37:4). And the Apostle Paul reminds us, “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him*” (1 Cor. 2:9).<sup>4</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. passages like Psalm 51:5, 58:3, as well as Romans 3:23.

<sup>2</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, the far-famed 19th century British Baptist preacher-scholar, said: “I believe there will be more in Heaven than in hell. If anyone asks me why I think so, I answer, because Christ, in everything, is to ‘have the pre-eminence,’ and I cannot conceive how He could have the pre-eminence if there are to be more in the dominions of Satan than in Paradise” (*Spurgeon’s Sermons*, Vol. 3 [1857]).

<sup>3</sup>Glorification is the instantaneous upgrading of our frail, aging, mortal bodies to immortal, powerful, eternal bodies (1 Cor. 15:12-58). Those transformed, indestructible bodies will be like Yeshua’s post-resurrection body (Phil. 3:20-21). We receive our glorified bodies either at the moment of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:14-17) or when we are resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:42). Remember that the DNA signature for a fully developed adult is present from the moment of conception—so the biggest difference between a fetus and an adult is the passage of time.

<sup>4</sup>Paul is paraphrasing Isaiah 64:4 in this passage.

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## CJF Ministries®

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<sup>16</sup>Isn't it ironic that the Reformers (Luther, Calvin, et al.) went to such great lengths to disassociate themselves from the Church of Rome, yet ended up in substantial agreement with Catholicism on issues like supersessionism?

<sup>17</sup>Not all of the surrounding Arab states are sworn to Israel's destruction. Some of them, in fact, conduct business with the Jewish State at one level or another. However, many extremist Islamic factions in that part of the world, and some state sponsors of terrorism (like Iran), openly declare their intentions toward tiny Israel. Here's an informative excerpt from the HAMAS charter: "... The Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to realize the promise of Allah, no matter how long it takes. The Prophet, Allah's prayer and peace be upon him, says: 'The hour of judgment shall not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them, so that the Jews hide behind trees and stones, and each tree and stone will say: 'Oh Muslim, oh servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him,' except for the Gharqad tree, for it is the tree of the Jews'" (translation by the Middle East Media Research Institute at MEMRI.org). Those words are ominous, indeed; but the Bible reassures us that the Jewish people will never be completely destroyed (Jer. 31:35-37). Going forward, though, Israel's continued possession of the Land may well be challenged one final time as the prophesied scenario approaches its conclusion (1 Thess. 5:3).

<sup>18</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, "The Promised Land: A Biblical-Historical View" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 138, No. 552 (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1981), 309.

<sup>19</sup>"An examination of Galatians 5:15,16, however, instead of proving any such identification is rather a specific instance where Jewish believers are distinguished from Gentile believers, and this by the very term *Israel of God*" (John Walvoord in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 101, No. 404 [Dallas, Texas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1944], 412-413).

<sup>20</sup>We have already seen that the Church shares in some aspects of the Abrahamic promises by virtue of their Abraham-like faith in the Jewish Messiah (Rom. 4:9-12). However, this does not exclude ethnic Israel, which is destined to be grafted back into the "tree" of Abrahamic faith when she comes to faith in Yeshua (11:26). Those promises, then, still belong to Israel. They have not been transferred to the Church.

<sup>21</sup>Attempts to redefine "Israel" in Romans 9, 10, and 11 as the Church are even more problematic. Such efforts are an act of desperation by interpreters who recognize the difficulty of resolving their own views with the text and its teaching. See endnote #12 on page 6.

<sup>22</sup>*The Spotlight* was an extremist, reactionary, anti-Zionist, and anti-Semitic tabloid published by Liberty Lobby, a group promoting anti-Jewish and anti-Israel views (including a revisionist view of the Holocaust).

<sup>23</sup>"Who Is Behind the Clinton Scandal? Old-Line Zionist Linked to Monicagate" by George Nicholas (Feb. 9, 1998; accessed from *The Spotlight* archives at libertylobby.org). Liberty Lobby, publisher of *The Spotlight*, went out of business in 2001.

<sup>24</sup>"Zionism: What It Is and What It Is Not" by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, n.d.). Accessed at [www.arielm.org/outlines/t-zwi.pdf](http://www.arielm.org/outlines/t-zwi.pdf).

<sup>25</sup>"Explaining Jews, Part VII" by Dennis Prager in *Townhall.com*'s May 30, 2006 issue ([http://townhall.com/columnists/dennisprager/2006/05/30/explaining\\_jews\\_part\\_vii\\_why\\_anti-zionism\\_is\\_anti-semitism/page/full/](http://townhall.com/columnists/dennisprager/2006/05/30/explaining_jews_part_vii_why_anti-zionism_is_anti-semitism/page/full/)).

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