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Messianic Perspectives®

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

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The Gospel According to Moses

PART III

By DR. GARY HEDRICK with JOHN KANTER



DR. GARY HEDRICK

"But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel"

—The closing words of the Torah, recorded in Deuteronomy 34:10-12.

The last chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy describes the death and burial of Moses and the transition of leadership to Joshua. This addendum was most likely added by someone other than Moses some time after his death. This in no way diminishes our belief in Mosaic authorship, since he most assuredly wrote everything in the Torah except those closing verses about his death. After all, an editorial addendum at the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* about the death of Mark Twain wouldn't mean that he didn't write the book, would it?

Besides, it is not the writer (the instrument) who is inspired (or "God-breathed"), but the Scriptures themselves (the product). This is an important distinction, because the Holy Spirit could use an anonymous writer to *close out* the Torah just as easily as He used Moses to write everything else contained therein. Whether it was Joshua (as the Talmud suggests) or someone else, it is evident that this individual didn't want any credit for his work, because he doesn't say anything about himself. He very neatly, seamlessly, and anonymously finishes the story and then disappears just as abruptly as he appeared.

The Ultimate Prophet

So here we come to the end of the Torah and the writer says, *"But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, . . ."* It certainly sounds as if a considerable amount of time had passed since the death of Moses—possibly a generation or more. But implicit in this statement is a certain hopeful anticipation that someday, another prophet like Moses would appear in Israel.

This anticipation was based, in part, on Moses' earlier statement about a future Prophet like him who would appear in Israel's midst (Deut. 18:15). We mentioned this important verse earlier in this study because it shows that after Moses would be a succession of other (lesser) prophets (with a small "p"), culminating generations later with the ultimate Prophet (capital "P") who would be even greater than Moses—namely, the Lord Jesus the Messiah (see John 1:19-28).

People in the first century were evidently acquainted with this prediction about a coming messianic Prophet, because after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand we read,

"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).

This individual would be like Moses, the Bible says. So how, exactly, would He be like Moses? This is where we begin this third and final installment of our study.

Moses and Messiah

We have already said that Moses was given the privilege of being the first to write about the Good News of Jesus the Messiah. So it is certainly fitting that he himself would serve as one of the most compelling Old Testament (OT) types of the Messiah. The parallels, in fact, are numerous.

Not only is Messiah Jesus the fulfillment of the promise about a coming Moses-like Prophet, but Moses himself fore-

MESSIANIC TYPES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Moses (Moshe)—Type	Jesus (Yeshua)—Antitype
When Moses was a baby, a king tried to kill him (Ex. 1:15-16).	When Jesus was a baby, a king tried to kill him (Matt. 2:16).
Moses was a shepherd (Ex. 3:1).	Jesus is the good shepherd (John 10:11).
Moses was called God's servant (Num. 12:7).	Jesus is God's Servant (Isa. 42:1, Matt. 12:18).
Moses was a prophet (Num. 12:6-8, Deut. 18:18).	Jesus is the prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22).
Moses was called a King (Deut. 33:5).	Jesus is the King of kings (Rev. 17:14).
Moses was a priest (Psalm 99:6).	Jesus is our High Priest (Heb. 3:1).
Moses interceded for Israel (Num. 21:7).	Jesus intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34).
Moses was a teacher (Deut. 4:5).	Jesus is the Good Teacher (Mark 10:17).
Moses was a mediator for Israel (Ex. 24:3).	Jesus is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).
Moses fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights (Ex. 34:28).	Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights (Matt. 4:2).
Moses appointed 70 elders (Ex. 24:1).	Jesus sent out 70 disciples (Luke 10:1).
Moses stretched out his hand to part the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21).	Jesus also exercised control over the sea (Matt. 8:26).
There is the law of Moses (Luke 2:22).	There is the law of Messiah (1 Cor. 9:21, Heb. 7:12).
Moses sent out 12 spies (Num. 13:2, Deut. 1:23).	Jesus sent out 12 apostles (Matt. 10:5).
Israel was baptized into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2).	Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11).
There is the circumcision of Moses (John 7:22).	There is the circumcision of Messiah (Col. 2:11).
Moses performed signs (Ex. 4:28).	Jesus performed signs (John 2:23).

shadows (or typifies) the Messiah in numerous ways. Like Jesus, Moses performed great signs among the people. He also served as a priest and a king, like the Messiah. Though Moses was never officially king over Israel, he did serve in an equivalent capacity and is even called “King” in Deuteronomy 33:5. And like Jesus, Moses served as a priest and was a mediator for the people.

Furthermore, both Moses and the Messiah were lawgivers. The OT Law is referred to as “the Law of Moses” (in the Hebrew New Testament [NT], “*Torat Moshe*”; Luke 2:22, John 7:23). Likewise, Paul refers to “the Law of Christ” (“*Torat HaMashiach*”; 1 Cor. 9:21, Gal. 6:2).

And finally, they were both liberators. As Moses led Israel out of the slavery and bondage of Egypt, Messiah would lead His people out of the slavery and bondage of sin. Writing almost 1,500 years after the Exodus, the Apostle Paul picks up this idea of being liberated from bondage to sin: “*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life*” (Rom. 6:22).

Sacrifices and Blood

In the Torah, Moses paints a vivid picture of Messiah and emphasizes repeatedly the centrality of the shedding of His blood in God’s plan of redemption.

When the Mosaic Covenant was made with Israel, Moses sprinkled the people with blood and said, “. . . *This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words*” (Ex. 24:8). Similarly, when the Lord Jesus celebrated the Last Seder with His disciples, He told them, “*For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*” (Matt. 26:28).

This OT imagery of the sprinkling of blood is found repeatedly in the NT Scriptures. The writer of Hebrews talks about hearts that are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus and cleansed from evil (10:19-22). Later, he says, “*to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel*” (12:24).

Peter utilizes the imagery of the OT sprinkling with blood when he speaks of those who are “*elect according to the*

foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2).

Blood Isn’t Optional

The idea of sacrificial blood is a key theme in Moses’ writings. One key passage says, “*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul*” (Lev. 17:11). The writer of Hebrews reiterates this idea: “*And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission*” (Heb. 9:22).

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officially king over Israel,
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When the Israelites were still in Egypt, they were to put blood on their doorposts so that God would pass over their houses and not strike down their firstborn. Paul borrows the OT image of God passing over our sins when he says “*whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*” (Rom. 3:25-26).

Liberal clerics are offended by what they call a “bloody religion.” To them, it’s not something to be discussed in polite society, so they remove the blood from their Bibles, excise it from their

theology books, and never talk about it from their pulpits. But the Bible says the shedding of blood is an absolute necessity. A bloodless religion is powerless to save anyone!

Blood represents life—any creature that loses too much blood dies within minutes. When a sacrificial animal bled to death in the Temple, it was literally pouring out its life as an offering to God—which is essentially what the Lord Jesus did when He died on Calvary (Luke 22:20; cf. Isa. 53:12).

It is difficult for us to conceive that anyone relishes bloodshed and death. But isn’t that really the whole point? Death is the result of sin—and it’s ugly! We find it repulsive and disturbing. But the brutality of the sacrificial system shows us just how serious sin is and the lengths to which God had to go in order to save us. God’s plan required the shedding of innocent blood, so God paid the price Himself. He offered up His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

Where Is the Lamb?

To commemorate God’s deliverance of His people from Egypt, the Israelites were instructed to celebrate Passover, or *Pesach* (more about this later). One of the requirements for Passover was that an unblemished lamb had to be sacrificed in the place where God would choose to establish His name (Deut. 16:2, Num. 28:19). This special place was on the Temple Mount (Mount Moriah) in Jerusalem. The Paschal Lamb could not be sacrificed anywhere else. Jewish people who lived outside of Jerusalem and even outside the Land of Israel had to make a pilgrimage (Hebrew *chag* related to the Arabic word *hajj*) to Jerusalem to sacrifice their lambs to the Lord. They couldn’t just have barbecues in their backyards in Syria or Asia Minor or wherever they happened to be—they had to come to Jerusalem.

This is why, while the Temple was standing, Passover was one of three “pilgrim festivals” in Judaism (the other two being *Shavu’ot* or the Feast of Weeks and *Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles). Thus we have (in Hebrew) *Chag Pesach*, *Chag Shavu’ot*, and *Chag Sukkot*. Of course, the pilgrimage requirement was suspended when the Temple was destroyed in AD 70. Today, the Jewish people celebrate Passover (and the

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other pilgrim feasts) all over the world, wherever they live, without the sacrificial lamb and without the necessity of shedding blood or making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Incidentally, this was one of the questions that perplexed young Charles Halff, our Jewish founder, before he became a believer in Jesus back in the 1940s. Where was the lamb? And since there was no Temple, how could sins be atoned for without blood being shed?

Later, Charles came to the realization that Jerusalem was not only the sacrificial center for ancient Judaism, but it was also the place where God sacrificed His own Lamb to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). In fact, Mount Moriah (where the Passover lambs were slain) is not far from Mount Calvary. (There are several theories about where Mount Calvary was located, but none of the proposed sites are far from the Temple Mount.) So eventually, Charles came to believe that Jesus of Nazareth shed His blood on Calvary to pay for his sins.

News Flash: OT Sacrifices Never Saved Anyone

The details concerning blood and sacrifices take up a large portion of the writings of Moses, but the writer of Hebrews plainly states, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins*” (Heb. 10:4).

So why would God require the sacrifice of so many thousands of animals over so many centuries if those sacrifices could not take away the people’s sins? The answer is that the efficacy of the Temple sacrifices was not in the death of the animal, but rather in the faith of the offerer. Whether they realized it fully or not, everyone who brought a sacrificial lamb to the Temple was pointing forward by faith to the sacrifice of the Son of God. And the sacrifice of the Son of God was the one that was effective for the expiation and remission of sins.

You see, it’s a common misconception that Jewish people in the OT were saved by keeping the Law (Heb., *HaTorah*). Not so! People in all dispensations have always been saved the same way—by God’s grace and through faith in Him (Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 4:3, 9).

In the OT, the sacrificial system was *anticipatory*; that is, it looked forward to the sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary. When a slightly modified sacrificial system is put into place during the coming Millennium (Isa. 56:6-7, 60:7, Jer. 33:18, Ezek. 46:1-15, Zech. 14:16-21), it will be *commemorative*; that is, it will look back 2,000 years and memorialize what our Lord accomplished when He bled and died there in Jerusalem.

The Levitical system’s foreshadowing of the Messiah’s sacrifice and suffering is something that’s attested to in the OT, as well as the NT. Isaiah’s depiction of the Suffering Servant includes language such as “offering

(which had already been confessed) to that animal. Then the frightened creature was released and quickly scampered away into the wilderness, never to be seen again. This symbolized the sins of the people being removed from them forever (Psalm 103:12). The second goat was sacrificed as a sin offering to the Lord.

Perfection Required

In every instance, the animal that was to be sacrificed had to be unblemished. In the Book of Exodus, for example, the Passover sacrifice incorporates elements of both the sin and trespass offerings (see chart), which came later. The Passover lamb was to be flawless and “without spot,” or as Exodus 12:5 says “*without blemish*.” In the OT, the sacrificial animals had to be unblemished because they typified the coming Messiah, who would be perfect and sinless.

Perfection was a necessity for the Messiah because if He had sins of His own to answer for, He would not be qualified to die for anyone else’s sin—let alone those of the whole world. That would be like my going to the bank and trying to help someone get out of bankruptcy when I myself am bankrupt. They would laugh me out of the bank! This is why Peter emphasizes that Jesus was the spotless, sinless (unblemished) Lamb of God (1 Peter 1:19).

There are other Mosaic sacrifices that serve as messianic types. Leviticus 1:3-17 is about burnt offerings. They are said to be a “. . . *sweet aroma to the LORD*” (v. 9). Leviticus 3:1-17 describes peace offerings—and there are other offerings, as well (see chart).

The Apostle Paul, a pedigreed Pharisee and expert in the Law of Moses, often uses sacrificial language in his writings. For instance, he describes Jesus’ offering of His life as a fragrant or sweet-smelling aroma (Eph. 5:2). The sweet aroma that rose to heaven from the Mosaic sacrifice was considered part of the offering itself (see Genesis 8:21, Exodus 29:18, 25, 41). In another place Paul refers to the *shalom* that was made through the shed blood of the Messiah: a clear reference to the Levitical peace offering (Col. 1:20). And he says that God reconciled the world to Himself through the atoning



Moses with the Tablets of the Law by Guido Reni | Image by © Alinari Archives/CORBIS

for sin” (53:10) and “bear their iniquities” (53:11), both of which are reminiscent of the scapegoat that bore the sins of the people away from the camp.

The scapegoat (Heb., *azazel*; lit., “goat of removal”) appears in the Torah in connection with its instructions for *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:8-10). There were actually two goats and lots were cast to determine what role each goat would play. The priest placed his hand on the scapegoat’s head, symbolically transferring the sins of Israel

THE FIVE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS AND THEIR MESSIANIC SIGNIFICANCE

Name	Scripture	Elements/Purpose	Significance
Burnt Offering (Heb., עֹלָה, <i>Olah</i>)	Lev. 1:3-17 6:8-13 8:18-21	Bull, sheep or goat, or male bird—a voluntary (sweet aroma) offering, an act of worship to atone for unintentional sin in general.	Signifies total dedication to God on the part of Messiah Yeshua (Matt. 26:39, Mark 14:36) and also the believer (Rom. 12:1-2).
Grain Offering (Heb., מִנְחָה, <i>Minchah</i>)	Lev. 2:1-16 6:14-18 7:12-13	Grain, flour, olive oil, incense, baked bread (sweet aroma)—a voluntary act of worship to show devotion and thanks to God.	Foreshadows the perfect humanity of Messiah Yeshua. The absence of leaven typifies His sinlessness (Heb. 4:15) and the oil represents the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18).
Peace Offering (Heb., שְׁלָמִים, <i>Shlamim</i>)	Lev. 3:1-17 7:11-21, 28-34	Any unblemished animal, depending on what the worshiper could afford, and bread—a voluntary act of worship representing fellowship between God and man.	Prefigures the <i>shalom</i> which the believer has with God through the atoning work of Messiah Yeshua on Calvary (Rom. 5:1, Col. 1:20).
Sin Offering (Heb., חַטָּאת, <i>Chattat</i>)	Lev. 4:1—5:13 6:24-30 8:14-17 16:3-22	A bull, goat, lamb, flour, or bird (for the poor)—a mandatory offering to make atonement for specific sin or for cleansing from defilement.	Represents the fact that the Messiah was made “sin for us” when He died on Calvary (2 Cor. 5:21) and that He was destined to suffer outside the gates of Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-13).
Trespass Offering (Heb., אֲשָׁם, <i>Asham</i>)	Lev. 5:14—6:7 7:1-7	A ram—a mandatory offering for specific wrongdoing (included restitution and a one-fifth fine).	As believers, we have the confidence that Yeshua the Messiah is our trespass offering (Col. 2:13).

work of the Messiah—yet another allusion to the peace offering (2 Cor. 5:19).

Bread and Water from God

One of the most extraordinary aspects of the story of the Exodus is how God provided the Children of Israel with food and water in the wilderness. Exodus 16 tells us how God caused bread to rain down from heaven. The people would gather the bread during the week; but on the sixth day, twice as much would be available to accommodate their needs for the Sabbath. In that way they wouldn't have to go out and gather it on their day of rest. In Exodus 16:31, the people named this heaven-sent bread *manna* (lit., “What is it?”). Moses tells us that they ate manna for forty years.

God provided the manna until the Israelites came to the Promised Land. And when we come to the NT, we find that God is once again feeding people with supernatural bread. The Gospels record how Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish

to feed the multitudes (Matt. 14:16-21, Mark 6:37-44). In John's Gospel, he recounts how Jesus referred to Himself as the Bread from Heaven, which of course was manna (John 6:32-33). He is manna from Heaven, the Bread of Life. All who come to Him will never hunger, and those who believe in Him will never thirst (John 6:35).

Water of Life

Speaking of thirst, food wasn't the only necessity God provided supernaturally in the wilderness—He also provided water. Water is actually more important to human survival than food—we can survive a lot longer without food than we can without water. When we are in Israel with our tour groups, dehydration is always a concern when we visit sites like the Dead Sea and Masada, because of the heat and combination of very low humidity. So we buy cases of bottled water and encourage our tour members to drink a lot. If you ever go on one of our

tours, you will get tired of hearing us say, “Drink!”

Providing water for two or three million Jewish people in the wilderness was an enormous challenge. According to Moses, when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they found no water for three days (Ex. 15:22). When they finally found water at Marah, it was too bitter to drink (v. 23). When a tree was thrown in the water, it became drinkable (“sweet”) (v. 25).

Exodus 17 records yet another incident when God provided water—this time, from a rock. On this occasion, at Rephidim, Moses was instructed to strike the rock in Horeb, and water would come out for the people to drink (v. 6). The “Rock” was a sort of metaphor to convey the idea that God is stable, unchangeable, unmovable, and provides a place of safety and refuge. This is a recurring theme in the “Song of Moses” (Deut. 32:15, 18, 30-31).

The striking of the rock so water could flow out of it typifies the strik-

ing of our Messiah (that is, His death on Calvary). Isaiah says that He was “stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (53:4). He suffered, bled, and died so that we might drink freely of the water of life (Rev. 22:17).

Striking vs. Speaking

Interestingly, some 40 years later, when God again used a rock to provide water, He specifically told Moses not to strike the rock. This time, he was supposed to speak to it. But Moses was having a bad day. As a result, he became angry and disobeyed God. He struck the rock not once, but twice (Num. 20:7-11).

Because of this sin, God told Moses that he would not be allowed to lead Israel into the Promised Land (v. 12). But why was this such a grievous mistake? All Moses did was revert to the same method God had instructed him to use 40 years earlier. So what was the big deal?

Well, the big deal was that striking the rock *more than once* violated the typology. The rock couldn't be struck more than once because the Messiah would only be stricken once. In fact, the once-and-for-all death of the Lord Jesus is mentioned numerous times in the Book of Hebrews (7:27, 9:12, 26, 10:10; see also 1 Peter 3:18). So Moses died before Israel crossed over into the Promised Land. That's how important typology is to God!

When Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well, He told her about “living water.” He said, “*but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life*” (John 4:14). Paul adopts the same theme when he says “*and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ*” (1 Cor. 10:4).

As we saw earlier, the Bible closes with one, final invitation for those who are thirsty to drink freely of the “water of life” which only He can provide (Rev. 7:17, 21:6, 22:1, 17).

The Brazen Serpent

Jesus alludes to Moses' use of typology in the Torah when He discusses the incident with the snakes in the wilderness (Num. 21:6-9). The people were discour-

The lifting up of the serpent on a pole prefigured the lifting up of the Son of God on a Roman execution stake centuries later. Anyone who looks upon Him in faith and acceptance can be healed of the affliction of sin and its eternal consequences.



Moses and the Brazen Serpent by Anthony Van Dyck | © Photograph by Erich Lessing/Art Resource

aged and they were especially tired of eating manna. They began groaning and complaining against Moses and against God (v. 5). The situation became rather desperate, and there was a danger that if God didn't somehow intervene, Israel might not make it to the Promised Land. This would have had catastrophic consequences for God's plan of redemption.

So God sent “fiery serpents” (that is, deadly snakes) against the Israelites—and, as you might imagine, that got their attention! Many people died from the snakebites (v. 6). The people told Moses that they were sorry and begged him to intercede for them. So Moses prayed for the people and was told by God that the

antidote would be a brass serpent lifted up on a pole. So Moses followed God's instructions. When someone who was bitten looked up at the elevated serpent, he lived (v. 9).

Interestingly enough, the Israelites preserved this brass serpent for a long time after the death of Moses. It was finally destroyed in the days of King Hezekiah because it had become an object of veneration, like an idol (2 Kings 18:1, 4).

The Lord Jesus said this entire “brass serpent” episode had a deeper meaning. The brass snake was a type and He was its fulfillment: “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:14-15). The lifting up of the serpent on a pole prefigured the lifting up of the Son of God on a Roman execution stake centuries later. Anyone who looks upon Him in faith and acceptance can be healed of the deadly affliction of sin and its eternal consequences.

God's Appointed Times

Moses also presents the Gospel in the feasts of the Lord. God calls them His appointed times (Heb., *mo'edim*): “*Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD [Heb., mo'edi YHVH], which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations [miqrai kadosh], these are My feasts [mo'edi]'*” (Lev. 23:2).

Don't Be a Stranger

Now this is mind-boggling! The very notion that the God of the universe asks—or more precisely, *commands*—His people to come and meet with Him at regular, appointed intervals, is really quite amazing.

You see, the reason this world is so out of whack is that we have been separated (by sin and its devastating effects) from the God who made us. Because of the Fall, we live in a broken, abnormal world. Death is abnormal (the whole “circle of life” thing is nonsense) and disease is abnormal; war and conflict are anomalies. The problem is that we have never known conditions to be otherwise, so we just rationalize and ultimately accept things as they are.

But God does know the world is indeed broken, and He's in the process of fixing it. The reason for its taking so long is that He's fixing it in such a way

Continued on Page 14



Is Modern Israel

Is the current state of Israel a work of

There are many reasons why we can say that the modern state of Israel is prophetically significant and of stage-setting significance for the Tribulation.

By DR. THOMAS ICE

Is the current state of Israel a work of God, as predicted in Bible prophecy, or is it merely an accident of history? I believe that modern Israel is a divine work and is in the process of fulfilling Bible prophecy. I believe that Israel, as she is constituted today, is a work of God in progress preparing the nation for the Tribulation, which will lead to her national conversion, the Second Coming of Christ, and His millennial reign.

Christian Support for Israel

On the one hand, there is great support for Israel generally among the Evangelical Christian community. This is likely the main reason why polls in the United States show great support for the modern state of Israel, in contrast with Europe, which tends to overwhelmingly support the Arabs. It is not the Jewish lobby that is so effective in America, while they struggle for [similar strength] across the Atlantic. Great support for Israel in the USA is because biblical Christianity resonates more here than in the Old World. There are not many Bible-believing Christians in Europe compared to their numbers in this country. Further, there is a greater number of Muslims in Europe than in North America. Muslim influence is driving opinions in Europe in much

the same way that Evangelicals tip the scales in this country.

While the vast majority of Evangelicals has always supported Israel, the Jewish community has only recently become convinced of this support.

National Review's Rod Dreher says Evangelicals who hold a "divine right" viewpoint support Israel with an "uncritical fervor that exceeds that of even some American Jews." Orthodox Rabbi Daniel Lapin, in an article posted May 7 on *National Review* online, says American Jews are "waking up" to Christian support.¹

For many Evangelicals, the modern state of Israel is [so] important that it will be the central issue by which they will determine who to vote for in [various] elections. For Christians such as myself, we continue to believe the dictum of history that God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel (Gen. 12:3).

Fighting God

Yet, even within the Christian community in America, there are those who do not believe that the modern state of Israel is related to God's sovereign plan for history. Preterist Gary North [recently boasted] that he has a book already in his computer for when "Israel gets pushed into the sea, or converted to Christ."² Lutheran Don Matzat has said:

The present-day nation of Israel is no more involved in God's plan for the future



Fulfilling Prophecy?

God . . . or is it merely an accident of history?

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than is France, England, Germany, the United States, etc. The teaching of the New Testament is very clear—Jesus fulfilled everything pertaining to Israel and formed the New Israel.³

Even a number of dispensationalists today say that there is a restored nation of Israel in God's plan for the future, but there is no reason to think that the current nation of Israel is necessarily prophetically significant. Dr. Mark Bailey, current president of Dallas Theological Seminary, has said:

Is that what is happening today? I can't say for sure. It is the first time in 2,500 years, though, that you have this kind of constitution of people in that land, but I don't *know* what that means. This may be the prelude to end-times events, but I think we're presumptuous if we try to give it meaning beyond that. It *may be*, that's all we can say.⁴

It is not surprising, in light of his view of the present state of Israel, that Dr. Bailey [seems to suggest] that Christians not support Israel politically.⁵

Modern Israel Is a Work of God

There are many reasons why we can say that the modern state of Israel is prophetically significant and of stage-setting significance for the Tribulation. I will list a few here but will do a more thorough job in a forthcoming book. First of all, Israel is not going to get "pushed into the sea." Secondly, France, England,

Germany, and the United States are not mentioned hundreds of times throughout the Bible, as is the case with Israel. The Bible says many times that Israel is not done in history, but many Christians act as if that were not true. Paul said in Romans 11:1a, "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!"

Dozens of biblical passages predict an end-times regathering of Israel back to her land. However, it is a common mistake to lump all these passages into one fulfillment time frame, especially in relation to the modern state of Israel. Modern Israel is prophetically significant and is fulfilling Bible prophecy. But readers of God's Word need to be careful to distinguish which verses are being fulfilled in our day and which references await future fulfillment. In short, there will be two end-times regatherings: one before the Tribulation and one after the Tribulation.

Hebrew Christian scholar Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum—a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary—explains the biblical basis for the current state of Israel as follows:

The re-establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 has not only thrown a wrench in amillennial thinking, but it has also thrown a chink in much of premillennial thinking. Amazingly, some premillennialists have concluded that the present state of Israel has nothing to do with the fulfillment of

prophecy. For some reason, the present state somehow does not fit their scheme of things, and so the present state becomes merely an accident of history. On what grounds is the state of Israel so dismissed? The issue that bothers so many premillennialists is the fact that not only have the Jews returned in unbelief with regard to the person of Jesus, but the majority of the ones who have returned are not even Orthodox Jews. In fact, the majority are atheists or agnostics. Certainly, then, Israel does not fit in with all those biblical passages dealing with the return. For it is a regenerated nation that the Bible speaks of, and the present state of Israel hardly fits that picture. So on these grounds, the present state is dismissed as not being a fulfillment of prophecy.

However, the real problem is the failure to see that the prophets spoke of two international returns. First, there was to be a regathering in unbelief in preparation for judgment, namely the judgment of the tribulation. This was to be followed by a second worldwide regathering in faith in preparation for blessing, namely the blessings of the messianic age. Once it is recognized that the Bible speaks of two such regatherings, it is easy to see how the present state of Israel fits into prophecy.⁶

First Worldwide Gathering in Unbelief

In 1948 when the modern state of Israel was born, it not only became an important stage-setting development, but it began an actual fulfillment of specific

Bible prophecies about an international regathering of the Jews in unbelief before the judgment of the Tribulation. Such a prediction is found in the following Old Testament passages: Ezekiel 20:34-38, 22:17-22, 36:21-24, 37:1-14; Isaiah 11:11-12; Zephaniah 2:1-2; and Ezekiel 38:8, 11-12, 39:25-29 presuppose such a setting.

Zephaniah 1:14-18 is one of the most colorful descriptions of the “day of the LORD,” which we commonly call the Tribulation Period. Zephaniah 2:1-2 says there will be a worldwide regathering of Israel before the day of the LORD: “Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, before the decree takes effect—the day passes like the chaff—before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD’s anger comes upon you!”

Ezekiel 20:34-38 speaks of a regathering which must take place before the Tribulation. The passage speaks of bringing the nation of Israel back “. . . from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out” (Ezek. 20:34). “With wrath poured out” is a descriptive reference to the Tribulation. Thus, in order for this to occur in his-

Ezekiel receives another revelation about a future regathering of national Israel (Ezek. 22:17-22). This time, the Lord is going to “. . . gather you into the midst of Jerusalem” (Ezek. 22:19). Like the metallurgist, the Lord will use the fire of the Tribulation to purge out the unfaithful.

tory, Israel must be back in the land before the Tribulation. This passage clearly says that it is the Lord who is bringing them back. The current nation of Israel is in the process of fulfilling this passage.

In a similar vein, two chapters later, Ezekiel receives another revelation about a future regathering of national Israel (Ezek. 22:17-22). This time, the Lord is going to “. . . gather you into the midst of Jerusalem” (Ezek. 22:19). Like the metallurgist, the Lord will use the fire of the Tribulation to purge out the unfaithful. The Lord is going

to “. . . gather you [Israel] and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it” (Ezek. 22:21). Once again, “My wrath” depicts the time of the Tribulation. It also follows here that the nation must be regathered before the event can take place. The outcome of this event will be that the nation “. . . will know that I, the LORD, have poured out My wrath on you” (Ezek. 22:22). For this to occur, there must be a regathering by the Lord of Israel to the land, just like we see happening with the modern state of Israel. God is at work through the current state of Israel.

Surely, anyone who claims to believe in a national future for Israel would have to say that the valley of dry bones prophecy in some way, shape, or form relates to modern Israel (Ezek. 37:1-14). The prophet describes a future process through which the nation of Israel will come to be reconstituted and (when the process is complete) enter into a faithful spiritual relationship with the Lord. This multistage process must surely include the current nation of Israel, in unbelief, that is being prepared to go through a time that will lead to her conversion to Jesus as their Messiah. This

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Bible Questions AND Answers

By DR. GARY HEDRICK



Noah's Ark by Edward Hicks | © Philadelphia Museum of Art/CORBIS

QUESTION: Do you believe in the Genesis flood? I just started reading the Bible all the way through, and I'm in that section of Genesis about Noah and the flood. I was wondering if you could answer three questions for me. First, do you believe this flood actually happened? (I have heard that it was borrowed from an earlier legend.) Second, if you believe it really happened, do you think it was a worldwide flood? (Wouldn't it be easier to see it as a local flood?) And third, isn't there a contradiction between Genesis 6:19 where God tells Noah to take two of each kind of animal into the ark and 7:2 where He says he's supposed to take seven, rather than two, of certain kinds of animals?

1. Yes, we believe the Genesis flood actually happened. The fact that other traditions (such as the Babylonian and even some Native American) also tell very ancient stories about a cataclysmic flood does not diminish the historicity of the Genesis account. The memory of such a universal and devastating event could easily have been preserved in more than one tradition. Many independent and developmentally unrelated traditions telling about a flood that nearly wiped out the human race provide evidence that they're all based on

a common core of truth. The nonbiblical accounts differ from the Book of Genesis on points where they became corrupted in the transmission of the details from generation to generation.

The fact that other traditions (such as the Babylonian and even some Native American) also tell very ancient stories about a cataclysmic flood does not diminish the historicity of the Genesis account.

2. Yes, we believe it was a worldwide flood; and no, it wouldn't be easier to see it as a local flood because then we would have to figure out (a) why God didn't just tell Noah to relocate his family to somewhere outside the floodplain and (b) why Noah had to provide for the survival of the animal kingdom by taking all those animals on the ark. Also, the language of the Hebrew text—including its verse that “. . . all of the high hills under the whole heaven” were submerged (7:19)—strongly suggests that this was much more than just a local flood.

3. No, there is no contradiction between the two passages that you cite, as one prominent Jewish commentator explained nearly a thousand years ago. Ramban (also known as Nachmanides) dealt with the resolution of 6:19 (one pair) with 7:2 (seven pairs of certain species) very simply and straightforwardly. He said that 6:19 referred to a *minimum* of two of each kind of animal, not a *limit* of two. In Chapter 7, we learn that Noah would need more of the “clean” species because they could be used not only for propagation, but also for food and sacrificial purposes. The Hebrew text of 7:2 literally says that Noah should bring “seven [pairs], seven males and a mate [for each one].” So the information in Chapters 6 and 7 is not contradictory, but rather complementary. Chapter 6 provides the general information that the animals would be brought into the ark in pairs (male and female); then Chapter 7 elucidates the delineation between unclean (one pair) and clean (seven pairs) species.

QUESTION: Does oppression excuse Palestinian terrorism? You are obviously Christian Zionists, so I suppose you can't be expected to empathize with the poor, disadvantaged Palestinian people who have little or no hope in their lives. Why do you think they are willing to strap bombs onto themselves, walk into public places, and blow themselves up? They have been oppressed for generations and have lost hope. Hopelessness breeds desperation, and desperate people perform desperate acts. Why can't you understand this?

ANSWER: As we have said many times before, we empathize with the plight of the Palestinian people. Many of them, particularly those who are poor, have been kicked around and trodden underfoot by others for as long as they can remember. They have been forced to endure horrible living conditions for themselves and their families. And to add insult to injury, they have been betrayed and exploited by their own leaders, such as the late Yasser Arafat, for example, who amassed a huge personal fortune by diverting millions of international aid dollars to his own private bank accounts. His wife lived for years in the lap of luxury in Paris as multitudes of the Palestinian people suffered in filth and squalor in the West Bank and Gaza.

However, not all Palestinians are suffering, impoverished, and uneducated. In Palestinian society, there is an elite upper class whose members do quite

well for themselves. Some are connected with aristocratic “old money” scattered throughout the Arab world, while others are bankrolled by the Palestinian Authority or Hamas. Many of the people in this privileged upper class have been educated in the US at schools such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and New York University, among others. They are university professors, musicians, intellectuals, philosophers, sci-

Islamic terrorism goes deeper than socioeconomic disadvantage. It's really more about the rabid anti-Semitism that is drilled into [its] followers from the cradle to the grave.



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entists, and professional and business people. When there's a black-tie affair in the West Bank, such as a concert or a political fund-raiser, well-to-do couples arrive in their fancy European automobiles and are dressed to the hilt. The women are adorned with jewelry that would even make Hollywood starlets envious. Many years ago, during a period of relative calm in the Middle East, I was a guest in the home of a

Palestinian businessman near Jericho. It was a palatial hilltop mansion with 20-foot ceilings, lavish furnishings, fountains, and marble floors. This gentleman was a very gracious host, and I have never been treated more royally. Sadly, we heard several years later that he and his family were forced to flee to North Africa because Arafat had put a price on his head. His “crime,” we were told, was his collaboration with the enemy (that is, the Israelis).

Nonetheless, no one denies that many Palestinian people lead difficult lives. Israel has had to close her borders and erect a wall because of homicidal bombers. Consequently, thousands of Palestinians who had jobs in Israel are now unemployed and unable to support their families. This also hurts the Israeli business owners, because it drives up labor costs and has put some out of business. The result is a very sad and tragic situation for everyone involved.

An often overlooked fact about Palestinian oppression is that their greatest oppressors, historically, have been fellow Arabs; case in point, the Syrians. In 1982 the Syrian military suppressed a Palestinian uprising of the Muslim Brotherhood at Hama, Syria, by slaughtering an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Palestinian men, women, and children in an unbelievable display of unbridled brutality. They even killed their pets and livestock! You can read more about the massacre at Hama in Thomas Friedman's book *From Beirut to Jeru-*

salem. Today the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) monitors living conditions of over one-half million Palestinian refugees in Syria who live in mud huts and crude block buildings in crowded camps (see the latest UNRWA report at: www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo017/fmo017.pdf).

You said that the homicidal bombers are poor and disadvantaged individuals who murder innocent civilians out of their sense of hopelessness and desperation. With all due respect, however, this is utter nonsense. Most terrorist attacks in Iraq and elsewhere are actually being carried out by well-financed, educated Saudis. Many of these homicidal terrorists—including the architects of the 9/11 attacks on US soil—are from wealthy influential Saudi families. Note the following reference: Glassman, Susan B. “‘Martyrs’ In Iraq Mostly Saudis: Web Sites Track Suicide Bombings,” *The Washington Post*, May 15, 2005, A01, washingtonpost.com.

Contrast this with the Civil Rights Movement here in the US, where African-Americans rose up in protest during the 1960s to take their rightful place as full citizens—and did so peacefully. Even when they themselves came to harm, the leaders of this movement refused to respond in kind. The same was true of Mahatma Ghandi with his peaceful protests in the first half of the twentieth century that ultimately led to India's independence and the dismantling of much of the far-flung British Empire. As you can see, many oppressed peoples have suffered greatly throughout history, and yet still refused to resort to the wanton murder of innocent civilians.

It is clear that Islamic terrorism goes much deeper than mere socioeconomic disadvantage or political persecution. It's really more about the rantings of militant Islamic clerics and the rabid anti-Semitism that is drilled into their followers from the cradle to the grave. They refer to the United States as “the Great Satan” because we support Israel (“the Little Satan”). Hearts and minds on both sides of the divide need to be transformed. That's why we keep on saying that the only real hope for permanent peace in the Middle East is Yeshua (Jesus), our *Sar Shalom*—the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

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Is Modern Israel Fulfilling Prophecy?
Continued from Page 8

is said by Ezekiel to be a work of the Lord (Ezek. 37:14). Thus, the modern state of Israel is a work of God and biblically significant.

Second Worldwide Gathering in Belief

Many passages in the Bible speak of Israel's regathering, in belief, at the end of the Tribulation, in conjunction with Christ's Second Coming, in preparation for commencement of the Millennium. These references are not being fulfilled by the modern state of Israel. Some of the citations include: Deuteronomy 4:29, 30:1-10; Isaiah 27:12-13, 43:5-7; Jeremiah 16:14-15, 31:7-10; Ezekiel 11:14-20; Amos 9:14-15; Zechariah 10:6-12; Matthew 24:31; and many more. I think that this regathering will fulfill the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) for the nation of Israel.

Matthew 24:31 records a future regathering of Israel, this time in belief: "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky [heaven] to the other." This is said to take place after the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29), which would be the Second Coming.

Conclusion

The fact that the last 50 years has seen a worldwide regathering and reestablishment of the nation of Israel, which is now

The fact that the last 50 years has seen a worldwide regathering and reestablishment of the nation of Israel, which is now poised in just the setting required for the revealing of the Antichrist and the start of the Tribulation, is God's grand indicator that all of the other areas of world development are prophetically significant.

poised in just the setting required for the revealing of the Antichrist and the start of the Tribulation, is God's grand indicator that all of the other areas of world development are prophetically significant. Dr. Walvoord says:

Of the many peculiar phenomena which characterize the present generation, few events can claim equal significance as far as biblical prophecy is concerned with that of the return of Israel to their land. It constitutes a preparation for the end of the age, the setting for the coming of the Lord for His church, and the fulfillment of Israel's prophetic destiny.⁷

It is true that the Bible predicts a future time when Israel will be regathered in belief and will then enter into the Kingdom for a thousand years. How-

ever, as I have demonstrated above, the same Scriptures also tell us of a time when Israel will be regathered in unbelief, before the Tribulation in order that God may complete His plan for national Israel. I believe that those who speak contrary to this will be found to be fighting God. *Maranatha.*



Thomas Ice is Executive Director of The Pre-Trib Research Center in Arlington, Texas, which he founded in 1994 with Dr. Tim LaHaye. A prolific author, Dr. Ice has co-written

numerous books, is the author of scores of articles, and is a noted conference speaker and lecturer. He holds a Th.M. degree from Dallas Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Tyndale Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

¹ Taken from *The Journal: A Summit Ministries Publication* (September 2002), p. 14.

² Personal letter from Gary North to Peter Lalonde, April 30, 1987.

³ Don Matzat, "The Great Premillennial HOAX," *Issues, Etc. Journal* (Vol. 1, Internet edition).

⁴ Mark Bailey, "The Lord's Land Policy in Israel," *Dallas Theological Seminary, Veritas* (Vol. 2, No. 3: July 2002), p. 4.

⁵ Mark Bailey, "The Lord's Land Policy in Israel," *Dallas Theological Seminary, Veritas* (Vol. 2, No. 3: July 2002), p. 6.

⁶ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Press, 1982), p. 65.

⁷ John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1964), p. 26.

R. A. Higbee



Christian schools in the area to ask if they would be interested in having her share a “Messiah in the Passover” presentation with their students. One of the Christianschools invited Michelle to share her pre-

“ ‘ooing’ and ‘ahhing’ at the *matzoh*, the bitter herbs, and the *charoset*” (the elements of the Passover Seder plate). Please pray for the spiritual growth of these new young believers.

Peter Parkas, CJFM missionary (New Jersey), also shares about one of his church meetings. The pastor’s wife had been witnessing and praying for her co-worker “Beth” for some time and had invited her to attend the service where Peter would be the guest speaker. After hearing Peter’s message, Beth responded to his invitation to receive Yeshua (Jesus) as her Lord and Savior. Peter said, “What a blessing to see Beth come up to the platform with tears in her eyes and say a simple prayer of faith inviting the Savior in!” And what an answer to prayer!

GOD OPENS DOORS

Michelle Beadle, CJFM missionary (New Orleans), writes: “Since Katrina, half of the churches in the city have shut down, and those churches left standing are still very involved, not only in their own rebuilding efforts, but also putting in innumerable hours toward helping the community rebuild as well.”

As a result, Michelle and CJFM Church Ministries Coordinator Kaye Fisher have spent countless hours reaching out to the local community and trying to schedule local church meetings this year. Michelle even called all the

presentation with its entire student body—from the kindergarten through the eighth grade—during their chapel services. The school holds two separate chapel services; the first is for the middle school students, and the second for the lower grades. Michelle relates that “all of the children were extremely well-behaved. I had their full attention for the entire 45 minutes, and at the conclusion of the first chapel service, **two** middle school boys gave their hearts to the Lord. At the end of chapel for the lower school, **35** children raised their hands, confirming that they had just prayed to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior

During the Passover season this year, **Barry Berger, CJFM Director of Missions Emeritus (Phoenix)**, was blessed to have led the thirteenth annual citywide Passover Seder for *Tikvah BaMidbar* (Hope in the Desert) fellowship. Three hundred and eighty-two people attended, and **eight** prayed to receive *Yeshua HaMashiach* (Jesus the Messiah) as their Lord and Savior. Some of the unsaved Jewish people in attendance commented that, although they had been observing the Passover for many years, in *this* presentation they heard an explanation they had never heard before: one that focused on the foreshadowing of the Messiah as the Lamb of God who died for their sins—something for them to ponder. Hallelujah!



Barry Berger, CJFM Director of Missions Emeritus (Phoenix), leading the city’s thirteenth annual Passover Seder

for the first time. It was so amazing!” Michelle also mentioned that the children were so responsive to the program that they were

CJFM missionaries (left to right) Peter Parkas (New Jersey); Michelle Beadle (New Orleans); CJFM Church Ministries Coordinator Kaye Fisher



Shabbat by Pamela Suran

The Gospel According to Moses, Continued from Page 5

that it will never break again. The NT writer Luke says that when the Lord Jesus returns, He will restore everything as it was originally meant to be: “Whom the heaven must receive **until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21, KJV).

God is restoring the fellowship that we were originally meant to have with Him. When you’re leaving a friend’s or loved one’s home after a nice, long visit, what do you say to each other as you part ways? You might say, “Come and see us,” or “Don’t be a stranger.” What this implies is that you’re going to miss them and you want to be with them again soon. That’s the idea in Leviticus 23. God is saying, “Come and see me.” And He wants them to do it at least three times a year.

Shabbat

Before he launches into a summary of the seven annual *mo’edim*, Moses first mentions the most fundamental appointed time of all: the Sabbath, which occurs not annually, but weekly.

The Hebrew word for Sabbath (Lev. 23:3) is *Shabbat* (שבת), meaning “to cease” or “to rest” (from labor). It’s observed on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, and at various other prescribed times on the Jewish calendar. All of the *mo’edim* are considered Sabbaths, even when they don’t fall on a Saturday.

Moses first mentions the most fundamental appointed time of all: the Sabbath, which occurs not annually, but weekly. The Hebrew word for Sabbath (Lev. 23:3) is Shabbat, meaning “to cease” or “to rest” (from labor). It’s observed on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, and at various other prescribed times on the Jewish calendar.

The writer of Hebrews, over and over again, talks about a special *Shabbat* (“rest”) for the people of God (Heb. 3:11, 18, 4:1, 3-5, 8-11). Jesus the Messiah finished the work of redemption when He died on Calvary. All that remains is for us to receive salvation as a free gift (Eph. 2:8). Salvation isn’t free because it didn’t cost anything; on the contrary, salvation is the most expensive commodity in the history of the universe. But it’s free to us because someone else—namely, the Lord Jesus the Messiah—paid for it. So we rest in Him because He did the work. He is our *Shabbat*.

Next, Moses talks about Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Day of Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks (also known as Pentecost or *Shavu’ot*), Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. These seven feasts have

historical, theological, and prophetic significance, as well as NT relevance. The first four feasts were fulfilled (with respect to their messianic and prophetic significance) when the Messiah came the first time. The final three feasts await a future fulfillment at the Messiah’s Second Coming.

Pesach—HaMatzot

The first two feasts—Passover (*Pesach*) and Unleavened Bread (*HaMatzot*)—are interrelated (Lev. 23:5-8). Passover begins at sundown on the evening of the 14th day of Nisan. Unleavened Bread begins on the following day and continues for one week. Because these two feasts occur together on the calendar, they represent one *chag* (that is, one journey to Jerusalem). To this day, in fact, they are observed as one feast in traditional Judaism. The rabbis generally do not differentiate between them.

Indeed, the NT writers declare that Jesus is our Passover Lamb, “. . . *The [blessed] Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29). Paul ties the two feasts together when he says, “*Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast [that is, Pesach], not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*” (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

HaBikkurim

Passover and Unleavened Bread are followed by the Day of Firstfruits (*HaBikkurim*) (Lev. 23:9-14). It takes place on the day after the Sabbath that follows Passover week. This was when ancient Israel consecrated the firstfruits of the barley harvest and a lamb. It was an expression of thanksgiving to God and involved giving a portion (or tithe) of the first part of the crop and a lamb to Him as an act of worship.

In 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul talks about Messiah being the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (in death) and will be raised from the dead. In other words, His resurrection was the first of many others to come—and it guarantees ours (vv. 20-23; cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Furthermore, the Apostle John mentions the 144,000 Jewish evangelists learning “a new song” and being the “firstfruits” of the Tribulation (Rev. 14:1-4). They will be the first of the Tribulation saints, the first of many who will come to faith in the Messiah through their ministry during this tumultuous, world-shaking period.

Shavu'ot

The next feast is the Feast of Weeks (*Shavu'ot*), also known as Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-22). It falls on the day after the seventh Sabbath after the Day of Firstfruits. It was also a feast of firstfruits, of sorts, because it was when ancient Israel dedicated and consecrated the firstfruits of the wheat harvest (remember, the earlier Day of Firstfruits commemorated the beginning of the barley harvest). Its NT significance is found in Acts 2, where we find the birth of the *Ekklesia* ("Church," or the

(2) it's not really the beginning of the biblical year (the biblical New Year is on the first day of Nisan, the first month). The biblical name for this fifth biblical feast is *Yom Teruah*, the Day of Trumpets, or more literally "Day of the Shofar Blast" (Lev. 23:24-25).

Shofar blasts were routinely used in biblical times to signal important events. Even today, the *shofar* (ram's horn) is used in the synagogue on high holy days, and blowing it is quite an art form. There are three types of *shofar* blasts: *tekiah* (a plain, deep bass sound

at the Rapture and resurrection of the saints (1 Thess. 4:16). In another passage, he talks about the trumpet sounding and the dead in Christ being raised incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:52).

Yom Kippur(im)

The next feast mentioned is *Yom Kippur* or the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27-32). In the NT, of course, Jesus has provided this once and for all atonement; but there is still a future time of cleansing for the Jewish people, when they will receive Yeshua by faith and appropriate His atonement for themselves. This is not something that happens merely collectively or nationally; it happens *individually*, as God quickens their hearts and opens their eyes one person at a time (cf. Acts 9:18).

In the Hebrew text, the word "atonement" is actually plural (*Yom Kippurim*, lit., "Day of Atonements"). This could be a plurality of intensity; however, it could also be a simple plural because there were many atonements ("coverings") throughout Israel's long history. The *Yom Kippur* sacrifice was offered in the Temple every year. The ultimate atonement of the Lord Jesus is unique because it doesn't merely "cover" sins, it takes them away (see our earlier discussion).

Zechariah 12:10 says the Jewish people will look to Him whom they have pierced and mourn as one mourns for an only child. Then the prophet says, "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). Romans 11:25-27 foresees a future time when all Israel will be saved. This will be Israel's ultimate *Yom Kippur*.

Sukkot

The final feast is the Feast of Booths or Feast of Tabernacles (Heb., *Sukkot*) (Lev. 23:34-43). This is when each Jewish family builds a small hut (Heb., *Sukkah*) in the yard and lives in it for a brief time to commemorate ancient Israel's dwelling in the wilderness.

A glimpse of the fulfillment of *Sukkot* is found in the passage where John says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The Greek word for "dwelt" here is *skeinao*, which literally means "to dwell in a tent." John is making the point here that God tabernacled among us in the

Sukkot will be an event of epic international proportions. All of the nations of the world will go up to Jerusalem every year to celebrate this feast and to worship the Lord in the Temple (Zech. 14:16).



Sukkot II by Pamela Suran

collective assembly of God's called-out ones) and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:41 says three thousand souls believed on that remarkable day. They were the firstfruits of the Church.

This is the last of the four spring feasts, all of which were fulfilled in the past. The next three feasts occur in the fall and await a yet-future eschatological fulfillment.

Yom Teruah

Calling the first day of the Jewish year *Rosh HaShanah* is technically a misnomer because (1) this day was never called *Rosh HaShanah* in the Bible and

ending abruptly); *teruah* (a treble trill between two *tekihs*); and *shevarim* (three connected short blasts).

Yom Teruah occurs on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri) on the Jewish calendar. In post-Temple Judaism, it came to be known as *Rosh HaShanah* (lit., "Head of the Year") because after the Babylonian Captivity, the rabbis followed a calendar in which the seventh month—the sabbatical month in the fall—was preeminent. The Day of Trumpets begins a ten-day countdown to the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, *Yom Kippur*. Paul alludes to the ultimate fulfillment of *Yom Teruah* when he refers to the sounding of the "trumpet of God"

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person of Jesus of Nazareth. This is one reason many of us believe that Jesus was born in the fall of the year, around the time of *Sukkot*.

During the coming Millennial Kingdom, God will dwell among us once again (Rev. 21:1-3). *Sukkot* will be an event of epic international proportions. All of the nations of the world will go up to Jerusalem every year to celebrate this feast and to worship the Lord in the Temple (Zech. 14:16). It will be a glorious time during that coming millennial age when, “*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea*” (Isa. 11:9).

Israel as a Messianic Type

Just as the sacrificial system in the Mosaic Law serves as a type of the atoning work of Messiah, the nation of Israel too serves as a messianic type. Earlier in this study, we saw that both Jesus and Israel were tested in the wilderness and both came out of Egypt, among other parallels.

Israel and Her Messiah: Inseparable

There really is an enduring link between Israel and her Messiah. Israel’s future

It will be a glorious time during that coming millennial age when, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).



“... the leopard will lie down with the goat ...” | *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks | © Brooklyn Museum/CORBIS

salvation and restoration are assured. The redemption of all creation is in the hands of the Jewish Messiah whom God brought up out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15) and who was lifted up like Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14). Whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:15).

Jesus is the One that Moses wrote about (John 5:46). Moses paints a wonderfully precise prophetic picture of Messiah and what He would accomplish. He

uses direct messianic prophecy and messianic typology to weave together the glorious story of how Jesus would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Since Moses was the first prophet to write about the Messiah and His coming, it is altogether fitting that when we come to the last book of the Bible, written almost 1,500 years after Moses died, we find the innumerable multitudes in Heaven singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb:

“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested’ ” (Rev. 15:3-4).

Note: Gary and John would like to acknowledge the able assistance of Amanda French, a graduate student at the Pasche Institute for Jewish Studies at Criswell College in Dallas, Texas, in the preparation of this article.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

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