



September 2018



Tony and Jane Derrick

Dear Ministry Partner,

This month, our Jewish friends are in the midst of their high holy days and celebrating 70 years as the Jewish State of Israel. God has blessed His chosen people, but He also has forged their determined character with severe testing. They have been dispersed from their homeland several times and treated with hostility by gentile nations that despised them because they are Jewish.

Those Jews who have come to believe in Yeshua as Messiah receive additional hostility from their Jewish brethren because they are Christian (our modern Greek expression for all who believe in Jesus/Yeshua as their Messiah). What is the remedy for when major life traumas pile on top of typical daily trials? Glad you asked!

JAMES

James, one of the first-century writers of the New Testament, offered instructions for how to handle life's tribulations Biblically. Over the next few months, we will work through the Book of James that offers practical advice for the Christian life. I touched on a few verses in last month's *Personal Letter*, but this month we'll begin an entirely new study.

First, we need to identify which James authored this book. The New Testament mentions five different first-century men named James:

- James the half-brother of Jesus — Galatians 1:19
- James the father of Judas (not Iscariot) — Luke 6:16
- James the son of Alphaeus (one of the 12) — Matthew 10:3
- James the "little" — Mark 15:40
- James the brother of John (both of the 12), sons of Zebedee — Matthew 10:2

Scholars concur that James, the half-brother of Jesus, authored the Book of James. The only identifying evidence we have is the first verse, where the writer identifies himself as "*James a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.*" I think it is significant that he didn't say, "Hey, I'm Jesus's brother."

(over please)



*Saint James the Greater, Guido Reni (1575–1642),
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*

James is not an easy book to understand, especially when trying to resolve the issue of faith and works. Martin Luther said that James was “a right strawy epistle.” Another commentator noted,

“It is only ‘strawy’ to the degree that it is ‘sticky.’ There are enough needles in this haystack to prick the conscience of every dull, defeated, and degenerated Christian in the world. Here is a ‘right stirring epistle’ designed to exhort and encourage, to challenge and convict, to rebuke and revive, to describe practical holiness and drive believers toward the goal of a faith that works. James is severely ethical and refreshingly practical.”

—J. Ronald Blue, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2018



Martin Luther (detail)
Lucas Cranach the Elder
(1472–1553)

Keep two points about trials in mind as we begin our study in the first chapter of James.

- Trials are certain; they will occur.
- Trials are numerous. James speaks of them, using a Greek word that means “many-colored” or “polka dotted.” Trials constitute various, multifaceted difficulties.

ATTITUDE

When approaching such challenges, we must adopt the right attitude. James advises us to “count it all joy,” or to look beyond the circumstance to see the future reward. I understand that we mortals live in the now and find it difficult to consider a distant eternity (which may be closer than it seems). But remember what Jesus taught:

“Blessed are you, when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets that were before you.” —Matthew 5:11–12

Without our knowledge, God may be purifying our faith in order to give us greater responsibility now and in His kingdom to come. Think of purifying gold by placing it in a “white-hot” fire. The dross (or impurities) rise to the top and are skimmed away, leaving behind a purer gold. Our faith becomes tested, proven, and pure. Testing perfects our character!

Trials also produce patience. That concept may hit you close to home, as it did me. The writer of Hebrews urges us to *“run with patience the race that is set before us”* (Hebrews 12:1). When patience is the response to the trials of life, we become mature in character and in living lives of faith.

I find James encouraging because he doesn’t leave us struggling in the “how to” department. In verses 5–8, he outlines the resources we need to victoriously face our inevitable tribulations.

WISDOM

We need wisdom! Verse 5 tells us: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* We examined this promise in last

month's *Personal Letter*. Isn't it amazing that God tells us that we will need wisdom to face our trials, and that He will give us that wisdom?

How many of you are asking, "What to do, what to do?" Here is your answer: Ask God for wisdom! Keep in mind that James was Jewish and his education centered in the Old Testament's laws of moral and spiritual purity. He had been instructed to write that faith works. (We'll discuss that statement in depth later).

Wisdom seekers need only ask in confident faith that God will be true to His Word. God cannot lie! "... *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began*" (Titus 1:2). James encourages his audience to make praying a priority because God gives to all men, generously, unconditionally, and doesn't judge the one praying.

I am convinced that when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1), they were not asking for a model (which He gave them anyway) but were asking Jesus to help them to "just do it!" Jesus gave them a model as an encouragement to pray!

WATCH AND LEARN

The third thing we can do is learn from examples, as found in 1:9–11. The term "low" (in v. 9) does not mean our spiritual state, but rather our earthly state. Though not wealthy, when we consider the treasure of our salvation and heavenly inheritance, faith wins the day!

Verses 10 and 11 teach the lesson that prosperity brings its own test. While a person may be wealthy in earthly possessions, life is uncertain. Remember the rich man who was certain that he should build more barns to store his bounty only to find out that his life would be required of him that very night?

And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" —Luke 12:19–20

ENDURE

Finally in verse 12, we read that the man who endures temptation will receive a reward: the crown of life. William Barclay (1907–1978) gives the best description of the word used for "crown" in his Daily Study Bible Series:

"In the ancient world, the crown (stephanos) had at least four exalted associations:

- *The crown of flowers was worn at times of joy... it was the sign of festive joy*
- *The crown was the mark of royalty. It was worn by kings and by those in authority*
- *The crown of laurel leaves was the victor's crown in the games, the prize that the athlete coveted above all*
- *The crown was the mark of honor and dignity*



William Barclay
(1907–1978)

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"The Christian has a joy that no other man can ever have ... The Christian has a royalty that other men have never realized, for, however humble his earthly circumstances, he is nothing less than the child of God. The Christian has victory which others cannot win, for he meets life and all its demands in the conquering power of the presence and the company of Jesus Christ... The Christian has a new dignity, for he is ever conscious that God thought him worth the life and death of Jesus Christ. No man can ever be worthless if Christ died for him." —[The Letters of James and Peter, 2d ed., The Daily Study Bible Series (The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 57–58]



Standing firm with Israel and ZLM,

Tony
Tony

P.S. If you have benefitted from this ministry's Bible teaching in our *Levitt Letter*, the *Personal Letter*, and our on-location-in-Israel television programs, please help us continue the Bible teaching that God has called us to deliver! People everywhere are starving for the truth of Yeshua's salvation ... and Believers* are compelled to provide it (Matt. 28:18–20 and Ezek. 3:18). ★

Zola Tours to the Holy Land



Just as our Bible teaching imparts valuable wisdom, our tours provide the highest quality with the best value because of our longevity in guiding pilgrims through the Holy Land. If you haven't been to Israel, ***don't wait!*** The Lord could return any day now. Please consider a trip to Greece, Israel, and Petra. Returning pilgrims call their tours "life changing" for a reason. Our 2018 Fall Tour has limited space, but it may not be too late to join us. Call Zola Tours manager Sandra ASAP at **214-696-9760**, email her at travel@levitt.com, or visit levitt.com/tours, and we'll do our best to save a seat on the plane for you.

Fall Tour 2018 options

Deluxe (Israel only)	Oct 14–23	\$4,488
Grand Petra (Israel & Petra)	Oct 14–26	\$5,688
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Spring Tour 2019 options

Deluxe (Israel only)	Mar 10–19	\$4,888
Grand Petra (Israel & Petra)	Mar 10–22	\$5,999

Our prices include tips, taxes, & fuel surcharge (subject to change).

* "Believers" is short for "believers in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah."

A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

Shalom, Dear Friends —

Both of us — David and Kirsten — hope that you are watching *Zola Levitt Presents* weekly, either on your television, through *levitt.tv*, or on one of our many social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter. Because you're receiving this *Personal Letter*, you are considered a faithful friend of this ministry and possibly support it financially. Because of your relationship with Zola Levitt Ministries, you have a heart for its success.

We appreciate you embracing the two of us as the studio hosts since we assumed those roles over a year and a half ago. (Has it been that long already?) We hope that you are getting to know our hearts and can see our love for this ministry and our Lord.

Tony's lesson brings home the fact that sometimes we face trials. Actually, difficulties are a part of this journey we call life. ZLM is facing a particularly rough patch right now. It was never Zola's style to "hit you over the head" asking for financial donations during trying financial times. But as the current hosts, we want you to be aware that your donations to this ministry are crucial in this hour. We are still reaching out to the world, winning more souls to Christ and keeping our readers and viewers up-to-date about what is really happening in Israel. *But we need your financial help to make it happen.*

This month, would you consider giving a "step-of-faith" financial gift? Giving an extra amount above your regular monthly contribution will help this ministry continue Zola's legacy. Perhaps you'd like to contact the office to " earmark " your donation toward a particular aspect. If you enjoy reading the *Levitt Letter*, perhaps you could help pay postage for next month's mailings. If the weekly television programs speak to you, how about underwriting a week of broadcasting a program *around the world*? If we work together, God can turn this financial impasse into a blessing.

You can make a difference. Pray for us? Yes, please. But this month, in particular, would you consider keeping this ministry active with an extra-special gift? Thanks in advance.

And please, *sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!* —
pray for the peace of Jerusalem! — Psalm 122:6. ★

David & Kirsten
Todah (Thanks),
David & Kirsten

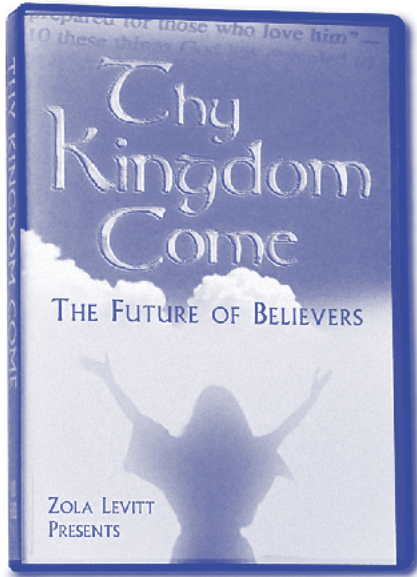


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Did you know that Zola Levitt Ministries
is ECFA approved?

Zola Levitt Presents Programs in September



Jeffrey Seif and Zola are back! (Well, we brought back Zola's teaching to television.) Jeff helps us analyze and apply the lessons in ***Thy Kingdom Come***. David and I are enjoying listening to Zola's teachings that were originally produced in 2001 but now have improved sound and picture quality. *Thy Kingdom Come* searches Bible prophecy to reveal the glorious future events awaiting all Believers in Messiah.

We're also bringing back Zola's songs for this series. Catch the series on TV, or view every episode on levitt.tv. (Tip: they are ready to view every Wednesday, just past midnight Central Time.) If you have friends and family who didn't experience Zola's teaching when he was alive, let them know that this series contains some of his most important lessons.

The Kingdom in Progress From the Mount of Olives, Zola explains how different living in the Millennial Kingdom will be. Israeli-American Reuben Prager of Jerusalem looks to the future as he prepares Jewish regalia and artifacts for the next Temple.

Return to Eden Preview

We break for one week to ask, "Is it possible to return to the Garden of Eden?" Tune in to get a sneak peak at this brand new series from **Jeff Seif**. Then, set your DVR so you won't miss a program when it begins in October.

The Gog & Magog Invasion Zola reveals how, at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, Satan is released one last time to do battle against the Lord. **Avi Lipkin** looks at the possibility of military invasion from a modern-day perspective.

The Great White Throne of Judgment We see the wicked doomed to eternal separation from God as Zola teaches about this last and final judgment. **Dr. Tom McCall** offers a revealing exposition of infamous evil people of generations past.

Eternity Near David's Tower, Zola speaks of the new Heaven, the new Earth, and the New Jerusalem. Zola and Dr. McCall discuss the delightful conditions for Believers at our ultimate destination.



Jeff Seif

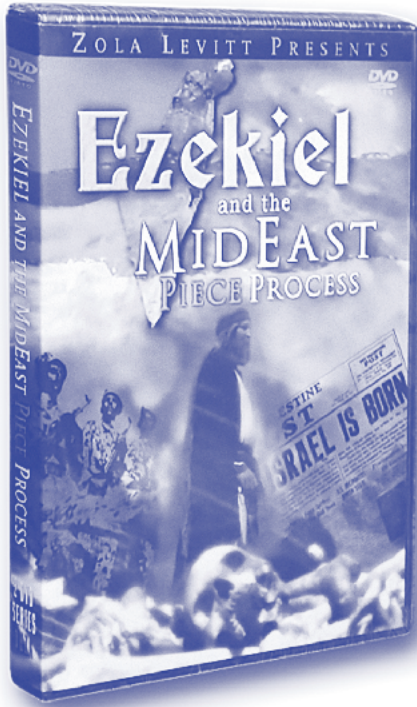


Avi Lipkin



Tom McCall

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OVERVIEW — DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PROPHECY A survey of the entire Book of Ezekiel with an emphasis on prophecy fulfillment today.

JUDAH'S DEMISE Examine particular pieces of prophecy, noting God's everlasting mercy through His promise to gather and rebuild Israel — something that is happening today.

PROPHECIES OF ISRAEL'S LAST DAYS RISE A once-desolate land has become like Eden.

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THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG Thousands of years ago, Ezekiel foretold an End Times war, but also predicted Israel's miraculous triumph.

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VALUE COMBO:

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• 1 calendar

Please return this entire page with your order or donation. Thanks.

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Dear Tony,

(please check appropriate boxes)

- I look forward to ZLM's on-location Bible teaching on TV, news articles in the *Levitt Letter*, and Bible studies like James in this *Personal Letter*.
- Here is my donation for September to help keep Zola Levitt Ministries spreading Yeshua's Good News until our Lord's inevitable return.
- I am ordering the following teaching materials, totaling:

___ Yes
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\$ _____

\$ _____

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Zola's Donation & Materials Order Form

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