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## Thank God For Those 44 Years!

### by Zola Levitt

About three years ago during a visit to Israel, I was contacted by Yehuda Levi, the President and Publisher of the <u>Jerusalem Post</u>, Israel's widely respected English-language newspaper. I was asked to write an article appropriate to the National Religious Broadcasters Convention held each January in Washington, D.C. I was honored, of course.

I wrote this piece, which turned out to be a history—spiritual and political—of Israel since the first century. Under the present difficult political circumstances we thought it would be appropriate to repeat these thoughts and we are glad to share them with you now.

There was probably a kind of "National Religious Broadcaster's Convention" back in A.D. 67 when the Romans besieged Jerusalem in one of those seemingly endless Holy Land holy wars. The organization was probably called something more like Empire-Wide **Spiritual** "The the Broadcasters' Association," and the location was probably on a comfortable Greek island. The "broadcasting" was largely in writing and largely by ship and by runner, but the job was the same in principle: cover the religious world of the day in light of Scripture, history, various sectarian points of view, etc.

And interestingly, the major news issue of the day was probably very similar to one of our major issues: Do the Jews really own all of Israel, or should the country be partitioned, or should they clear out altogether?

The same factions were divided over the matter in the same ways as they are today. The biblical group practicing the brand new Judeo-Christian ethic must have argued, "God gave the land to Abraham and his seed forever. He said the covenant was 'everlasting'" (Gen. 12:3). A secular contingent who did not view the Scriptures with favor probably pointed out that "the Jews haven't been in control in Israel for centuries. Let the Romans administrate the place. They can let everybody come and go as they please. Jerusalem will be an 'international city.'"

And then there were probably myriad non-biblical religious sects saying everything from, "My ancestors were here since the time of Ishtar and Moloch," to, "The Jews took my grandfather's farm."

Naturally the fate of Israel wasn't up to the members of the media, but, then as now, their views were influential. Some probably tried to "broadcast" even-handedly, as some do today, and some

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probably broadcast partisan views and propaganda, as some do today.

In any case, with hindsight we can see the results of what happened with Israel at that critical time and for the following nineteen centuries. The Roman siege came to a bloody ending at Jerusalem, the rest of Israel and Masada, and the empire administrated the Holy Land with an iron fist. If people could come and go freely, they surely weren't Jews, whose members were thinned with Holocaust-like precision. By the time the lunatic emperor Hadrian consummated his personal final solution to the Jewish problem, the Israeli nation virtually went out of existence. Israel was Palestine, Jerusalem was Aelia Capitalina, and the Jewish people, with Roman blessing, became a pesky footnote in history. A small number persisted with their Yom Kippur wailing at their indestructible Western Wall, but God's covenant with His friend Abraham was effectively null and void.

The land itself didn't do very well under Roman rule. It declined and fell with the decline and fall

of Rome until a newly minted religion took it over entirely. The Moslems with their long swords and short supply line came to stay. They resanctified Jerusalem in the 7th century, making it significant in the career of Mohammed, who, they claimed, traced his lineage back to father Abraham. This strange rereading of the ancient patent prevails today.

Thus the world had a long look at one of the three original alternatives for the fate of the Holy Land—giving it to the secular forces of Rome. Broadcasters who originally held to that view would have wanted to change their position with hindsight. The place never prospered because its original owners, the children of Israel, had been run off. No one else treated it with much love. The ensuing centuries of Moslem rule were a story of almost nonstop bloodshed. The Arab tradition of settling disputes with the teeth rather than the tongue dominated Middle Eastern affairs. The land was contested constantly, and as a result, it suffered.

Relatively brief appearances of the self-styled Christian armies of Europe brought no improve-

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George Mason University's Professor James Bennett, in the January 28 "Chronicle of Philanthropy," charged that the American Cancer Society builds up large reserves of cash while stressing chronic needs for more money. The Society's response: "Money accumulated in reserves is generally raised in one year in order to be spent the next."

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#### PRO-ISRAEL LOBBY

Richard A. Hellman, an attorney in Washington, founded The Christians' Campaign. Public Action Israel Believing God gave Israel to Abraham and his descendants, CIPAC is recruiting helpers willing to write letters to Congress, the Secretary of State, etc. The cost to join is \$45. Please write to:

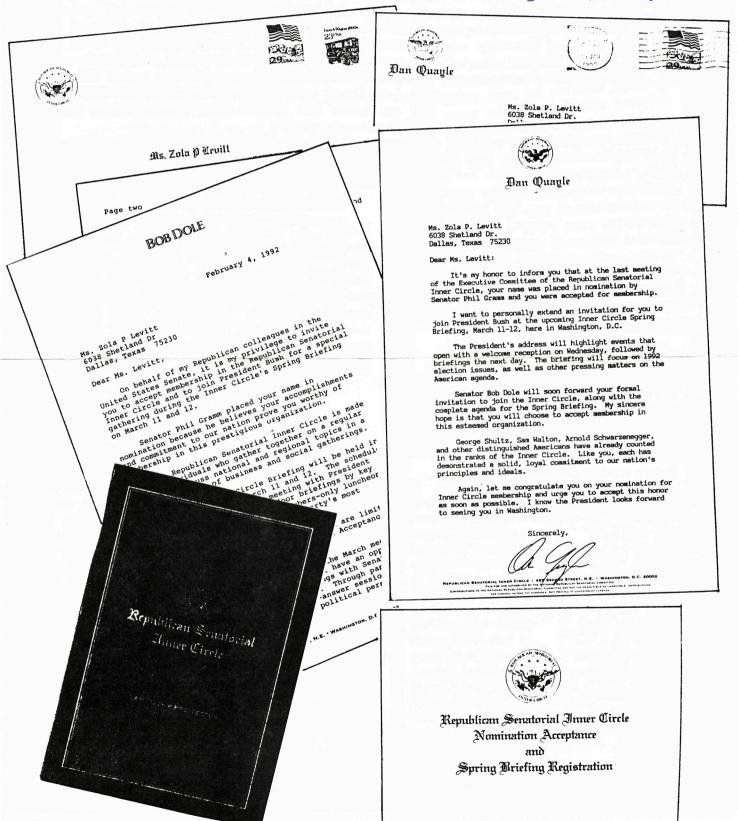
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# "The American people are not impressed by gimmicks."

- George Bush, January 28, 1992



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## **Hebrew Lesson: The Alphabet**



Remember Hebrew is read right to left.

When saying the names of the letters, vowels are pronounced "short" — a as in father; e as in leg; i as in hit; o in volley; u as in put.

One Hebrew sound has no equivalent in English — the glottal ch (made at the back of the throat). The tz sound is similar to the ending consonant sound in the word cats. Please note above that some letters have a final form used only at the ends of words; they are called sofeet, meaning end.

Coming next month . . . VOWELS!

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ment. Lessons in love from the Crusaders were lost on those they massacred.

When the Turks rode in, reforestation received a new meaning. These crude conquerors replaced the precious trees of the Holy Land with saltwater swamps. In the absence of its true owners, Israel was desecrated. Not until the arson of today's intifada was the Holy Land so purposefully reduced in beauty, value and comfort. God's country became barren and very nearly uninhabitable.

Israel in pagan religious hands proved no better than Israel in Roman hands. This solution was not workable either. The rest of the sad story of Israel under occupying regimes is within modern recollection. The armies of two world wars used the Promised Land as a battlefield when convenient. The British made every possible effort to keep the true owners out, valiantly postponing the moment of recovery that would finally ensue when Abraham's rightful descendants returned. But finally, in spite of the Romans, the Moslems, the Crusaders, the Turks and the British, the children of Israel did return, in an amazing fulfillment of voluminous biblical prophecy. And at last the land that they loved received a little overdue care. The real solution to the dilemma of who ought to have Israel was finally obvious.

The land truly received some healing when the Jewish people took it back in 1948. Trees were planted by the hundreds of millions. Swamps were drained, and one of mankind's deadliest foes, malaria, was eliminated from Israel. Irrigation was utilized wholesale to reclaim fertile territories from the wilderness, and soon the most magnificent visions of the prophets could be seen in the Promised Land; truly, "the desert blossomed as a rose." The local populations prospered. Arabs who had lived in the land for centuries suddenly had the modern world delivered to their doorsteps - or, in some case, to their tents. Water became plentiful and clean; doctors appeared within reach of every village, inoculating children and treating their parents. Schools were constructed throughout the land. Life spans increased dramatically. The Jews, wanderers for almost two millennia, brought the 20th century back with them to their land.

Thus the world has seen some 600 years of Roman rule, about 1300 years of on-and-off Moslem rule

and 44 years of Jewish rule in the land of Israel. Thank God for those last 44 years!

Nobody loves a land like its rightful owners. If we are the new generation of religious broadcasters and if we again have the task of opinionating about the land of Israel, the let us learn from history. The secular forces who have controlled this ancient land merely exploited it. The alien religious forces abused the land and failed to keep up with the times. Only the chosen people of the Bible, to whom the land was given scripturally, have really cared for it.

Biblically, a great new kingdom is coming, and it will be headquartered in Israel. After millennia of strife, the land really does need this 1000 years of peace. If our religious-broadcasting brethren of the first century were divided over who should control this important land, we should not be. As Israel is prepared for its greatest role, the earthly home of the Kingdom of Peace, let us give it to those whom God gave it at the beginning. The children of Abraham will care for His land. And as the Psalmist admonished: "Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper who love thee!" (Ps. 122:6).

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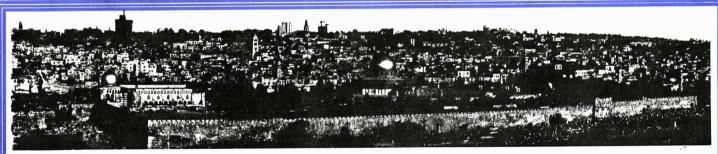
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March 1992



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