

Levitt

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.—Rom. 10:1



Letter

Hanukkah: evening Dec 24 – evening of Jan 1, 2017

A Messianic Jewish Response to Christians Who Naysay Christmas

How Evil Triumphs [p. 6](#)
 Combatting BDS [p. 28](#)

istock image

To Index

By [Sandra Teplinsky](#) / [LightOfZion.org](#)

This time of year, Christians often question whether they should celebrate Christmas. Surprisingly, it's the gentile, not Jewish, Believers who ask, pointing out that the holiday often replaces the Jewish roots of His incarnation with folk rites associated with pagan deities. These followers of Yeshua grieve at the extent to which Christmas centers on material greed and gluttony. I certainly can't say I disagree with them.

However, **I can think of at least 10 reasons why it is important for Christians to celebrate Christmas.** I've listed them below in the spirit of Romans 14:5: "One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each should be fully convinced in his own mind."

[\(continued p. 2\)](#)

A New 'Hate Symbol'

TIME Magazine

In an effort to expose and combat hate speech, the Anti-Defamation League periodically designates "hate symbols" or icons—some of which appear to be inoffensive—that now have nefarious meanings. The latest addition: **Pepe the Frog**, a beloved Internet meme originally created by artist Matt Furi for a 2005 comic. Pepe's image is often shared alongside speech bubbles that read, "Feels good, man." That phrase is obviously not hate speech. But in recent months the ADL says "racists and haters" have posted images of Pepe with a Hitler-like mustache or wearing a Klan hood, hence the official designation. ★



Pepe the Frog by Matt Furi

A Messianic Jewish Response to Christians Who Naysay Christmas *cont. from cover*

1. The Savior of Humankind came from Heaven to Earth, an incomparable gift from God worth celebrating more than any other. Quite possibly, He was conceived at this season.
2. A testimony of Yeshua resonates worldwide because of Christmas.
3. Jews and others can be uniquely reached with the Gospel at Christmas. Some Israelis are especially interested in Yeshua at this time of year. I myself committed my life to Him at Christmastime, 40-plus years ago.
4. Christmas can help preserve and protect the expression of Christianity in an era that sees a decline in religious freedoms. Some American Jews have become strong advocates of Christmas for this reason.
5. With Christmas comes Advent, a month of spiritual focus that is generally less worldly in its expression.
6. Christmas traditions can draw families closer together.
7. Thankfully, most Believers now acknowledge some of the pagan roots and materialism of Christmas. This awareness can free them to celebrate the holiday with a greater focus on Yeshua.

8. Christmas is a fixture of Western culture. If the righteous don't preserve the holiday's true meaning, secular expression could eliminate it altogether.

9. If Christians stop celebrating Christmas, the result in some Gospel-resistant cultures could be no public mention of Christianity at all.

10. Quite possibly, God likes it when global attention is directed to His Son one day a year. ★



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SHIMON PERES, 1923 – 2016

"HE GAVE HIMSELF TOTALLY TO THE GOOD OF ISRAEL"

(What Shimon Taught Us, p.8)



Let There Be ... Yeshua!

Myles To Go
By Myles Weiss
ZLP Host



Then God said, "Let there be **light!**" and there was **light**. (Genesis 1:3)

I remember the early days of my walk with Jesus. I was so "lit up" that my New Age friends thought I had snapped into some form of psychosis and gave me books to that effect. They were hoping to see me delivered from my deliverance.

Reading Scripture and calling on the King of kings effected so dramatic a change in me that my buddies assumed I was under the sway of a powerful cult. The truth was setting me free at such a rapid deep pace that I was becoming unrecognizable. My speech, lifestyle, interests, and time were given to Jesus in ever-increasing ways.

My internal experience was just as dramatic as the outer. I was aware of the changes going on inside me—as if LIGHT had entered my soul and was crowding out years, perhaps generations(!), of darkness. The Person of Jesus was both the source and the object of this shining; like a personal Hanukkah, the full menorah illuminating my interior life and beaming to those around me.

My zeal, I am sure, scared some friends and family. The fact that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah overwhelmed my reality. I centered my life around Him, to the best of my ability. Suddenly, the nice Jewish boy was hanging around Church people and, to all appearances, attending services around the clock!

I immediately attended bible college, then graduate school for a Master's Degree in Family Therapy, and quickly thereafter felt called to a position at church as Marriage and Family Therapist...using the Bible as my main text.

Total immersion in LIGHT... a personal Hanukkah.

Years later, another menorah experience directed my path. On Mount Carmel,

[\(continued next page\)](#)





in Israel's Druze village of Isfiya, Katharine and I attended a Messianic leadership school where we learned about the Jewish roots of Christianity from local Believers. Messianic Jews and Arab Christians (among other Believing gentiles) taught us from the Bible and then led us to the sites where it all happened. The Scriptures turned from black and white into vivid, living 3D color!

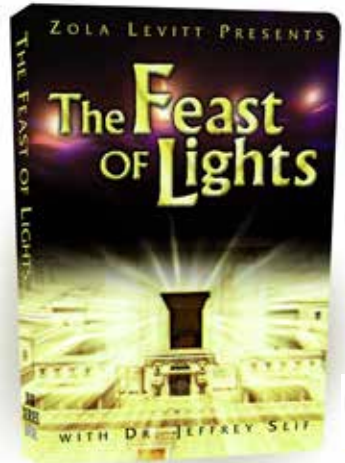
That is why we urge you to join us on a Bible study tour—*God will connect your faith to the ground where it all took place!* You will be “grounded in the Word” beyond your wildest dreams.

This year, 5777, the first day of Hanukkah happens to coincide with Christmas Eve. While Hanukkah is not a mandated Feast of the Lord, the seemingly random occurrence provides a visual reminder of the divine destiny shared by Christians and Jews. ★

[The Feast of Lights](#)

Three 30-minute programs on one DVD

Since the dawn of time, forces of darkness have amassed and threatened the Jews with extinction. However, in every generation, God provided a leader who would shine the Light of God's faithfulness. **Hanukkah**—the Jewish Feast of Lights—harks back to a time before Christ when a cruel, anti-Semitic dictator threatened to wipe out the Hebrews. But the Lord's deliverer arose (foreshadowing Yeshua, the Ultimate Deliverer), lit the lamp of hope, and saved Israel. From generation to generation, Jews have lit lamps in their homes to commemorate the victory and retell the story of the Feast of Lights.



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The Story of Hanukkah

Dr. Jeffrey Seif sets up the story of Hanukkah wherein the abominable Syrian dictator Antiochus Epiphanes overthrew Jerusalem and desecrated the Holy Temple. Although many throughout history have sought to destroy God's Chosen People, Jeff reassures us that “He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” Also, we learn about harvesting the olive oil and its importance to the golden Menorah, which resided in the Holy Place.

The Light of the World

Jesus told His disciples, “You are the light of the world.” Speaking from the Messianic synagogue Baruch HaShem, Jeff explains the significance of light to the celebration of Hanukkah as well as its prophetic image of Jesus Christ. Jeff interviews Rabbi Martin J. Waldman about the increase of Messianic Jews in the world today, and we see Zola's timely interview with Messianic Believer Simcha Davidov.

The Feast of Dedication

Jeff explores the prophecy of Daniel as fulfilled first by Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration, as well as the future abomination of desolation to be committed by the antiChrist. Discover the Feast of Dedication as observed by Jesus in the Bible, and don't miss a heartfelt interview in which Zola and Jean Rosenberg look at the celebration of Hanukkah in the home today.

How Evil Triumphs: 26 Abstentions



BY IAN DEITCH and THOMAS ADAMSON / Associated Press

Israel recently suspended cooperation with **United Nations** Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) a day after the cultural agency **adopted a draft resolution that denies the deep historic Jewish connection to holy sites in Jerusalem.**

UNESCO's draft resolution, titled "Occupied Palestine" and sponsored by several Arab-Islamic countries, uses only the Islamic name for a hilltop compound sacred to both Jews and Muslims, which includes the Western Wall, a remnant of the Biblical Temple and the holiest site where Jews can pray.

Israelis and many Jews around the world viewed it as the latest example of an ingrained anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, where Israel and its allies are far outnumbered by Arab countries and their supporters.

The draft resolution, seen by The Associated Press, diminished the links to Judaism of two important holy sites in Jerusalem's Old City.

The text refers to the site known by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and by Jews as the Temple Mount only by its Muslim name. The draft resolution refers to the Muslim site of Al-Buraq Plaza without quotations, but puts the site's Jewish name, the Western Wall Plaza, in inverted commas.

Education Minister Naftali Bennett: "Following the shameful decision by UNESCO members to deny history and ignore thousands of years of Jewish ties to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, I have notified the Israel National Commission for UNESCO to suspend all professional activities with the international organization."

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat: "Would UNESCO vote to deny the Christian connection to the Vatican? Or the Muslim connection to Mecca?"

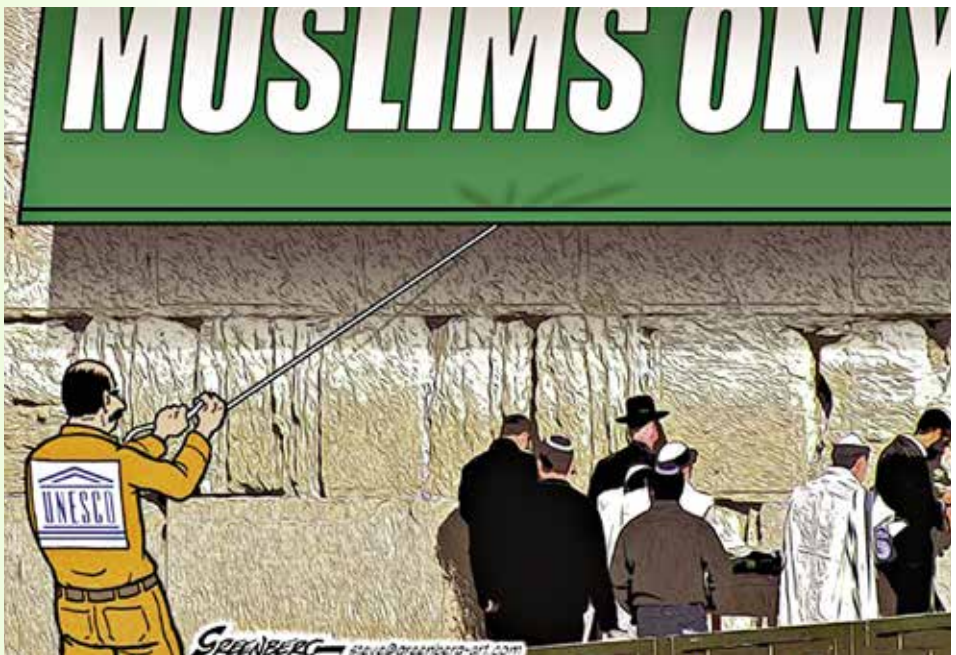
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How Evil Triumphs... *continued*

UNESCO chief
Irina Bokova



UNESCO chief Irina Bokova condemned the religious and cultural divisions being played out in the U.N. body that was created in part to further cross-cultural understanding. "When these divisions carry over into UNESCO, an organization dedicated to dialogue and peace, they prevent us from carrying out our mission."

Bokova has no official control over resolutions, which are sponsored and voted on by member states. Bennett, the Israeli minister, said Bokova's comments were insufficient and urged the body to take action. The spat is the latest in Israel's rocky relations with UNESCO, which it accuses of making decisions out of political considerations.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, with sites holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in the 1967 Mideast war. Palestinians claim the territory as part of their future state, and its fate is one of the most contentious issues in the decades-old conflict.

From Haaretz:

Twenty-four countries voted in favor of the decision, six voted against, and 26 abstained, while just two were missing from the vote.

The U.S., Britain, Germany, Holland, Lithuania, and Estonia voted against the resolution.

A senior source said that the efforts of Israeli diplomats significantly changed the votes of European states, none of which supported the motion. Israeli efforts, he asserted, succeeded in swaying France, Sweden, Slovenia, Argentina, Togo, and India to abstain from the vote.

The resolution, which condemns Israel on several issues regarding Jerusalem and its holy sites, was advanced by the Palestinians alongside Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, and Sudan. ★



What Shimon Taught Us

Our Man in Haifa
Eitan Shishkoff
and wife Connie



I watched the funeral of Shimon Peres, an iconic figure in Israeli history. Widely considered the last of Israel's founding generation, Peres served our nation for 70 years in numerous government posts, including prime minister (three times between 1977 and 1996) and president (2007–2014), a highly respected, ceremonial position.

This man carried two profound ideals simultaneously: the unique calling of Israel as both the fulfillment of God's ancient covenant promises *and* the betterment of the world. This combination cannot be assumed. Those who champion one cause are often unable to embrace the other. Peres's idealism was unique, and we would do well not to lose it, especially in the face of so much evil in today's world.

The beauty of all the psalms we heard during his memorial gave voice to the poignancy of a life lived for others—a true pioneer and public servant—devoting himself to the founding and the growth of the miracle that is Israel's resurrection from history's grave.

Shimon Peres was born in Poland, now Belarus, in 1923. Early in Peres's life, David Ben-Gurion recruited him to participate in the original defense of the newborn state. Peres was involved in many turning-point decisions, including the development of nuclear defense. He helped author the hostage rescue from Entebbe, Uganda in 1976, the dramatic airlift of Ethiopian Jews to Israel, the pursuit of peace with the Palestinians, and the development of the Negev Desert and the Galilee.



President Shimon Peres with net@ students during pope's visit 2009

Shimon served as a member of the Knesset for 48 years. He also wrote poetry and possessed a full heart.

Many dignitaries from around the world came to Israel to honor and eulogize this pioneer. But the speaker who moved me the most was the man who succeeded Peres as Israel's president, Reuven (Ruby) Rivlin. They were frequently at odds over national policy, but their mutual affection and respect showed through in Rivlin's warm personal remarks. Ruby highlighted the messages that Shimon's life telegraphed: the victory of hope over fear, the love of the people and the land, his infectious optimism. Yet Peres knew the price of establishing and maintaining a democracy in the Middle East. As Rivlin summed up his high estimate of the statesman: "... you taught many in the world to love us...to see the good in our people... and to touch the dream of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem)."

I can't fully explain it, but I cried at this memorial service. As an Israeli, I didn't always agree with Shimon Peres, but it touched my heart that this man, with one life, gave himself totally to the good of Israel. He had a way of "sweeping people up" in his hope, his vision for the future, and in the determination to both defend Israel and to invest in the next generation. His example truly inspires me. ★

Co-laborers with Messiah

By **Katharine Weiss** / ZLP co-host



Have you ever wondered what difference your prayers and financial support make to our endeavors? I assure you, together we are impacting this generation in a meaningful way.

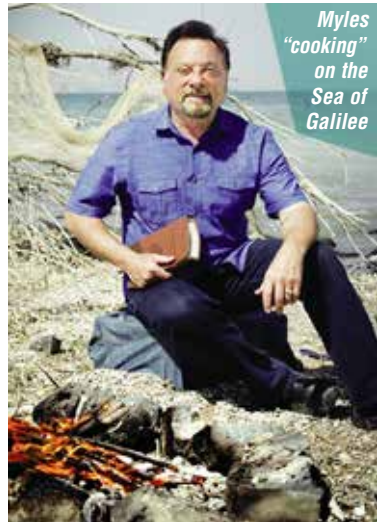


At a prayer gathering in Israel, a young woman whose Hebrew name is **Hadassah** approached me. Hadassah “happened” upon our TV program, which triggered a desire to explore her family’s Jewish history. She is now making “*aliyah*” (lit. “going up,” to become a citizen of modern Israel). She joyfully thanked me for *Zola Levitt Presents*, which had sparked the journey into her past... and future. Seeing a face like hers—and a heart like hers, now set on fire with God’s love and purpose—makes our struggles worth the effort.

As you may know, Myles and I end each program and letter with the exhortation from Psalm 122:6, “*Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim—Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem.*” In our travels, we see hearts genuinely touched with peace through Yeshua the Prince of Peace, not through political machinations. Viewers, friends, and even family assume that Myles and I lead a glamorous “jet set” lifestyle. We do not. ZLM is prudent with funds and *all* of us who serve with this ministry give 100% effort to minimize costs, from the office staff and administrators, to travel managers and TV crews, to bookkeepers and editors, to the TV hosts.

Myles and I can laugh now about the 100-plus-degree heat on the Sea of Galilee’s eastern shore. There, Myles filmed the “Call of the Disciples” portion of our new series, *Close Encounters with Yeshua*. For a realistic, first-century effect, our creative producer/director Ken Berg built a small fire on the beach so we could shoot the teaching with nets and the sea behind and Myles’s knees up against the fire. Perfect. Beautiful.

Myles just had to wait with “cooking” knees until the sport fishermen behind him sailed out of camera range. Re-creating an ancient fishing scene somehow lost its authentic feel with the appearance of a gargantuan out-board motor on a fiberglass boat, manned by two large, very modern Israelis in beige fishing vests and hats with Nike logos!



Burning knees can’t compare to how low God knelt to reach for us!

I had my Bible-sharing opportunity that same day. We went up to the Mount of Beatitudes to film a segment on Yeshua’s teaching. By then it was 104 degrees, and in between TV takes we mopped and powdered each other’s soaked faces.

Sweat-drenched faces can’t compare to the drops of blood He sweat for us!

After a month on the road, exhausted and perspiring, we squatted at the airline check-in and transferred study materials from checked luggage to carry-ons. We succeeded in saving the ministry “overweight baggage” charges.

He bore the weight of our sin and endured shame for us!

This Hanukkah/Christmas season, why not THANK YESHUA for the light in your life? Be generous with family, friends, and ministry—and expect Him to light up your way! ★

Man of the Year

Classic Zola
from 1981:
35 years ago



This month every year, *TIME* magazine selects its “Man of the Year” [“Person” since 1999] for the cover of its New Year issue. People everywhere have ideas and suggestions, and quite a poll is taken to choose that man who most profoundly affected world affairs throughout the ending year.

It might be interesting for us to speculate on who would qualify as the Man, or Men, of 1980 where Christianity is concerned. Believers’ influential men might make up a slightly different group since our Biblical view of world politics is quite distinct from that of the unbelieving world. For one thing, we believe there are only a few years left, and that outlook greatly affects our thinking about just who has been really influential. Also, we are interested in a more [Holy] Spiritual quality of life than the highest dreams of those who rule or conquer the nations of the world.

From the point of view of the American Church, certainly the Men of the Year were Jerry Falwell and James Robison. The two led a movement that changed the United States government. They stood fast before mockers and doubters, claiming that the majority of Americans are moral and wish to live in a moral land. In my view, it still remains to be seen whether the sort of government they helped elect is going to bring real solutions to all of the problems of this complex nation, but there can be no doubt that history has been changed because of their efforts.

The National Affairs Briefing in Dallas, an event covered by *Zola Levitt Live* [Zola’s radio show back then] on two programs, was derided by some of the media and generally downplayed as unimportant partisan politics. In reality, it marked a significant turning point in the campaign of President-elect Ronald Reagan, propelling him toward the Oval Office. President Carter should

not have turned down that opportunity to address the American voters from a Christian platform.

On the negative side of things, Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, also profoundly affected world affairs. If he had his way, the Kremlin would control all the nations of the world and presumably we would all be as well-off as the people of Afghanistan or Poland. Brezhnev has high ambitions and a marvelous survival record. He might be called “The Real Estate Speculator of the Year” since he managed to gather up a whole country in 1980 (Afghanistan) and set up several others for future Soviet domination (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan). Southeast Asia has largely fallen to the Soviets under Brezhnev’s leadership, as well as numerous African nations. You have to give Brezhnev credit; that’s a lot of real estate.

We might also consider the Polish strikers for “Men of the Year.” In the face of almost certain disaster, they stood up for human freedoms and dignity, and they have won their point... at least until the tanks come. They court a



Zola continues



major tragedy in opposing the might of the U.S.S.R.; but in the manner of the Apostles, they are not overly concerned about the odds. They largely comprise Believing Catholics, possibly with varying levels of Christian sincerity; but compared to their Communist overlords, they constitute an army of saints. At any rate, they are hardly atheists, and it is quite believable that they initially learned in church doctrines the freedoms that inspire them to rebel. Communists are bred to believe that there are no individual human rights, but the Church teaches otherwise. Poland has always been a strongly Christian country, and it is not surprising that that nation would be the one to stand up and fight.

When all is said and done, however, the Man of the Year is the Unknown Witness, the born-again Believer, known only to the Lord, who goes about his service through it all. Like the Unknown Soldiers of past wars, the Unknown Witness studies the Holy Scriptures, gives a good account of the Lord, steps forward when he sees a need, promotes the Christian ethic in his prayers and daily life, and ultimately makes a real change in the world. In the end, it will be him and other unsung heroes who make the most difference. When the coming Kingdom takes over this world, that unheralded testifier to Jesus Christ—present and past—will be responsible. He is the Man of this and every other Year. ★

Watch What You Watch!

By Taylor Berglund / CharismaNews.com

Pastor Rick Warren, author of [*The Purpose-Driven Life*](#), asks Christians to use discernment and avoid the profane traps of the enemy. Believers, he says, need to be intentional about the type of content they allow into their minds.



"Some people are so open-minded their brains fall out," Warren says. "They say, 'I can watch that stuff. It doesn't bother me anymore.' That's the problem! When you can watch and read stuff that is profane, blasphemous, evil, vile, and abusive and it doesn't bother you, you have a problem. You have become a fool."

He continues: **"Wise people protect their minds.** They put on the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17). They don't just allow anything into their minds. They keep the poison out."

So how can Christians develop wisdom and avoid evil? Warren says the key is staying close to the Word of God. "The first place you need to go to fill your mind with truth is God's Word," he says. "The more you develop the habit of spending time each day reading and studying the Bible, the wiser you will become."

Apostle Paul advised in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things."

"Idle hands are the devil's workshop" (Prov. 16:27). The more time your hands are holding the Bible, the less chance they have to stray from God's will. —Mark ★

Ask the Chaplain

By Dr. Todd Baker
Zola Levitt Ministries
Staff Theologian

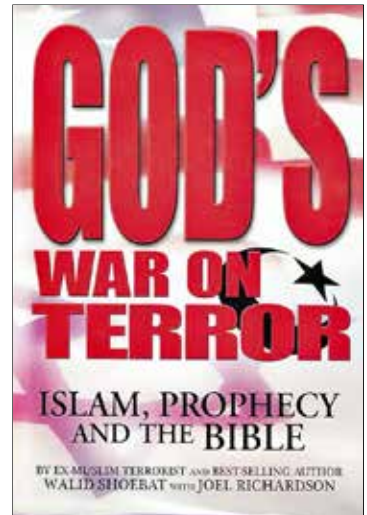


Q. Christians have no need for another Temple, so why would they rebuild one? Also, Israel would never let them do it. Can you tell me why?

A. True, Christians do not need a Temple to meet the God of the Bible because they are the living temples of God (1 Corinthians 6:19). However, end-times Bible prophecy makes clear that a third Temple will be built shortly before or after the Rapture of the Church (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:1–3). This will be done exactly as Bible prophecy clearly predicts, whether or not Christians fund it—for God always watches over His prophetic Word to perform it in full (Jeremiah 1:12).

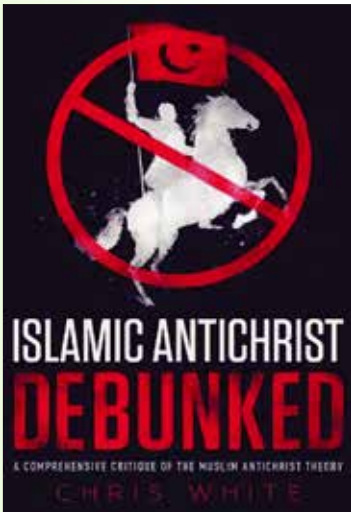
Q. After reading the book *God's War on Terror: Islam, Prophecy and the Bible* (Walid Shoebat, Joel Richardson), I would like to know if your ministry is familiar with it and whether you still hold to the position that the antiChrist is of European descent out of the revived Roman Empire. Thank you.

A. Yes, we do; because that is the clear teaching of Scripture. Shoebat and Richardson have stated that the anti-Christ will come from the Islamic world. **Here are my problems with that theory.**



Firstly, no true Moslem would allow the Third Temple to be rebuilt, especially not in place of the Dome of the Rock. Secondly, if any Moslem claimed to be God, as the antiChrist will do (Daniel 11:37), all Moslems would immediately reject him for blasphemy. Daniel 9:26–27 makes clear that the antiChrist will be Roman in origin.

The garrison that came from Syria to destroy Jerusalem came originally from Rome, not the Middle East as Shoebat has indicated.



The Arab auxiliaries involved in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. were only about 6,000 men according to Josephus. The rest—58,000—were all Roman citizens, from the 3rd, 5th, 10th, 12th, 15th, and 18th Legions. But the Arab contingent being from another country does not make them any less Roman citizens. For a credible refutation of Shoebat and Richardson's Moslem antiChrist theory, see the book [*Islamic Antichrist Debunked*](#) by Chris White. ★

A Rabbi Learns About The Rabbi

By Dr. Todd Baker / Zola Levitt Ministries Staff Theologian



On this ministry's 39th **To The Jew First** Gospel outreach to Israel, an incredible encounter occurred in the Old City of Jerusalem, near the Western Wall. The Holy Spirit presented me with a rare opportunity to share Yeshua the Messiah with an Orthodox rabbi. Using a booklet in Hebrew, I showed Rabbi **Eliezer Moshia** (*below*) a list of 100 Messianic prophecies that are given in the *Tanakh* (the Scriptures that he uses and what Believers call the Old Testament). Then I showed him a corresponding list of how each prophecy was literally, accurately, and historically fulfilled by Yeshua of Nazareth, as recorded in the *B'rit Hadashah* (New Testament).

I saw from the expression on his face that this rabbi was connecting the dots, linking each Messianic prophecy (already familiar to him) with its New Testament fulfillment. I pressed a little farther and encouraged Rabbi Moshia to accept as a gift the Messianic prophecy booklet and a Bible in Hebrew that includes the New Testament in order to verify what I'd just told him: Messiah did come and is soon coming again.

Rabbi Moshia accepted my offer and blessed me. Incredible! **Pray that this dear rabbi reads the Bible that this ministry gave him and finds the Supreme Rabbi—Yeshua the Messiah.** Pray that, in faith, Rabbi Moshia believes and says to Yeshua, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel" (John 1:49).

God is moving among the rabbinic community. Messianic expectation in Israel has reached a level to rival the expectation of first-century Israel when Messiah Jesus came the first time. Rabbi means "teacher" in Hebrew. By teaching the teacher, the Holy Spirit uses him to reach his students. Pray earnestly for this rabbi's salvation, and for his salvation to formulate a new lesson plan.

To help you witness to Old Testament believers, see the tools our TJF team uses on [page 20](#); inexpensive, plus and a free downloadable leaflet. ★



Rabbi Eliezer Moshia

WISE AS A SERPENT / By Mark Levitt

Medicare Deadline: Dec. 7



Some readers will share this article with friends and family—along with the announcement on page 15 re: donating before-tax IRA/Roth dollars to nonprofits like our ministry. Beyond the need to enroll for Medicare benefits within three months of eligibility (often age 65), it is wise for senior citizens to weigh open enrollment options each calendar year.

Many of the concepts below are similarly applicable to major medical health insurance. Please heed and share this wisdom from the recent MarketWatch article by Ken Moraif entitled, “Why It’s Important to Not Skip Medicare Open Enrollment.” —Mark

Every year from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, Americans have the opportunity to change their Medicare coverage. Every year, many beneficiaries could save hundreds of dollars by changing plans. But every year, most of them do nothing. I believe people don’t bother with open enrollment because the information seems overwhelming. To help remedy that, I’d like to offer a few tips that can help you make good decisions:

Review your current plan. Plans can change, as can your needs. You should receive an Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and/or Evidence of Coverage (EOC) if you have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D plan. Read them so you’re aware of any changes.

Make sure your doctor still accepts your particular Medicare Advantage Plan. If your healthcare provider’s affiliation changes, you may need to choose a new doctor or decide to pay more for your current doctor’s out-of-network costs.

Check your medications. Don’t just verify that your drugs are on your plan’s list; look carefully for restrictions like quantity limits or prior authorization. If your plan has a network-pharmacy

benefit, check to see if the pharmacies covered are easy for you to access. Lastly, compare prescription-drug benefits across plans; you may be surprised at the amount of money you could save.

Consider premiums and out-of-pocket costs. Add up co-payments, co-insurance, and annual deductibles, along with the monthly premiums. Then compare costs.

Be aware of the Medicare Advantage maximum out-of-pocket limit. After you spend a certain amount “out of pocket,” you pay nothing for covered services. Different plans may have different caps, and the limits can change each year; so compare and review.

Get some help. [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) offers a [Plan Finder](#) tool where you can find and compare Medicare Advantage and prescription-drug plans available in your area. You can also contact your [State Health Insurance Assistance Programs](#), or go through a licensed insurance agent who is experienced and knowledgeable regarding these plans. The services of an agent do not cost you anything. The insurance companies pay their commissions; your premium will be the same whether or not you use an agent. ★



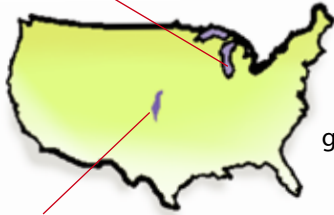
"Did you include the receipts for easy return?"



ZLM Bulletin Board

Israel's Relative Size

The nation of Israel is small enough to fit multiple times into the states of California, Maine, and many others. For that matter, Lake Michigan could easily hold the State of Israel with room to spare.



Israel compared to... USA

Israel is diminutive in comparison with other "small" countries, like Norway and Jordan. Consequently it is dangerous for Israel to withdraw from the land it now retains. To see outlines of Israel laid across nations, states, and cities, visit:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/relative.html>



ECFA Approved (still)

For nearly five years now, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) has monitored various aspects of this ministry's financials, newsletters, website, government documents, television broadcasts, etc. The ECFA knows more about our ministerial effort than some of our employees! A word to the wise: the ECFA continues to accept ZLM as an official member.



Free Item

Pamphlet of the Month

Most donors consider giving gifts of cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, and other property. Did you know that by simply naming a ministry like ours as the beneficiary of a new or existing life insurance policy, you can make a larger gift than otherwise possible? This month's pamphlet

Questions & Answers about Life Insurance

addresses questions such as

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- 2) How do I go about making a life insurance gift?
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To receive a free copy, email us at staff@levitt.com or write to our P.O. Box.



Questions & Answers About Life Insurance



Year-End Giving PLANS

Special Tax-Free IRA Gifts

It is possible for those aged 70½ or older to make tax-favored charitable gifts from traditional and Roth IRA accounts. Up to \$100,000 per year can be transferred directly from traditional or Roth IRAs to qualified charities such as **Zola Levitt Ministries**, free from federal income tax. There may also be state income tax savings. Amounts given in this way count toward required IRA minimum withdrawal amounts for the year of the gift. **To make such gifts, it is important not to withdraw funds prior to a gift, but instead have the gift amount distributed directly from an IRA to the qualified charities.** Those with check-writing privileges on their accounts may find this the most efficient way to make gifts directly from an IRA.

"Come Home!"

Zola Tours to Israel



See page 36 for details



Hebrew Lesson



He Outshines the Darkness

John J. Parsons

כִּי־אַתָּה נֵרִי יְהוָה וַיְהוֶה וַיְהוֶה יְגִיֵּם חֹשֶׁךְ־כִּי

“For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness” (2 Sam 22:29)

כִּי	חֹשֶׁךְ	וַיְגַלֵּם	וַיְהוֶה	וַיְהוֶה	נֵרִי	אַתָּה	כִּי	
(2)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(1)
choshki	yagl'ah	vadonai	Adonai	neri	atah	ki		
my darkness	will lighten	and the LORD	LORD	my lamp	Thou (are)	For		

In the holy place of the tabernacle (*mishkan*), a seven-branched lampstand (*menorah*) held seven individual lamps (*nerot*) that represented God's perfect light.

The seven lamps of the menorah contained pure olive oil inside almond-shaped containers, suggesting the seven eyes of the LORD mentioned in Zechariah 3:9. Together, the menorah and its seven lamps were referred to as the Perpetual Lamp (*ner tamid*), a source of light that illuminated the Bread of Presence (*lechem panim*) and the Altar of Incense (*mizbeach haketoret*) within the holy place.

The lamp was to be attended to every morning and evening during the time of the burning of the sweet incense (symbolizing prayer), and was never to be extinguished (Leviticus 24:2–3).

In our lesson verse, King David metaphorically calls the LORD his Perpetual Lamp—that is, the Source of holy light that enables him to see. Just as the radiance of the menorah caused the darkness of the holy place to be dispelled, and illuminated both the Bread of Presence and the rising plume of sweet incense, so the presence of the LORD in the heart of faith causes the inner darkness of the soul to be overcome, revealing the provision and presence of God (John 1:5, 9). Indeed, David would have understood this metaphor to refer to his future descendant (the promised “Son of David”) who would be the True Light of the world (Psalm 132:17, John 1:9, 8:12, 12:46).

Living in view of God's Light itself gives us light to see (John 3:20–21). Yeshua is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Person, who upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3).

Beholding the radiance of the Lord Yeshua drives away our inner darkness, feeds our soul, and enables us to have authentic communion with a holy God. ✨



***Our Hands are Stained with Blood* by Michael Brown**

One of our highly recommended books!

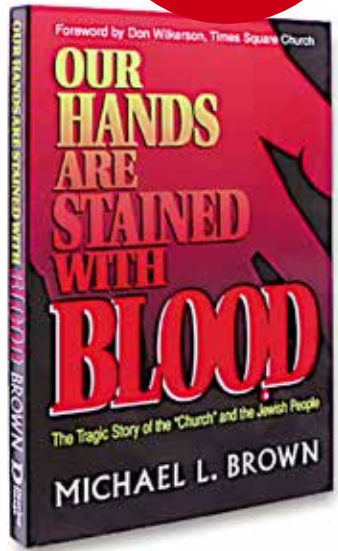
“And they’ll know we are Christians by our love.”

Contrary to the sweet sentiment of this hymn’s lyrics, this book documents with unrelenting intensity the prolific anti-Semitism at the hands of the “Church.”

From the first “Christian” persecutions of the Jews in the 4th century to the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust to anti-Semitism in today’s pulpits, this book is a sure cure for someone who imagines persecution of God’s Chosen is a hoax. It is a history every Christian must understand.



Dr. Michael L. Brown, founder and president of FIRE School of Ministry in Concord, NC, is widely considered to be the world’s foremost Messianic Jewish apologist.



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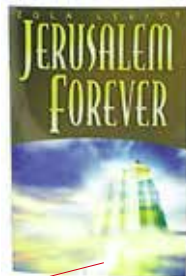
AHAVA – Mineral Foot Cream 3.4 oz This effective moisturizing cream softens and renews rough feet and soles. Powered by AHAVA’s proprietary Osmoter™ and natural plant extracts, the rich formula of concentrated Dead Sea minerals helps to soothe, repair splits and cracks, and leaves feet smooth and hydrated. Avocado, Wheat Germ, Sweet Almond, and Jojoba oils smooth, soften, nourish, and comfort the feet. Aloe Vera soothes. Tea Tree Leaf oil contains anti-bacterial and antifungal properties. Salicylic acid helps renew skin.

AHAVA – Mineral Body Lotion 17 oz The Dead Sea minerals and soothing Aloe Vera in this quickly absorbing body lotion protect the skin while they stimulate and elevate the natural hydration processes for a smooth, refined skin texture. Aloe Vera extracts soothe and provide natural moisture. Witch Hazel extracts smooth the skin, providing a refreshing, revitalizing effect. [\(See the article “Add Salt” on page 25\).](#)



Zola's Classic Study Booklet Library

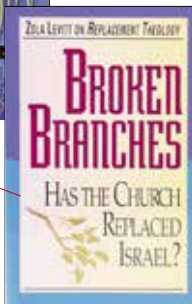
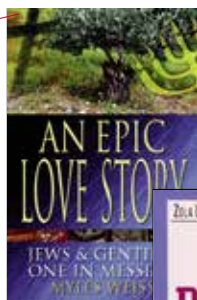
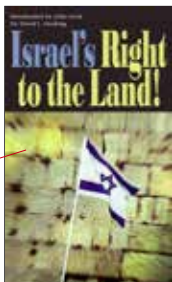
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Books

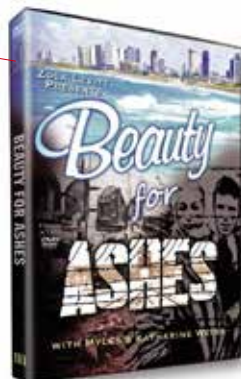
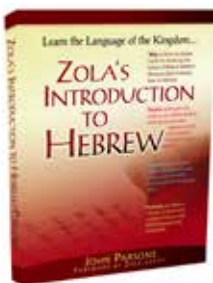
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___	Israel's Right to the Land!	\$2	___
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___	AHAVA Mineral Body Lotion 17 oz.	\$37. ⁵⁰	_____
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To
Index



**See our
TJF outreach
article on
page 13.**

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Another excellent witnessing tool, this handsomely designed 2¼" x 7" heavy bookmark gives Old Testament Scriptures declaring details of Who the Messiah of Israel was, and what He would experience and accomplish. Upon request, receive one bookmark free with any purchase or donation (or you can send us a self-addressed stamped envelope).

The Muslim Version of Christmas



ISRAEL TODAY

The “Jesus is Palestinian” message has proven an effective propaganda tool aimed at numbing the senses of a Christian community that for more than five decades almost unanimously supported Israel. First propagated by Yasser Arafat, Palestinian leaders continue to advance the notion of their own Jesus, not for the sake of local Christians or even the Palestinians in general, but rather for the sake of Islam.

When Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas stated on Christmas Eve 2014, “We celebrate the birth of Jesus, a Palestinian messenger of love, justice, and peace,” he was not honoring the Messiah, but instead promoting a supposedly Muslim prophet. On the same day, Mahmoud Al-Habbash, the PA’s Supreme Sharia Judge and Abbas’s Advisor on Islamic Affairs, declared, “Christmas is also a Palestinian holiday because Jesus, peace be upon him, was Palestinian.” He didn’t have in mind a venerated Arab nationalist, but rather a faithful Muslim preparing the way for the coming of Mohammed.

If Christians have any doubt that a Palestinian Jesus poses a threat not only to Israel’s future but to their own fate as well, they need only look to the devastation of entire Christian communities across the Middle East. And if they are led to believe that Islamic State (ISIS) is not representative of Islam, they should open their ears to the desperate pleas of Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, the head of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

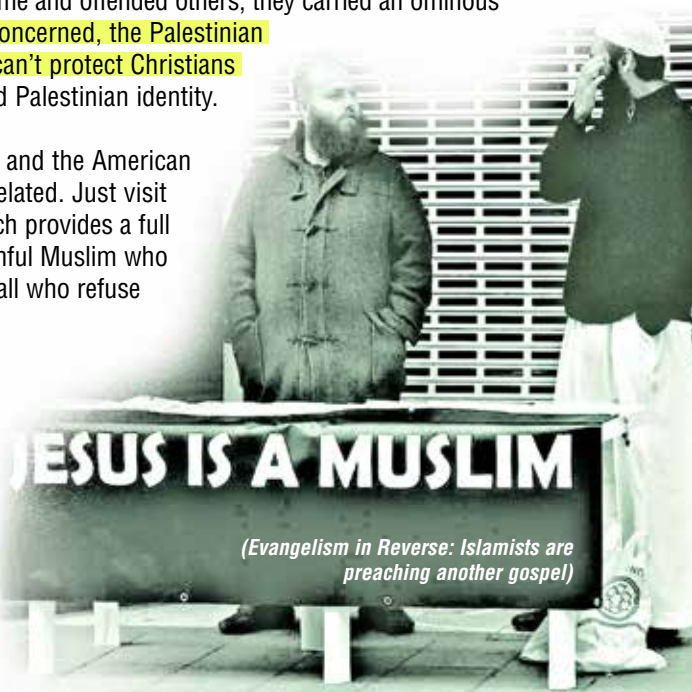
Bartholomew warned that the violence in Iraq and Syria threatens “an entire civilization.” “The victimization and extermination of women and children, as well as of the elderly and disabled, for any reason whatsoever—much more so in the supposed name of religious conviction—is a repudiation of our own future,” he said.

Those who believe Israel is an isolated case should be reminded of the recent Muslim billboard campaign in Columbus, Ohio and other American cities proclaiming “Jesus is Muslim” and “Muslims love Jesus too.” This was essentially the same kind of “soft” jihad used by Palestinian leaders, a clever strategy to open hearts to the message of Islam.

This version of soft jihad came from American Muslim stand-up comedians Negin Farsad and Dean Obeidallah, the directors and stars of the documentary *The Muslims are Coming!* (2013). Its message is clear: “Jesus is Muslim” rather than just “Jesus is Palestinian.” While these billboards amused some and offended others, they carried an ominous warning: **As far as Muslims are concerned, the Palestinian Jesus is a Muslim prophet who can’t protect Christians** even if they cling to his supposed Palestinian identity.

Abbas’s celebration of Christmas and the American Muslim billboard campaign are related. Just visit the “Ask-A-Muslim” website, which provides a full explanation of why Jesus is a faithful Muslim who proclaims dire consequences for all who refuse his call to submit to Allah.

Benign as this Muslim Jesus movement may seem, it actually condemns Christians sympathizing with “Palestine” to the same fate as those standing with Israel. ★



(Evangelism in Reverse: Islamists are preaching another gospel)



Letters to ZIM

For ministry products and TV programs, visit the [web store](#) and [video archives](#).

Where's His Birth Certificate?

Dear Katharine,

I receive your *Levitt Letter* and enjoy it! Last year you wrote: "[Christmas is the perfect time to celebrate His birth \(even though it may have been in spring or autumn\)](#)." Thank you for clarifying that for me because I thought He was born sometime around April 16 or 17. I have been so uneasy about celebrating Christmas because of what I believed. You don't know how much those few words you said mean to me! Now, I am going to enjoy this time of year because of you! —B.G.

Dear B.G.—

Thank you for your kind note. I know Katharine appreciates hearing your positive reception to her words. For additional affirmation, please read and enjoy Sandra Teplinsky's 10 reasons for Christians to celebrate Christmas even while acknowledging that December 25 likely isn't the day Jesus was born (p.1).

Our own John Parsons explains on his website [Hebrew4Christians.com](#) that clues in the Gospels point to a couple of options for timing Christ's birth at seasons other than winter. The clues stem from when Mary's cousin Elizabeth conceived the child who became John the Baptist. We know that Mary conceived six months after Elizabeth (Luke 1:26, 31), and that Elizabeth conceived following Zacharias's Temple rotation—but which of his two annual rotations? (Luke 1:22–23).

It is a fun discussion, and you'll appreciate reading the exegesis. But in the end, no matter what you decide regarding when Jesus was born, it has no impact on your salvation. John Parsons sensibly concludes: "The important thing, of course, is that our Lord was indeed born and ransomed us from the wages of our sins." And that's what we celebrate every day. —Editor

Winter weather arrived in Israel (2015) just in time for Hanukkah.



Gentiles or gentiles?

Dear ZLM,

I enjoy reading the articles in the *Levitt Letter*. However, there is a grammatical error that occurs repeatedly: not capitalizing the word Gentile. The Bible itself refers to “G”entiles. I hope that your editor will correct this. It’s important to get it right. —D.D.

Dear D.D.—

This comment pops up more often than you’d suspect, so thank you for giving me the chance to explain why this ministry doesn’t capitalize the word “gentile.” A gentile is not a person belonging to a certain race or nation. A gentile is anyone who is not a Jew—a non-Jew. The term non-Jew is not capitalized because it is non-specific as to race, ethnicity, or national affiliation. Early New Testament manuscripts were written in all-capital Greek letters (uncials). Bible translators likely left the capital on gentile because “gentile” was used interchangeably with the word “Greek,” the most non-Jewish folks around back in Bible days. Here are popular Bible translations of Romans 1:16 as a prime example.

ROMANS 1:16

AMP: Amplified Bible — to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

KJV: King James Version — to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version — to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

TVL: Tree of Life — to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

CJB: Complete Jewish Bible — to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

GNT: Good News Translation — first the Jews and also the Gentiles.

MSG: The Message — starting with Jews and then right on to everyone else!

VOICE: The Voice — first the Jew, and then the non-Jew.

Moving away from using Greeks to symbolize the most foreign “others” in a Jewish world makes the need to capitalize the generic synonym “gentile” unnecessary. Hope this helps. —Editor ★



Israel: All the Feasts Tie Into the Gospel



BY GRANT BERRY (r) CharismaNews.com

Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, tells a remarkable story of the deliverance of Israel from the control of the Ancient Greeks in 164 B.C. The Seleucid Dynasty had assumed rule of the area after Alexander the Great died.

Seeking to assimilate the people into their Hellenistic way of life with no exceptions, the Greeks dealt ruthlessly with anyone who opposed them. Had they been successful, they could have threatened the very environment that brought Messiah into the world. After ransacking God’s Holy Temple, they sacrificed a pig to their Greek god Zeus on the Temple’s altar. This act repulsed the Jews, owing to strict dietary laws that considered the pig unclean.

A Jewish priest named Mattathias and his five sons killed several Greek soldiers, sparking a revolution. Vastly outnumbered, the Jews’ surprising success and faith in the God of Israel inspired them to take back their country.

In the month of Kislev (December), they restored the Temple’s menorah (symbolizing the light of God). They found enough oil to burn for one day, but it would take eight days to prepare new oil. Nevertheless, the oil they found miraculously burned for all eight days. This event demonstrated two miracles of God: 1) to deliver His people, and 2) to light His Temple.

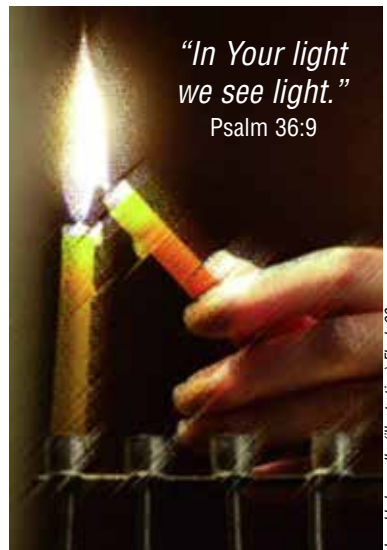
The rededication of the Temple to God—Hanukkah (Hebrew for *dedication*)—though not one of the Lord’s feasts given in Leviticus 23, paints a prophetic picture through Daniel, and became part of the Jewish calendar.

Yeshua/Jesus celebrated Hanukkah and forever connected it to His own Messiahship (John 10:22–39). Through Hanukkah, we see the light of the world. Like the Levitical feasts, Hanukkah is a prophetic foreshadow of Yeshua/Jesus, the Light of the world (John 9:5).

Hanukkah is observed using a special menorah—a Hanukkiyah—a candlestick that holds nine candles: one for each day of the miracle and the ninth, called the *Shamash* (*attendant or servant*), that lights the others. Of course, who is the great Servant, but Yeshua/Jesus Himself, who gives light to all of us.

On each of the days, the Shamash candle is lit and used to light the other candles, increasing one each day until the last day, when they are all lit. Nightly gifts include chocolate money—*Hanukkah Gelt*; special foods consist of those cooked in oil to commemorate the miracle, such as *Latkes* (potato pancakes) and doughnuts; and a traditional game involves a *dreidel*, a four-sided spinning toy. ★

If you’d like to know more, Zola and Jeffrey Seif give a detailed account of the history that led to the Temple’s rededication and connect the pictures of Yeshua that are evident even today in modern celebrations of the event. Please see [The Feast of Lights](#) description on p. 5.



Add Salt

The International Jerusalem Post

While soaking in the abundant salt and minerals in the waters of the Dead Sea is known to have various health benefits, what would happen to a garment left immersed in the hyper-saline water for a prolonged period?

Israeli artist Sigalit Landau has documented the astounding results of the experiment at the lowest point on Earth in her eight-part photography series “Salt Bride.”



The images, recently displayed at the Marlborough Contemporary gallery in London, depict the crystalline transformation of a dress submerged for a period of two months in the salt-rich Dead Sea in 2014. The images have become an international media and viral sensation.

In collaboration with photographer Yotam From, Jerusalem native Landau conducted the underwater project using a traditional Hasidic gown replicated from the costume of the female lead in the canonical Yiddish play *The Dybbuk*.

Written by S. Ansky between 1913 and 1916, *The Dybbuk* tells the story of a young bride, Leah, possessed by an evil spirit and subsequently exorcised. In Landau’s “Salt Bride” series, Leah’s black garb is transformed underwater as salt crystals gradually adhere to the fabric. Over time, the sea’s alchemy transforms the plain garment from a symbol associated with death and madness into the wedding dress it was intended to be.

Landau also created “Small Salt Bride”—a bridesmaid’s dress—as a separate sculpture.

Landau’s practice is deeply connected with the Dead Sea. The artist shot some of her most iconic videos in its water, and has been experimenting with the salt crystallization of objects for years. The Dead Sea—the lifeless,



credit: Sigalit Landau/Marlborough Contemporary

lowest place on Earth, in which the dress was immersed in one state, and from which it was pulled out in a very different form—sets in motion an anticipated yet uncontrolled organic process.

As Landau states: “Over the years, I learned more and more about this low and strange place. Still, the magic is there waiting for us: new experiments, ideas, and understandings. It is like meeting with a different time system, a different logic, another planet. It looks like snow, like sugar, like death’s embrace; solid tears, like a white surrender to fire and water combined.” ★

The benefits of Dead Sea salt in skin products are legendary. [Please see Ahava on p. 17.](#)

Power Up with Super Algae



SCIENCE: BY JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH (r) JPost.com

Israeli researchers have transformed humble pond slime into an engine to drive a green energy revolution. **Dr. Iftach Yacoby** (*below*) and his team at Tel Aviv University (TAU) genetically altered single-celled algae, which naturally emit hydrogen, allowing the organism to increase its efficiency many times its natural ability. Hydrogen fuel cells are already being introduced into vehicles, and the new discovery could mean algae become a key player in the push for green energies.

In the groundbreaking research, the scientists disproved the commonly held theory that micro-algae produce only a minimal amount of hydrogen for a few minutes at dawn. Yacoby's team discovered not only that algae continue to emit hydrogen throughout the day, but that through genetic engineering they could radically improve the pond life's work rate. The discovery means that in the future it will be possible to grow micro-algae with conventional farming methods so that all the necessary energy can be produced on a larger scale.

"Hydrogen is an energy source with huge advantages," says Yacoby. Its tremendous energy content can power cars and bicycles great distances on very little fuel, and hydrogen doesn't pollute at all. "The exhaust emitted by a hydrogen-powered car contains only clean water that can be suitable for drinking."



TAU's Dr. Iftach Yacoby and his algae

In 1942, scientists discovered that micro-algae—single-celled algae with a green color found in any pool of stagnant water—release hydrogen during photosynthesis. However, until now, **it was believed that algae emitted too little hydrogen to provide useful amounts of energy.** "Algae produce hydrogen with the help of hydrogenase, an enzyme that breaks down in the presence of oxygen," explained Yacoby. Conventional wisdom assumed that for a few moments around sunrise, at the beginning of photosynthesis, the algae produced both hydrogen and oxygen, but that as the oxygen accumulated and paralyzed the hydrogenase, the hydrogen production stopped.

When they tested this assumption, the researchers found that even in daylight, algae produce large amounts of oxygen and a tiny amount of hydrogen. Next, the researchers genetically engineered the cell to produce greater amounts of hydrogenase. Hydrogen production by their engineered micro-algae increased 400%.

"Twenty thousand years ago, man ceased being a hunter-gatherer and domesticated plant species from nature to grow his own food," concluded Yacoby. "But when it comes to energy, we are still collecting from what nature gives us—so far, mainly polluting fossil fuels, whose supplies are dwindling."

His team's challenge is to deliver these newfound production capabilities to more-durable strains of algae that live in nature. In other words: to domesticate wild species of micro-algae, just as man domesticated wild wheat for his needs." ★



Biological Link Between Stress & Obesity

MEDICINE: HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM / HUJI.ac.il



Metabolic and anxiety-related disorders both pose a significant healthcare burden, and are in the spotlight of contemporary research and therapeutic efforts. Although intuitively we assume that these two phenomena overlap, the link had not been proven scientifically.

Now, a team of researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem reveals the molecular elements that bridge anxiety and metabolism—a type of microRNA that influences shared biological mechanisms.

“Our previous research found a link between microRNA and stressful situations that generates an inflammatory response in both the brain and the gut. For example, the situation of patients with Crohn’s disease may get worse under psychological stress,” says team leader **Prof. Hermona Soreq** (above) from the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences and the Department of Biological Chemistry in the Alexander Silberman Institute of Life Sciences at the Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences.

The present study added obesity to the equation. The research paper, published in the journal *Trends in Molecular Medicine*, details the evidence linking microRNA pathways, which share regulatory networks in metabolic and anxiety-related conditions.

Metabolic disorders, such as abdominal obesity and diabetes, have become a global epidemic. **In the U.S., the prevalence of metabolic syndrome is as high as 35%.** In Austria, Denmark, Ireland, and Israel, it affects 20–25% of the population.

Anxiety disorders are harder to quantify than metabolic ones. They include obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and phobias. The full burden of the anxiety spectrum is difficult to assess, due to under-diagnosis and poorly defined pathophysiological processes.

This newly revealed link offers novel opportunities for innovative diagnoses and treatment of both metabolic and anxiety-related phenomena.

“We revealed that some anxiety-induced microRNA are capable of suppressing inflammation and that their expression level is different in diverse tissues and cells, depending on heredity and exposure to stressful situations,” explains Prof. Soreq. ★

Laurel and Hardy and the microRNA connection—It’s not coincidental that the heavier character is also the more anxious of the duo
(credit: Petra Pollins)



Light at the End of the BDS Tunnel

BY CHERYL HAUER (r) BridgesForPeace.com



Eugene Kontorovich, a professor at Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago and a recognized expert in constitutional and international law with a focus on boycotts, indicates there's definitely light at the end of the BDS tunnel. Earlier this year, he testified before a U.S. congressional committee and spoke with refreshing clarity about the irrationality of boycotting Israel.

In many cases, Kontorovich observed, those boycotts are actually illegal. Under corporate law, any organization, including a nonprofit, can do only what is permitted under the purposes specified in its charter. **Boycott resolutions that are beyond the powers of an organization are void, and individual members can sue to have a court declare them invalid.** For instance, an educational institution whose bylaws call for the free exchange of ideas and information is legally prohibited against boycotting that kind of exchange with another educational institution, like universities in Israel. Individuals serving on the boards of these organizations may actually be liable for damages.

Some in the United States and Europe say that BDS activities are protected under free speech guarantees. However, Kontorovich says nothing could be further from the truth. "Not only is this not free speech," he says, "it's actually hate speech, and therefore not protected under the First Amendment. It's illegal."

Kontorovich further makes the point that various types of discrimination are prohibited under international law. That includes economic discrimination, which is clearly the goal of the BDS movement. Besides, such actions are antithetical to peace, justice, and equality and a stumbling block for democracy and human rights for all the people of the Middle East. Over the past couple of years, Kontorovich and his colleagues have had amazing success in combating the evils of BDS.

In June 2015, **President Barack Obama signed an anti-BDS bill into law**, conditioning any free trade agreement with the EU on its rejection of BDS. But that's only the beginning. Since then, Colorado, Arizona, Tennessee, New York, Indiana,

(continued next page)

Israeli and Palestinian working together





Pennsylvania, Florida, New Jersey, California, South Carolina, and Illinois have passed various types of anti-BDS legislation. Twenty other states are considering similar legislation. Many of these bills not only prohibit actions of boycott, divestment, or sanctions within their own states, they also prohibit doing business with those that engage in such activities. Kansas and Pennsylvania adopted legislation to defund any university that takes part in academic boycotts of Israel. Elsewhere: The UK, France, Austria, Germany, and Spain have all enacted similar legislation.

Of course, the conflict is far from over. The BDS movement is gathering its forces and preparing to go to battle on the legal front. But Kontorovich remains positive. He truly believes the law is on Israel's side, and he recognizes that Israel has many friends around the world. "If they will rally in support of these government initiatives and **change the narrative,**" he says, "Israel will win. Let's not call it 'BDS.' Let's call it 'economic discrimination,' because that's what it is."

Correction and more good news: The United Methodist Church voted at its quadrennial General Conference this year to sever its membership in a BDS-organizing coalition. This good news ran as a media brief in our [July Levitt Letter](#) (p. 30). A list of denominations that support BDS appeared in [October's Personal Letter](#) and erroneously included the UMC because the list had not been updated since the Methodist vote. A sharp reader called the discrepancy to our attention. We're happy to offer this correction and only wish it included more denominations. —Editor ★



Chess Champion Boycotts Championship Over Women's Rights in Iran

By Jennifer Breedon / ClarionProject.org

Nazi (nah-ZEE) **Paikidze-Barnes** (r), Russian-born American chess champion, has taken a stance and unknowingly sparked a global discussion on the *hijab* (head scarf) and other coverings worn by Muslim women.



The World Chess Federation (FIDE) announced the 2017 Women's World Championship will take place in Iran in February. Paikidze-Barnes believes "It's unacceptable to host a women's world championship in a place where women do not have basic fundamental rights and are treated as second-class citizens." She formed a petition calling FIDE to move the competition or call on Iran to make it optional for participating women to cover themselves.

While women should be free to dress as they choose within their religious or moral belief system, it is unacceptable to enforce criminal charges or approve violence against any woman who isn't properly clothed. Much worse is enacting those same criminal punishments against women of other faiths or other countries where freedoms for women are upheld.

Nazi Paikidze says that FIDE's guiding principles contain a rejection of "discriminatory treatment for national, political, racial, social, or religious reasons or on account of sex," and she stated that FIDE was violating this principle by subjecting women to this society. She quoted Ayaan Hirsi Ali: "Tolerance of intolerance is cowardice." ★



Rachel Weisz
as author
Deborah E. Lipstadt
(Photo: Laurie Sparham)

Holocaust Denial Film's Timely Message

By James Kirchick / TabletMag.com

Denial is the newly released film about the infamous libel trial when British Nazi apologist David Irving in 1996 sued American author and historian Deborah Lipstadt. *Tablet Magazine's* review of the movie reveals the current status of anti-Semitism, worldwide ignorance, and their connection to the alarming rise of mendacious despots.

Denial arrives at an important time. Though the sort of historical falsifying that consigned David Irving to permanent ignominy (and a jail sentence in Austria) is not widely believed in the West, it's alive and well in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where a theocratic regime denies the Holocaust while promising another. Across the Arab world, where any conspiracy theory about Jewish perfidy is guaranteed to earn widespread acceptance, only 8% of people believe that the Holocaust has been "accurately described by history." (The same poll, conducted by the Anti-Defamation League in 2014, also found that just over half the world's population had even heard of the Holocaust.)

Whereas Holocaust *denial* is a crime in some Western European countries, conversely in Turkey the *assertion* of the 1915–1917 Armenian genocide risks a jail sentence. Indeed, the widespread ignorance and denial of the genocide inspired Hitler's own

campaigns of mass murder two-and-a-half decades later: In a speech delivered on the eve of Nazi Germany's 1939 invasion of Poland, the event that would make possible the extermination of millions

of Jews in the Pale of Settlement, the Führer infamously asked his generals, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

But this film addresses more than just Holocaust denial—a depraved pursuit that remains the exclusive preserve of racists and anti-Semitic crackpots. *Denial* is ultimately about the power of lies. Why do people believe patent falsehoods and find the men who utter them so seductive?

Al-Qaeda 9/11 Warning: "... Events of 9/11 Will Be Repeated."

MEMRItv.org

On September 9, 2016, al-Qaeda's media wing Al-Sahab released a video message by the group's leader, **Ayman Al-Zawahiri** (*bottom next page*) marking the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. In the video, Al-Zawahiri reiterates the reasons behind the attacks and their impact on the U.S., and urges the *mujahideen* to focus on targeting the U.S. and its allies and to bring the battle onto Western soil. "As long as your crimes continue, the events of 9/11 will be repeated thousands of times, by the will of Allah," he declares. Appealing to non-Muslim African-Americans, he blames their woes on the U.S. and calls to them to convert to Islam.



Princess Alice of Battenberg— Righteous Gentle [TimesOfIsrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com)



After attending the September 30 funeral of former Israeli president Shimon Peres, Britain's heir to the throne, **Prince Charles of Wales**, quietly visited his grandmother's grave at a Jerusalem convent.

Charles's paternal grandmother, **Princess Alice of Battenberg**, who saved a Jewish family during the Holocaust, was interred in 1988 in a crypt at the Convent of Saint Mary Magdalene in Gethsemane on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives—honoring a wish she had expressed before her death. Alice of Battenberg was recognized by Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial as a "Righteous Among the Nations" and by the British government as a "Hero of the Holocaust." During the Nazi occupation of Greece, she hid a Jewish woman and two of her children from the Nazis. In 1994, Queen Elizabeth II's husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, visited Israel for a ceremony to mark his mother's valor.



Born in 1885 as Princess Alice of Battenberg and congenitally deaf, she spent much of her life in Greece after marrying Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark (he was simultaneously prince of two different European countries). Alice moved to London in 1967 to live in Buckingham Palace with her son, Philip, and daughter-in-law, the present queen. When the princess died two years later, her body was interred in a crypt at Windsor Castle. But in 1988, she was transferred to the convent.

In October 1994, when Yad Vashem bestowed the Righteous Among the Nations award posthumously upon his late mother, Philip planted a maple tree in her memory along the Avenue of the Righteous Among Nations, which commemorates gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust. He also met with members of the Cohen family whom his mother hid in her Athens palace for 13 months during the Nazi occupation of Greece.

In September of 1943, members of the Cohen family, from the Greek town of Trikala, had appealed to Princess Alice for refuge. An acquaintance of theirs, she took them in and hid them until the Nazis withdrew in October 1944.

The story was not known until the early 1990s, when Michel Cohen, 78, told officials at Yad Vashem of how he, his mother, and sister were saved by the princess. The surviving members of the Cohen family flew to Israel from France to attend the ceremony in 1994. ★

Ayman Al-Zawahiri, from article at left



There Wasn't Any Inn



ARCHAEOLOGY: By Gordon Mellish (r) BibleArchaeology.org

At the time of Yeshua's birth, Rome ruled most of the known world. This required lots of men and lots of money. Octavian was the king of Rome at that time. Caesar, Kaiser, and Khan all mean "king," and he was given the title of Augustus as an honor, so we know him as Caesar Augustus. To pay his soldiers, he taxed everyone. To ensure compliance and good records, he ordered all Jews to register in their tribal areas.

Joseph and Mary were both of the tribe of Judah, and their "hometown" was Bethlehem in Judea. Mary and Joseph, living in Nazareth in Galilee, made preparations to travel the 86 miles "up" to Bethlehem. It was a five- or six-day journey, and Mary was pregnant.

They plodded over the hills, rocks, and sand, through the tribal areas of Manasseh and Ephraim, and the towns of Shechem and Shiloh. Here they had a mountain-top view of the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. It was an uphill walk, but no problem for a healthy, young pregnant woman.

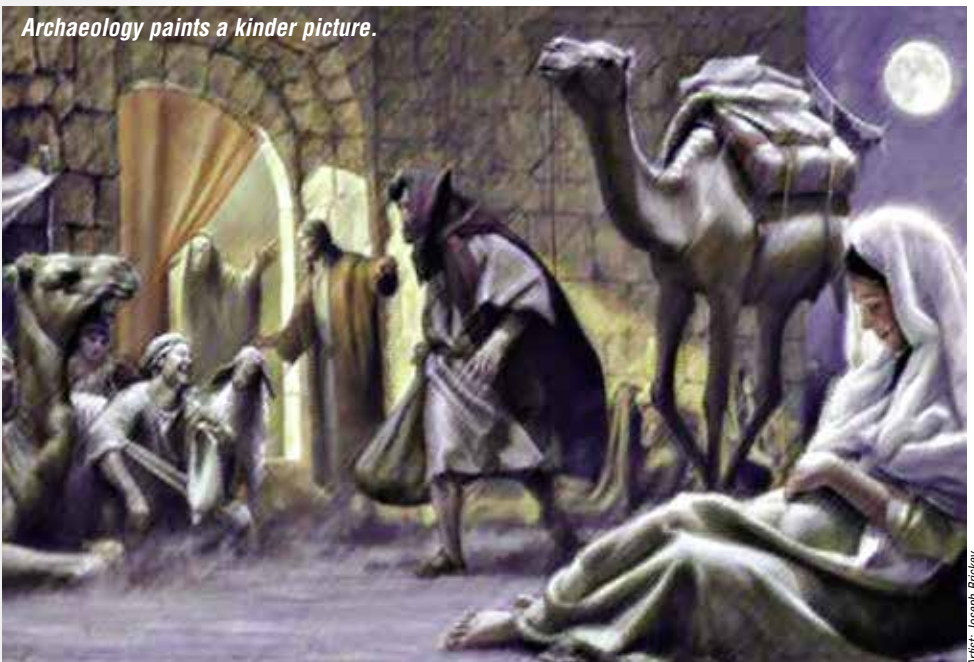
When they reached Jerusalem, they had a choice. They could stay near Jerusalem with Mary's cousins, Zechariah and Elizabeth (whom Mary had helped during Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist), or they could walk another 5.5 miles to hilly Bethlehem. They walked on and stayed with cousins in Bethlehem, in their hillside home.

When you build a house on a hillside, you must dig the foundation deep enough into the slope that you end up with a room on the ground floor. This is where people kept their animals, bringing them in at night to keep them safe and to keep the house warm. There was no heat in any house—no stove, no fireplace. The heat rising from the animals warmed the people. Bethlehem—at 2,500 feet

[\(continued next page\)](#)



Archaeology paints a kinder picture.



Artist: Joseph Brickey

Archaeology... continued



above sea level—was very cold and damp in the spring and winter. Archaeologists have never found the remains of any heating system in the ruins of houses in Israel.

“There was no room for them in the *kataluma* (Greek for *guest room*),” not “inn” as it is translated in Luke 2:7. There was no inn in Bethlehem. No major road passed through Bethlehem, so there was no need for any commercial inn there. According to the culture of that time, Mary and Joseph’s cousins would have been insulted had they not stayed with them.

“And while they were there,” Mary gave birth to her first son. To keep Him warm, she “wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger” (Luke 2:6–7). This kept Him off the cold floor and kept people or animals from trampling on Him. The manger, of course, was in the house and very convenient, a building style that continued into the 19th century.

Because Mary laid Jesus/Yeshua in a manger, **Bible translators**, thinking of their own culture, assumed He must have been born in a stable and **mistranslated the Greek word *kataluma***—which means guest room or upper room—as “inn.” The Greek word for a commercial inn is *pandokeion*. To indicate a commercial inn, Luke uses *pandokeion* in the story of the Good Samaritan, where the Samaritan took the man who had been robbed and beaten to an inn (Luke 10:30–34). If Luke had meant there was no vacancy in a commercial inn in Bethlehem, he would have used the word *pandokeion*.

When Jesus was preparing for His last supper, He instructed Peter and John to find “a large upper room (*kataluma*) that is furnished. Make the meal there” (Luke 22:8–12). Here, Luke uses the word *kataluma* to mean “upper room” and it is correctly translated. Translators mistranslated *kataluma* as a commercial hotel when telling the Nativity story. ★



Arabs' Historic Mistakes in Interactions with Israel



PART 4: BY FRED MAROUN (r) GatestoneInstitute.org

In the relationship between the Arab world and Israel, we see a patchwork of hostility, tense peace, and violence. We Arabs managed our relationship with Israel atrociously.

The Original Mistake—Not treating Jews as equals. Without this mistake, Jews would have remained in the Muslim Middle East and advanced our civilization rather than the West's and, feeling secure, wouldn't have felt the need for a separate state.

The Worst Mistake—Not accepting the UN's partition plan of 1947, which provided for a Jewish state and an Arab state sharing what was British-controlled Mandatory Palestine.

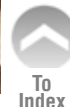
More Wars and More Mistakes—After the 1967 6-Day War, Israel offered us a chance to recover from the mistake of the war. We responded: "No peace with Israel." This led to the 1973 war (also lost). ([These three topics were covered in the September, October, and November Levitt Letters.](#))

The Tragedy of the Palestinians

Arabs' most reprehensible and tragic mistake is our treatment of Palestinians since Israel's declaration of independence.

The Jews welcomed into Israel Jewish refugees from Arab, Muslim, and other lands, regardless of the cost or difficulty in integrating people from diverse cultures, including Ethiopians,

Indians, Moroccans, Brazilians, Iranians, and refugees from the Former Soviet Union. By doing so, they demonstrated the powerful bond that Jews share. At the same time, we had the opportunity similarly to show that Arabs share a bond, but instead of welcoming Arab refugees, we confined them to camps with severe restrictions on their daily lives.



As Amnesty International reported, even after decades in Lebanon, Palestinians still continue to suffer marginalization in the labor market, which contributes to high levels of unemployment, low wages, and poor working conditions. The lack of employment prospects leads to a high dropout rate for Palestinian schoolchildren, who also have limited access to secondary education. Their restricted access to social services further exacerbates their poverty.

Lebanon and Syria each share a border with Israel, yet neither would integrate into their citizenry refugees who shared almost identical cultures, languages, and religion. Jordan also shares a border with Israel and integrated some refugees, but not all. We Arabs could have proven ourselves a noble people, but instead we showed the world (and continue to show) that our hatred toward each other and the Jews is far greater than any concept of Arab solidarity. **Shame on us that seven decades after the Arab Palestinians fled Israel, their descendants are still considered refugees.**

The worst part: Even within the West Bank and Gaza, a distinction remains between "refugees" and "native" Palestinians. According to the most recent (2010) numbers, 37% of Palestinians within the West Bank and Gaza live in refugee camps (Gaza has 8 camps, and the West Bank has 19 camps). **The Jews are not keeping the Palestinian refugees in camps. We are!**

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas claims a state on those lands, but we can hardly take him seriously when he leaves the Palestinian refugees under his authority in camps, un-integrated with other Palestinians. Not only ridiculous, but callous. ★

Jewish Humor, etc.



A cheerful heart is good medicine – Proverbs 17:22



Making Good on a Promise

On the day after Christmas, Father John noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from the church's nativity scene.

Immediately, Father John turned to call the police, but as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon. In the wagon was the figure of the infant Jesus.

Father John rushed up to Harry and asked, "Harry, where did you get the little infant?"

Harry replied honestly, "I took Him from the church, Father John."

"And why did you take Him?"

Sheepishly, Harry explained, "Well, about a week before Christmas, I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told Him if He would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give Him a ride around the block in it."

Note: See "A Messianic Jewish Response to Christians Who Naysay Christmas" on [page 1](#).



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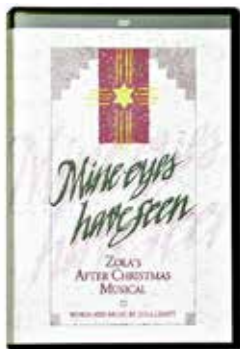
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