

# Israel My Glory

A MINISTRY OF THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL GOSPEL MINISTRY, INC. March/April 2015 Isa. 46:13

## The Book of Obadiah:

The pitfall of pride—12

The Genesis 12:3 principle—18

You reap what you sow—20

## Plus:

A special 12-page section dedicated to a special man: our own Zvi—32

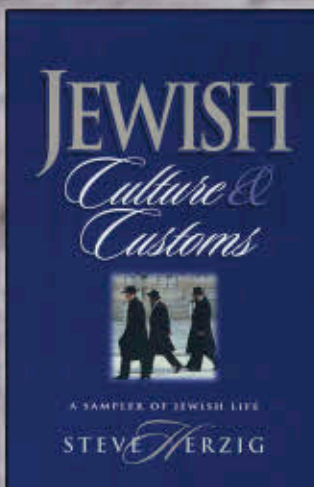


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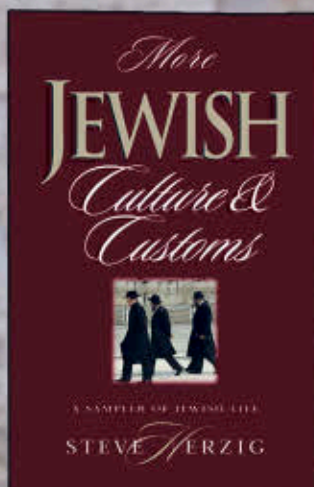
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# Israel My Glory

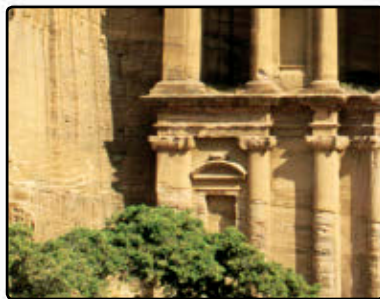
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**Our Cover:** Zvi sharing his faith on the streets of Jerusalem (FOI Image Archive).

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## INSIDE VIEW

From the Executive Director



“**T**o be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). I thought of that verse when I received word that our beloved and longtime colleague, Zvi Kalisher, had passed away in mid-November.

Over the almost six decades he was associated with The Friends of Israel, he became well known around the world because of his regular column at the back of *Israel My Glory*.

I took note of his popularity when we decided to leave Zvi out of the issue celebrating Israel’s 60th anniversary to make room for all the material we had.

As soon as the magazine hit the streets, our phones began ringing. Readers feared we had decided to stop featuring Zvi. Some went so far as to say, “If you aren’t going to print Zvi anymore, you can cancel my subscription!” We assured them Zvi’s column would return in the next issue and appreciated how dearly they enjoyed reading it.

It was Zvi’s unique way of opening the Scriptures and asking questions pointing people to the Messiah that caught the attention of so many. As I travel, I often hear people praise *Israel My Glory*. They usually follow by saying the first thing they do is flip to the back and read Zvi before reading the rest of the publication.

Few of our hundreds of thousands of readers met Zvi, but those who traveled with us to Israel on our *Up to Jerusalem* tours had that privilege. Until his health limited him several years ago, Zvi told his life story to each of our tour groups while we were in Jerusalem.

I recall the first time I heard him. He was a master at mixing humor with the seriousness of surviving the Holocaust and the early, difficult days of living in Israel without his family, who had been killed in Europe.

Zvi was a living testimony to God’s amazing grace and divine hand. He



Zvi (left) with Elwood McQuaid at the Treblinka extermination camp in Poland in 1998. Elwood was then executive director of The Friends of Israel.

enjoyed telling how many languages he could speak and always shared pictures of his family and ministry. He lived for the opportunities to speak to others of the One who changed his life, the Messiah. He took the initiative to share God’s love with anyone who would listen, always taking them to the Word.

I never tired of hearing his story. A few years ago, when his son Meno was out of town and unable to bring him to meet with our group, Meno’s wife, Anat, brought Zvi. I watched her face as her father-in-law gave his testimony. Even though she had heard it many, many times, she looked as though it was the first time.

She was enthralled by his story, and I could see in her face the admiration and respect she had for him. Her expression spoke more than words of her love for him. I talked to her afterward, and she expressed how fortunate she felt to know Zvi and be able to call him *Abba*, meaning “loving father” in Hebrew.

Zvi’s legacy of sharing with others will live on and bless many for years to come, as we present dramatic readings of his columns on our new radio program beginning in April. The weekly, half-hour broadcast will feature an “Apples of Gold” segment at the end of each program,

drawing from the many years of Zvi’s testimonies in *Israel My Glory* magazine.

I had the good fortune to see Zvi one last time in October on our fall tour, when we attended services at the Jerusalem Assembly. It was merely a month before his call home from his heavenly Father. He was old and frail, but he still had the twinkle in his eye that endeared him to so many.

In Luke 16, Jesus tells His disciples to use their limited time and earthly possessions in a way that will earn them friends who will receive them when they enter heaven. I imagine a throng of friends greeted Zvi when he left his body and entered the presence of the Lord.

This issue of *Israel My Glory* includes a tribute to this remarkable man. If he could speak to us, he would say the tribute is not about him but about the Lord, who preserved a young boy from death in the Holocaust, took him to his homeland of Israel, and introduced him to the Messiah. It is a tribute to God’s amazing grace and the impact a believer in Messiah can have when he gives his life to serving Him.

James A. Showers is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.



# Our Most Popular POSTERS



## THE BRIDGE

This popular painting by well-known artist William C. Ressler illustrates that Jesus Christ is the only bridge between heaven and Earth, God and man.

Overall size: 16" x 30"  
PBRI \$4



## THE TABERNACLE

This is a beautiful rendition of the Old Testament Tabernacle by artist Stan Stein, depicting even the majestic Shekinah glory and the Israelite encampment in the wilderness.

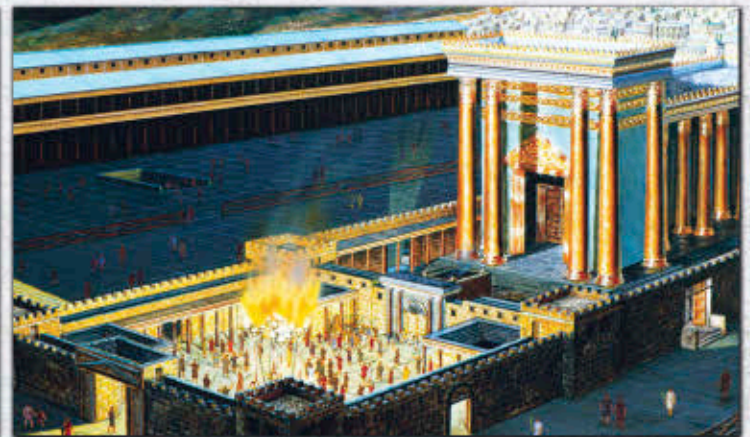
Overall size: 18" x 30"  
PTAB \$4



## TEMPLE MOUNT

This rendering by artist Stan Stein dramatically depicts the grandeur of Herod's Temple, which stood on Mount Moriah at the time of Christ.

Overall size: 20" x 31"  
PTMT \$4



## NIGHT SCENE OF HEROD'S TEMPLE

In this dramatic portrayal of Herod's Temple, artist Stan Stein transports us back in time to witness the nightlong ceremony that marked the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Overall size: 18" x 30"  
PFEA \$4



# Is America a Christian Nation?

**"M**ore than 90% of Americans who express a religious preference identify themselves as Christians." So said a December 2014 Gallup survey after interviewing 173,490 U.S. citizens.

Furthermore, "Eight in 10 Americans attend religious services at least occasionally, while more than half attend monthly or more frequently." The pollsters concluded that, contrary to the view of America as no longer predominantly Christian but a conglomerate of many opinions, "the U.S. remains a largely Christian nation."

If these figures are accurate, why are the Christian faith and followers of Christ under such relentless attack? In an interview aired recently on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, well-known evangelist Franklin Graham articulated what more and more believers across America are thinking:

*I believe there'll be some persecution in this country. . . . We see it now in some sense. Hollywood has demonized people of faith—pastors and Christians—and for 50 years [they've] been poisoning the minds of people against the church of Jesus Christ. . . . You can't even pray now at football games. You can't have the Lord's Prayer read. I prayed at President [George W.] Bush's inauguration [in 2001], and he was sued because of my prayer because I prayed in Jesus' name; we're living now in a time where we see the spirit of Antichrist is at the government level.*

Mr. Graham's conclusions are borne out in the plethora of legal decisions legitimizing deviant practices that directly contradict biblical mandates and historical national mores.

Thus the enormous contradiction between the Gallup poll and the current anti-God religious, social, and political revolution seems, to say the least, enigmatic. Perhaps while America appears Christian by profession, it is unchristian in practice.

Certainly, the silence of Christians on fundamental aspects of national cohesion has been like an endorsement of America's burgeoning neo-pagan culture; and their passivity will exact a heavy penalty.

God metes out judgment eventually. A striking illustration of the process is found in Israel's history, unsullied by the passage of time. God directed the prophet Jeremiah to speak to a people "who

have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not" (Jer. 5:21).

Americans should take a few moments to absorb Jeremiah's warning on the high cost of forgetting God. The basic issues of good and evil, right and wrong, order and chaos, remain the same. Despite the liberals' progressive mantra touting a secularized new order, everything they tout has been tried before; and without exception, it all crashed and burned.

Scripture emphatically states, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Ps. 33:12). Despite flippant reactions to the contrary, history bears out the declaration's veracity. Great nations and empires that denied or defied the biblical principle dominated the world for a while with great pomp and circumstance; but in the end, they withered and died.

America is a nation on notice. We have endured as a country blessed beyond anything known on the planet. Without question, this republic was raised on Judeo-Christian foundations, which have undergirded the national structure.

Today we seem to be approaching the tipping point. While atheists, hedonists, neo-pagans, and liberals wage a war against Christianity and God, our nation's international reputation is in sharp decline. Those who want to turn the United States into an also-ran, Third Worldlike entity are making headway.

People who live only for the moment and refuse to believe anything bad will happen here need to reassess their views. History reveals that nations at the pinnacle of material success and personal comfort can mask potential calamity. However, they are at greatest risk of losing it all. Or, at the least, becoming has-beens on the world stage.

Can the prognosis change? Certainly. When Israel fell into the depths of what appeared an incurable situation, there was hope.

Jeremiah pressed a divine *nevertheless* into his narrative: "'Nevertheless in those days,' says the LORD, 'I will not make a complete end of you'" (Jer. 5:18).

The key is simple:

*Therefore say to them, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Return to Me . . . and I will return to you'" (Zech 1:3).*

by Elwood McQuaid



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A Letter  
From the Editor

Dear Friends,

When I was reading the book of Obadiah awhile back, I felt it offered so many good principles for everyday living that I thought you might enjoy an entire issue on it.

Many months later, as I was preparing to send the finished articles to our art director, Tom Williams, I received the news.

Our beloved Zvi Kalisher had left us. At the age of 86, he was ushered into the Lord's presence on November 17 at 9:30 A.M. from a hospital bed in Jerusalem, surrounded by his loving family. I can't imagine how he felt when he stepped into heaven and beheld the face of his Savior, whom he had served so well on the streets of Jerusalem for more than 55 years.

Zvi's first article for *Israel My Glory* ran in the June/July/August/September 1959 issue, when the incomparable Victor Buksbazen was our executive director. Zvi was 30. Through the years, we've changed his column's name four times, the latest being to "Apples of Gold" after he had become too ill to write.

Zvi Kalisher taught me the importance of moving slowly when sharing your faith. "If you go quickly," he said, "you just break their legs quickly."

He was a man of infinite wisdom who had suffered through the Holocaust. Yet, rather than becoming an atheist because of it, as my father had, he became a devout believer in Jesus, whom he loved profoundly and served faithfully for the rest of his life.

I can't think of anyone better to write our main tribute to him than another man of infinite wisdom who knew Zvi better than anyone else did at The Friends of Israel: our retired executive director, Elwood McQuaid.

Elwood penned Zvi's biography, not once but twice. In 1978 he wrote *ZVI*, and in 1988 he wrote *Zvi and the Next Generation*. In 2000 we combined the two into *Zvi: The Miraculous Story of Triumph Over the Holocaust*. Elwood also traveled to Poland with Zvi to film *Zvi: The Return* more than 50 years after the Holocaust. It was Zvi's first trip back after immigrating to Israel in 1947.

You'll notice a few of our regular columns are absent, but they'll return, along with "Apples of Gold," in the May/June magazine. This is a special issue of *Israel My Glory*. The Bible teaching is devoted to Obadiah, but the issue is dedicated to our dear friend Zvi, who lived by the Bible's principles. We will miss him enormously. Please pray for his family.

Waiting for His Appearing,  
Lorna Simcox  
Editor-in-Chief



# *Introduction to Obadiah*



*The famous treasury building in the rose-red city of Petra, once belonging to the Edomites. Today Petra is a tourist attraction in Jordan (Hanan Isachar/[www.isachar-photography.com](http://www.isachar-photography.com)).*



History is replete with small nations that strut across the world stage, proudly flex their political muscles, and then vanish into obscurity. Edom was such a nation, and its story was graphically detailed by the prophet Obadiah in the short book that bears his name.

Obadiah is the saga of fraternal twins (Esau and Jacob) who struggled in the womb of their mother, Rebekah (Gen. 25:22–23), and developed into two nations: Israel and Edom.

Esau was born first, entitling him to both the birthright and family blessing. However, Jacob obtained the birthright from Esau, who willingly traded it for a bowl of red pottage (vv. 33–34). Later, Jacob obeyed his mother’s instructions to trick his father, Isaac, into giving him the blessing of the firstborn as well (27:22–29, 33–37). Esau’s hatred for Jacob grew so bitter he vowed to kill him after Isaac died (v. 41).

Fearing Esau’s wrath, Jacob fled to Haran where he lived with Laban, his mother’s brother, for the next 20 years. In Haran, Jacob became a shepherd, married Laban’s two daughters (Leah and Rachel), and fathered 12 sons who later became the 12 tribes of Israel (27:42—30:24).

When Jacob returned to the land of Canaan, Esau met him in a spirit of genuine brotherly love and reconciliation (32:3—33:17). There seemed to be no animosity between the brothers when they buried Isaac, their father (35:29).

Esau’s descendants were the Edomites who settled in Mount Seir, situated on the southeastern edge of the Dead Sea, from the Zered River to the Gulf of Aqaba (32:3; 36:20–21). Edom’s capital was Sela (called Petra today), thought to be impregnable because of its mountainous location (Isa. 42:11).

The Edomites developed a fierce, independent spirit that fostered pride and a false sense of security. They saw themselves as unconquerable.

A major trade route called the King’s Highway (running north and south) passed by Seir. Caravans traveling the route were vulnerable to the Edomites, who often swept down from their rocky stronghold to rob them.

Though Jacob and Esau had been brothers, the Edomites developed a deep-seated hatred for Israel. Their animosity first erupted when they refused to let the Israelites pass through their land on the way to Canaan from Egypt (Num. 20:14–21; 21:4; Jud. 11:17–18).

But God instructed Israel not to hate Edom, because they were related (Dt. 23:7). Hostility dominated their relationship (Ezek. 35:5), especially during the days of King Saul (1 Sam. 14:47), King David (2 Sam. 8:13–16), Joab (1 Ki. 11:16), and King Solomon (1 Ki. 11:14, 17–22).

Edom’s hatred reached its climax when the country helped the Babylonians conquer Judah in 586 B.C.

## About the Book

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, having only 21 verses, 670 words, one command, four questions, no promises, 30 predictions, 12 verses of prophecy, five verses of fulfilled prophecy, seven verses of unfulfilled prophecy, and three distinct messages from God.<sup>1</sup>

The theme is Edom’s destruction. The key verse is Obadiah 15, and the key words in Obadiah are *Edom/Esau* (nine times) and *cut off* (three times).<sup>2</sup>

**Author.** Obadiah is mentioned as the author in verse 1 only. His name means “worshiper of Jehovah.” Nothing is known about his family, residence, occupation, or age. Nor is it known whether he came from a lowly peasant family or an upper-class one. Thirteen different men in the Bible are named Obadiah.

**Date.** The exact date of Obadiah’s prophecy is also unknown. Scholars suggest three possibilities:

(1) During the reign of Jehoram (Joram, between 848 and 841 B.C.), when Edom revolted against Judah (2 Ki. 8:20–22; 2 Chr. 21:8) and the Philistines and Arabians attacked Judah (2 Chr. 21:16–17).

(2) During the reign of Ahaz (731–715 B.C.), when Edom attacked Judah (28:17).

(3) During Babylon’s invasion of Judah in 586 B.C.

Conservative scholars are divided between the first and third views.

Problems exist with the first view, which does not seem compatible with Judah’s destruction, mentioned in Obadiah 10–14. Though the Philistines and Arabians did attack Judah during Joram’s reign, nothing indicates Judah was destroyed.

The third view seems the most favorable because it coincides with the exile of most of the Jewish people to Babylon for 70 years. Other prophecies indicate Edom assisted Babylon in Judah’s destruction at that time (Ps. 137:7; Jer. 49:9–16; Lam. 4:21–22; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:1–15).

**Addressees.** In Obadiah, God addresses three groups: (1) an unidentified group of Judeans, probably the prophet himself, and the Jewish people taken into exile; (2) Edom, which helped Babylon conquer Israel; and (3) surrounding nations calling for war against Edom (Obad. 1–2).

**Message.** Although it is an obscure book, tucked away in the Minor Prophets and seldom read, Obadiah carries a contemporary message that 21st-century individuals and nations should read and heed.

Like many countries today, Edom was proud, prejudiced, and prosperous and persecuted those living around it. The Edomites had been lulled into a false sense of security, believing themselves indestructible because of their seemingly secure, strategic location in the mountains of Seir.

But mountains mean nothing to God. He eventually judged the nation for helping the Babylonians destroy Judah (Ps. 137:7),

Edom's hatred  
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using the Nabatean Arabs to destroy Edom and bring the Edomites under Nabatean control (Jer. 49:7–22; Ezek. 25:12–14).

Edom was expelled from Seir and stripped of its land and national identity. The Edomites later settled in southern Judah where they became known by the Greek name *Idumeans*.

Although Israel was divested of its holdings, God promises Israel a future, when the nation will experience “deliverance” (salvation), “possess their possessions” (recover land previously owned), be characterized by “holiness” (Obad. 17), and destroy Esau’s descendants (v. 18).

God also promises the Jewish people will occupy all the territory He promised them in the Abrahamic Covenant (vv. 19–21; cf. Gen. 15:18–21) as a unified people (Ezek. 37:15–23). These prophecies will be fulfilled at Christ’s return to set up His Millennial Kingdom on Earth.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Finis Jennings Dake, “Summary of Obadiah,” *The Dake Annotated Reference Bible* (Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, 1963), 899.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries and a Bible teacher for *The Friends of Israel*.



## Answers From God's Word

**Question:** What does God reveal to believers only?

**Answer:** “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

—Colossians 1:27

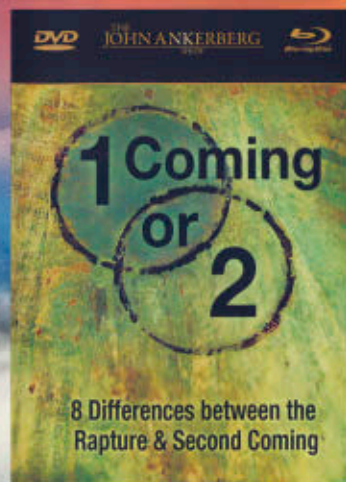


**Question:** What is better than a dinner of plenty?

**Answer:** “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf with hatred.”

—Proverbs 15:17

# 1 COMING OR 2?



Hosts John Ankerberg, Renald Showers, and Jimmy DeYoung investigate the Bible’s teachings on the coming of Christ. In this four-program series, you will see that the biblical passages regarding the Rapture and Second Coming of Jesus involve too many differences to refer to the same event and why these differences are important.

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# Are the Blood Moons Signs?

**B**lood moons are a beautiful sight. These astronomical anomalies have become a hot topic for both backyard astronomers and Christians who consider them prophetic signs.

Are the blood moons signs? Or are they simply God's handiwork?

A blood moon is a *total lunar eclipse*, when Earth stands between the moon and sun. Since Earth blocks the sun's light, the only hue that emerges through Earth's atmosphere is red, casting a blood-red color on the moon.

Some Christians associate tetrads (fours) of blood moons with significant events in Jewish history and argue that something earthshattering will happen to Israel during the current tetrad: April 2014 through September 2015.

## The Lonely Blood Moon

Biblical prophecy certainly speaks of a blood moon. The prophet Joel envisioned it when he prophesied about the "great and awesome day" of the Lord:

*I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into*

*darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD (Joel 2:30–31).*

Luke later quoted Joel in Acts 2:20, and the apostle John used the same prophecy in Revelation: "And the moon became like blood" (6:12).

Each time a blood moon is mentioned, it is in conjunction with other cosmic events occurring simultaneously. So if a biblical blood moon has occurred, we should also expect to see a darkened sun and only one blood moon, not tetrads. Furthermore, each writer pointed to the same future event.

## After the Fact

Blood-moon-prophecy advocates argue tetrads appeared during important events in Jewish history: the Jewish expulsions from Spain in 1492; Israel's independence in 1948; and in 1967, during the Six-Day War.

However, the first blood moon occurred in April 1949, *after* Israel had already gained its independence in May 1948. Similarly, a tetrad appeared in 1493, a year *after* the Jewish people were expelled from Spain. If the blood moons are signs, they should have occurred before those events. Wrote prophecy and Bible scholar Mark Hitchcock,

*Consider, for instance, if you are driving down the highway and see a sign for an exit after you pass it. That sign isn't much help. [Likewise], the blood moon tetrad of 1493–1494 cannot be a sign of what happened . . . in 1492. This just doesn't fit the definition of a sign.<sup>1</sup>*

## The Biblical Blood Moon

Placing prophetic value on these blood moons grabs our attention, but the referenced events are random.

Some involved a serious struggle but ended in joy, like Israel's independence and the Six-Day War, while others ended only in sorrow, like the expulsion from Spain.

Furthermore, there were important historical Jewish events, such as the destruction of the two Temples and the Holocaust, that were unaccompanied by blood moons.

Why?

Because there is only one biblical "blood moon," and it will shine in the place of a darkened sun and burned-out stars when the Lord judges this world. Until then, every blood moon is an example of God's majestic handiwork.

### END NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Mark Hitchcock, *Blood Moons Rising* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2014), 132.

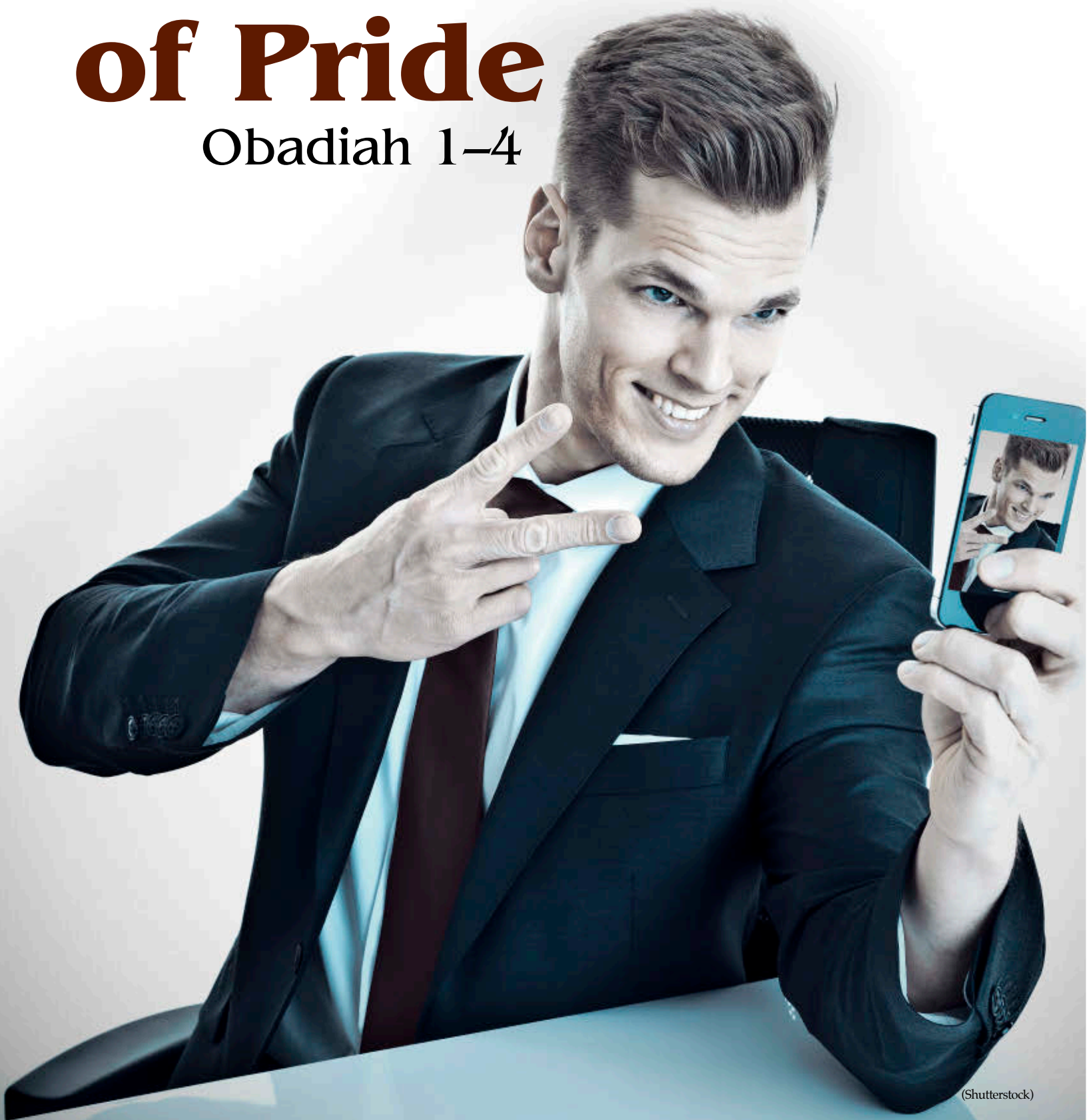
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# The Pitfall of Pride

Obadiah 1-4



(Shutterstock)



When the apostle Paul wrote to his young protégé Timothy to tell him how to pastor the church at Ephesus, he cautioned him not to give too much responsibility to new believers. Do not appoint a novice to the office of bishop (overseer), he said, “lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6).

The great English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon called pride “the firstborn son of hell”; and Harry A. Ironside, longtime pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, warned, “Pride is a barrier to all spiritual progress.”

The Edomites were filled with pride. Ensnared in mountains and protected by high cliffs and deep gorges, they thought themselves invincible; and they became poster children for the truth of Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

The prophet Obadiah used a mere 21 verses to tell ancient Israel’s arrogant, self-righteous neighbor to the south that God’s judgment was upon it and Edom would be destroyed.

Because Edom’s terrain made it difficult to conquer, the nation reveled in a false sense of security. Believing no one could touch them, the Edomites treated the nations around them, especially Israel, with disdain and cruelty. Often they allied themselves with other nations and attacked Jerusalem, delighting in violence against their “brother Jacob” (Obad. 10). Then they would retreat to the safety of their impregnable defenses.

The book of Obadiah opens with “a report from the LORD” through a messenger who had been involved in what we today would call shuttle diplomacy (v. 1). God had sent an envoy to the surrounding nations, calling them to unite in battle against Edom to humiliate it.<sup>1</sup>

“Behold,” He told Edom, “I will make you small among the nations; you shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock” (vv. 2–3).

Edom’s pride was so deep-seated that God conveyed His wrath toward the nation through no fewer than six other prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, and Malachi. All prophesied Edom’s destruction.

In Obadiah, God warned the Edomites their location could not protect them from Him: “Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down” (v. 4).

The nations involved in destroying the Edomites included the Nabateans, the Jews (under John Hyrcanus), and the Romans.<sup>2</sup> The Edomites ultimately ceased to exist as a people after the Roman conquest of the first century.

**AMONG THE MOST INFAMOUS** of Edomites (Greek, *Idumeans*) was Herod the Great. He stands out as the quintessential example of pride gone amuck. His massive ego has left us with a treasure trove of archaeological sites he built in an effort to immortalize himself: the Temple compound, the Herodium, Masada, and Caesarea Maritime, to name a few.

He killed anyone he perceived to be a threat to his reign. Matthew 2:2–8 tells of Herod’s murderous plot to assassinate

the Lord Jesus in His infancy because wise men from the East told Herod of the Baby born “King of the Jews.”

Fanatical pride fueled his relentless pursuit of power and generated such deep paranoia within him that it motivated him to murder many members of his own family for fear that one of them might usurp his coveted throne. Roman Emperor Augustus said bitterly it was safer to be Herod’s pig than Herod’s son.

Pride still afflicts nations today. More than 60 countries are involved in conflicts involving more than 600 militias and separatist groups, all of whom feel they have a right to control the lives of others.<sup>3</sup> Pride seeks control and will not rest until the objective has been achieved.

The Edomites would have done well to heed Proverbs 16:18. For them, the verse became a prophecy. And their pride became the affliction from which they never recovered.

#### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Walter L. Baker, “Obadiah,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1:1,455.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “List of Ongoing Conflicts,” [warsintheworld.com](http://warsintheworld.com) <[tinyurl.com/warswars](http://tinyurl.com/warswars)>.

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## Answers From God's Word

**Question:** Why do so many unsaved people spurn the gospel?

**Answer:** “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”

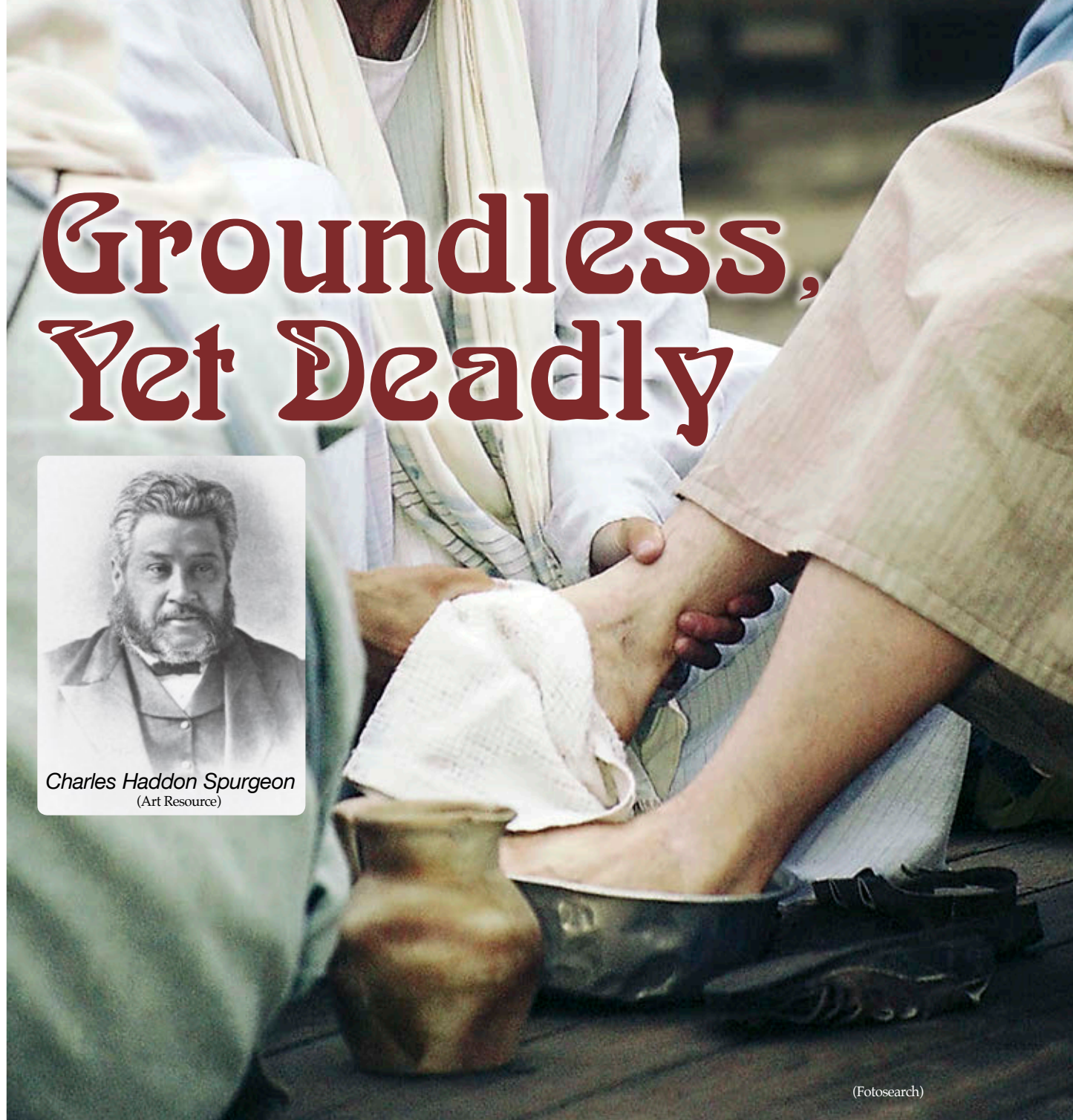
—2 Corinthians 4:3–4



# Groundless, Yet Deadly



Charles Haddon Spurgeon  
(Art Resource)



(Fotosearch)

**P**ride is a matter of the heart. In both Hebrew and Greek, the languages of the Old and New Testaments respectively, the words *pride* and *proud* denote an arrogance, a puffing up, that causes people to exalt themselves above those around them. This affliction leads to a judgmental spirit and presumptuous actions.

Unfortunately, almost everyone wrestles with pride, to one degree or another. Thankfully, the Lord has equipped His people with His inspired Word to battle this great sin moment by moment through the power of the Holy Spirit.

More than 100 verses in the Bible deal with pride and help believers renew their minds and strengthen their hearts so they do not fall into the condemnation of the Devil.

Often, pride can deceive us. Sometimes we need a godly, courageous friend to bring it to our attention. The famous D. L. Moody preached of pride when he quipped, "I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man."

In a message delivered in 1856 at New Park Street Chapel in England, Charles Haddon Spurgeon declared, "Pride is a *groundless thing*. . . . Whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art



in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor."<sup>1</sup>

Spurgeon continued,

*Art thou desirous of being great and mighty in thine own esteem? Hear me then, sinner, destruction is coming upon thee. As truly as ever thou exaltest thyself, thou shalt be abased; thy destruction, in the fullest and blackest sense of the word, is hurrying on to overwhelm thee. And oh! Christian, is thine heart haughty this morning? Art thou come here glorying in thy graces? Art thou proud of thyself, that thou hast had such high frames and such sweet experiences? Mark thee, brother, there is a destruction coming to thee also. Some of thy proud things will be pulled up by the roots, some of thy graces will be shattered, and thy good works, perhaps, will become loathsome to thee, and thou wilt abhor thyself in dust and ashes. As truly as ever thou exaltest thyself, there will be a destruction come to thee, O saint—the destruction of thy joys and of thy comforts, though there can be no destruction of thy soul.*<sup>2</sup>

Pride is a cruel taskmaster; it commands the heart, crowding out all virtue. It must be identified and purged if one has a desire to be used of God.

The antidote to pride is humility: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

"Humility," Spurgeon said, "is to think of yourself, if you can, as God thinks of you":

*It is to feel that if we have talents, God has given them to us, and let it be seen that, like freight in a vessel, they tend to sink us low. The more we have, the lower we ought to lie. Humility is not to say, "I have not this gift," but it is to say, "I have the gift, and I must use it for my Master's glory. I must never seek any honor for myself, for what have I that I have not received?" But, beloved, humility is to feel ourselves lost, ruined, and undone.*<sup>3</sup>

We will never completely vanquish pride in our lives until the Lord separates us from the presence of sin when we are finally with Him. Until then, embracing and abiding in "Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24) is paramount in the moment-by-moment battle with pride.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Pride and Humility" (sermon delivered August 17, 1856), *The New Park Street Pulpit*, The Spurgeon Archive <[spurgeon.org/sermons/0097.htm](http://spurgeon.org/sermons/0097.htm)>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

by Tom Geoghan, vice president  
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## Peace of Mind in a World With No Peace

If your will is up-to-date, you enjoy a certain peace of mind. The fact that a plan is in place to care for your loved ones and favorite charities is a reason to sleep well. It's comforting to know you have thoughtfully arranged your affairs before you go home to be with the Lord.

Yet our world is changing rapidly. In these uncertain times, you may be wondering if your will can withstand the changes that lie around the corner.

In light of today's realities, it might be a good time to review your estate plan. Or perhaps you have yet to "get your house in order" and are looking to take that first step.

Let us help. We can put you in touch with a capable professional to work around the uncertainties of the times.

To learn more about wills, request our free, no-obligation brochure *Making a Will That Works*. Simply check the appropriate box on the envelope in this magazine, call Tom Geoghan at our office at 800-257-7843, or e-mail us at [development\\_dept@foi.org](mailto:development_dept@foi.org).

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# The Folly of Misplaced Trust Obadiah 5–9



**M**ost Americans remember where they were on 9/11. We remember our vulnerability; our politicians singing together on the Capitol steps in Washington, DC; the national prayer meetings; the choruses of “God Bless America” at ballparks; the packed churches; and the frequent quoting of Psalm 46:1: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

But the flurry of church attendance, prayer, and Bible-quoting soon died. The God-consciousness faded. And though American money still reads “In God We Trust,” most Americans rarely consider the Almighty, let alone trust in Him.

(iStock by Getty Images. Digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)



Sadly, self-sufficiency, conceit, and spiritual complacency reign. Who needs God?

Americans and many others around the world are much like the ancient Edomites. Through the prophet Obadiah, God warned the Edomites their pride and arrogance would precipitate their downfall (Obad. 3).

But the book of Obadiah is more than an oracle of judgment against wicked Edom. It is an exposé of the folly of misplaced trust. Edom's substitutes for God amazingly parallel those of today.

**POSSESSIONS.** Edom was located on a major trade route. As a center of commerce, it had made its merchants wealthy. Yet when judgment came, no treasures would be left behind: "Oh, how Esau shall be searched out [plundered]!" (v. 6).

The Bible warns mankind about the unreliability of riches: "For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away" (Prov. 23:5). That is why the apostle Paul cautioned the wealthy not to "trust in uncertain riches but in the living God" (1 Tim. 6:17).

It is not wrong to have possessions; but good things that take the place of God become bad things.

Those of us who live in a land of material abundance need to ask ourselves some hard questions. Are we happier when our cars are new or our suits are expensive?

Though it is not wrong to have bank accounts, nice homes, plenty of insurance, or good investment portfolios, are these the things that give us security and confidence about our future? They could disappear in a day.

**POSITION.** Based on their treaties and alliances, the Edomites thought their position in the ancient Near East was secure.

"The men in your confederacy . . . the men at peace with you . . . those who eat your bread [a token of covenant and friendship in that culture]" are descriptions of Edom's misplaced confidence in its political position (Obad. 7).

Human relationships can disappoint, even deceive us, if we rely on them for security. It's not wrong to want to get married, work for a certain company, or become an officer in a particular organization. But it is wrong to depend on such things for security. Our trust should be in God, not in our position or relationships.

**PERCEPTION.** "Will I not in that day," says the LORD, "even destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau?" (v. 8).

Edom was renowned for its schools of wisdom, proverbs, and intelligentsia. As a cosmopolitan center of trade, it claimed to have the latest in worldly ideas and perceived itself to be a highly developed civilization.

Today's culture worships academics, education, and advanced degrees. Knowledge, of course, is a good thing; but apart from God, it cannot produce wisdom. Instead, it "puffs [one] up" (1 Cor. 8:1).

Wisdom does not come from academics: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). If we trust in our own perception and education, we are foolish.

No wonder godly believers shake their heads in incredulity as some of the most brilliant minds in society promote agendas that take us far from God and common sense.

**POWER.** In his prophetic vision, Obadiah saw that the "mighty men" and "everyone from the mountains of Esau" would be destroyed (Obad. 9).

Edom's military might and secure, fortresslike cities in the mountains would not prevent its demise.

History records that "in the late sixth or early fifth century B.C. the Nabateans, from northern Arabia, worshipers of gods and goddesses of fertility and the celestial bodies, drove out most of the Edomites. . . . The Nabateans went to the Edomites who took them in for a banquet. Once welcomed inside Edomite territory, the Nabateans turned against their ally and killed the guards."<sup>1</sup>

Military might, political alliances, and impregnable fortresses could not provide lasting security.

Many believers grieve that America today, much like ancient Edom, suffers from misplaced trust. It relies on its possessions, position, perception, and power. We pray for repentance and the day when "In God We Trust" will be more than a slogan.

Yet we must also admit that while faith is what pleases God (Heb. 11:6), it is easy to trust in other things. It can be scary to trust God alone. C. S. Lewis's children's book *The Silver Chair* illustrates this fear.

Lewis pictured the Lord Jesus as a great lion, Aslan. Jill was desperately thirsty; but the lion crouched between her and the refreshing stream. "If you are thirsty, come and drink," invited the Lion.

"Will you promise not to—do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill.

"I make no promise," said the Lion.

"Do you eat girls?" she said.

"I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the Lion. . . .

"Oh dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then."

"There is no other stream," said the Lion.<sup>2</sup>

Lewis then wrote, "It was the worst thing she had ever had to do, but she went forward to the stream, knelt down, and began scooping up the water in her hand. It was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted."<sup>3</sup>

Trusting Christ is how we start a relationship with God. Trusting Christ is also how we take every step in the Christian life. Trusting Him alone, instead of the enticing and often more comfortable substitutes, will stretch our faith. And it will quench our thirsty souls as nothing else can.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Walter L. Baker, "Obadiah," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983) 1:1455–6.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1953), 17–18.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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# The Genesis 12:3 Principle

Obadiah 10–14

*Israel and Kurdistan supporters attend a rally against anti-Semitism, Hamas, and ISIS in Frankfurt, Germany (Horacio Villalobos / Corbis).*



Imagine having to sleep with a gun under your bed. I am not talking about Detroit, New York, or Philadelphia. I am talking about Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. This is Israel's reality. Imagine seeing tanks and troop carriers daily. Think about living in a society where military uniforms and guns are as common as blue jeans and business suits. This is Israel.

Israel knows the ravages and expense of war, the violence of conquest, the heartbreak of death, and the unstable peace that often follows victory. Since the days of Abraham, the Jewish people have struggled to survive. Even today, Israel's enemies are poised to attack, wanting to drive the Jewish nation into the Mediterranean Sea.

Four thousand years ago, Abraham enlisted his servants to fight the armies of four kings to rescue his nephew, Lot (Gen. 14:1–16). This was the first of more than 30 battles Israel fought that were recorded in the Old Testament. The nation's leaders, such as Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Saul, David, and the judges, led their people into combat on a multitude of battlefields. The clash of swords and cries of the wounded were heard frequently in the Holy Land.

The ancient prophet Obadiah spoke to this issue in verses 10–14 in the book that bears his name. His prophecy of merely 21 verses condemns the nation of Edom—the descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau—for its stand against the Jewish nation: "For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever" (v. 10).

Warring against the Jewish people results in judgment. Standing silent and offering no help when they are attacked evokes God's wrath. Obadiah prophesied that Edom would cease to exist; and today, there is no Edom.

Edom's destruction follows a principle God teaches in His Word via a promise He gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs of Israel: "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (Gen. 12:3).

God promised to acknowledge and prosper the nations that stand with Israel and to bring evil to those that threaten it. And He has made good on His promises throughout the ages.

Edom's failure to help Israel when "strangers carried captive [Israel's] forces, when foreigners entered [Israel's] gates," made Edom "as one of them" (Obad. 11). God considered Edom to be as bad as the nations that actually attacked Israel. Obadiah 12–14 lists eight things the Edomites did to anger God:

(1) They watched the Israelites being captured, (2) "rejoiced" at their destruction, (3) spoke "proudly" during their "distress" (v. 12), (4) entered Jerusalem, (5) "gazed on [the Israelites'] affliction" (6) plundered them (v. 13), (7) killed Israelites who were trying to escape, and (8) delivered Jewish survivors to their attackers (v. 14).

So God promised judgment. Eventually, He cut Edom off forever (v. 10).

**MANY PEOPLE REFUSE TO ACCEPT** that God promises to curse the nations that curse the Jewish people. Yet, where are the Philistines, the Moabites, the Midianites, the

Ammonites, the Amalekites, and the Jebusites? They have ceased to exist as nations.

However, the Genesis 12:3 principle did not die with them. God eventually took down Babylon, Persia, Rome, Greece, Nazi Germany, and others. He has promised, "I will punish all who oppress them [the Jewish people]" (Jer. 30:20).

Britain was once the foremost power in the world, occupying one quarter of the world's territory and controlling one fifth of the world's population. During World War II, Britain governed the Holy Land via a mandate from the League of Nations that directed it to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in what is today Israel, Jordan, and Gaza.

Instead, the British gave most of the land to the Arabs, allowed illegal Arab immigration into Palestine, and denied Jewish people entry when they were trying to escape extermination at the hands of the Nazis. After the war, Britain's power eroded, its empire declined, and its influence decreased.

Canada's current prime minister, Stephen Harper, has made no bones about the fact that he stands with Israel. Wrote journalist Thomas Rose, "Next to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has clearly emerged as Israel's strongest and most unapologetic defender."<sup>1</sup> Today Canada is prospering, with one of the most competitive economies in the world.

Obadiah 10–14 demonstrates the Genesis 12:3 principle, and history confirms it. Nations that have aided the Jewish people, God has honored; nations that have harmed the Jewish people, He has judged.

This principle has two important aspects that impact all nations and peoples—including America. (1) We must actively stand with Israel and help with its defense. (2) We must never passively stand in silence, ignoring Israel's need for assistance and defense. Dire consequences, curses, will follow.

When I pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6), I pray for its inhabitants, its leaders, and the peace process. I also pray for America and other nations to stand with Israel and not ignore its dilemmas. Visiting Israel and buying Israeli products send a message to the world that terrorism fails in its purpose.

The Genesis 12:3 principle means there is a choice to be made: Bless Israel and prosper, or curse Israel and end up like Edom.

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#### END NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Rose, "Canadian Prime Minister Condemns Obama, West for Not Supporting Israel," Breitbart, July 14, 2014 <[tinyurl.com/TRharper2](http://tinyurl.com/TRharper2)>.

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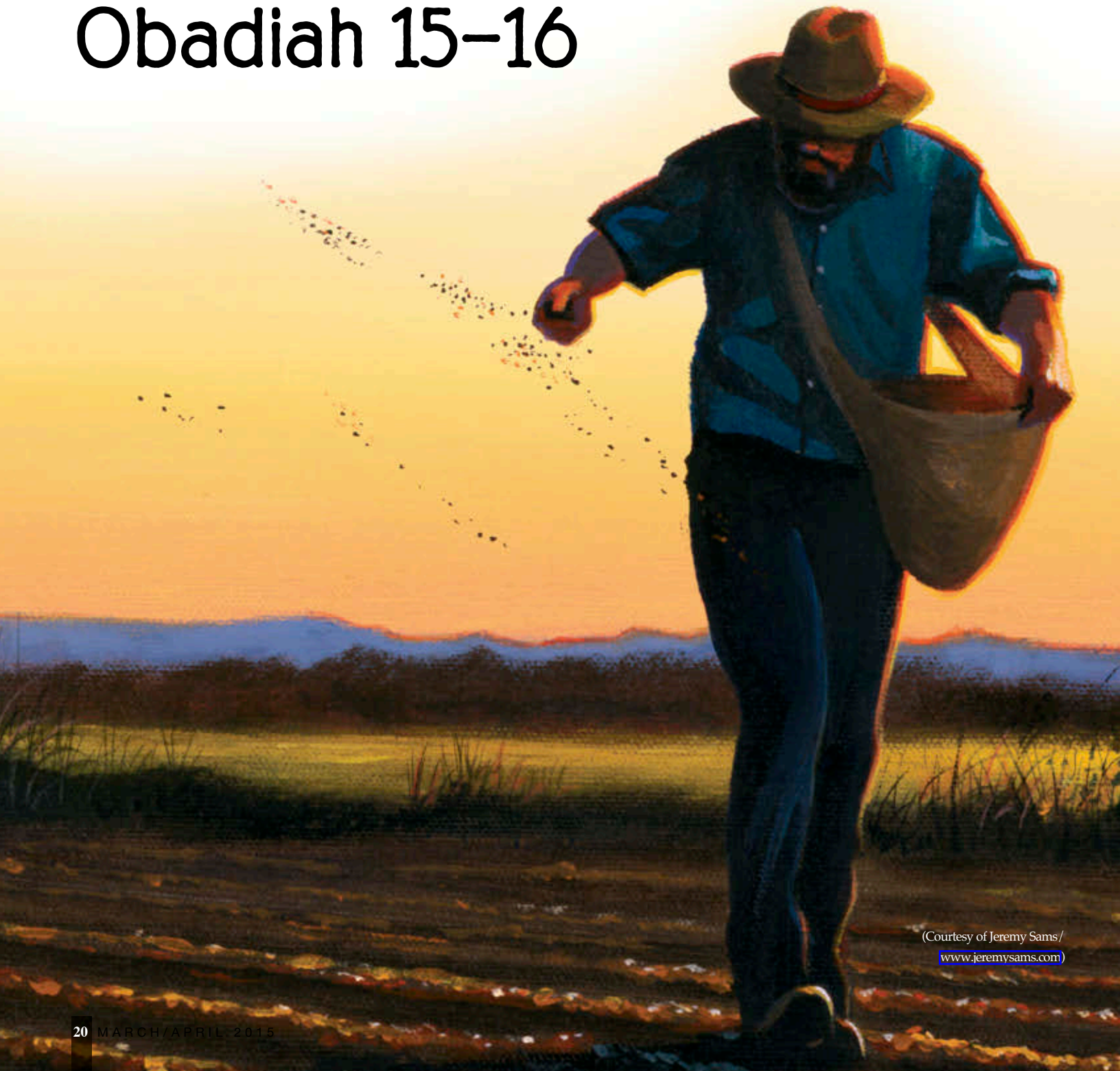
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# You Reap What You Sow

Obadiah 15–16



(Courtesy of Jeremy Sams/  
[www.jeremysams.com](http://www.jeremysams.com))

**H**ave you ever seen someone revel in another's misfortune or be smug and self-satisfied when sympathy was called for?

There's a saying, "What goes around comes around." The Bible puts it this way: "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7); and often we reap far more than we sow.

The Edomites exemplified this truth. When they should have shown sympathy, they gloated. Then they made matters worse by "piling on." Ultimately, they precipitated their own extermination.

The victims were the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob. The perpetrators were the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother.

Though Israel deserved God's judgment for transgressing the Mosaic Covenant, God was angry with the Edomites for their attitude and treatment of their distant cousins. Speaking through the prophet Obadiah, He warned the Edomites their allies would betray them and their dwellings would be wiped cleaner than a vineyard after harvest or a house after a burglary.

"As you have done," God promised them, "it shall be done to you" (Obad. 15).

Why did God destroy them?

**FIRST, THE EDMITES GLOATED** over their brothers' misfortune. They arrogantly rejoiced that invaders had humiliated Israel.

In fairness, Israel had not been the best neighbor. King Saul had fought the Edomites. King David had conquered them and "also put garrisons in Edom; . . . and all the Edomites became David's servants" (2 Sam. 8:14).

Though Edom regained its freedom, it was later conquered by King Amaziah, who "killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war, and called its name Joktheel" (2 Ki. 14:7). Struggle and animosity between the two nations were nearly constant throughout the days of the Jewish kings.

Yet to God, these circumstances did not justify Edom's attitude. He detested Edom's haughtiness and its celebration over Israel's judgment.

Obadiah's message is that gloaters never win: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him" (Prov. 24:17–18; cf. Obad. 15).

In Psalm 35 David asked God to judge those who rejoice at his stumbling. Job said, "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, or lifted myself up when evil found him (Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for a curse on his soul)" (Job 31:29–30).

Jesus takes the Old Testament teaching to an even higher level:

*But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be*

*sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil (Lk. 6:27–29, 35).*

**SECOND, THE EDMITES TOOK ADVANTAGE** of the helpless. God judged Edom for its arrogant, unsympathetic treatment of the defeated Israelites.

The Edomites "stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped; . . . [and they] delivered up [imprisoned] those among them who remained in the day of distress" (Obad. 14). Apparently they killed and enslaved those who had been able to flee. Later they entered the fallen Israelite cities and looted them.

Not content merely to gloat, the Edomites went a step further: They pillaged the helpless. Rather than aiding and comforting the surviving Israelites, they killed or imprisoned them and stole everything of value they could find. So God promised to wipe Edom from the face of the earth:

*For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head. For as you drank on My holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; Yes, they shall drink, and swallow, and they shall be as though they had never been (vv. 15–16).*

**THIS IS THE LAW OF SOWING** and reaping. You reap what you sow. The apostle Paul stated the principle most fully in Galatians 6:7–10:

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

Well-known preacher Charles Stanley stated the elements of this law well:

*Every choice has a consequence. If we make wise, godly decisions, we can expect God to reward us for our faithfulness. If we make rash or sinful choices, we can anticipate negative consequences (Gal. 6:7–8). In other words, you reap what you sow, more than you sow, and later than you sow. . . . Although the principle uses agricultural terms, it applies to spiritual things and—by virtue of that fact—all of life.<sup>1</sup>*

The Edomites sowed animosity, murder, imprisonment, theft, and destruction. So they were destined to reap the same or worse.

What are you sowing? Are you spiteful to those who have harmed you? Or do you assist them in their need? Are you sowing to the flesh or to the Spirit? Bible expositor John Stott commented,

*To 'sow to the flesh' is to pander to it, to cosset, cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. . . . Every time we allow our mind to harbour a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk which strains our self-control, we are*



sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh. Some Christians sow to the flesh every day and wonder why they do not reap holiness.<sup>2</sup>

On the positive side, Stott wrote,

*It is those who 'sow to the Spirit' (Gal. 6:8) who reap the fruit of the Spirit. And to 'sow to the Spirit' means to cultivate the things of the Spirit, for example, by our wise use of the Lord's Day, the discipline of our daily prayer and Bible reading, our regular worship and attendance at the Lord's Supper, our Christian friendships and our involvement in Christian service. An inflexible principle of all God's dealings, both in the material and in the moral realm, is that we reap what we sow. The rule is invariable. It cannot be changed, for 'God cannot be mocked' (Gal. 6:7). We must not therefore be surprised if we do not reap the fruit of the Spirit when all the time we are sowing to the flesh. Did we think we could cheat or fool God?*<sup>3</sup>

On sowing to the Spirit, the great 19th-century British preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, wrote,

*Sowing looks like a losing business, for we put good corn into the ground never to see it anymore. Sowing to the Spirit seems a very fanciful, dreamy business; for we deny ourselves and apparently get nothing for it. Yet if we sow to the Spirit by studying to live unto God, seeking to obey the will of God, and laying ourselves out to promote His honor, we shall not sow in vain. Life shall be our reward, even everlasting life. This we enjoy here as we enter into the knowledge of God, communion with God, and enjoyment of God. This life flows on like an ever-deepening, ever-widening river till it bears us to the ocean of infinite felicity, where the life of God is ours forever and ever.*

*Let us not this day sow to our flesh, for the harvest will be corruption, since flesh always tends that way; but with holy self-conquest let us live for the highest, purest, and most spiritual ends, seeking to honor our most holy LORD by obeying His most gracious Spirit. What a harvest will that be when we reap life everlasting! What sheaves of endless bliss will be reaped! What a festival will that harvest be! LORD, make us such reapers, for thy Son's sake.*<sup>4</sup>

When we encounter the misfortune of others, better to say, "There but for the grace of God go I." Better yet, do unto others what you'd want them to do to you. Such sowing reaps everlasting reward.

#### ENDNOTES

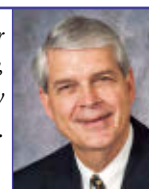
<sup>1</sup> Dr. Charles Stanley, "The Principle of Sowing and Reaping," In Touch Ministries <[tinyurl.com/StnleySR](http://tinyurl.com/StnleySR)>.

<sup>2</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1968), 170.

<sup>3</sup> John Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, cited in "John Stott on the Spirit-Filled Christian for Pentecost," TitusONENine, weblog of the Rev. Canon Dr. Kendall Harmon <[tinyurl.com/Stott](http://tinyurl.com/Stott)>.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, cited in "Faith's Checkbook," <[Christianity.com](http://Christianity.com)>, May 2, 2014 <[tinyurl.com/spdevd](http://tinyurl.com/spdevd)>.

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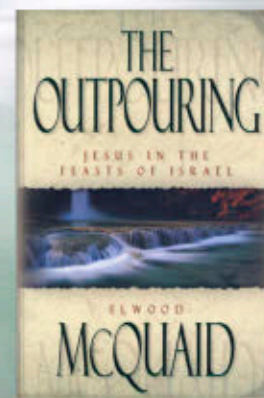


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# Every Square Inch!

## Obadiah 17–21



(Stan Stein / FOI Image Archive)

One of the joys of spending time in Israel is the privilege of making wonderful friends. As relationships grow, conversations arise on a variety of topics.

Sometimes a discussion turns to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the international pressure on Israel to give up more territory. With a heavy heart, I have listened intently to people who live with this conflict daily. If the moment is right, I interject, "But there is coming a day when *HaShem* will give

every square inch of land promised in the Torah into Jewish possession. What He has declared, He will deliver."

The responses vary from blank stares to surprise, joy, and even tears. Many of my Jewish friends have never heard such declarations from Christians.

With their faces in mind, I can only imagine the ancient response of the besieged Jewish people to the prophet Obadiah's prophetic transition in verse 17. Beginning with the word *but*,



Obadiah switched from proclaiming Edom's judgment to promising Israel's restoration.

This change often goes unnoticed, overshadowed by God's judgment in verses 1–16 and 18. But it is there—a conversation-stopping shift to the cascading grace of three blessings to be poured out on Israel: “But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions” (v. 17).

**IN JERUSALEM (MOUNT ZION)** there is, first of all, “deliverance” from the horrendous judgments and slaughter of Daniel's 70th week, called the Tribulation. By God's grace, there will be a promised, preserved remnant of Israel.

Second, “there shall be holiness.” Jerusalem will no longer house the common or profane. The city and everything in it will be sacred, sanctified, and dedicated to a holy purpose. The Scriptures are clear that only when God the Son, the Messiah, returns to take up residence in Jerusalem, surrounded by the redeemed of Israel, will the city again become the holy dwelling place of the Divine.



And that's not all. As God gathers the Jewish remnant in the Diaspora from the four corners of the earth, Israel will finally possess all the land He promised it so long ago.

The details of this return are outlined in verses 19–20. From the moment God promised Israel the land, it has been the Jewish people's inheritance. Yet they have not taken full possession of it, as they were commanded. Sadly, throughout the ages, they have never enjoyed all the daily blessings of the land due to their disobedience. But when the Messiah comes in power and glory, they will fully possess their rightful possessions.

The prophet declared this to be the day when reunited Israel (Jacob and Joseph) will finally devour the kingdom

of Edom like gluttonous tongues of fire consume dry grass and underbrush. The destruction will be absolute, “and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau” (v. 18).

This event will occur after Jesus Christ comes in His kingly glory to redeem Israel. The prophet Isaiah said the glorious Messiah will personally judge the Edomites and bring salvation to Israel (Isa. 63:1–4).

I can almost hear the fist-pumping shouts and see the tears of joy as the Israelites heard Obadiah's words. Reading them makes me want to stand on the Mount of Olives and shout that Israel is not forgotten; the Jewish people have not been forsaken. Their tormentors will be annihilated, and Israel will be blessed with salvation throughout the land.

How can such a thing be possible? To be honest, the situation today doesn't look good. There is no human reasoning or political solution that can bring God's promises to fulfillment. Yet God doesn't need those things to accomplish His purposes. If He did, He would not be God.

**OBADIAH CLOSED HIS PROCLAMATION** of blessing and judgment at the end of verse 18, saying, “For the LORD has spoken.”

Regardless of how bad things look in the Middle East or how far-fetched the promises may seem today, the Lord's Word is inerrant, true, and irrevocable. Someday Israel will receive every square inch of land God has promised it.

Years ago a popular bumper sticker proudly displayed by Christians declared in bold print, “God said it—I believe it—That settles it!” Whether someone believes God's Word or not, God said it. That settles it.

Well-known biblicist Dr. James Montgomery Boice, who pastored Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for 32 years, said of this passage,

*This is a great section of the Word of God for Israel. . . . This must be taken literally. It must refer to a period of blessing of God on Israel as yet not seen. Some do not take the words this way. Either they say that the prophecies have been fulfilled by the humble regathering of the nation in Judah after the Babylonian exile, or they apply these promises of blessing to the church and view them as being fulfilled spiritually in these days. . . . I do not see how either of these views is possible. Above all, I do not see how the promises can be spiritualized. The only possible way to interpret the first two-thirds of Obadiah is to take the work literally. It deals with a literal nation, a literal period in history, and literal sins. Even the third part foretells a period of literal judgment on Edom, as we have seen. How is it that all of a sudden, between verses 16 and 17, we have to shift gears and say that the last few verses of Obadiah must be spiritualized? I do not see how this is possible.<sup>1</sup>*

When possession of the land is complete, then “saviors [deliverers]” from those military conquests will come to Jerusalem to rule with the Messiah in His Kingdom (v. 21). The promised Messiah-King unites Israel as a nation,

conquers the squatters on covenant lands, and takes possession of David's throne: "And the kingdom shall be the LORD's" (v. 21).

This is the same King described in Jeremiah 10:10: "But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation."

He is called "Faithful and True." His name is "The Word of God" and "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11, 13, 16). He "shall be King over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9).

Overcome by a powerful enemy and dragged from their land, the ancient Israelites needed a word of hope from the Lord. Obadiah brought that message. The closing proclamation of his book, "The kingdom shall be the LORD's" is the only true message of hope for all Israel and the world.

#### END NOTE

<sup>1</sup> James M. Boice, *The Minor Prophets*, Logos ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 255–256.

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## Answers From God's Word

**Question:** In whom does God take pleasure?

**Answer:** "The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy."  
—Psalm 147:11



**Question:** What combination of child discipline does God recommend?

**Answer:** "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."

—Proverbs 29:15

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by Elwood McQuaid





by David M. Levy

## 1 John 5:1–12

# Victorious in Christ

**M**ost people involved in sports know the name Nike. It brings to mind a brand of clothing and sports equipment easily identified by a logo with a checkmark.

*Nike* is actually a Greek word (*nikao*) meaning “overcomer.” The ancient Greeks used it when referring to athletic or military victories.

The apostle John used the word *overcomer* more than any New Testament writer when speaking of the Christian’s victorious life in Christ (1 Jn. 5:4–5), Jesus’ victory overcoming the satanic world system (Jn. 16:33), and Christian overcomers in the book of Revelation (Rev. 2–3).

The apostle Paul used the word when referring to Christians who live victoriously through faith in Christ (Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57).

In 1 John 5:1–12, John revealed what it means to be an overcomer in Jesus Christ.

## Trust in Christ

John linked saving faith with love for God and other Christians: “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him” (1 Jn. 5:1).

The phrase *whoever believes* encompasses everyone who has trusted Christ for salvation. It implies more than giving mere lip service or mental assent to some statement of faith. It means believing “Jesus is the Christ,” God incarnate (the God-Man), and committing one’s life to Him as personal

Savior. This is something heretics are not willing to do.

In other words, believers accept Jesus as coequal with and of the same essence as the Father (cf. Jn. 10:30–33).

Someone who is born again possesses a new love for God the Father, who begot him, and for all other Christians, who are “begotten of Him.” Love, expressed toward God and other believers, strongly indicates a person’s faith in Christ and place in the family of God.

John also revealed how a believer’s love is authenticated and demonstrated: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 Jn. 5:2–3).

Christians cannot truly love God without loving other Christians. The reverse is also true: One cannot truly love a fellow Christian without loving God.

True love for both involves a willingness to lay down one’s life for a Christian brother, if called on to do so (1 Jn. 3:16), and to surrender one’s self as a living sacrifice to God (cf. Rom. 12:1). Without love for others, the proclamation of love for God is false.

In addition, genuine love must be linked to obedience by “keep[ing] His [God’s] commandments [New Testament commandments given by Christ]” (1 Jn. 5:3). The connection between love and obedience transcends emotional feelings about God and other Christians. Obedience means living out the commandments. John

reminded believers, “His [God’s] commandments are not burdensome [grievous or heavy]” (v. 3; cf. Mt. 11:28–30).

Unlike the Pharisees’ rules, God’s commandments do not weigh people down, sapping their strength with grueling legalities that make serving God burdensome and almost impossible.

In fact, the opposite is true. When obedient to God’s commandments, Christians experience great inner joy, peace, and freedom that only Christ can provide (cf. Rom. 12:2). They come to realize that obeying God provides security, safety, and spiritual fulfillment like nothing else in life.

## Triumphant in Christ

John also revealed that believers can live victorious lives that overcome the world:

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 Jn. 5:4–5).*

The word *whatever* should be translated “all” or “every” person “born of God,” meaning all true Christians are victorious over the world. Anyone who has been “born of God” is considered an “overcomer” (is victorious) over the evil world system by virtue of his faith in Christ.

The phrase *our faith* does not refer to a believer’s self-effort in exercising personal faith battling the world’s demonic forces but, rather, to the believer’s faith in Jesus, who overcame the world through His sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection from the dead (cf. Jn. 16:33).

In other words, gaining victory over the world is not something a Christian does; victory is what Christ accomplished for believers. People who are born again are victorious over the world for three reasons:

(1) They are linked to Christ’s victory over the world.

(2) They have a new relationship with God the Father in love and obedience to His commands.

(3) They have the indwelling Holy Spirit, who provides the power to be victorious over temptation and this evil world system.

In 1 John 5:5, John asked a rhetorical question that reaffirmed what he said in verse 4: “Who is he who overcomes the world?”

The answer is, “He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (v. 5). You cannot overcome this evil world through self-effort but only through Jesus Christ (cf. Jn. 16:33).

Paul wrote that nothing can ever separate a believer from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord and that he was victorious in Him (cf. Rom. 8:37–39; 1 Cor. 15:57).

## Testimony About Christ

John previously provided personal testimony that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God (1 Jn. 1:2–3). Here he confirmed this historical fact by the testimony of the indwelling Holy Spirit: “This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood” (5:6).

Jesus’ historical appearance as the Messiah was by “water and blood.”

Some believe this text refers to the blood and water poured out at the crucifixion when Christ was pierced (Jn. 19:34–35). Others teach it refers to baptism (water) and the Lord’s Supper (blood). Still others believe it refers to the inauguration and consummation of Christ’s ministry.

The latter position seems to be the teaching of Scripture. Jesus’ baptism formally inaugurated Him as the Messiah and was testified to by the Holy Spirit and the audible voice of God the Father (cf. Mt. 3:16–17). His ministry was consummated on the cross when He said, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30).

Along with the “water” and “blood,” Jesus’ testimony as the God-Man is explicitly linked to the Holy Spirit as a third witness: “And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 Jn. 5:6).

John shows the agreement within the three testimonies:

*For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.<sup>1</sup> And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one (vv. 7–8).*

The Old Testament Law required two or three witnesses to testify on any given issue to establish the truth concerning a matter (Dt. 19:15). Scripture abundantly validates that God the Father, the Word (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit are in one accord that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God.

Both the Father and Holy Spirit confirmed Christ as the God-Man at both His baptism and crucifixion, and they continually bear testimony to the fact of His incarnation.

When John added “these three agree as one,” he emphasized that all these witnesses agree completely that Jesus Christ is eternally the divine Son of God.

God’s witness of Christ’s deity is greater than man’s: “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son” (1 Jn. 5:9).

God’s witness is trustworthy and far transcends the authenticated witness of man. The triune God originated and orchestrated Jesus’ pilgrimage on Earth, and Jesus provided convincing testimony through His life and sacrifice that He is the divine Son of God.

The phrase *has testified of His Son* indicates God has placed Himself permanently on record as affirming Jesus’ deity.

This fact is indeed a condemning witness against the false testimonies at Jesus’ trial and all the false teachings (i.e., Gnosticism, Cerinthianism, and Docetism) that repudiate His deity then and now.

God’s testimony demands that one accept it or reject it:

*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son (v. 10).*

Accepting it means you believe God’s testimony and sincerely commit your life to the incarnate Lord and Savior.

Rejecting it means you are calling God “a liar” and are attacking the very essence, nature, and character of the Almighty Himself.

Such a stance is the epitome or embodiment of evil. It is satanically inspired and contradicts the Word of the one true God, constituting the worse kind of evil a person can commit against Him. It is the stance of an individual who not only rejects Jesus Christ but also continually refuses to accept God’s testimony of His Son.

God’s witness is of great importance: “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life” (vv. 11–12).

The outcome of believing and accepting God’s testimony about His Son results in being “born of God” (v. 1) and eternal life. Thus eternal life is obtainable only through a Person, not through a religious system of man’s invention or by doing good works to try to acquire favor with God. Nor is eternal life something you hope to receive in the future; it is a present possession (“God has given”) in life now that lasts forever.

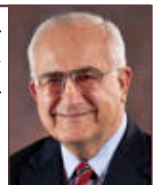
Conversely, “He who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (v. 12). Without Christ, no person alive today possesses any spiritual life whatsoever; he or she is spiritually dead. This is a sobering warning that needs to be taken seriously.

No one put it clearer than Jesus Himself when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6). If you have not placed your faith in Christ, perhaps today is the day to make that decision.

### END NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Verse 7 is not in some Greek texts.

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel.





# THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

by Renald E. Showers

## The Foundation of Genuine Wisdom

**T**he Bible teaches that the foundation, or beginning, of genuine wisdom is the fear of the Lord. Unwise people spurn the fear of the Lord by neglecting God's moral absolutes, but wise believers walk in holy obedience to Him.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). Old Testament language scholar H. F. Fuhs wrote, "Fear of God becomes synonymous with reverence, worship, and obedience to God's command."<sup>1</sup> He explained that God's "absolute holiness"—belonging exclusively "to the divine realm" and "totally inaccessible to mortals"—prompts that fear.<sup>2</sup>

The word translated *beginning* means "the beginning of a process with a definite end or goal."<sup>3</sup> Born-again Christians should aim for the goal of becoming reflections of God's holy nature through genuine reverence, worship, and obedience.

Ephesians 1:3–6 says,  
*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption*

*as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

Colossians 3:12–14 declares,  
*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

1 Peter 1:13–16 says,  
*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

### God's Moral Absolutes

The Bible reveals that God is a moral being and that He created humans in

His image as moral beings. He has revealed moral absolutes to humans and forbids them to violate them.

God appointed humans to administer His rule over this earthly province of His universal Kingdom in accord with His moral nature and the fixed order of moral law He established. These truths imply that God holds people accountable to be morally responsible.

Born-again Christians can reflect God's holy nature by obeying the moral absolutes He presents in His authoritative Word. Disobeying them can have serious consequences—not only for the one who disobeys, but also for the family and others associated with that person.

Most people reject God's rule over them and instead assert their own self-rule. In other words, humanity decided to exercise dominion over the earth in its own way, rather than in God's way. People began to violate and pervert God's moral absolutes and His fixed order of moral law, especially His institution of marriage.

### Sexual Violations and Perversions

God instituted marriage because He created people with male and female sexuality (Gen. 1:27). Thus God alone possesses the authority to define marriage and determine the proper use of sexuality. God intends all human sexual relationships to take place exclusively within the bond of marriage, a life-long union between a man and a woman.

One reason God created humanity and ordained the male-female union was to populate the earth. God blessed Adam and Eve and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (v. 28).

This fact indicates that, when God created humanity as male and female, He revealed the fixed, inflexible moral

order He—the sovereign King of the universe—determined and established for human sexuality. Any deviation from that order violates and perverts what God intended and portends dire consequences for mankind.

The Bible addresses several kinds of violations and perversions of God's design for human sexuality. Two are fornication and adultery.

**Fornication.** Scripture uses the term *fornication* both generally and specifically. In the general sense, it refers to any voluntary sexual intercourse outside male-female marriage.

For example, 1 Corinthians 5:1–2 refers to incest. The apostle Paul wrote, “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

In the specific sense, *fornication* refers to voluntary sexual intercourse between an unmarried man and unmarried woman. Jesus said, “For out of the heart proceed . . . fornications. . . . These are the things which defile a man” (Mt. 15:19–20).

Galatians 5:19 distinguishes fornication from adultery and homosexuality: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication.” First Corinthians 6:9–10 signifies that fornicators are distinct from adulterers and homosexuals: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.”

The Bible clearly indicates that fornicators violate God's moral order and, therefore, deserve judgment. Under the Mosaic Law, if a man discovered his wife was not a virgin when he married her, she was to be stoned to death for premarital fornication (Dt. 22:13–14, 20–21). Jesus said fornications defile a person and are evil (Mk. 7:20–23). Romans 1:29 and 32 declare that people who commit fornication are worthy of death.

The apostle Paul asserted that a Christian's body does not exist for the practice of fornication. It exists for the benefit of Christ. Since believers are spiritually unified with Christ, their bodies are extensions of Christ in the world. Since fornication involves a one-flesh union with an immoral person, believers who commit fornication thereby unite Christ's members with immoral people. Paul was so repulsed by that thought that he exclaimed, “God forbid” (1 Cor. 6:15, KJV), and commanded Christians to “flee” fornication (v.18).

Fornicators sin against their own bodies. Since the Holy Spirit permanently indwells believers, they must not defile the temple of the Holy Spirit through fornication.

In addition, since God purchased believers through the shedding of Christ's blood, He owns every part of them. Therefore, believers should glorify God through the functions of their bodies and spirits (vv. 18–20).

Fornication is a lustful work that is divorced from the controlling power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:17–19). It should never be associated with Christians (Eph. 5:3) since God's will is for Christians to abstain from fornication and to be sanctified (1 Th. 4:3).

The Scriptures clearly indicate that no one guilty of fornication will inherit the Kingdom of God. Rather, such people will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19–21; Rev. 21:8) unless they genuinely seek God's forgiveness for that violation and perversion of His established order for human sexuality. God will forgive and deliver from judgment those who personally trust Jesus Christ as their Savior (1 Cor. 6:9–11).

**Adultery.** Adultery is another grievous sexual sin against God. *The American College Dictionary* defines *adultery* as “voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and any other than the lawful spouse.”<sup>4</sup> *Webster's New International Dictionary* defines it as “sexual unfaithfulness of a married person; voluntary sexual intercourse of a married man with another than

his wife or by a married woman with another than her husband.”<sup>5</sup>

The Bible clearly emphasizes the fact that God regards adultery to be a grievous sin. One example is God's response to the situation that resulted when Abraham and Sarah misled Abimelech, king of Gerar, by hiding the fact they were husband and wife.

Abimelech innocently took Sarah for himself (Gen. 20:1–2, 5). But before he even touched her, God warned him he was about to die because he had taken another man's wife (vv. 3–4). In addition, God closed the wombs of all the women in the king's household (vv. 17–18).

The warning was to prevent Abimelech from sinning against God (v. 6). God ordered Abimelech to restore Sarah to her husband or he and all of his household would die (v. 7). The king recognized that Abraham's deception had brought a great sin upon him and his kingdom (v. 9). King Abimelech heeded the Lord's warning and restored Sarah to Abraham.

God's response revealed two things: First, adultery is a sin—not only against a spouse, but also against God. It violates what God ordained for marriage and sexuality. Second, adultery can cause serious consequences.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> H. F. Fuhs, “yare,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (hereafter cited as TDNT), ed. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans./ed. David E. Green, translated from *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>3</sup> S. Rattray and J. Milgrom, “raysheeth,” *TDNT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans./ed. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 13:269.

<sup>4</sup> *The American College Dictionary* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 18, s.v. “adultery.”

<sup>5</sup> *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., unabridged (Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1939), 37, s.v. “adultery.”

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# God's Signs

(iStock by Getty Images. Digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)

Signs are important to me because I travel a lot, and they point me in the right direction. Biblical signs are somewhat different. Though they point us in the right direction, they are supernatural—given by God to substantiate, confirm, and identify His message and His messenger.

The word *sign* appears more than 100 times in the Bible. Whenever I see a rainbow in the sky, I remember God's promise never again to destroy the earth by flood:

*This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth (Gen. 9:12–13).*

One of the best-known accounts of biblical signs involves Moses and the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. The Lord told Moses, "I will certainly be with

you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain" (Ex. 3:12).

Then Moses threw his shepherd's staff to the ground, and it became a serpent. When Moses caught it by the tail, it turned back into a rod (4:3–4). He was to perform this sign before the Israelites "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers . . . has appeared to you" (v. 5).

To convince Pharaoh to let His people go, the Lord poured out 10 plagues on the Egyptians. They were supernatural signs that authenticated Moses in the eyes of everyone in Egypt. Before he died, Moses told the Israelites,

*Did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders? The LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes. So the*

*LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an out-stretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders (Dt. 4:34; 6:22; 26:8).*

Biblical signs are always supernatural and cannot be duplicated by human effort. When the Israelites were conquering Canaan, God made the sun stand still in the valley of Aijalon and fought for them (Josh. 10:12–14).

When evil King Ahaz thought he was in danger of losing the Davidic kingdom of Judah to Rezin (king of Syria) and Pekah (king of the northern kingdom of Israel), God dispatched the prophet Isaiah to encourage him by offering a sign: "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

That sign's ultimate fulfillment came when Jesus the Messiah was born of a

Jewish virgin. His supernatural birth guaranteed the Davidic kingdom would continue forever. Angelic messengers alerted shepherds in the field: "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you" (Lk. 2:11–12).

Of course, today many people are looking for signs of the Lord's return. Prior to that event, He will come in the air to rapture His church (1 Th. 4:16–17). At His Second Coming, however, He will come to Earth. His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which will split in two (Zech. 14:4).

The Rapture is signless. But the Second Coming is preceded by many signs that will authenticate the event as coming from God. Jesus Himself explained what the signs will be when His disciples asked, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Mt. 24:3).

He told them,

- There will be wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, great tribulation, and death (vv. 6–9).

- There will be the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [Temple]" (v. 15).

- "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (v. 29).

- "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, . . . and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (v. 30).

Biblical signs are intended to authenticate God's message and His messenger. They are supernatural, unambiguous in Scripture, and point us in the direction of the true and living God.

*Thomas C. Simcox  
is the Church Ministries training  
coordinator and a Bible  
teacher for The Friends of Israel.*



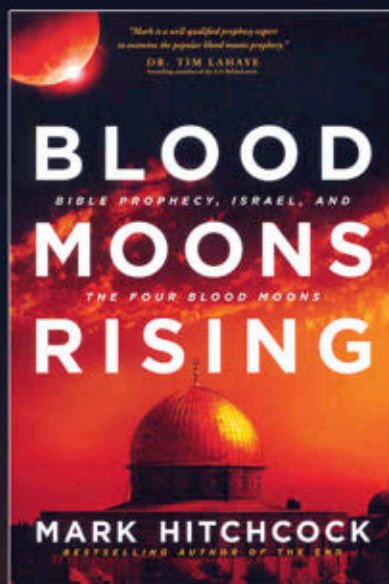
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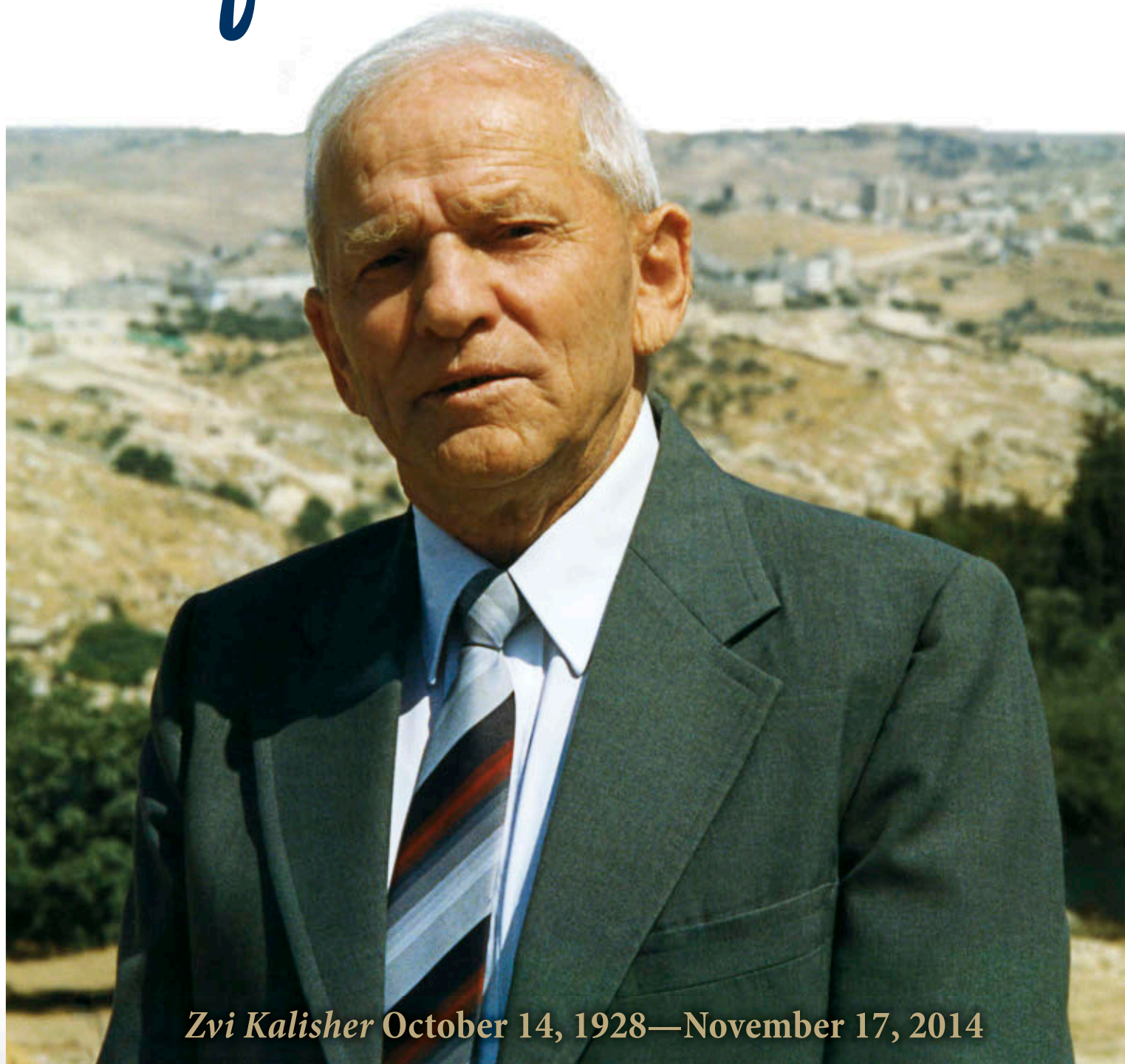
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# Recollections of a Friend



*Zvi Kalisher* October 14, 1928—November 17, 2014



In a life spent traveling and meeting hosts of people from all walks of life, I've found that few individuals leave an enduring legacy. Such a legacy was left by a person of small stature but larger-than-life dimensions that are somehow difficult to define but observably indelible.

From the day I first met Zvi Kalisher, almost 40 years ago, I knew he was special. He affected people that way. Zvi would occupy a large portion of my time, energy, and efforts to chronicle the events of his remarkable life—a story that deserves to be repeated and preserved.

When asked to contribute my thoughts to The Friends of Israel's tribute to a man who was so much a fixture of the ministry of this mission, I was a bit disconcerted. There is so much to be said, yet there are so few words available for a fitting memorial. After considerable thought, I decided to share a few of the experiences that, in my mind, say so much about my friend.



From left: Then FOI Executive Director Elwood McQuaid, Zvi's son Meno, unidentified man, and Zvi at the Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem.

## Quiet Conversations

As I traveled with Zvi across Israel, Poland, and the many places that told his story, I was acutely aware of the fact that there were two sides to the history we were attempting to chronicle.

One side involved the irrepressible images of the remarkable epic of survival that began in Poland when Zvi was a 10-year-old who was orphaned when his parents and sister were pushed into a railroad car for a one-way trip to the ovens of Treblinka during World War II.

The other side would not be told, except in unguarded moments of quiet conversations too intimate for prose or public forums. One such moment occurred when we walked onto the property of the orphanage where Zvi had walked hand in hand with his mother before she left him there in a desperate attempt to save his life. He spoke of her wistfully as he shared her parting words: "Now you must be a man. But remember, never tell

these people that you are a Jew. And be strong. I'll come and visit you every week." Of course, he never saw her again.

Hearing him tell the story, I sensed he knew instinctively, even as a child, that their parting was permanent. But he never felt betrayed. Perhaps the most poignant memory I have of all of our times together was his deep love for his mother, who was never out of mind and was forever etched on his heart.

## Do I know Him? Yes, very well.

I was seated in the Knesset office of Israel's secretary general, Lt. Col. Netanel Lorch, discussing events related to Israel's 1948 War of Independence, in which he was an important commander. As our talk wound down, I asked Colonel Lorch if he remembered Zvi Kalisher.

"Do I remember him? Yes, very well," he told me. "Zvi served under my command during the war. As a matter of fact, he was responsible for my breaking an ankle during an unfortunate time in the fighting. You know, he served as a sapper [landmine detonator], which was one of the most dangerous jobs in the army. He comes to the office occasionally, and we talk. He was here a few days ago with his son, and we had a good visit."

## The Search

The Warsaw Ghetto was where the Nazis penned up about 400,000 Jewish people behind 10-foot barbed-wire enclosures: 30 percent of Warsaw's population trapped within a mere 2.4 percent of Warsaw.

Inside the ghetto, children were starving to death by the hundreds. Between 1940 and mid-1942, approximately 83,000 Jews died of starvation and disease alone.



Zvi and Elwood in the restored Old Town Warsaw in 1998.





*Zvi at the entrance to the sewer he had crawled through that led into the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II.*

At great risk to themselves, young smugglers, including Zvi, crawled through fetid sewers with food gleaned from the fields outside the city to distribute to people on the verge of starvation.

As we stood one day over a sewer cover, not far from the Rapoport Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw, Zvi told me, "We went in through this sewer into the Ghetto. I do not know why, but I never had fear that I would be caught or shot by the Germans. I wanted to help, yes; but what was really on my heart was to find my family and see if I could somehow get them out."

After he exhausted his search and gave up hope, young Zvi realized he was utterly alone: To persevere or die were his only options.

## *Protector of the Innocent*

It seemed almost contradictory to me that, for all of his troubles, Zvi never grew bitter or cynical. He lived, both as a boy and a man, as a model of caring.

"I saw him on the road and knew that I must help, or he would not be alive long."

The "him" was a Jewish boy who had fled the Ghetto in Lodz and was searching for food to take back to his starving family.

"You cannot go back there," Zvi cautioned him. "Come with me. I'll look after you."

And he did just that. For weeks on end, it was as though the child from Warsaw became a parent to the war waif who could not survive on his own. Unfortunately, in a fit of near hysteria, the boy from Lodz made an attempt to take food from a kiosk and go back to his parents, only to be captured and probably killed. The memory of that boy never left Zvi. Nor did his deep sense of regret that he could not save him.

Long after the war, Zvi would take me on his rounds to visit Holocaust survivors in their apartments in Jerusalem. He never spoke of these visits when he told about the war or gave his testimony to groups in later years. They seemed to be almost a sacred trust, something that reached the deepest part of Zvi's soul.

I marveled at the way he demonstrated empathy to these elderly people, some of whom were badly scarred by their time in the material hell that was Hitler's Europe. Zvi always had the right thing to say, and we never left an apartment without a plea from the tenants for a promise that he would return soon.

## *Home Again*

It was a beautiful, sunny day in Warsaw in 1998 when we decided to take a trip to the home where Zvi and his family lived before the war. I was amazed the place was still standing. During World War II, the German Luftwaffe had bombed all the houses across the street into rubble.

The Kalisher house is an imposing structure, befitting the stature of Zvi's father, who was a veterinarian for the Polish army.

"I have never been back here since the war," Zvi said. "Let us see if they will let us go in."

As we stepped onto the porch, a young couple came out to greet us and ask what we wanted. They seemed extremely nervous and refused to permit us inside at first. The reason, Zvi later explained, was that the occupants did not own the property. Technically, the house still belonged to the Kalishers. Other conflicts have arisen when Jewish owners returned after the Holocaust in an attempt to reclaim their properties.

Zvi assured the people they need not worry because he had no intention of making a claim on the house.

"But how do we know that you are telling the truth?" the man protested.

Speaking in Polish, Zvi answered by taking them on a verbal journey through every room, even describing things he did as a boy in one room or another.

The tenants suddenly softened and invited us in.

"Come, we go in," he said.

"No, I'll stay here and wait for you. Stay as long as you like. I'll wait," I told him.

I had a good reason for waiting outside. This was not a moment for me to share. My friend was back home for the first time in 50 years; and I felt that I was a bystander, watching him enter a sanctuary overflowing with memories belonging only to him. After he emerged, we returned to the hotel. Not much was said. Zvi was lost in his thoughts.



*Elwood and Zvi stand before a preserved section of the Warsaw Ghetto wall.*

## *A Good Place to Hide*

When we entered the village where Zvi had been sheltered from the Nazis for two years, I had some questions about his ability to find the farm where he had stayed. I needn't have been concerned. He led us straight to the place, got out of the van, and said he would be back.

When the door opened, there was a brief moment of tenuous exchange. The man standing before him on the porch was large, with a ruddy complexion. He appeared to be someone you did not want to run afoul of. My trepidation soon disappeared when the farmer scooped my friend up in a big bear hug and beckoned his wife and children to come outside to meet Zvi.



*The farm in Poland.*

The man happened to be the son of the gracious man who had taken in the child refugee and kept him safe for many months. Actually, the man at the door came into this world with the help of a midwife whom Zvi had been dispatched to find in a snowstorm one winter's night.

As I sat across the room while the farmer and his family flanked Zvi and looked through picture albums of the days they spent together, I saw a different portrait of my dear friend. No longer was he the war waif I had written about, who tramped the roads, slept in barns, foraged for a few bits of food, and dodged Nazi bullets. Nor was he the hardened Israeli soldier of so many battles and campaigns.

That day, I felt I had seen the soul of Zvi Kalisher. He was not merely a tough kid who had fought to survive and made it; he was one who made it because he had another mission before him, one that God had fashioned that involved the highest of callings.

## *A Door Always Open*

A true mark of my friend's character was a refined gift for hospitality. By a stroke of extremely good fortune delivered by God's hand, he married Naomi, a beautiful girl of Persian (Iranian) descent who was a magnificent cook and ruled the Kalisher kitchen as the sovereign of the manor. Zvi often



*Naomi and Zvi on their wedding day.*

remarked that, at the arch to the kitchen, she drew a line he was never allowed to cross.

To be invited to a meal at the Kalishers' was something relished by all of us who were entertained in their home, where the doors were always open to visitors. In fact, it wasn't unusual for the children to come home to find a guest sleeping in one of their beds.

People, some of whom showed up unannounced, were welcomed and entertained, sometimes for weeks on end. The Kalishers' warm and generous hospitality was the reflection of a grateful man, with a wife and family, who was more consumed by love than burdened by the bitterness so many carried after what they suffered in the Holocaust.

## *A Lasting Legacy*

When Zvi came to grips with the larger issue of why he had been spared while so many others had perished, he found a new life that touched and transformed an innumerable host of people from almost every corner of the world. I think it can be best summarized in the verse Zvi himself so often referred to, Psalm 27:10: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me."

His life changed when he came to know the Lord, who took care of him through faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. His tireless witness for his Savior, which has been a vital part of this publication almost from its inception, leaves us with a legacy of inestimable value. That legacy is distilled in three features:

(1) Evangelism. Zvi never wavered in his burning desire to make Christ known—without fear or compromise.

(2) Patriotism. Zvi loved his adopted country, Israel; served in virtually every conflict until he retired; and saw his children follow his calling.

(3) Compassion. Zvi's life and ministry were marked by unfeigned kindness. He reached out to people in need, regardless of who they were or where they lived.

My friend has gone to a place that looks better to me every day. He will never be replaced, nor would I wish it so. My friend was, in the best sense, one of a kind. And we are all better because of him.

*Elwood McQuaid  
is consulting editor  
for The Friends of Israel.*





# A Tribute to Zvi



I first met Zvi Kalisher in 1977 on The Friends of Israel's first tour to Israel. We had just arrived in Jerusalem, and that evening Zvi shared an hour-long testimony. I left the meeting saying to myself, *No one could survive the Holocaust in Warsaw, Poland; immigrate to Israel as a young boy; fight in all Israel's wars on the front lines, defusing mines; and survive—unless God supernaturally protected him and had a sovereign plan for his life.*



Apart from God, there was no logical way to explain Zvi's survival to the age of 86. In fact, 20 years earlier, Zvi had collapsed on a street in Jerusalem and, from all indications, was dead.

The paramedics revived him and took him to the hospital where he boldly witnessed to nurses and doctors alike. A week later he was sent home with no signs of any major physical or mental impairment, and he immediately went back to work.

Little did I know when we met that we would develop a 37-year-long personal friendship and ministry relationship that would enrich my life in ways I could never have imagined. As our bond grew, I learned that God gifted Zvi in ways I had not seen in other workers for the Lord.

Although his education was limited because of growing up in war-torn Poland during the Nazi occupation, Zvi was extremely intelligent. He spoke at least nine languages that he never formally studied and could switch languages in the middle of a conversation with no problem.

He also could easily recall facts about every state in the United States, many I barely knew—and I am an American.

Years ago, when I lived in Chicago, I showed him the city. He shared many facts on Chicago that surprised me, to say the least. Not only did he know much about Chicago and America, but he also knew a great deal about Israel, Europe, all the Arab countries in the Middle East, and the events taking place daily on the world scene. He was an avid reader and remembered everything he read.

Zvi could adapt to every situation at the snap of a finger. He never cowered to opposition but faced it head-on. His gift of discernment enabled him to read people and circumstances and know how to respond to them properly and effectively.

Bold and fearless in his witness for the Lord, Zvi was not afraid to speak honestly to men in high positions. Going into the lion's den, so to speak, he would confront any man at any time for the Lord, whether a politician, high-ranking religious leader in Israel, or someone in the Arab community in Jerusalem. He did not wait for people to bring up spiritual issues. Instead, he created the opportunity and seized the moment.

Zvi had no religious training in Bible or theology or in how to share his faith. The only tool he had was God's Word, which he memorized diligently. He could recall Scriptures quickly in both the Old and New Testaments. Zvi always carried a little blue Bible the size of his hand, consisting of both Testaments in Hebrew. And he always knew where to turn in it for any situation.

Unlike many, Zvi was unafraid to give out his name, address, and telephone number, making sure people could reach him if they wanted to talk. He often invited them over for dinner to have a spiritual conversation.

No one was as fearless as he. He was unafraid to face anyone for the Lord. I have not seen another man like him. The world has lost a lion of a witness of God's love, mercy, and grace. It will be a long time before another Zvi emerges in Israel who will be as bold a witness in presenting Jesus as the Messiah to his people.

As for his lifestyle, he lived simply, with few material possessions, saving what he earned to help establish the futures of his four children and 16 grandchildren. His entire focus was to live for the Lord and use his time to share his faith in the Messiah.



*Zvi and Naomi*





In 1985 I was appointed director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel (FOI). It was my job to develop our international work. One of my assignments was to spend a month each year in Israel, speaking and teaching in churches and Bible studies, acquainting Jewish believers with FOI, looking for new Israeli workers, and spending time ministering with our Israeli staff. This meant spending at least one week working with Zvi. Every day we would go throughout Jerusalem, talking to people in every context imaginable.

We would walk against the crowds, passing out tracts about Jesus. People would not throw them on the ground because they bore God's name on the front. They would tuck them in their pockets and hopefully read them later. Some would stop, read the tract briefly, and confront us about what they read, sparking a lively discussion on whether Jesus was the Messiah.

We also would go every day into Mea She'arim, one of the oldest Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem. Established in 1874, it is the home of the Hasidic (ultra-Orthodox) Jewish community that adheres to strict Jewish law, prayer, and Bible study.

The Hasidic speak Yiddish in daily conversation, reserving Hebrew for prayer, religious study, and worship. They are intensely zealous in their religious beliefs and have been known to get physical with people who try to speak to them about Jesus.

Into this environment Zvi would go daily to speak tactfully about the Messiah of Israel.

We would go into a *yeshiva* (Jewish seminary) where men sat all day studying the Torah (Pentateuch) and Talmud. Zvi would sit down with a man who was in deep thought and open up a conversation on a Messianic passage from the Law.

A lively discussion would ensue, as other men would gather around to share their opinions. Sometimes the conversation would erupt into loud denials, shouting, and condemnation of Zvi's interpretation of a Messianic passage. Yet Zvi was never rattled or out of control. He never grew

angry but lovingly stood his ground, engaging people in conversation until they broke off the discussion.

I would listen, not understanding a word because the conversation was in Yiddish. Later Zvi would explain everything to me. I would even take pictures in the yeshiva (which was strictly forbidden), but no one said anything to me. Like the Amish, Hasidic Jews do not want their pictures taken. They often hide their faces or try to confiscate the camera. Such was never the case when I went with Zvi.

I know of no other believer in Israel who was as bold as he and went into a yeshiva to share his faith.

Zvi also would take me into a synagogue in Mea She'arim. He would take a Bible out of a bookcase, turn to Isaiah 53, tap a man on the shoulder, and ask, "Who is this speaking about?"

The man would read it and almost always admit he did not know of whom it spoke and say he needed to ask his rabbi. But this opened the door for conversation.

Every day we went to the Western Wall where Jewish men sit or stand to pray. Zvi would approach someone and ask what he was praying about. Often it was for the Messiah to come, rebuild the Temple, and bring peace to Israel.

So Zvi would ask, "How will you recognize the Messiah when He comes?" A conversation would ensue, with many men gathered around to listen and comment. Zvi would often bring the conversation around to teach how Jesus fulfilled the Jewish Scriptures as the Messiah.

When we brought Zvi to the United States to share his testimony at FOI banquets throughout the country, I would take him to synagogues, assisted-living homes, and schools. On one occasion in Wisconsin, Zvi talked to men in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Polish, and Russian.

One year we scheduled special prophecy meetings on Prince Edward Island, Canada, and brought Zvi from Israel to share his testimony. By faith, we rented the civic auditorium that seated 1,000 people. The night Zvi gave





his testimony, the place was filled to capacity. I will never forget that event. It also happened to be Zvi's birthday. A cake was rolled out, and 1,000 people sang happy birthday to him.

Zvi was continually flooding us with reports on his ministry in Israel, of which you read only six per year in *Israel My Glory*. Each report filled the paper from the top of one side to the bottom of the flip side, with no margins. He used all the space available. He typed it on an old typewriter until 2013, when he became too ill to write. He wrote as he spoke, and it was a blessing to read each report.

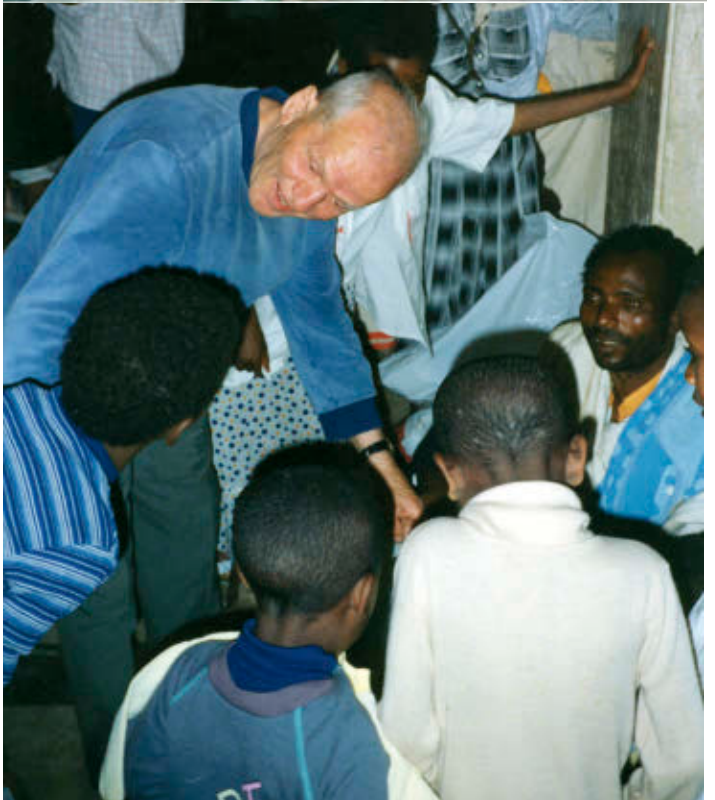
Zvi was a unique servant of God. He lived in countries filled with conflict and war all his life. First, it was the struggle to survive the war years in Warsaw and escape the Nazis and gas chambers. Then it was the struggle through Israel's battles to survive as a nation amid Arab aggression and calls for the Jewish state's annihilation.

Listening to Zvi share his testimony with boldness and conviction was like witnessing a first-century apostle presenting the Messiah of Israel.

Through it all, God used Zvi Kalisher as a mighty witness to his people for more than 55 years with The Friends of Israel.

He and his ministry, though no longer with us, will never be forgotten. It was a privilege to be a part of his life. I will never forget my experiences with Zvi, and I will cherish his memory forever.

David M. Levy is the director  
of International Ministries  
and a Bible teacher  
for The Friends of Israel.





# My Dad



A young Zvi in the Israeli army.

I was privileged and blessed to have two believing parents in the Lord Jesus. The most important heritage they gave us was a biblical and spiritual education and guidance from the time we were children.

Dad was a Holocaust survivor from Poland, and Mom immigrated to Israel by herself from Persia (now Iran) in 1949 when she was 13 years old. Both went through the most difficult times in the birth of the modern State of Israel.

Since Dad was an orphan, he volunteered for the most dangerous operations during his military service, especially during the War of Independence in 1948. He knew his death would not cause any tears because he would not be leaving anyone behind. Such heroism was the mark of his life.

My father was an honest man and always spoke the truth.

Mom and Dad never spent a penny on themselves. Their sole intent was that their children have a better start in life than they had. Their love for us and for their grandchildren was unconditional.

In my entire life, I do not remember Dad ever missing a church meeting unless he was outside the country, in army reserve duty, or gravely ill.

Even during the last two years, with all of his sicknesses and dementia, he demanded that I drive him to church on Saturday and to prayer meeting on Wednesday evening.

Dad was among the people who prayed for years that God would give us a church building. He was extremely happy to see his prayers answered and the church packed with people. He also thanked God that some of his children went into full-time ministry.

From being an orphan whom no one cared about, he became a father to three boys and a girl and a grandfather to 16 grandchildren.

More than 10 years ago, I visited the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland with Dad. The two of us stood silently in the crematorium, thinking, *Hitler lost. We are here!* It was a deeply meaningful experience.

On November 14, 2014, Dad fell at home and broke his hip. That same day he had hip-replacement surgery. But his body was too weak to recover. Three days later, at age 86, he died.



Zvi and Naomi (second and third from left) with part of the family in 2007. Pastor Meno and his wife, Anat, are third and fourth from the right. The occasion was the baptism of Meno and Anat's son Daniel (second row, wrapped in blue towel) and their daughter Michal (wrapped in white towel).

He was buried that evening. At the funeral, some of the older grandchildren shared their experiences with their grandfather and spoke of his faith in Jesus. My brothers and I read from the Scriptures and sang at the graveside. We are so happy his funeral glorified our Lord.

Our parents were married 56 years. We all miss Dad a lot. Please pray for Mom's encouragement.

Dad's verse was Psalm 27:10: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me."

We are sad Dad is not with us but, at the same time, so happy and thankful God is true to His promises to save His children and bring them into His presence.

We rejoice because we know we will meet again.



Meno Kalisher is the pastor of the Jerusalem Assembly House of Redemption in Jerusalem, Israel.



# The Zvi I Knew

Considering all of the difficulties he faced as a Holocaust survivor and a moneyless, unemployed immigrant in a precarious Israel, Zvi Kalisher had every reason to become cynical, wary, and suspicious. But he became exactly the opposite.

My first encounter with Zvi was in my local church many years ago, prior to my coming to serve at The Friends of Israel. There he shared with the congregation his amazing life story of defying the deadly designs of the Holocaust and experiencing God's saving grace in the land of the Bible. In the decades since, I came to know Zvi as a person of many loves, all of which were rooted in his great love for his Savior.

Zvi loved his family dearly. His wife, Naomi; their children and spouses; and the grandchildren were a huge part of his life. He carried their pictures for everyone to see and was always quick to share, visually and verbally, how the Lord was at work in their lives.

He loved the Bible as the Word of God. It was his constant companion. There was no greater defender than Zvi of its truth, no greater advocate for its message of redemption in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. He was so eternally grateful for God's saving encounter in his own life that everywhere he went and everyone he met he considered to be a divine appointment—an opportunity to share God's love and grace.

Hosting and cohosting numerous Friends of Israel *Up to Jerusalem* journeys to Israel, I frequently experienced



Bill Sutter, then FOI executive director (left), and Zvi in Jerusalem.

another of Zvi's great loves. He planned for and looked forward to the tour participants coming to his city, the holy city of Jerusalem. He loved riding on our tour bus, meeting the people, and making himself available for sharing and fellowship. He was like a magnet, attracting everyone to him. And everyone on our tours loved him back.

A highlight on each tour was "An Evening With Zvi," when he recounted his compelling testimony of surviving the Holocaust, making it to Israel, and finding peace in the Lord. Following his presentation, people would hang around to hear more, ask questions, and take pictures. In fact, pictures of Zvi hang in homes around the world, reminding tour participants of the remarkable man they met personally when they went *Up to Jerusalem*.



Bill and Zvi



Zvi addressing our Up to Jerusalem tour.

Bill Sutter  
is a consultant  
for The Friends of Israel.





# My Memories of Zvi



*A young Naomi and Zvi with their children.*

My wife and I first met Zvi in 1978 at a Friends of Israel (FOI) banquet in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. He was the highlight of the evening. His life story, *ZVI*, by Elwood McQuaid, had just been published; and everyone wanted to see him.

FOI flew him to the United States from his home in Jerusalem to speak at several banquets around the country. What a thrill to meet him and an even bigger thrill to take him from the banquet to a house the mission owned in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where we held many Bible studies and trained our field personnel. My wife, Alice, and I were on staff, living and ministering in the house. The trip took about an hour. We knew we had a hero in our car; and, best of all, we had him all to ourselves.

We learned three things about Zvi on that trip. Those three things characterized and defined him in my eyes through the 36 years I knew him. He loved his family, his country, and his Lord. That trifecta was always revealed through the stories he told and the photographs he showed.



*Zvi and Steve in 1982 in Jerusalem.*

As we traveled in the night-time darkness down the Atlantic City Expressway, we saw several deer along the side of the road. "That's my name," Zvi said, pointing to the deer. "My name means 'deer.' They all came out to greet me."

Then he pulled out several photographs from a small satchel he carried. Every time I saw Zvi, whether in the United States or Israel, he was carrying a small satchel. It always contained at least two things: photographs of his family or him in the army and a small, blue-covered Hebrew Bible. Those photos and that Bible were his treasures.

Oh, how he loved to show off his family. Each photo had a story. He showed us his wife, Naomi, and we heard about her wonderful cooking. He told us about his daughter, Ruthie, and her singing.

He told us about the "cannibals," his affectionate description of his sons, Meno, Victor, and David, who he said ate everything in sight. Years later he would use the same term for his grandchildren when they visited his home. He showed us a picture of himself in 1948 and then shared his testimony.

Though I loaded a suitcase into the trunk of the car, Zvi had not brought one from Israel. "Other than a toothbrush and some underwear, what else do I need?" he asked me rhetorically.

He told us that when Marvin Rosenthal, FOI's executive director at the time, learned Zvi had no suit, he took him to a men's store to purchase one. "When I get home," Zvi told us, "I will hang it up and never touch it again."

As a Holocaust survivor, Zvi's perspective on life was different than that of most people. Little annoyances did not bother him, and he was grateful to God for everything. His plane had

been delayed in Paris. Zvi said the passengers were furious. Some were even shouting at the airline personnel.

"For me it was good news," he told me. "I am in a nice place [the airport], with good food [restaurants], and many bathrooms. I have a pillow [his toiletries bag] and can stretch out for a nice rest. What more can one ask?"

He told many stories of his time in the army. His job was diffusing land mines, "where you are not permitted even one mistake." He often used that explanation to make it clear one mistake meant the mine detonated and killed you.

We heard about the time he burned down his military barracks when he left several pounds of rice cooking in a pot without water while he spent three hours at the cinema. Zvi was famously inept in the kitchen, but Naomi more than made up for it.

In the 1980s, when we lived in Chicago, Zvi was a most welcome guest in our home as he again toured the country, speaking at FOI banquets. By then Alice and I had four children, and I had read them Elwood's book.

My youngest son, Jonathan, now 30, remembers how elated he was that Zvi had dispossessed him of his bed. Although Jonathan was young, he still remembers the atmosphere in the room when Zvi spoke: "It was heavy, respectful, and solemn, like someone great was talking." Of course, someone great was talking.

On FOI's trips to Israel, Zvi usually spent a day with the people on our bus when we were in Jerusalem. On one trip to the Western Wall, knowing what a bold witness Zvi was for Christ, I asked him to speak to men there while I recorded the conversations. Being multilingual, he spoke to men that day in Polish, German, Yiddish, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Swedish. To each man, he spoke in the man's own language, translating from his blue Hebrew Bible.

In 1996 we shared a pulpit in Orlando, Florida. A colleague of mine had arranged for us to go to Epcot at Walt Disney World. Since we had only a few hours to spend there, we decided to eat at an international restaurant and chose the Norway pavilion.

Zvi said he knew Norwegian because he once spent three weeks with a Norwegian family but had not spoken the language in many years. So I asked him to speak only Norwegian to the waitress. Then I asked her how this Polish Israeli's Norwegian was.

"Perfect," she replied. "Not even an accent."

I thank God for him and for the privilege to have known him and been his colleague. Well done, good and faithful servant. See you in heaven!

*Steve Herzig is the director  
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