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Bridges for Peace

Israel Teaching Letter

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STANDING *with* GOD

*As God
proves Himself
faithful to keep
His promises
to Israel,
the nations
will see that
He is God.*



www.israelimages.com/Israel Talby

Israel is in the news every day. You can pick up any newspaper or newsmagazine or watch the television news, and there will usually be something about Israel. You will hear about many of the problems, issues, and conflicts Israel faces, both on an individual and a corporate level. You will hear about suicide bombers, terror attacks, and war. But, as strange as it may sound, these are only symptoms of a bigger problem. *That problem is spiritual.*



The world is at war against God. You can see evidence of the spiritual struggle from Genesis to Revelation. The evils of earthly war, violence, and hatred are all by-products of the war raging in the spiritual realm. The first time we read of this conflict is in Genesis when the serpent comes to Eve and tells her that God is a liar and not to be trusted: *“Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil!’”* (Genesis 3:4-5).

Since that time of beginnings in the garden, Satan has been trying to supplant God in

Satan has been trying to supplant God in the hearts and minds of human beings.

the hearts and minds of human beings. He has a deep desire to be like God: *“I will make myself like the Most High,”* he says in Isaiah 14:14 (NIV). In this ultimate con-



lict between God and Satan, God is in the process of proving Himself to the people of the earth, and Satan is doing everything he can to disprove God, even His very existence. Satan has used many schemes, including mind games, to convince mankind that God is dead, isn't interested, or is a cruel taskmaster. He tries to convince us that God is too busy with the universe to worry about individuals. According to Satan, God doesn't want us to enjoy life; He only wants us to keep a lot of rules. This deception permeates every area of education and society. My father, Dr. David Allen Lewis, says it is the conflict of the ages.

Israel—a Focal Point of Spiritual Activity

When God made an eternal covenant with Abraham, Satan took notice. I am sure he sat up and said to himself, “Aha, now I have Him. All I have to do is destroy Abraham and his family, and I will prove that God cannot be trusted to keep His word.” Since that day, he has been trying to destroy the Jewish people. His reasoning is simple: If he can eliminate the Jewish people, then God will never be able to fulfill His covenantal promises and thus will be proved to be a liar, powerless, or perhaps a myth.

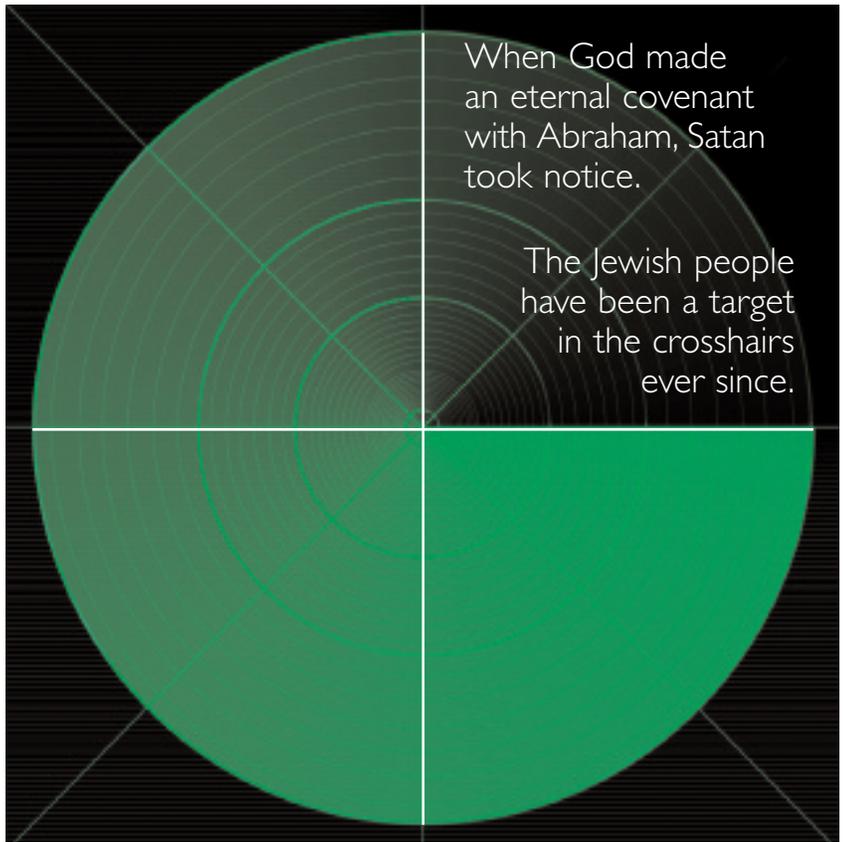
The Jewish people have been a target in the crosshairs ever since. Did you ever stop to wonder why they are the most persecuted people on the earth? Don't you think it is a bit odd that Israel, with only one-thousandth of the world's population, should be the subject of one-third of all United Nations resolutions? Why is tiny Israel, the size of the State of New Jersey in the United States (or in Australia, one-third the size of Tasmania; or in Canada,

the size of Vancouver Island in British Columbia; or in Japan, the size of the island of Shikoku; or in South Africa, the size of Kruger Park; or in the United Kingdom, the size of Wales), in the news nearly every day? It is because this small place is the center of the conflict.

What if God had chosen someone other than Abraham? Let's just imagine that God made a covenant with a guy named Oleg from Sweden. Then, I believe, Satan would have been trying to destroy the Swedish people for centuries; the attention of the UN would be on Sweden; and Sweden would have more foreign journalists stationed in her capital city than most other places in the world. But God didn't choose Sweden or the Swedish people. He chose Abraham and his descendants, the Jewish people.

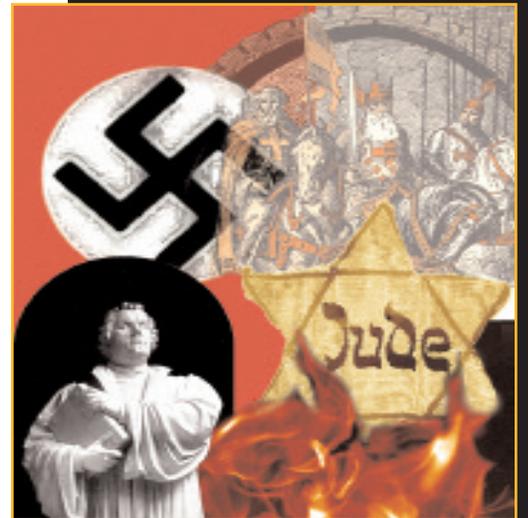
The psalmist Asaph wrote about the unceasing attacks against the children of Israel: *“Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, ‘Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.’ For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You”* (Psalm 83:1–5).

“For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones.” *Psalm 83:2–3*



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Satan must have thought he finally had God beat.



But God wasn't beat. In 1948, He reestablished the nation of Israel.

Silhouette of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister
[www.israelimages.com/David Rubinger](http://www.israelimages.com/David%20Rubinger)



The next verses contain a list of all who had tried to destroy the Jewish people. If Asaph were writing today, I am sure that psalm would be much longer, in reciting all the attempts to annihilate the Jewish people. At the end of the psalm, he calls out to God, *"Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord, are the Most High over all the earth"* (Psalm 83:16–18).

Throughout history, we can trace event after event where the Jewish people have been targeted, hunted, pursued, persecuted, and murdered. The worst part about the systematic plan to destroy the Jewish people and discredit God is that Satan didn't fight fair! In many instances, he

used God's other people, the Christians, as a weapon against the Jewish people. Christian persecution of the Jews is well documented. The Holocaust, rising out of Christian Europe, was the culmination of this effort. Satan must have been jumping for joy as he witnessed the murder of six million Jews. He must have thought he finally had God beat.

God Proves to the World That He is God

But God wasn't beat. Today, we see God fulfilling His promises to Israel, almost on a daily basis. In 1948, He reestablished the nation of Israel. Never in the annals of history has a people been dispersed for nearly 2,000 years and then come back to their ancient homeland. God has been calling the Jewish people to come home to Israel. Of the 5.5 million Jews living in Israel, 3 million came as immigrants. Since 1990, over one million have come, mostly from the former Soviet Union (FSU). Why is He doing it? Is it because the Jewish people are so wonderful? So spiritual? No, though God loves Israel, He is doing it for the sake of His name. Whenever you see the phrase "for the sake of My name" in the Bible, it means for the sake of His character. God is bringing the people home to prove His good character. He made promises, and if He doesn't keep them, then the world will know that He can't be trusted.

The prophet Ezekiel told of the day that the people would return: *"But you, O moun-*

WHY is God fulfilling His promises to Israel? He is doing it for the sake of His name and character.



tains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt” (Ezekiel 36:8–10).

Later in the same passage, the prophet tells us about God’s motivation. “When they [the Jewish people] came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, “These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.” But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord God: ‘I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nation wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,’ says the Lord God, ‘when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you”” (Ezekiel 36:20–26a).



www.ciaimages.com/Bernard Lalizou



Join God in This Conflict of the Ages

The prophet Daniel may be best remembered for his end-time prophecies, but there is much more to him. Daniel was a man whom God looked on with favor. In Ezekiel 14:14, a passage of judgment, Daniel is spoken of as righteous: “Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [a country], they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God.”

Daniel was a man of the Word. He studied and understood the prophecies of Jeremiah the prophet. In Daniel 9, we read the account of one such study session. Daniel read that the days of captivity in Babylon were almost over. What joy he must have felt! Just imagine, you and your nation have been taken captive to another land as slaves. You have lost one of the most precious things—freedom. For 70 long years, you have been away from home, subject to a king who forced his subjects to bow down to images or face death. This was not a



On July 13, 2005, there were 500 immigrants from the United States and Canada—the largest contingent of North American Jews to make *aliyah* (immigrate to Israel) in one day in Israel's history!

“...I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet...”

Daniel 9:2

pleasant situation. I imagine that if I were in that situation, after reading Jeremiah, I would have had a whooping and shouting victory dance. I would have been calling all my friends and inviting them to a big party celebrating God's goodness: "We are going to be free!" But that wasn't Daniel's response.

Daniel's reaction was different: *"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes"* (Daniel 9:1–3).

Read the whole account in Daniel 9 and you will see that the next 16 verses are a prayer of repentance and intercession. I see from this passage that Daniel was a man of study and prayer. But there is still more to Daniel.

Daniel was a pragmatic politician. He understood the importance of working within the world he lived in: *"Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. And Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king"* (Daniel 2:48–49). We can see from these verses that Daniel didn't just sit in a study hall or kneel in a prayer chapel; he became actively involved in the affairs of state. See also Daniel 1:19–20, 6:1–3, 6:25–28, and 8:26–27.

In Leon Wood's book *A Commentary on Daniel*, he said, "Apparently God wanted him in a place of influence to encourage and assist in the Jews' return to Judah, just as he had been in a position earlier to contribute to their welfare while in Babylonia" (page 154).

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What Does This Mean to Us?

I believe we can sum Daniel's example up in three points:

First, we should devote ourselves to study God's Word and receive instruction from

Him. In other words, we should use our heads! The Bible says, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Word of God is our manual, and we should devote ourselves to studying it as a good soldier studies his commanding officer. We need to understand our commander, the Lord. Let's find out what He has to say, learn His strategies, find out what He cares about, and discover His way of way of thinking. It doesn't take long to see that Israel is near to God's heart. At Bridges for Peace, we are committed to supplying you with the tools you need to study and understand God's Word concerning Israel. This *Israel Teaching Letter* is only one of the tools.



So we need to devote ourselves to study, but if we only concentrate on study, we will become unbalanced. I know some Christians like that. They can discuss minute details about the Scriptures, but they don't seem to have a lot of heart. In fact, I have been in some academic circles where intense arguments over points of eschatology have threatened fellowship between believers. How sad!

The second thing we need is to get our heart involved through prayer. Why did Daniel feel that it was necessary to pray when he discovered their captivity was almost over? After all, God had said it would happen, so it would happen...right? I believe that the end result was predetermined by God, but the path to get there was variable. My father used to say, "It is predestined that Jesus will return, but our prayers and good works will determine many details of the future from now until the trumpet sounds."

There are many "if" clauses in the Bible. For example: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). God is willing to act, but there are conditions signified by that all important little word—"if."

We need to find out what God's will is and cooperate with Him. Daniel understood that. He knew what God's plan was and set himself in a place of intercession to cooperate with God in prayer.

As Christian believers, we talk about prayer, but we don't always find time to do it. Prayer is powerful. It is our awesome privilege to have a direct line of communication with God. When we pray, spiritual power is released, which continues to have influence. "How much power?" you may ask. Let's look at Revelation 8:1-5: "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake."

When the Lord called my husband, Tom, and I to Israel, one of the things He called us to do was to be intercessors for the house of Israel: "I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7).

Bridges for Peace is committed to giving you tools to help you pray. We have the "For Zion's Sake I Will Not Be Silent" Scripture Guide to Praying for Israel, our "Israel Current News Update with Prayer Focus" (sign up on our Web site, www.bridgesfor-peace.com, to get this e-mail every Friday), Chai (Life) prayer groups (check with your national office for locations), and the opportunity to be an online watchman for Israel on our "24 Hour Prayer Chain" (sign up at www.bridgesforpeace.com).

So now we have our heads involved with study and our hearts involved with prayer. **The final thing we need is action. Let's get our hands involved.** I believe God is calling His body to be active in His kingdom purposes.



*Bridges for Peace
is committed to giving
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you pray.*



Unfortunately, we see much apathy in the Church today. Edward Rowe, an expert on effective Christian citizenship, said in his book *Save America!*: "There is a noticeable trend toward Christianity without application. Millions of sincere Christians have been caught up in a certain pietistic withdrawal from reality. For them, Christianity is pretty much an individual and personal matter. The Bible is studied for the personal enjoyment which it brings, rather than for the purpose of discovering its applicability and doing something about it. Apathy prevails where action is needed" (page 39).

George Otis, author of several books, wrote in *The Blueprint*: "If God wanted His children isolated from the government aspects of society, then why did He have Joseph man Pharaoh's government? Why would He have installed David as King? Why would God have prepared Daniel and Mordecai to be thrust into roles as politicians? Why would the parents of Jesus have responded to the government census process? Why would Jesus have said, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's'? Because Jesus has sent us into the world just as the Father sent Him. The natural and spiritual are to work in harmony for a good society. We are to vote, work, and become involved with the affairs of our nation as well as to pray for it. We must be willing to act as 'God's watchmen on the walls,' and be a clear voice for righteousness" (page 122).



Sylvia Large

Act 3

God and Satan are involved in this incredible spiritual struggle, which puts Israel in no-man's-land. We see the evidence of this struggle all around us in the world. What is our response? We can stand on the sidelines and watch, or we can choose to become actively involved with God. At Bridges for Peace, we give you many opportunities, by your actions, to participate in God's plans for Israel. This is the battleground, and this is the place where God is showing the world that He keeps His word. Why don't you consider getting involved through one of our projects (see the enclosed list)? Perhaps you can come to Israel and volunteer (see our Web-site section "Opportunities"), or maybe you would like to be active in your own country through our representative program (see your national office for details).

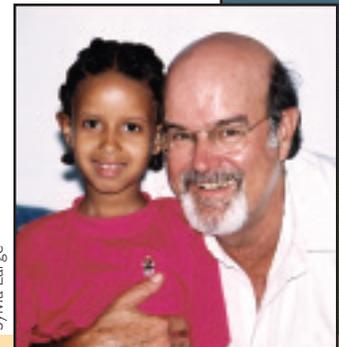
Stand with God and Israel

Remember the title of this *Israel Teaching Letter*: "Standing with Israel Is Standing with God." As God proves Himself faithful to keep His promises to Israel, the nations will see that He is God.

There was a poem I heard many times while growing up, because my dad loved it; it was entitled "The Conflict of the Ages." Here are the words:

Have your eyes caught the vision? • Has your heart felt the thrill?
 To the call of the master • Do you answer, "I will"?
 For the conflict of the ages • Told by prophets and by sages
 In its fury is upon us • Is upon us today!

Will you join me to help vindicate His name? Get involved with God's plans. Let's use our heads (study), our hearts (pray), and our hands (act).



Sylvia Large

Blessings, in His service, from Jerusalem,

Rebecca J. Brimmer

Rev. Rebecca J. Brimmer
 International Executive Director (CEO)
 Bridges for Peace International

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Scriptures taken from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Many pastors, Bible teachers, and laypeople have written and asked if they can use these notes for preaching and teaching. The answer is a resounding "yes"! It is our hope that the information contained herein will be disseminated over and over again, whether through the spoken word or by photocopying and redistributing these teachings. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3).

