

Connecting you to God's never-changing truth in ever-changing times.

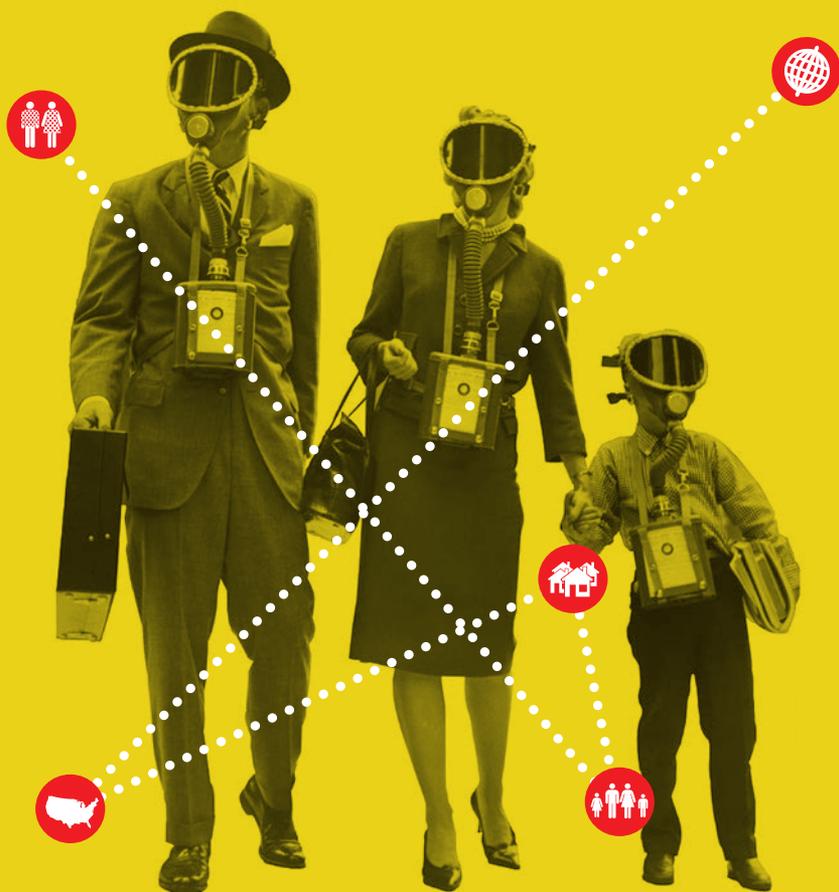
THE CONNECTION

QUARTERLY | FALL 2008

THE MEDIA MINISTRY OF PASTOR SKIP HEITZIG

HOMELAND SECURITY

PEACE IN TIMES OF TERROR



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 1.800.922.1888

Email: info@connectionradio.org

Address: Connection Communication, PO Box 95707, Albuquerque, NM 87199-5707

E-Commerce: ConnectionRadio.org

Skip's Blog: SkipHeitzig.com

Live Services: calvaryabq.org

Publisher: Skip Heitzig, SkipHeitzig.com

Editor-in -Chief: Brian Nixon, brian.nixon@calvaryabq.org

Managing Editors: Penny Rose and Jerry Rood

Contributors: Chuck Smith, Penny Rose, General Boykin, and Brian Nixon.

Art and Design: John Shaffer and Rick Sena

Dear Friend,

WELCOME to the new and improved *The Connection Magazine*! If you've been with us before, you'll notice several key differences from previous publications.

First, the size of the publication is different. We designed it that way so you can keep this magazine in your Bible and refer to it frequently.

Second, we've added a devotional/Bible study section that we call Truth-Connect, to help you grow in biblical understanding. This issue, looks at the letter of 1 Peter.

Third, we've included radio station lists and other means of communication to help you stay connected to the ministry and its resources.

In this first issue of the Connection Magazine we tackle a very important subject: believers' security in an uncertain world. We've given it the title of *Homeland Security: Finding Peace in Times of Terror*.

In the first article, I challenge the reader to realize, recognize, and respond to the current state of affairs in the world. Upon these three points we this issue of The Connection Magazine is built.

The second article shows the need for God's people to build healthy Christian lives. The article is abridged from a sermon by one of Christendom's great preachers, Charles Spurgeon. Preached 150 years ago, the message is still timeless.

The next article, written by my friend, Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, calls for us to recognize the current state of affairs in Israel, the epicenter of world events from God's view point.

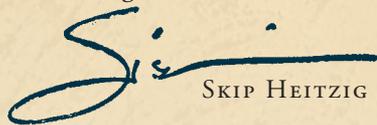
The final article is entitled *Caterpillars and Clay Pots*. I wrote it as a call to respond to God, by presenting our bodies and minds to Jesus Christ.

Finally, you'll notice two new sections called *Off the Cuff* and *From The Blog*. In these features I interview various Christian leaders as well as answer frequently asked questions people post or ask me on my blog, SkipHeitzig.com.

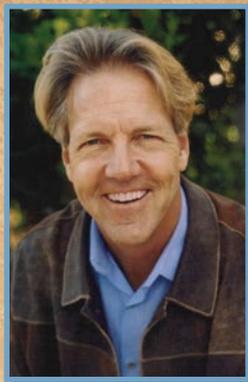
We round things off with *Connecting the Dots*, simple reminders of some of the main points found within each issue.

Please enjoy, and respond to the articles, resources, and devotions given throughout these pages. I trust that the Lord will use this publication to help you find a way to serve Him more and love Him better.

In His strong love,



SKIP HEITZIG



HOMELAND

by Skip Heitzig



That's not as impossible as it might sound.

In 1912, just after Woodrow Wilson had been elected President, he went to visit his elderly aunt whom he hadn't seen in a long time. When he walked into her room she said, "Well, Woodrow, what have you been doing lately?"

He paused for a moment and said, "Auntie, I've just been elected the President."

In a surprised tone his aunt said, "Oh? Of what?"

"Of the United States of America," President Wilson said, calmly but directly.

At these words, she bristled back, "Oh, don't be silly!"

In our day with 24-hour news coverage, it's almost impossible to imagine that everyone wouldn't have such common and crucial information. How could a President's own relative be unaware of his election to the highest office in the land? Our first response may be that this is a cute and innocent story. But what if the change involved battle or warfare? Imagine being in an armed

AS I WATCHED THE ELECTION RETURNS ON THE

IOWA PRESIDENTIAL CAUCUS RECENTLY, A WORD

CAUGHT MY ATTENTION. CAREFULLY POSITIONED

BEHIND A REPORTER AND THE LARGE CROWD

GATHERED IN THE BACKGROUND, A HUGE SIGN

HIGHLIGHTED THIS SINGLE WORD: "CHANGE."

USING THE SIGN AS A PROP, THE REPORTER

OPINED, "THIS WORD BEHIND ME SUMS UP WHAT

OUR NATION IS LOOKING FOR; WE WANT CHANGE."

"HMM," I THOUGHT, "BUT WHAT IF 'CHANGE'

HAPPENED WITHOUT YOU KNOWING IT?"

SECURITY

conflict and not knowing your enemy. Even worse, imagine not knowing that he had changed tactics or approach. That kind of change could be fatal!

In 1917 Lawrence of Arabia conquered the port city of Aqaba on the Red Sea. The Turks, who controlled the city at the time, considered Aqaba to be impregnable because they had a sizeable naval artillery positioned in the hills behind the city. These guns, aimed seaward, kept any ship from military advantage. So they had a well-armed port on one side, while the rest of the city was surrounded by inhospitable and barren desert. The Turkish conquerors thought no one would attempt an assault from the desert behind them. To their surprise, Lawrence of Arabia came through that forbidden wilderness with his warring tribes, flanked them on their blind side, swept past the naval guns, and defeated the city. The Turks had made two mistakes. First, they didn't identify their enemy. Second, they didn't choose the right weapons for the battle.

Think back to just a few years ago. No one in the United States was actively talking about terrorism or a war on terror. The term al Qaida wasn't even in our vocabulary. But a single day in September 2001 changed everything and a new enemy surfaced. Now we have to face the truth that there are some people in the world who hate us and want to destroy us—something we all take very seriously now.

There's no doubt we live in a world at war. Let me ask you this question: How do live with faith and peace in the midst of turmoil? I suggest we realize our position, recognize the perils around us, and then, armed with this knowledge, let's do something--or respond--to that prospect or opportunity.

REALIZE OUR POSITION

Let's begin with the thought of realizing our position is God. God isn't necessarily looking for the Phi Beta Kappas, politicians, nobility, world-famous athletes, entertainers or statesmen to be His spokesperson. He'll take anyone who'll willingly be His instrument. Are you available for the task? Would you be willing to be His representative son or daughter who will step into this arena and with insight and vision do something about the problem? Think of who you are in God's eyes: sons and daughters of the living God; visible ambassadors for His invisible Kingdom. What a amazing position you have had bestowed upon you!

RECOGNIZE THE PERILS

After realizing our position in Christ, we must recognize the unique perils people face today.

Let's begin at the top of the list with the most important hazard. I call it eternal insecurity. The majority of people we interact with don't really give much thought to their eternity. Instead, they focus on their jobs, hobbies, kids, college funds, and other things that provide



PEACE IN TIMES OF TERROR

physical security. This lack of eternal stability is eternally serious and has grave of consequences.

Another perilous area is family security. You don't have to look very far to notice that the traditional family is under attack. It is being barraged and slandered. Some are trying to replace the Judeo-Christian concept of family with a much different definition. I fear some of us are caving in to the pressure and accepting non-traditional families as a model for society.

Sadly, children are being neglected so parents can pursue personal interests. Spouses are being dumped for newer models. As a country, we seem to be worried about border security (who's coming over (or under) our fences). I'm not saying these aren't vital concerns. But to me, the real issue of homeland security begins inside the home with the marriage and the family structure. How secure is your family? Are you allowing outside influences to permeate your home and destroy it from within?

The third peril to be on guard against is cultural conformity. As Christian believers, we are called to live differently than this world. Paul put it this way: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). I love the way one translator, James Moffatt, rendered it: "Don't let the world squeeze you into its own mold!" If you are not living differently from the world around you, you are becoming conformed to the culture. Take a moment and evaluate yourself: How different are your values from the society around you?

Another concern for Christians is spiritual animosity. Today more than ever, there is an aggressive, vocal, and even radical

segment of society that is viciously on the attack against believers. Worldwide persecution of Christians is worse than ever. In fact, the sheer numbers of persecutions in the 20th Century outstrip all previous centuries combined. Even in the US and Europe, the onslaught can be felt. Perhaps you've noticed the increase in books like *The God Delusion* and *God Isn't Great*. Hollywood is producing films like *The Golden Compass*. These are engineered to dismantle people's faith in God, especially in the Lord Jesus Christ.

One final danger to be aware of is international instability. We know the world is politically and militarily shaky. Radical Islam is becoming the number one issue that challenges the ideological and political fabric of the entire world. With economic uncertainty at home and social volatility abroad, we are seeing exactly what Jesus predicted:

"wars and rumors of wars" (Matt. 24:6).

What are we to do during such a volatile time? Is there an appropriate response to these challenges? Yes—as believers we must respond!

RESPOND: BE INFORMED, EQUIPPED, AND ENGAGED

Given all of the above dangers facing modern believers, we must ask ourselves, "How do I respond? What's the best way to make a difference?"

The best way to respond is to be informed, equipped and engaged. You can be informed by staying in touch with our world and its problems. I encourage you to find out what's going on. But don't stop there! As you read the daily paper or watch the news, read your Bible. In doing that, you will be able to synthesize to what's happening in the world with God's "big picture." By staying informed

and staying in God's Word, you will be equipped not just to bravely face our world and culture, but protect your family and promote Christ.

Did you get that last part? Promote Christ! There are many who just circle the wagons with other Christians. But a fortress mentality never helped anyone. If you're only concerned about protecting yourself and your family from the perils of life today, then you won't become the salt and light Jesus called you to be.

walked out to the fairway to find the ball. He saw that his ball lay just under a tree and a bit off the fairway. It would be a tough maneuver to hit that ball under the branches, over a lake and onto the green. Finally he turned to his caddy, "This'll take a five iron, don't you think?" The caddy shyly said, "No."

Bolt retorted, "What do you mean, not a five iron? Watch this." He grabbed his club and swung. The ball landed two feet from the cup. As he handed the five iron back to



BY STAYING INFORMED

AND STAYING IN GOD'S WORD, YOU WILL BE EQUIPPED NOT JUST TO BRAVELY FACE OUR WORLD AND CULTURE, BUT PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND PROMOTE CHRIST.

Let's look for creative ways to insert the gospel message into our everyday lives. Let's be engaged in our world and active in our culture. And let's turn our lights up really high--let them shine brightly. Edmund Burke once said, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Let's be both good and active.

Back in the 1950s, Tommy Bolt was one of the premier professional golfers in the world. Everyone in the golfing community knew that Bolt's caddy was a chatterbox; he'd talk throughout the whole game. During a match in Los Angeles, before Tommy took his first tee shot, he turned to his caddy and sternly said, "Okay, in this game you don't say a word unless I ask you. Then you say either yes or no. Got it?" The caddy nodded.

Tommy took his first shot, and then he

his caddy he said, "What do you think of that? Go ahead, you can talk now."

The caddy simply said, "Mr. Bolt, you just hit the wrong ball."

Ouch! What good does it do to make a perfect shot with the other guy's golf ball?

It's time for God's people to get into the right game, with the right tools. Some of us are just swinging at stuff. Find out what you're aiming at and carefully evaluate your actions and motivations. Ask yourself this: Am I making an eternal impact by what I'm doing? The world around you is changing, and not for the better. Make sure you're informed, equipped and engaged to influence people around you for Christ.



HE MAKES PEACE IN THY BORDERS, AND FILLS YOU WITH THE FINEST
OF THE WHEAT. HE SENDS FORTH HIS COMMANDMENT
UPON EARTH: HIS WORD RUNS VERY SWIFTLY.

PSALM 147:14.-15.

BUILDING OUR ZION

by
CHARLES
HADDON
SPURGEON

The psalmist is here describing Jerusalem's prosperity. He connects their prosperity with the progress and diffusion of the Word of God. In this Scripture text, the Lord is teaching us this great truth: There is an intimate connection between the establishment and the building of our "Zion" at home, and the going forth and the spread of God's Word abroad.

carefully and very steadfastly to the soundness of that gospel which we proclaim and preach. If it should ever come to be a matter which casts doubts upon the divinity of Christ, or the personality of the Holy Ghost, or if it should ever come to the marring and spoiling of our ideas of Christ's great atonement which is the basis of the

AT HOME

The subject of this discourse is the connection between a healthy church at home, and the increase of the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

THE HEALTH OF THE CHURCH

To begin with the most important—true godliness is found in her members.

A church can never be in a sound and satisfactory state for ministry, she never can be in such a condition that God can smile upon her complacently, if she be mixed up with the world, if her sons and daughters be not sufficiently distinguished from the world and manifestly seen as God's people.

In our purity, and in our purity alone we stand. Let us once lose our distinctive principles, let us once attempt to "popularize" the church and bring ourselves from the distinction we have sought to maintain between the church and the world, and God's blessing will be withdrawn from us; we shall cease to be strong within, and mighty without.

Second, I think we must look very

whole gospel then it is time that the scabbard be thrown aside and the sword be drawn.

Against any who assails those precious, vital truths, which constitute the heart of our holy religion, we must contend even to the death.

We must look to the preservation of the health of the church. If her doctrines be tainted, her faith will not be maintained; and the church being unsound, who can tell what next may occur?

Third, we must look to the spirit of union.

The church happily represents, in a large degree, a saved bond of brothers and sisters in Christ. It may have become somewhat denominational, yet it was never intended to be..

Whenever the foot is at enmity with the hand there must be something like madness in the body; there cannot be a sound mind within that frame which is divided against itself.

And if there be among us any remnants

of the spirit of division; if there be something in us that would make us excommunicate and cut off brethren, then there must be somewhere or other an unhealthy disease.

Oh, my heart longs to see a more thorough union among Christians! I think there is more of it than we sometimes believe. I am sure the more we come to know one another, the better we love each other.

have been like the bells to the parish steeple—a very poor parish where there were never enough bells to ring a chime. Now, what church can be considered to be as Christ would have her, when her members meet to pray, and they constitute but a handful? I care not if the place is crowded at your other services. The church is not prosperous if the prayer-meeting be thin!

The most erudite minister may instruct



**WE BRING IT DOWN TO THIS:
OUR SUCCESS IN A MEASURE
DEPENDS UPON THE VITALITY,
HEALTHINESS, AND GODLINESS
OF EACH INDIVIDUAL.**

Distrust may arise from want of personal acquaintance. We need more frequently to come into company. If the churches were more active, so as to throw us into contact, I think we should discover more of a real unity than perhaps we think has begun to exist.

Oh, that this unity may grow and continue! May it not be merely an evangelical alliance in form, but a spiritual confederation in fact. May its enunciation come from every lip and every heart, and may there be a real love toward every other member of that alliance, in carrying out its principles to the fullest and the greatest extent.

Finally, the church is never healthy except when she abounds in prayer. I have known prayer meetings that

the people. The most earnest preacher may plead God's cause with men. But if he does not have a band of men who plead man's cause with God, his pleadings will be in vain.

Shut up that house of God in which men have ceased to pray. Or if you open it, let your opening be a meeting for hearty and earnest prayer. I have to mourn and confess in my case, that I have had to feel in myself—and I think I can speak for many others—a want of prayerfulness.

Zion must avail before she can bring forth children. She may use all her weapons but if she keeps back the great battering-ram of prayer, she will never break the walls of the spiritual Jericho. She may use every other instrument, but unless she takes John Bunyan's weapon

of “all-prayer,” she will never rout the great enemy of souls.

Yes, my brethren, we want faithfulness, we want healthiness, we want a prayerful spirit, and then we may conclude that all is well with us.

IT BEGINS WITH US

Truth is like the crystal, which retains its shape even though it is broken almost to an invisible atom. And so the truth that our success depends upon the whole church is equally sure. We bring it down to this: Our success in a measure depends upon the vitality, healthiness, and godliness of each individual.

If, as a Christian, you were a separate and distinct organism—a body entirely separate from every one else—you might be never so sick and no one else would suffer. But you are not so.

Remember that you are a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We hold it to be a precious fact that if one member suffers all the members suffer. If one member rejoices, all members share the joy. Must it not equally be true that if one member is unhealthy, the unhealthiness of that member does, to a degree, taint the whole?

We all draw from the same treasury. On the other hand, we ought to contribute to the same. If you contribute less, there is the less in the treasury. If your efforts are more feeble than they should be, the efforts of the whole church are feebler. Next time you find fault, remember that you share in the cause of that fault. Next time you mourn the church’s

prayerlessness, remember that it is your own prayerlessness that helps make up for the church’s lack.

Next time you complain of any minister’s dullness, or of any church’s want of energy, reflect: It is your own dullness, your own want of energy that helps to swell the rolling tide.

If every man mended one, all would be mended. If every man stirred one soul and that soul his own, the whole church would be stirred up. If it were possible for every member of the church to be sound, how could any part of the body be sick? If every individual were what he should be, could any complain?

We have grown into the habit of praying for the church as if she were a colossal culprit, which we should tie up, and then take the ten-throged whip of the law and pull off the quivering flesh. All the while the real culprit is escaping, namely—ourselves—our own individual selves.



CHARLES SPURGEON

is called “the Prince of Preachers.” One of the most influential ministers of the nineteenth century, Spurgeon became pastor of London’s famous New Park Street Church

only four years after entering the ministry, finally moving his church to the Surrey Music Hall. He frequently spoke to crowds of over 10,000 people, without the aid of electronic amplification. His powerful message reaches across the centuries through his sermons and books.

SECURING

by
Chuck SMITH

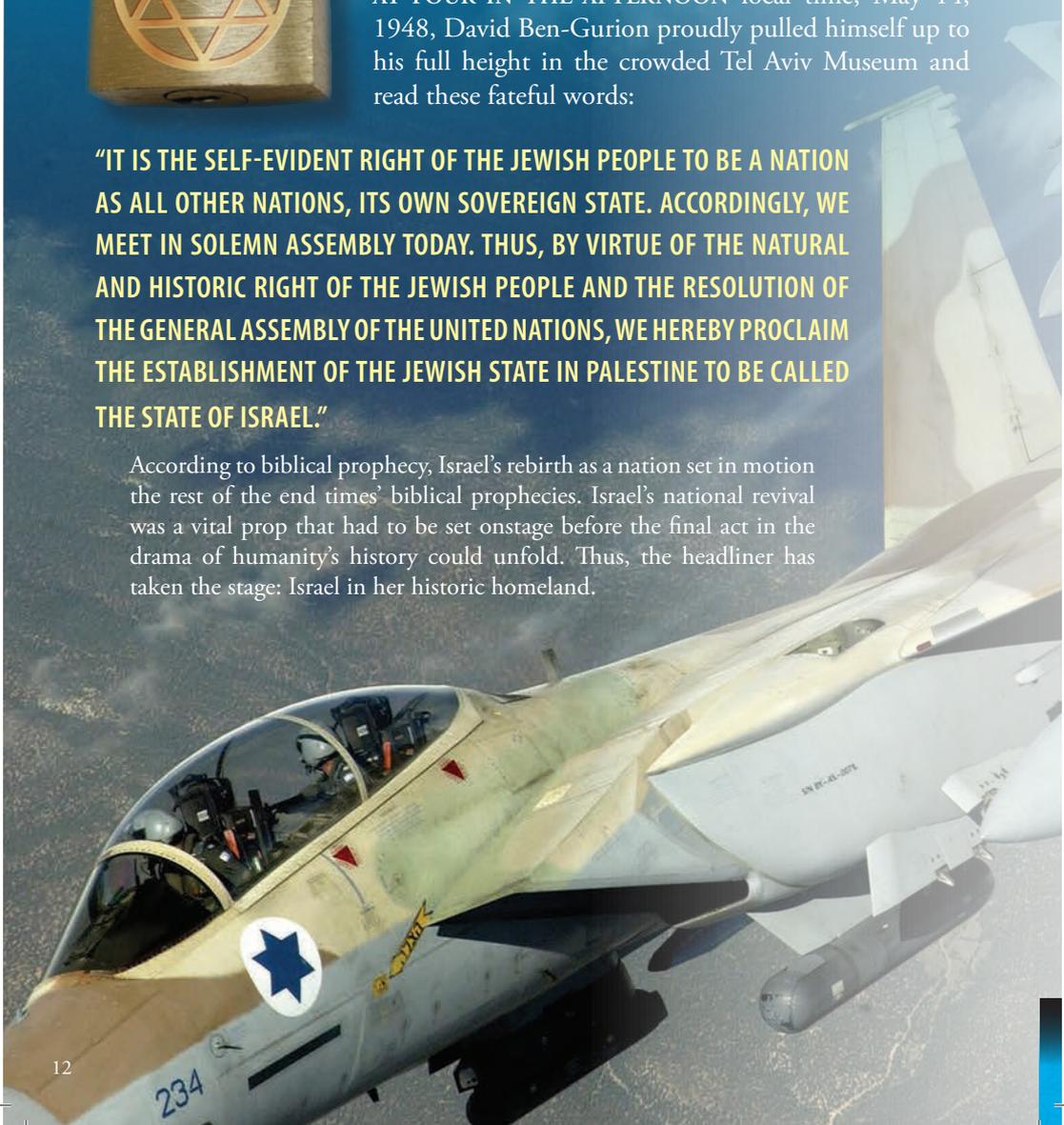


Israel

AT FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON local time, May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion proudly pulled himself up to his full height in the crowded Tel Aviv Museum and read these fateful words:

“IT IS THE SELF-EVIDENT RIGHT OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO BE A NATION AS ALL OTHER NATIONS, ITS OWN SOVEREIGN STATE. ACCORDINGLY, WE MEET IN SOLEMN ASSEMBLY TODAY. THUS, BY VIRTUE OF THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WE HEREBY PROCLAIM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JEWISH STATE IN PALESTINE TO BE CALLED THE STATE OF ISRAEL.”

According to biblical prophecy, Israel's rebirth as a nation set in motion the rest of the end times' biblical prophecies. Israel's national revival was a vital prop that had to be set onstage before the final act in the drama of humanity's history could unfold. Thus, the headliner has taken the stage: Israel in her historic homeland.



However, in October 1973, during Yom Kippur (the holiest day of the year for the Jews), Syria and Egypt simultaneously attacked Israel from opposite ends of the country. The majority of Israelis (including the regular army personnel) were in their synagogues or resting quietly at home.

Communication networks had been silent all day in respect of the holy day. Suddenly, sirens wailed in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Radios immediately came alive with emergency code numbers for the nation's military troops. The call also went out to the people in the military reserves to activate and defend themselves.

The Syrians and Egyptians launched what was intended to be the war of annihilation. The Syrians attacked the Golan Heights with 1,200 tanks in an initial assault over a twenty-mile area. (When Hitler made his major invasion of the Soviet Union in World War II, he used 1,000 tanks over a 200-mile perimeter.) In the Sinai, Egypt attacked with 3,000 tanks and 1,000 pieces of major artillery. It was intended to be the complete destruction of the nation of Israel, and the Arab powers almost achieved their goal. Were it not for miracles greater than those that took place during the 1967 Six Day War, miracles as great as those in biblical times, Israel would not be a nation today. For a moment, it seemed World War III was in the offing. We came close to seeing the end of Israel as we know it in 1973. But God had other purposes; He brought the war to a halt.

Looking back, the Israelis feel that they made a mistake in halting their advance on the enemy. They were robbed of a full and decisive victory over the Arabs. They could have fired on Damascus with their tanks, forcing the city to surrender. Israeli

Army General Ariel Sharon was pleading for permission to move against Cairo while he had momentum. The Egyptian army was trapped and helpless. But he was stopped by US pressure and the Jews were prevented from enjoying total victory. Today, the Israelis feel that they are right back where they started—surrounded by enemies on all sides.

Again in 1982 it was apparent that the Soviet Union was planning to aid an attack on Israel. Many Israeli military officers believe that the move by the Israeli Army into southern Lebanon in June thwarted a planned fall invasion. As the Israeli Army moved north in their Peace for Galilee operation, they were amazed at the vastness of the store of weapons they discovered. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin declared that even though Israeli Intelligence is one of the best in the world and knew that weapons were being stored in southern Lebanon, the amount of weapons captured was ten times greater than had been expected. It took over three months to transfer these weapons back to Israel, using a score of huge truck-and-trailer rigs operating twenty-four hours a day.

Israel captured 400 new T-62 tanks, the plans for the proposed invasion, and enough weapons to equip three army divisions. The only place to find enough trained personnel to use such a large store of weapons would have been the Soviet Union.

It is very interesting to notice the Israelis' change of attitude since the 1973 war. The Israelis once had what was called the "Masada Complex." This is the belief that suicide is preferable to slavery.

When the Roman general Silvanus was making his final assault against the



elevated city of Masada overlooking the Dead Sea in 72 AD, the 960 inhabitants saw that a tremendous ramp had been built toward the rear of their fortress. They knew that in the morning the Romans would attack and they would not be able to hold off the assault. Ben Eleazar called the people in the synagogue and announced that they would either see their wives ravaged before their eyes. The other option was to take the honorable way and commit mass suicide. The people decided on suicide rather than slavery.

The next morning the Romans broke into the city of Masada. To their horror they discovered that the city's inhabitants were all dead, with the exception of one old lady and a few children who had hidden in a cave. It was a hollow victory for Rome.

Until just recently, Jewish cadets were taken to Masada for their graduation. The leaders would recount the story of Masada and the whole group would declare in unison, "Masada shall never fall again." In other words, they would fight until they die.

However, in Israel the Masada Complex is being replaced by a new attitude called the Samson Complex. When Samson knew his time had come to an end, Samson had a little boy lead him to the main pillars supporting the temple of his Philistine captors. Then with all his strength, and as the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he pulled the pillars together so that 3,000 Philistines were crushed along with him (see Judges 16:26-30). Today, some Israeli leaders say that if

they have to go, they will take the world with them. They feel that the world has let them down, and with good reason.

In the Yom Kippur War, after ten days of fighting, the Israelis almost ran out of ammunition. The United States could not help them because Germany, England, Italy, and France would not let US supply planes land and refuel on their soil. Finally, after ten days, Portugal opened up a base on the Azores for refueling. US planes were soon landing nose-to-tail at the Ben Gurion airport, re-supplying the Israeli Army just in time to keep them ahead in the war.

The Israelis are planning to go all-out in the next war. They have declared that they will not stop until every arm lifted against them has been destroyed. Saudi Arabia has been allocating one billion dollars annually to the Arab states for the next conflict. The Israelis feel Saudi Arabia should not go unpunished. It is the Israelis' full intention that the next war will remove any chance for enemy advances. Their sole goal is a decisive victory.

What will such a decisive commitment bring? When Israel begins to exercise the advantage in the next conflict, you can be sure that the Russians will try to stop them by force. We will then be at the scene of the final countdown described by God in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Russia's invasion of Israel will trigger a sequence of events during the final seven years known as the Tribulation Period. We'll see the emergence of the tenation European power, the rise of the Antichrist, the great tribulation during the last half of the seven years, and then the coming of Jesus Christ with His church in power and glory! Finally, the world will see the establishment of God's kingdom bringing in everlasting righteousness.



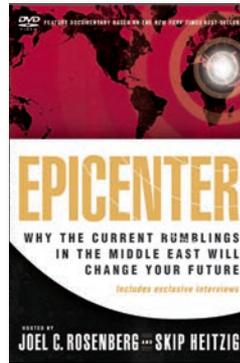
HOMELAND SECURITY >> RESOURCES



HOMELAND SECURITY

As a nation, we live on constant guard to preserve our democracy and freedom. But do we pay as much attention to the security of our souls? Understand the threats that believers face at every level: personally as a family, communally, nationally, globally. Plus, learn how we can best follow God's original plan for our lives, our families, and the rest of the world.

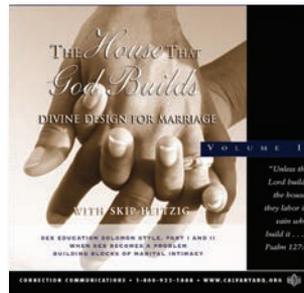
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EPICENTER DOCUMENTARY

This one hour documentary is hosted by Joel C. Rosenberg, author and founder of the Joshua Fund; and Skip Heitzig, of Calvary of Albuquerque. With over two hours of in-depth special features, it contains interviews with Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli prime minister; Nathan Shartansky, former Israeli deputy Prime Minister; Tim LaHaye, author of the Left Behind series; Chuck Smith, of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa; Greg Laurie, of Harvest Christian Fellowship; plus leading Iranian dissidents

DVD PACKAGE • V811 • \$19.99



THE HOUSE THAT GOD BUILDS

Intimacy in marriage doesn't have to be another one of the elusive intangibles of life. In this series, skip Heitzig shares the importance of marital intimacy and gives couples the tools to restore and renew this important ingredient in their marriage relationship.

DVD PACKAGE • V818-DVD • \$49.99
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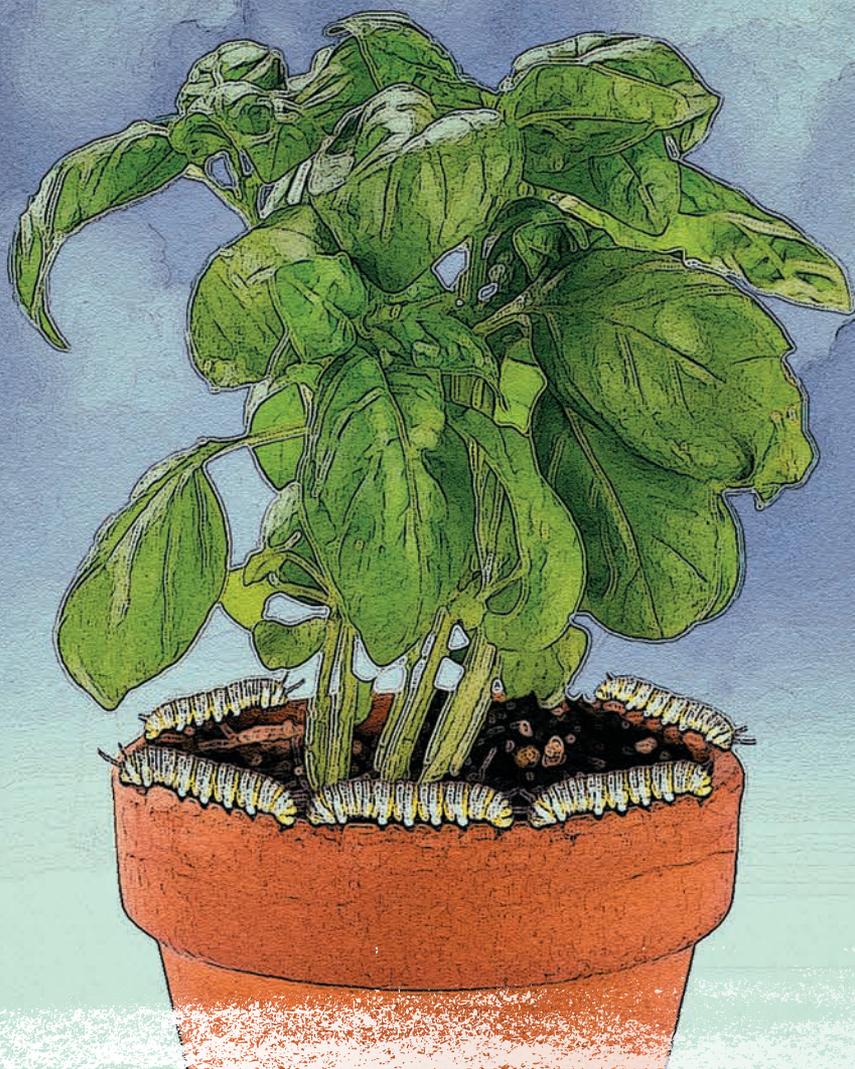


>> STATION LISTINGS



Caterpillars & **CLAY POTS**

RESPONDING TO THE WORLD
SKIP HEITZIG





THE BIBLE is full of wonderful examples of people who yielded themselves to God. Consider Sarah who was barren and elderly. Yet she allowed her womb to become a receptacle for Isaac, the son of promise. Then there was Moses who surrendered his mouth for God's purpose. He humbly said, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips" (Ex. 6:30) Nevertheless, God, used Moses' and his mouth to speak to Pharaoh and to proclaim the Law as Israel became a nation. And think about David's hands. As a shepherd boy, David yielded his hands and his life to God. When young David put a sling and a stone in those hands and yielded the results to God, he vanquished the gigantic Goliath. And what about Paul's feet? He walked on them to carry the gospel from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth. Just as God used biblical heroes of the faith, God wants to touch the world through you. Paul wrote that you should "present your bodies a living sacrifice , holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service"

ROMANS 12:1

A RATIONAL CHOICE

Notice something about what God asks you to do in Romans 12:1. He asks you to make a rational choice to offer yourself in service to God. This word "reasonable" comes from the Greek

word *logikos* from which we get the word "logical." Does it seem logical to present your body to Him? Of course it does! Why? There are innumerable reasons. Let me give you just a few. God sent His Son to save you from your sin. God has protected and provided for you in the past. God offers you peace in times of fear. There are so many more promises you can cling to that we're only touching the surface here. Of course it's reasonable and logical to offer your life to God because "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).

INWARD TRANSFORMATION

When you offer yourself in outward service to God, you'll find that you'll experience an inward transformation. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." God is calling you to a life of nonconformity. I love The Phillips' Translation for this verse, "Don't let the world squeeze you into its own mold." One of people's greatest fears is that they'll be rejected by their peers or perceived as "different." As a result, too often we conform to the world's view. We dress the way they dress, watch what they watch, talk like they talk, and act like they act. But that's not what God wants for you. He has called you to be different and set apart from the world's ways. In the Old King James version of the Bible, an interesting word is used for God's people: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him

who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9 KJV, italics added). Are you willing to become a peculiar person for your powerful God?

CIRCLING CATERPILLARS

Years ago a group of scientists did an interesting experiment. They placed several caterpillars on top of a clay pot head to tail all the way around the pot to create a solid ring of caterpillars. Then they observed as the caterpillars marched around and around. The caterpillars marched not for just an hour or one day or a second day.

That way leads to death. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that “the sorrow of the world produces death: (2 Cor 7:10). On the other hand the psalmist wrote, “Your word has given me life” (Ps. 119:50). Not much of a choice, is it? The world or the Word. Sorrow or joy. Life or death? Choose God! Choose life!

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Dare to be different. To think differently. To act differently. To surrender your body for God’s use. Make the rational choice to follow Him—it’s the wisest thing you’ll



ALLOW HIM TO TRANSFORM YOU FROM THE INSIDE OUT WITH THE POWER OF HIS WORD AND HIS INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT.

They marched round and round until they all died of starvation and exhaustion. Not one caterpillar broke away from the group to get nourishment. Don’t you imagine one of those caterpillars wished he had been peculiar and broken away from the pack to dive into the plant and eat?

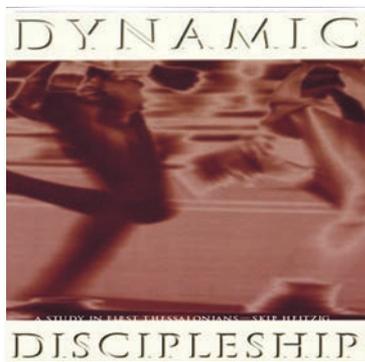
THE WORLD OR THE WORD?

Sadly, our world acts like a procession of caterpillars. But as believers in Jesus Christ, we should not be conformed to the world.

ever do. Allow Him to transform you from the inside out with the power of His Word and His indwelling Holy Spirit. Then, in obedience, begin to obey His commands. Become a peculiar person for God’s sake. Allow Him to use your unique gifts and talents for His kingdom. You’ll be amazed at what He can do in and through you!



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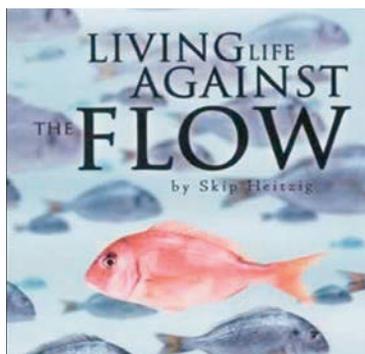
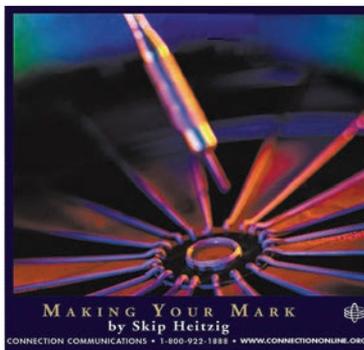
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TRUTH CONNECT

← PUTTING GOD'S WORD INTO ACTION

OCTOBER: 1 Peter • CHAPTER I

BLESSINGS AND BAD TIMES

Connection—Week 1 • October 1st-4th

Read: Read 1 Peter Chapter One. Ask God to help you personally apply the truths of this book to your daily life. As you meditate on the themes of blessings, trials, and conduct pray that you represent Christ to the people you encounter.

Review: 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter. We remember Peter as the well-intentioned disciple who often blundered by speaking before he thought. But the Peter who wrote this epistle was transformed by Christ's death, resurrection and indwelling Holy Spirit. Probably written between 60-70 AD, Peter wrote this letter to encourage Christians undergoing trials, persecution and suffering.

Reach Up: Consider some of the trials you have undergone. How have they drawn you nearer to God?

Reach In: Name some of the people in your circle of friends, family or colleagues who are enduring trials. Describe some ways you can share Christ's love with them in practical ways.

Reach Out: Our neighbors, nation and world suffer in a variety of ways. List some ways you see people in distress. Talk about how you could help alleviate their pain. What does 1 Peter 1 say to confirm this?

Remember: "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do" (1 Peter 1:15).

Connection—Week 2 • October 5th-11th

Read: Chapter 1, verses 1-2.

Review: Peter began his letter with a salutation. You'll notice he used the word "elect" in verse 2, which means "called," "chosen" or "set apart." Peter was writing to those chosen by God. In the Old Testament the Hebrew people were God's chosen people. The New Testament refers to the church as those chosen by God. In other words, Peter was writing this letter to you!

Reach Up: When did you know God had chosen you as one of His own? How did you feel to be part of His family?

Reach In: Did you ever run for any elected office in school, your community or at work? What did it cost you? Knowing that your election cost "the blood of Jesus" (v. 2), consider what you are willing to pour out in service to your church to show your appreciation for Christ's sacrifice.

Reach Out: Peter reminds us we are "pilgrims" in this world (v.1). One reason we're here is to spread the gospel message so others can enter God's family. Think of one person who may not

have heard the gospel message. Purpose to share it with them this week. They may be one of the “elect” and not yet know it.

Remember: “Grace to you and peace be multiplied” (1 Peter 1:2).

Connection—Week 3 • October 12th-18th

Read: Chapter 1 verses 3-12

Review: Peter speaks specifically of believers who were undergoing various trials. It’s important to understand that trials are allowed by God to prove whether our faith is true. Trials are different from temptation. Temptation is used by our enemy, Satan, to draw us away from God. Trials draw us nearer to God and prove how faithful He is at all times.

Reach Up: God promises an “inheritance incorruptible...reserved in heaven for you” (vv. 3-5). How does this divine reward encourage you when you are enduring the trials and tests of this world?

Reach In: Peter spoke of “various trials” people endure (vv. 6-9). Describe a time when you or fellow believers had their faith “tested by fire” (v. 7). How did it glorify God in the long run?

Reach Out: Salvation through Christ’s substitutionary death was something even the angels wanted “to look into” (v. 12). As a Christian you know the details and have the Spirit’s power to tell the story. Is there someone you know who longs to look into these things? How will you share the story?

Remember: “Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8-9).

Connection—Week 4 • October 19th-31st

Read: Chapter 1, verses 13-25

Review: Despite trying circumstances, Peter reminded his readers to conduct their lives as holy and obedient children. Why should we live pure lives in the midst of such a corrupt world? Because we have the hope that Jesus will return again. Having seen the resurrected Lord, Peter believed Christ’s promise that He will return again—soon! We should, too.

Reach Up: Peter exhorted, “Rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 13). Do you look forward to Christ’s return? If not, why not?

Reach In: What do you think it means to “love one another fervently with a pure heart” (v. 22)? How have you seen this in action in your fellowship of believers? How could you improve in this area?

Reach Out: Peter reminded his readers to “call on the Father” (v. 17). Spend some time praying for those people you know who have strayed from the faith. Ask God to seek them out and woo them back into the fold.

Remember: “The word of the LORD endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25).



TRUTH CONNECT

← PUTTING GOD'S WORD INTO ACTION

NOVEMBER: 1 Peter • CHAPTERS 2 & 3
SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND SUBMISSION

Connection—Week 1 • November 1st-8th

Read: Skim 1 Peter chapters 2-3. Reflect on the relationships God has blessed you with: spouse, children, employer, employees, friends and family. In this letter, Peter reminds us that the way we treat these people is a picture of our relationship with God.

Review: Peter's readers were being persecuted for their faith in Christ and living under the authority of an ungodly government. In addition, their personal relationships were becoming strained. His letter answered their questions concerning how to live as godly people in an ungodly world. Aren't you glad he wrote this letter that holds such relevance for believers today?

Reach Up: We grow spiritually when we desire the "pure milk of the word" (v. 2). How often do you spend time in God's Word? How will you schedule more time for personal spiritual nourishment?

Reach In: A healthy church is a Bible-based church. Describe the characteristics of a church that is centered on Scripture?

Reach Out: Have you ever offered your neighbor a spiritual meal? This week, offer your unsaved friends, family members, and neighbors a teaching CD, extra Bible or invitation to church so they can enjoy the "pure milk of the word."

Remember: "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles" (1 Peter 2:11-12).

Connection—Week 2 • November 9th-15th

Read: 1 Peter 2:1-12.

Review: Peter issues a rallying cry for believers to "come to Christ" (v 4 NLT) as living stones of His spiritual house (see vv. 4-5). Using the imagery of the Temple, Peter compares believers to "living stones" and Christ as the "chief cornerstone." In the Old Testament only priests could draw near to God in the literal holy of holies. But because of Christ's death on the cross, all believers can come near to God in worship anytime, anywhere. What a privilege!

Reach Up: Peter exhorts us to offer "spiritual sacrifices" (v. 5). What do you think he means by this? What spiritual sacrifices are you willing to offer to God as a member of his "royal priesthood" (v. 9)?

Reach In: To be built up into a spiritual house implies that believers must become connected to one another. What connections have you made with other believers? What roles do they serve in building the house of God?

Reach Out: Another role in building God's spiritual house is adding new "stones." Name some ways you can encourage others to become members of God's house. When and how will you begin this building project?

Remember: "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).

Connection—Week 3 • November 16th-22nd

Read: 1 Peter 2:13-3:7

Review: Peter introduces the idea of submission as the way to live godly, orderly lives. To submit means to put in order or to yield one's place or position. Similar to a military ranking, submission does not imply subservience. Rather, to submit is to willingly adhere to God's order of things so that everyone works together in a way that honors God

Reach Up: What characteristics of Christ spoken of in this passage make you willing to submit to His authority? In what ways do you struggle with the concept of biblical submission?

Reach In: Our passage tells us it "is the will of God" to submit and do good in order to silence the critics of Christianity (see 1 Peter 2:15). List some realistic ways that being submissive can further the cause of Christ. How do you think failing to submit hurts Christ's cause?

Reach Out: Purpose to pray every day for those in authority over you. Ask God to give you a heart of submission toward your government, employer, and spouse even if they are unbelievers. Ask God to use your life to draw them to His Son.

Remember: "Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

Connection—Week 4 • November 23rd-30th

Read: 1 Peter 3:8-22

Review: Two themes conclude this chapter: 1) Unity through love; 2) Suffering for righteousness. Concerning unity Peter urged believers to be of "one mind" in their interpersonal relationships—to bless one another rather than give in to the pettiness that leads to infighting. He also reminded Christ's followers that those who suffer "for righteousness' sake" (v. 14) are blessed because they follow in His footsteps.

Reach Up: Peter commanded, "Sanctify the Lord in your hearts" (v. 15). Sanctification means to become separated from the world and set apart for God. In what ways have you separated yourself from the world's ways? What will you do to become set apart for God?

Reach In: Quoting Psalm 34, Peter urged believers to "seek peace and pursue it" (v. 12). Is there someone in your church family with whom you are squabbling? What steps will you take to become a peacemaker?

Reach Out: We're reminded that "Christ...suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust; that He might bring us to God" (v. 18). Are you willing to suffer to bring someone to God? What are you willing to do?

Remember: "Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).



TRUTH CONNECT

← PUTTING GOD'S WORD INTO ACTION

DECEMBER: 1 Peter • CHAPTERS 4 & 5
SHEPHERDING AND SUFFERING

Connection—Week 1 • December 1st-6th

Read: Skim 1 Peter chapters 4-5. “Suffer” is repeated fifteen times in this epistle. Here Peter teaches us how to suffer. We also learn how to shepherd God’s people. This month, ask God to reveal how, despite suffering, you can lead God’s people for His glory.

Review: Peter reminded believers that “Christ suffered for us” (1 Peter 4:1), offering a compelling reason to willingly suffer for Him. Peter also reminded them that Christ came first as the Suffering Savior but will come again as the Just Judge. His return should compel us to suffer for and serve Him wholeheartedly.

Reach Up: How does it make you feel to know that Christ suffered and died for you? What are you willing to do for Him?

Reach In: 1 Peter 4:1 encourages us to “arm yourselves also with the same mind” as Christ. What do you think it means to have the mind of Christ? How can you promote this in your church?

Reach Out: When you suffer, do you talk about Jesus’ help or are you embarrassed? If you fail to give Christ the glory for empowering you, you are missing an opportunity to reach others for Him.

Remember: “Let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19).

Connection—Week 2 • December 7th-13th

Read: 1 Peter 4:1-11.

Review: Based on what Christ had done for them, Peter urged believers to put their past behind them and live in the present as faithful followers of Christ. He reminded his readers that they had lived enough of the “past lifetime” walking in the flesh. Now he urged them to “live according to God in the spirit” (v. 6).

Reach Up: Spend some time thinking about what your life was like before Christ. Did your life resemble what Peter described in verse 3? Praise God for delivering you from a past that was hopeless and helpless.

Reach In: Peter encouraged the believers, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another” (v. 10). What do you think your spiritual gifts are? How have you used them to build up the church?

Reach Out: Peter wrote that the Gentiles “will give an account to Him who is ready to judge

the living and the dead” (v. 5). How does this make you feel about your friends and family who don’t yet know Christ? What will you do with what you know?

Remember: “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers” (1 Peter 4:7).

Connection—Week 3 • December 14th-20th

Read: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Review: Here Peter prepared the church for the “fiery trial” that would come upon them. This prophecy came true in part when Nero accused Christians of burning Rome. Persecution of early Christians then rose to new heights. Christians have continued to be persecuted since that time. But the great persecution will come during the end times when Antichrist sets himself against Christ and God’s people in the last days.

Reach Up: Our text tells us we are “blessed” when we are reproached for Christ’s name. List some of the other ways God has blessed you.

Reach In: Peter said that judgment should begin at God’s house (v. 17). Some commentators believe this refers to God’s refining discipline of Christ’s followers. Describe a time when you experienced the consequences for your sin and how it made your faith more pure. How can you encourage others who are experiencing the same thing?

Reach Out: Why do you think Peter included busybodies in the same category as murderers, thieves, and evildoers (v. 15)? How do you think the church would be more inviting without this sin? How can you begin to clear the church of this wrongdoing?

Remember: “The time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17).

Connection—Week 4 • December 21st-31st

Read: 1 Peter 5.

Review: Peter concluded his letter with some words to the elders of the church. He reminded them to follow the example of the “Chief Shepherd” (v. 2). Next, Peter reminded the younger people to be humble. Humility means not thinking more highly of ourselves than we should. What a wonderful lesson for all of us, young and old! Then Peter explained how to fight Satan when he comes prowling. Aren’t you glad Peter’s letter is full of help for your life today?

Reach Up: Peter promised the elders “the crown of glory that does not fade away” (v. 4). What promises do you cling to from Scripture? Which new promises from 1 Peter have impacted your spiritual walk?

Reach In: We’re told the devil prowls like a roaring lion and that “the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (v. 9). Spend some time in prayer for the persecuted church in China, the Middle East, Central Africa, and India to name a few.

Reach Out: It takes humility to approach someone and tell them about the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Who has the Holy Spirit encouraged you to tell about Jesus? When will you humbly approach them?

Remember: “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

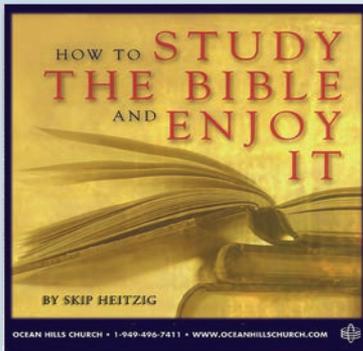
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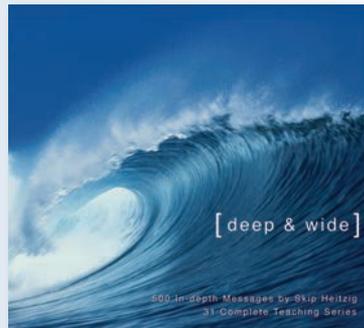
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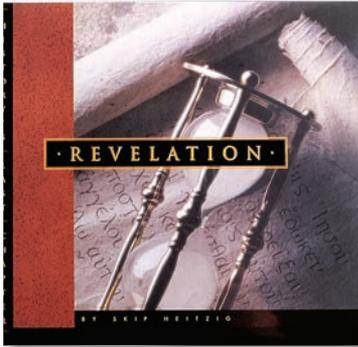


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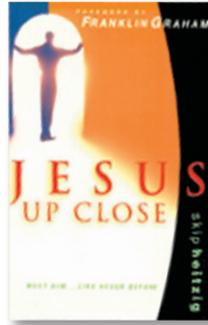
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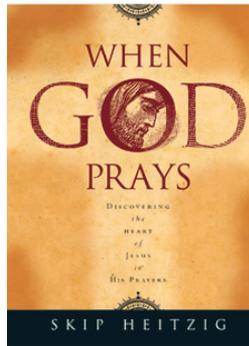
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SKIP HEITZIG sat down with a true American hero, Lieutenant General Jerry Boykin, on July 4th, 2008.

Lieutenant General Boykin played a role in almost every recent American military operation, from the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979-1980 to the 1993 Somalian campaign.

We catch up with Pastor Skip and General Boykin in this abridged transcript interview for *Off the Cuff*.

Skip: Since September 11th, 2001, Americans have learned that there are individuals out there in the world who hate people in the West and want to destroy them. I am, of course, referring to radical Islam.

I'd like you, from your perspective, to frame radical Islam and the threat against America.

General Boykin: Well, the first thing is that the West still considers Islam to be a religion. And we are hampered by our belief in the freedom of religion. The fact of the matter is the jihadist, the radical Islamist, believes that Islam is a way of life; it's not just a religion. As you well know, Skip, for the Muslim, there can be no other law other than God-given law, shariah law. Therefore, it's a way of life, it's a political system, it's an economic system, and it is their religion. But it is very difficult for us in the West to understand that.

The second thing with the jihadists is that their theology is founded upon the Koran. And the people who read the Koran have to read the Koran understanding that the Koran was written in two parts. It was written in the part when Mohammed was in Mecca trying to build his religion. The second part of it was written when

Mohammed was in Medina, forming his armies ready to come back and conquer- literally- the known world and not just Mecca. And there are statements in the parts of the Koran that were written when he was in Medina that talk about jihad and talk about what Muslims are required to do with regards to the infidels, which are the people of the book, or the Christians and the Jews. But I will tell you, Skip, I'm more worried about this threat than I ever was about the Russians.

So you have to recognize that in fact he's real and he has very evil forces under his control. Those are the demons that we encounter. And spiritual warfare is a very real battle. And each of us is in a spiritual battle every single day. And that battle doesn't end when we come to know Christ as our personal Savior; in fact the battle is intensified.

The good news is that in that battle we have an advocate, we have a Commander or a Commander-in-Chief that has far

SPIRITUAL WARFARE IS A VERY REAL BATTLE. AND EACH OF US IS IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE EVERY SINGLE DAY.

Skip: I was wondering if you would give our audience a little bit of encouragement when it comes to spiritual warfare. What are the differences between spiritual and physical warfare, and how would you relate what you've seen to spiritual lessons?

General Boykin: Yeah, you know what, thank you very much for that question, Skip, because I do talk to audiences quite frequently about this issue. It's difficult for people, particularly in America, to come to grips with the reality that we have a real enemy out there named Satan. And what I say to them is you have to go back and see that the same Bible that tells you about God, tells you about Satan.

more power than our enemy, Jesus Christ. But spiritual warfare is very real. And every one of us needs to accept that. Many of the things that we see happening today are a result of the spiritual battle that is occurring not only in our country, but also around the world.



For the complete interview with Pastor Skip Heitzig and General Boykin, go to www.connectiononline.org and click the First Friday segment on the content bar.

>> FROM THE BLOG



Q&A with PASTOR SKIP

Pastor Skip,

Question: A friend of mine was talking to me the other day about a teaching called, “Eternal Security.” What is this teaching, and is it biblical?

Answer: It’s a great question, and one that is frequently asked.

Let me answer that from both a biblical standpoint and from a historical standpoint.

But first, let me give you a basic definition. “Eternal Security,” sometimes called, “Perseverance of the Saints,” is the teaching that holds that once a person becomes a Christian, that person will be preserved to the end of time, reaching heaven according to God’s plan. They are, therefore, eternally secure.

Christians have always been divided on this subject. As far back as Augustine of Hippo (a leading pastor in northern Africa, 354-430 AD, there have been two sides in understanding this topic. Augustine taught

Eternal

that man is helpless in his choice for God due to original sin, and that God chooses, through divine grace, who would be saved and secure.

Later in history, a lawyer named John Calvin (1509-1564 AD) picked up on this teaching and stressed that Christ died only for the elect (that is, true Christians) and only the elect were sure of salvation and eternal security.

On the other hand, other great men throughout history such as John Chrysostom (ca. 347 AD) Thomas Aquinas (1225-1224 AD), and John Wesley (1703-1791 AD), have basically taught that God’s foreknowledge of an individual’s eternal destiny is based on whether the individual rejects or receives Christ as Savior.

Though this is a simplistic historical

overview, it serves to demonstrate that there has been a long history of dialogue and disagreement on both sides of the issue.

While it is to look into the various sides and viewpoints, the Christian should always go to go to the source of God's thought on the subject: the Bible.

The Bible is clear on several things concerning God's creation:

- God created the world (Genesis 1)
- God loves the world (John 3:16)
- God wishes that none should perish (1 Peter 3:9)
- God yearns for people to choose Him ("choose this day whom you will serve" Josh 24:15; see also Deut 30:19)

on His foreknowledge of the individual's decision, makes His choice to regenerate by His Holy Spirit (called justification) and commits to the process of conforming that person into the image of Jesus Christ (called sanctification). This being so, eternal security is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer's life, ultimately leading them to God's eternal presence, heaven (called glorification).

Simply stated, the biblical teaching of eternal security is biblical when biblically understood, but not necessarily when historically understood since godly and learned people throughout history have disagreed on these points. As wonderful as many of these leaders have been in their Christian walk, we must always turn to

l al Security

The Bible also teaches that God has:

- Predestined (that is chosen) people to be conformed into the image of Christ. (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:5, 11)
- That Christians are chosen (John 15:16; Eph. 1:4)
- God has chosen people for His own good pleasure (Rev. 4:11)

Based upon these two streams of biblical truth, let's summarize the subject of eternal security:

God created us, and God loves His creation. He created people for His good pleasure. His desire is that no one should perish, yet He has given people the freedom (or choice) to interact with God openly and without restraint. God, based

the Bible for the decisive answers, and not necessarily to opinion or commentary of men.

To a large extent, the dichotomy between free will and God's choosing is a mystery. Yet, the Bible paints us a clear enough picture to stand on firm on the adage, as penned by Dr. Norman Geisler, "Chosen, but Free" (an excellent single volume resource on this subject).

Thanks for your question,



To read more of Pastor Skip's personal blog, go to SkipHeitzig.com.

>> STAYING CONNECTED



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>> CONNECTING THE DOTS



After considering the theme of “Homeland Security”, we wanted to leave you with 3 points to reflect upon.

- 1.} **REALIZE** your position in Christ; Stand firm in His promises of love towards you.
- 2.} **RECOGNIZE** the foes of your faith, seeing that you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- 3.} **RESPOND** to the things of the world in a Biblical fashion. Be informed, equipped, and engaged according to God’s will for your life.



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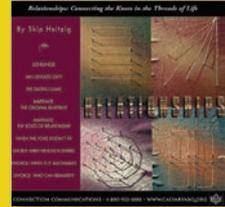
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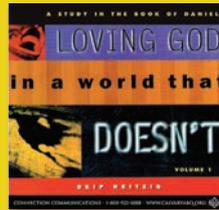
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