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www.worldofthebible.com

Dear Friends of World of the Bible,

Allow me to begin with a hearty word of “thanks” to all of you who responded to our need and have enabled us to move forward in faith! We have even been able to replace the two old computers with new (refurbished) ones! Thank you for your continued encouragement which enables us to continue exploring and explaining the world of the Bible!

In this light may I share with you some of the exciting new projects that we have planned? The first project is a number of new books, beginning with *The Battle for the Last Days Temple*, to be completed by August 15 and released by Harvest House Publishers this January, and *In Search of the Ark of the Covenant*, to be completed by March 1 and released by Harvest House in July 2004. This book will launch the beginning of a factual archaeological adventure series that will include *In Search of the Original Bible* (2005), and *In Search of Noah’s Ark* (2006). I am also at work on a commentary on the Book of Ezekiel for *The 21st Century Old Testament Commentary* series by AMG Publishers slated for publication in 2007. The second project is the vision to establish a World of the Bible Center with an Exhibition/Museum as a visual witness to the historical accuracy of the Bible. A location has been chosen along the bustling I-35 corridor between San Antonio and Austin and near the San Marcos Outlet Mall, one of the largest in the U.S. that sees over a million visitors each year, many from foreign countries. San Marcos also hosts a major university, Texas State University with 30,000 students), and many others are nearby such as the University of Texas (with 70,000 students). We have a small collection of antiquities and manuscripts to launch the exhibition, but are looking to acquire artifacts and related material from private collectors who would like to have a home for their collections. There are a number of successful exhibition/museums of this type in the U.S., which are having a significant impact on all ages, and ours would follow this format while combining the unique contributions and resources developed by our ministry. If you would like further information on how you could help us in achieving this vision please write us for our prospectus on *The World of the Bible Center*. If you have items you would like to discuss donating please contact me personally.

Our archaeological excavation on the Qumran Plateau has been postponed until the spring. I will be going to Jerusalem in August to work with authorities connected to the dig on final plans. All of those who applied this year as volunteers for the dig will be given first consideration. There is also a plan to host a “top to bottom” tour of Israel before the dig. *However, you do not need to be a part of the dig to be a part of this tour – it’s for everyone!* All who have been waiting for just such a tour are asked to call our office (toll free 1-866-604-7322) and get on the list for this spring tour! Details will be mailed to you when available.

Finally, let me invite all of those within reach of the Atlantic Coast to join me and other speakers at the Atlantic Coast Prophecy Conference (Myrtle Beach, SC) September 15-16. We will be addressing the theme: “Is Prophecy Being Fulfilled Today?” Call us today for a color brochure if you are interested (1-866-604-7322)!

Please know that my staff and I appreciate you for your faithful support of our work to advance the knowledge of the biblical world, to address its modern conflicts and interpret its future fulfillment. In an age that is looking more desperately than ever for the reality of the Bible’s message, we are trying to provide answers and understanding that will carry God’s truth to this generation, until Christ comes! May the Lord bless you as you labor and look for Him!

Yours for the World of the Bible,



Randall Price

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to the word of the Bible

news & views

"Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things" - Revelation 1:19

On (and Off) the Road Again

by Dr. Randall Price

The war with Iraq was over. It was now time to deal with the escalating problem of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The U.S., Russia, and European nations, along with the U.N., planned a road map for peace in the Middle East. Representatives from these parties convened a conference with Israeli and Palestinian leaders to make their pledges for peace. The year was 1991.

If all this sounds familiar, it is because we are here again with the same parties back where it all started. Over a decade has passed since the Madrid conference that led to the Oslo Accords. During that time we have witnessed the assassination of an Israeli Prime Minister (the architect of Oslo, who incidentally was against a Palestinian state), the collapse of the Oslo Peace Plan, a renewed and bloodier Palestinian Intifada, 9-11, the War on Terrorism, and another war with Iraq. Yet here we are on (and already off) the road again!

On April 30, with U.S. still trying to maintain peace in Iraq, the Bush Administration unveiled its "Road Map to Peace" in the Middle East, or at least with the Israelis and Palestinians. On June 4 in Aqaba, Jordan, the Red Sea Summit took the first steps toward implementing the road map with pledges for peace being made by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and newly-installed Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). On June 5 in Jerusalem, the Palestinian pledges were shattered by repeated attacks on Israelis and Israel's targeted response to the source of the terrorism – the terrorist themselves (in this case Hamas leaders). Yet, after weeks of renewed conflict – some of the deadliest in months - the Bush administration announced its continued dedication to the Road Map.

What is the "Road Map to Peace" and how does it intend to accomplish its goal?

The Road Map

The goal of the Road Map is to bring about a "final and comprehensive settlement" of the Israeli-Arab conflict by 2005. This is to be accomplished by Israel withdrawing to the pre-1967 war lines in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and the Palestinian Authority establishing an "independent,



In June angry settlers in Jerusalem denounce plans for a Palestinian State.

democratic and viable Palestinian State" in these areas to live beside Israel "in peace and security." Three phases are to mark the completed journey of this road map:

Phase 1: To be immediately accomplished:

The Palestinian Authority must:

- Undergo a visible and productive process of reform.
- Issue an official statement declaring Israel's right to exist in peace and security and calling for an immediate and unconditional end to hostilities.
- Undertake visible and productive efforts to arrest, disrupt and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning attacks on Israelis.
- Dismantle the terrorist network and capabilities.
- End all incitement against Israel.

The Israeli Government must:

- Issue an official statement affirming is

commitment to an independent, viable, and sovereign State of Palestine and call for an end to any and all violence against Palestinians.

- Freeze all construction and dismantle settlements built after March 2001.
- Progressively withdraw from Palestinian autonomous zones reoccupied during the Palestinian uprising.
- End the demolitions of the homes of Palestinian terrorists as a practice of war.

Phase 2: To be accomplished at the end of 2003:

- The ratification of a Palestinian constitution.
- A major international conference held to begin the official process of establishing a Palestinian state.
- The US, UN, EU, and Russia begin promoting international recognition of the Palestinian State and its UN membership.

Phase 3: To be accomplished in 2004 and 2005:

A second major international conference finalizing permanent status solutions for Jerusalem, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, contiguous borders, Jewish settlements, and peace between Israel and the other Arab nations.

Roadblocks on the Road

Since the Aqaba Summit the violence has not only continued but intensified, offering a first test as to whether the road map has a chance of succeeding in the real world outside diplomatic circles. However, before committing to the journey the road map should be scrutinized in light of past and present realities. Although the road map contains directions to reach the goal, it, like most maps, does not show the roadblocks along the way.

These roadblocks must be considered seriously since we have not only failed to go any distance down the road over the past decade – we have actually gone *backwards*! The Israeli and Palestinian societies are polarized as never before, having suffered

immense losses to life, property, and employment. Gone are the "Israeli-Arabs" that once lived at peace within Israel as citizens (and without suspicion), bridging the gap between the cultures. They have now become simply "Palestinians," however suspect as Israeli collaborators by militant Palestinians and as homicide bomber recruits by the Israelis. Gone is the Israeli hope of Arab recognition of Israel as the historic Jewish homeland. It has been replaced by a historical revisionism that proclaims that homeland as occupied Palestine, the rightful residence of three million Palestinians and their five million refugee cousins. Gone, too, is the great Israeli political divide that once threatened to split the country over the prospect of peace. Each Israeli election since Oslo has elected an increasingly hawkish Prime Minister on a platform of Israeli security, forging, especially since the renewed Intifada, a greater Israeli solidarity than before. Then, there is 9-11. Blamed on Israel for inciting the Muslim militants against America and the West, it has forced Israelis to adopt a more isolated stance and care less about world opinion (or international pressure to conform to the Road Map).

With these changes in view, let us look at some of the roadblocks on the road and determine for ourselves the prospects of making the journey.

Roadblock #1 – Yasser Arafat. Arafat remains in complete control of the Palestinian Authority, despite the appointment of a figurehead Prime Minister (Abu Mazen), who has no authority to make changes in official Palestinian positions while negotiating with Israel. Arafat, who rejects the Road Map and is unacceptable to the U.S. and Israel as a peace partner, is in command of the Palestinian media (newspapers, radio and television), the general Intelligence Service in Gaza and the West Bank, Military Intelligence, Force 17, the naval forces, and the national Security units, which comprises the Palestinian Army. He also controls the Palestinian Authority's money and holds the popular support of the Palestinian people (Mazen is reported to have barely 3%) as well as of the Arab people everywhere. As Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher stated, "Arab countries will stand by Arafat as the legitimate Palestinian leader despite his absence from the summit." Mazen admits it is Arafat's government even while Arafat publicly undermines every pledge he

made at the Aqaba Summit in his appointed role as Palestinian Prime Minister.

However, even if Mazen were able to gain control, he would be no better than Arafat. He has spent almost 40 years within the leadership structure of the PLO, the terrorist organization that became the Palestinian Authority. One must be both completely loyal to its revolutionary cause and personally ruthless to survive and succeed as he has. For example, Mazen, as the treasurer of Fatah (a PLO faction), financed the Palestinian terrorists who massacred 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. Moreover, he has written the checks of every Palestinian homicide bomber over the past three years of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (Oslo War). His personal feeling toward Jews and the State of Israel can be understood from the topic of his dissertation (done in Moscow), which argued that the Holocaust was exaggerated, being invented by Zionist Jews to gain a Jewish State in Palestine.

Roadblock #2 – Militant Palestinian Organizations. In order to begin travel down the road, the first phase requires a cessation of hostilities by the Palestinians against the Israelis. Mazen is supposed to arrest, interrogate, and punish terrorists, dismantle terrorist organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. However, neither Mazen, nor his minister for the interior, Mohammed Dahlan, intend to do this.

Though Mazen called for an end to terrorism (as did Arafat!), he stated in an interview with the Arab newspaper *Alsharq Al-Awsat* that only suicide operations are restricted while armed resistance to Israel must continue. And it has! Since Mazen assumed office Palestinians have carried out more than 300 attacks against Israelis, including homicide bombings, roadside shootings, grenade, rocket, and anti-tank missile attacks, mortar shellings against Israeli towns, penetrations of Israeli towns by gunmen, assaults and stabbings. Moreover, the Fatah offshoot, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which has claimed responsibility for many of the homicide bombings in Israel, reports directly to Yasser Arafat. A spokesman for the organization stated, "the Road Map leads us to hell. It is a plan that is doomed to fail ... we will give Israel a painful response in coming days."

Furthermore, *all* of the militant Palestinian organizations have rejected the Road Map and Mazen's call to them at the Aqaba Summit to halt violence and disarm. They have stated that the Summit closed the door to further cease-fires talks. A day after the Summit Hamas leader, Abdul Aziz al-Rantissi (whom Israelis targeted for assassination on June 10) declared, "We will stand by the Palestinian people and by the gun," and has openly called for an intensification of terrorist attacks on Israel until "the occupation is ended and complete victory is achieved" (i.e., there is no more Israel). Even if Arafat and Mazen were to attempt to disarm these groups (whom they helped arm in the first place) they could face a civil war with the Palestinian militants, who have the support of the Arab street.

Roadblock #3 – The Arab world. Although Arab leaders such as Saudi Arabian Prince Abdullah and Jordanian King Abdullah II have given their support to the road map (based in part on the original Saudi Peace Plan), a Pew survey of Muslim populations revealed that the wide majority of Muslims do not believe the needs of the Palestinians can be met so long as the State of Israel exists. The poll, conducted last month by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, surveyed more than 15,000 people across the Muslim world yielded the following statistics against Israeli and Palestinian co-existence: Morocco (90%), Jordan (85%), the Palestinian Authority (80%), Kuwait (72%), Lebanon (65%), Indonesia (58%), and Pakistan (57%). Moreover, the most anti-American countries in the survey were Jordan (99%) and the Palestinian Authority (98%). These are interesting statistics given the Road Map is backed by the U.S. and Jordan hosted the Aqaba Summit. Without widespread cooperation and support with the U.S. and the Road Map by the Muslim world there is only a map and no road.

Roadblock #4 – The Jewish settlers. The Jewish settlers, now 220,000 strong in 140 settlements scattered across the West Bank and Gaza, have vowed to resist any Road Map that proposes the creation of a Palestinian state. The Palestinian Authority wants them all dismantled and removed (as in the Sinai with the Camp David Accord). Most of the settlers are religious and contend that the "West Bank" is biblical Judea and Samaria and that in order to fulfill the

Road Map and create a Palestinian State they would have to abandon God's commandments to "possess the Land" and turn over God's Promised Land to the avowed enemies of Israel who are bent on its destruction and would have international backing. They have promised to block any attempt to evict them from their homes. To show their defiance of Ariel Sharon's concessions to the road map, the day of the Aqaba Summit some 10,000 angry settlers demonstrated in the center of Jerusalem bearing placards that read: "No to a Palestinian State!" Edith Levy Neumand, who has lived for 17 years in the 1,000 member settlement of Tekoa in the Judean hills near Bethlehem, represents the settlers feelings when she declared: "A Palestinian State is impossible. If we accept that, we are accepting death. It is tantamount to killing us!" The Road Map will have to contend with this quarter of a million Israelis who are devout (and armed) and politically represent a large voting block. Like the militant Palestinians, they are dedicated to ending the journey before it begins.

Roadblock #5 – The Postponed Issues.

The Oslo Peace Plan was doomed from its inception when it was forced to postpone its most decisive and divisive issues until a second stage of negotiations. It was hoped that territorial concessions by Israel to the Palestinians along with autonomy and an armed police force would create enough good will to permit negotiators to reach a compromise on the status of Jerusalem, the holy places, the settlements, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. However, the opposite occurred and the short and bumpy journey toward peace came to a screeching halt at the Camp David II Summit over these pivotal problems. Nevertheless, the new Road

Map again postpones these issues to the end of the journey.

This time, however, Israelis have heard the Palestinian Authority claim that Jerusalem was never Jewish, that the Temple Mount never existed, Jews have been banned from visiting the sacred site, even as tourists, while Palestinians destroy its ancient relics and erect Muslim mosques on the Temple platform. Moreover, Jerusalemites have been the special target of repeated bomb attacks (even on Passover). Too, the Israeli government has adamantly stated that it can never accept the Palestinian right to return, for demographically it would mean the end of the Jewish State. The Palestinians, however, have been equally staunch in their refusal to concede this right of return and have argued it should be the first and foremost issue decided on the Road Map.

If we add to these roadblocks other serious concerns such as the threat of sanctions against Israel by the U.N. Security Council and the U.S. administration to force Israel to fully implement the road map on schedule, and the dramatic rise of antisemitism in Europe, we have the making of not simply another bumpy road but of a perilous journey into a conflict of potentially apocalyptic proportions.

Archaeological News Update

In previous issues (Jan/Feb, Mr/Apr) we reported two nee astounding archaeological discoveries: the James Ossuary and the Joash Inscription.

The James Ossuary, a first-century burial box thought to have housed the bones of the Apostle James, also bears an inscription: "James, the son of Joseph, brother of Jesus," making it the earliest attested appearance of "Jesus" in an archaeological context. The Joash Inscription, a black sandstone tablet

thought to be from the 9th century B.C., contains an inscription by the Judean King Joash that roughly parallels the biblical text in 2 Kings 12 concerning repairs to the Jewish First Temple. Geologists have accepted it as authentic, but epigraphists and linguists have pronounced it a forgery.

Controversy has surrounded these artifacts since they surfaced last year. Now, suspicion has grown as it has been learned that both antiquities came from the same Israeli, Oded Golan, a 51 year-old engineer and antiquities collector. After policed searched his home and warehouses hundreds of antiquities were found, along with boxes of dirt from various parts of the country, engraving tools, and chemicals. While these later items could be used to clean and restore artifacts and inscriptions, they could also be used to *create* them as well, giving support to the claims of some experts that both the James Ossuary and the Joash Inscription are forgeries. However, on the James Ossuary only the words "brother of Jesus" have been questioned, and although Oded has denied he owns the Joash Inscription, Israeli authorities found a receipt in Oded's home for it's purchase from the late Arab antiquities Abu Yassir. Oded claims Yassir obtained the relic from an Arab construction excavation on the Temple Mount. The Israeli Antiquities Authority, who will now attempt to authenticate the inscriptions, may be aided in their examination by the damage both artifacts have suffered in transport. The James Ossuary was broken while being shipped for exhibition in Toronto, Canada, and the Joash Inscription broke in half while in police custody. Both breaks are through the inscriptions and permit experts to view it in cross-section as well as the various layers of the stones. Although a positive verdict is hoped for, those concerned with the historical accuracy of the biblical text should desire only collaboration from truly authenticated antiquities.

Dr. Price's Schedule

- June 1, 8, 15, 22, July 6** 10:45 AM "Isaiah series" Grace Bible Church (tapes of messages may be ordered from Grace Bible Church, 218 Country Estates Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666 (512) 392-6312. See also the church's website at: www.gbcsanmarcos.org.)
- June 9-11, 12-14, 23-27** writing retreat for *The Battle for the Last Days Temple*, Camp Peniel, Marble Falls, TX.
- June 29** 10:45 AM Independence Day service, Grace Bible Church, San Marcos, TX
- June 18** 12 PM (CST) Interview on Songtime USA Radio, Hyannis, MA (check local listings for air time in your area).
- July 8** 8-9 PM (CST) Live interview on *Open Line*, Moody Broadcasting Network (topic: the Middle East Conflict).
- July 12-15** Radio & television interviews at the Christian Booksellers Association International Convention, Orlando, FL.
- August 1-15** Meetings with archaeological authorities for Qumran excavation and research for new book, Jerusalem, Israel.
- September 15-16** 2003 International Atlantic Coast Prophecy Conference, Landmark Resort Hotel, Myrtle Beach, SC. Theme: "Is Prophecy Being Fulfilled Today?" For brochure & registration contact our ministry toll-free: (866) 604-7322.
- September 20** 9-11 A.M. Interview on "Prophetic Views Behind the News" with Jan Markell, AM980 KKMS, Salem Radio Network, St. Paul, MN.
- September 19-20** College Preparation Seminar (apologetics), Grace Bible Church, San Marcos, TX (512) 392-6312.
- September 26-27** "For Such A Time as This" Prophecy Conference St. Paul, MN contact: Olive Tree Ministries (763) 493-3010.
- September 30-Oct 3** Annual Seminary Lectureship (with evening lectures for the public), Bible Baptist Seminary, Clark Summit, PA.

REPORT FROM JERUSALEM

In April a 2,100 year-old *miqveh* (ritual bath) was discovered near the Hasmonean Tunnels close to the Temple Mount. It was accidentally revealed when workers were clearing an area in preparation for the building of an educational center at the site for students to learn about the Jewish connection to the Temple Mount.

Dating to the Hasmonean period (164-68 B.C.) when Jerusalem was an independent state before Roman rule, the *miqveh* probably served the Temple priests who used tunnels in this area to access the Temple Mount and required regular ceremonial cleansing.

The room housing the *miqveh* is 65.5 feet high and 33 x 33 feet wide with a stairway leading to the ritual bath at its bottom. Along one wall a water conduit also from the Hasmonean period was found as well as remains from later periods such as Roman floor tiles (1st-2nd centuries A.D.), a (Byzantine?) mosaic floor (3rd-6th centuries A.D.), walls from the Crusader period (A.D. 1099-1187) and a ceiling from the Mamluk period (A.D. 1250-

1516).

Such a discovery once again testifies to the existence of a Jewish Jerusalem in antiquity as well as to the presence of the Jewish Temple at the site, facts officially denied by the Palestinian Authority and particularly by Ikrima Sabri, the Palestinian Mufti who presides over the site. By contrast, his Jewish counterpart, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, Rabbi of the Western Wall and Jewish Holy Places, who oversaw the discovery of the *miqveh* has stated: "We know there is much more to be found in this area – the Old City is built atop many ruins – but we know that we can't find everything, because people live there. We hope to see the building of the Holy Temple soon, and then the past will truly be open to us."

However, before that day arrives there will have to come a time of reckoning over the status of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount – a day that is growing closer and made more compelling by discoveries such as this ancient Jewish *miqveh*.

Window On The Word

by Jim Davis

Superior Bread

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" - John 6:11

Bread is the item most depended upon to sustain physical life. Even today in the Orient, bread is still the most common source of food used to feed the masses. In both the Old and New Testaments it is clear that wheat and barley grains were main staples. Wheat was the first choice for bread, but barley (which was cheaper) was the food of the poor as well as fodder for horses.

In the Bible the word "bread" is used as a figure of speech for food. We find Jesus praying, "give us this day our daily bread", a request for our daily meals. In the gospels, Jesus tests His disciples when He asks, "where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" "Breaking bread," means to eat a meal; thus the early church was found "breaking bread" on the first day of the week (Acts 2:42; 27:7). The lad with loaves and fishes in John 6:9-13 was most likely a lower class Galilean, as the Greek phrase *pente artous krithnos* "five leavened loaves of barley" indicates. Each loaf was about the size of a biscuit - not much for 5,000 men (likely over 10,000 including women and children)! Though Jesus multiplied this bread, it was not the quality that a hardened Israel likely would have expected from the promised Messiah (though it was sufficient to keep them following, vs. 26).

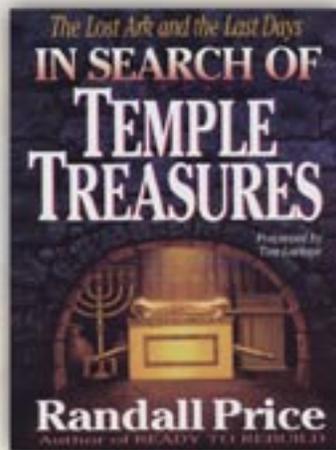
This same multitude later compared Jesus to Moses and demanded from Him a sign (John 6:30-31). Manna had been the sign of God's provision for their forefathers in the Sinai desert (though mistakenly attributed to Moses). Jesus corrected their thinking and identified the true Giver as the Heavenly Father, rather than Moses. He then figuratively spoke of Himself as "the bread of God which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33). Jesus is the superior bread, for He alone came down out of heaven to give eternal life to all who will believe in Him.

What happened to the Ark of the Covenant?

What do the ancient Jewish writings reveal about the location of the lost Ark of the Covenant?

Do Jewish rabbis know where the Ark is today?

How would finding the Ark affect the Middle East conflict?



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