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Welcome

A Happy New Year! I have been travel(l)ing, and unable to get online, so this issue is delayed, but hopeful(l)y none the worse for that.

It is interesting that the discussion of a one- or two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian problem (p3) appears at a time when Gaza and the West Bank seem to be splitting apart themselves.

And, for the alert reader, a correction to the missing paragraph in last issue's article on Rabbinic Judaism: yes, there were two rebellions!

Write me at pkclark@pmbx.net & let me know what you think.

A Heart for the Children

I will let these communications speak for themselves:

(12/31/06) When this five-year-old boy named Hemen was seen at the screening in Amman on December 28, Israeli cardiologist Akiva Tamir looked up at me and said, "This might be his last breath." Dr. Tamir was so alarmed that we put Hemen immediately into the ICU of the hospital that was hosting the screening, and began the process of obtaining an urgent visa for surgery in Israel.

By yesterday Hemen's condition had improved enough that I was called to take him from the hospital to the guest house of an Iraqi church in Amman. When I arrived at the ICU the nurse in charge, a young man named Omar, ordered me a cup of Nescafe and we sat to talk. He told me of Saddam's execution a few hours before, and showed me video which had already been distributed throughout the Arab world via the mobile phone networks.

I asked Omar how he felt about the execution, and he said he and others he knew were sad. I asked if this were because they felt outsiders had come in and shamed the Arab world, and soon we were in a very open conversation about the separation felt between Arabs and other peoples. A pause came and with it the feeling that Omar had truly bared his heart. He sat looking at me for long moments with emotion-filled eyes.

Finally it came to me to tell him how the Injil (New Testament) addressed this very issue; how the wall of separation between peoples, Jew and non-Jew, had been torn down through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the two could now become one new man; and how this motivated our work of re-uniting Arabs and Jews through children's heart surgeries.

He responded so positively—with real joy, it seemed to me. We exchanged several kisses on both cheeks, and I left with a strong sense of affirmation that God will use these surgeries to heal children's hearts, and more.

We hope to have visas to Israel for Hemen and his father within ten days. One other child in urgent need, seven-year-old Jihan, will also travel at the same time. She was crying out through much of last night and is looking very poorly this morning.



(12/21/06) Dear friends,
A beautiful illustration of the breaking down of the Ephesians 2 wall of separation between Jew and non-Jew takes place over the holidays in the hospitals in Israel. Pictured are the little Iraqi girls Hawraa (left, in the hospital gown) and Santa Maria (right, in the red) receiving a visit this Hanukkah from Israeli schoolchildren bearing gifts for their "enemies." But it's the following picture that really touched my heart:



The boy (left) is one of the first children we brought out of the Gaza Strip for heart surgery back in 1998. Now ten years old, he's returned again to Israel for a second life-saving surgery. Look at the sense of belonging as this Muslim child receives Hanukkah/Christmas gifts from Israeli children. It's everything the Muslim world needs in one picture: Ishmael welcomed back to the camp. May we see it repeated a million times in the coming days. Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas!

If you want to help, see Shevet at www.shevet.org/index.html

The Patriarchate

In 132 the Bar Kochba rebellion began in Galilee. It arose partly from the undercurrent of dissatisfaction with Rome, but primarily because the Emperor Hadrian had proposed - alongside a rebuilding plan for the temple site that included a temple to Jupiter - to ban circumcision, which the Romans found offensive. The Rabbis supported the rebellion, due to the ban on circumcision, and were subject to the deportations experienced by the rest of the population.

Later, the leading rabbi, Judah HaNasi ('the prince', 135-220) persuaded the Romans to appoint a representative for Jews across the empire. This they did, and the appointment of Rabbi Judah HaNasi begins the period of the Patriarchate, which survived until the beginning of Rome's decline in the 4th century. The conduct of all Jews in the empire was the responsibility of this agency, through its centers in Sepphoris, Beit She'an and Tiberias.

The Hebrew Bible – *Tanakh*, Old Testament – was compiled during the Second Temple period; between the Restoration led by Nehemiah and Ezra, and the AD 70 destruction of the temple. The Tanakh has the temple sacrificial system as central to the religion, familiar to us from the Old Testament, and from New Testament records of contemporary practice. By the time the Patriarchate was instituted in the 2nd century the Rabbis were in firm control of the Jews' religious practices, and through the Yeshivas they developed a system of religious writings that would eventually supplant the Tanakh.



A folio from the *Prato Haggadah*, a Midrash, originating in Spain. One of the moral tales in this document is that of the four sons: the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, and the son who does not know how to ask.

further justification for the *oral* law (now largely compiled in written form) with increased reference back to the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible, Old Testament).

The texts of Rabbinic Judaism would have been Mohamed's primary source of religious literature when he began to develop his own beliefs. In the next issue we will look at the impact that Islam had on Rabbinic teachings.

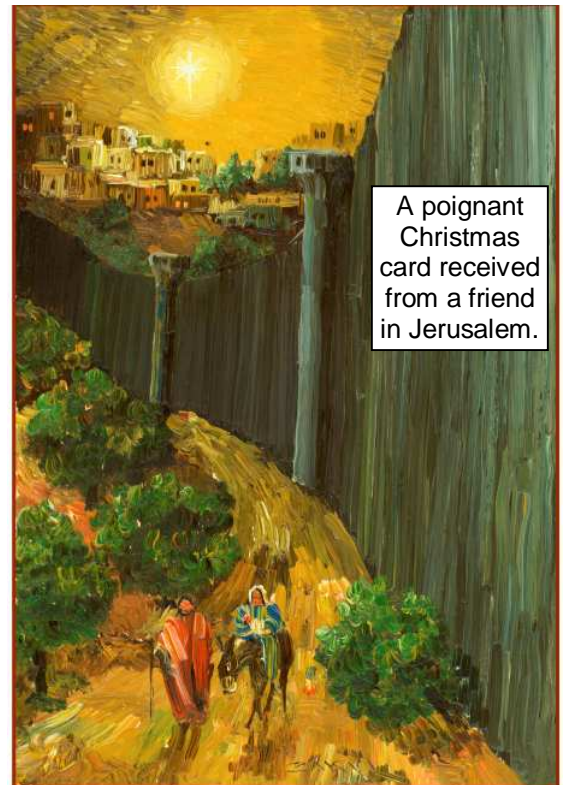
Readers may wonder, were there no 'Bible-believing' Jews left? Had the purported *oral* laws so completely overwhelmed Scripture? What remained of the role of the written Torah, the *Tanakh*? One effect of the rise of Islam was an increase in the debate over origins and beliefs. This led to the rise of a 'fundamentalist' strand of Judaism, known as the Karaites, who rejected the *oral Torah*, and returned to the books of the Law, the Pentateuch. In the next issue we shall also look at what became of them.

In the previous issue, due to an error in the editing process, a significant paragraph was omitted. The Roman Emperor Titus' destruction of the Second Temple, as reconstructed by Herod the Great, occurred in AD 70, as a result of a rebellion that began in AD 68. In 132-135 a further rebellion, known as the Bar Kochba rebellion, also had far-reaching consequences. The Roman response to this rebellion included further and complete destruction of the Temple Mount, expulsion of Jews from the region, and the renaming and rebuilding of the city after the Roman model. Jews were prohibited from living in *Aelia Capitolina*. The consequences of this revolt ensured the dispersion of the Jews throughout the Roman provinces.

The major part of the oral law is the *Mishnah*, a series of texts that were assembled and edited from the period of the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 AD). Judah HaNasi (see e-News 79) led the work, which then continued over a period of three centuries. It is presented as if it were a compilation of oral traditions dating back to Moses; even though the Jews no longer spoke Hebrew but Aramaic, the language of the text was Hebrew. This was one reason why Hebrew was able to survive as a language, to be revived in our own day as the official language of the state of Israel.

The Mishnah was quite complex, loosely knit, and discussion of its text began almost as soon as the Mishnah itself. The centers of these discussions were the *yeshivot*, and it was within these colleges that the *Gemara* was compiled, as debates over the meaning of the Mishnah. These debates are contradictory, expressing a variety of opinions while referring to other Mishnah, as well as the written – Biblical – Torah.

An additional set of texts was compiled during the Middle Ages, again by renowned Rabbis, known as the *Midrash*. This was developed to provide



A poignant Christmas card received from a friend in Jerusalem.

Christian Zionism – Can't Get There from Here?

Two issues ago, in an article entitled No Starting Point (issue 78), I pointed out that the current demographics of the Land does not provide an easy starting point for achieving the Israel that is described in Biblical prophecy. As the tourist found, when he stopped and asked a local for directions, "You can't get there from here." The 'facts on the ground' do not make for any easy solution, but neither can we, unlike our tourist, reverse course and return to the previous road junction.

Let us use the analogy of the tourist as we consider the questions we asked ourselves in issue 79.

Literal? (How literally Biblical passages should be taken.)

'You want West Beach? You can't get there from here, but if you carry on the way you're going there's a pleasant beach for the kids right ahead. At least you get something for your journey.'

'It's too cold for bathing anyway. You ought to go check out the old fort on the hill over there. You'd find it interesting.'

'You don't have enough petrol to get there. Why don't you just stop here, and look around our village?'

Responsibility? (Where the responsibility lies for achieving the described Israel.)

'Honey, we don't need to stop & ask directions. Why don't we just enjoy the drive and see where we end up?'

'Hey, Dad. The odometer is going to turn over to the 100,000 pretty soon. Let's just drive around until we can see all those zeros.'

Ok. Perhaps that's a bit flippant, but it might serve to remind us that there are alternative ways of approaching the problem. As believers we should ask ourselves whether it is actually our problem at all; whether we are taking more responsibility than we actually should be, by making decisions at this level.

As politicians and mediators have discussed the Israel/Palestinian issue, two basic considerations have stayed at the fore: whether to work towards a *one-state solution*, unite the Jewish and Arab populations under one authority, or a *two-state solution*, where the Palestinians have their own separate state. In the following table I summarize the alternatives presented by each.

	One-state solution			Two-state solution		
Alternatives	Palestinians have full citizenship	Palestinians without full citizenship	Palestinians expelled from territory	Israel has borders as 1967	Israel's borders resemble today's occupation with some loss of settlements	Israeli borders result in isolated islands of Palestinian territory
Problems	The Palestinian population is greater than the Jewish population. Their vote would count more than the Jewish vote.	Israel ceases to be a democracy, but becomes in fact a state based on racial/religious characteristics.	International outcry, neighboring countries will suffer, as well as millions of Palestinians.	Large numbers of the Israeli population will have to vacate settlements such as Ariel, Har Homa, Maale Adumim.	This is approximately what Ariel Sharon had planned, before his collapse, and is the direction Israel seems headed.	This is the situation that the Palestinian population is concerned about, and is likely to occur by default if compromise is not made.

We will continue this discussion in the next issue.

This Month

Dec	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31								
	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S								
Sudan	Fighting in South. Accusations of abuse against UN troops in south.						Darfur harvest is fine, food aid is reduced			Govt. & Jinjawid use rape as military tactic			Jinjawid attack Chad villages						Govt. to allow UN presence with AU in Darfur																				
Somalia	Ethiopia enters fray when OIC attack Baidoa. In 1 week they drive OIC from country			Islamists detain, expel journalist			UN approves sending African peacekeepers to Somalia			Fighting between OIC & govt. troops, inc. Ethiopians at Dinsoor, Maddyoy			OIC surround Baidoa govt.			OIC declare Jihad against Ethiopia			Fighting between OIC & govt. in Baidoa			Ethiopia strikes OIC bases			OIC retreats from Mogadishu														
Pakistan	Unrest continues in NWFP. Girls' schools close after threats.			Snow & freezing rain hit quake survivors in N Pakistan			Musharraf proposes joint rule of Kashmir			Pakistan claims to have aided Afghanistan by arresting 500 Taliban this year			Baluch pro-govt. sheikh killed by bomb			Shiite professor killed in Deraa Ismail Khan			Plans to fence Afghan border																				
Afghan.	Kandahar suicide attack-8 killed			70+ Taliban killed in Helmand			Suicide bomb hits troop convoy-2 killed			Taliban reject peace talks			Suicide bomb misses Helmand gov.kills 8			Taliban ex-minister killed in raid			50 Taliban killed in Kandahar prov.			Herat bomb blasts-7 die			Taliban chief killed in air strike			1 UK soldier killed in Helmand			Police chief missing after Taliban raid in Farah prov.								
Arabia	Saudi detains 139 terrorism suspects			Saudi militants attack Jeddah prison			Saudi clerics call on Sunnis to resist Shiites			US criticizes UAE weapons data									UAE to transfer \$30m to PNA			Haj rituals begin in Mecca									Saudi cleric calls Shiites 'infidels'								
Iraq	Car bombs in market kill 51			Mortars spark Sunni/Shia clashes			Suicide kills 70 day laborers			25 abducted from office			Security in 3-day clash w/ Shia militia in Samawa			Saddam death sentence confirmed			35 insurgents held in Baquba			10 US killed in clashes			Bomb hits Samarra 'Golden Mosque'			Baghdad market kills 5			4 US killed in action			2 bombs kill 17 in Baghdad					
US Deaths: 3/30: 2,317 5/31: 2,459 7/31: 2,578 8/31: 2,626 9/30: 2,700 10/31: 2,806 11/15: 2,858 12/15: 2,942 12/31: 3,000	Last 44 Italian troops leave			Air strikes on foreign insurgent houses-8 die			7 US troops killed			Marshlands back to 50% of area			US air strike kills 32, inc insurgents			9 killed as gunman raid Shia home			13 killed in Mosul			Najaf handed over to Iraqi control			S kills 7 police			Suicide kills 15 at police stn.			3 US killed in Anbar prov.								
	14 rebels raid convoy, are killed			Baghdad Mandaeen leader killed			Helicopter crash-4 US killed, 12 survive			Bomb kills 2 US nr Tikrit			Saddam's nephew escapes prison (financed insurgency)			Shiite sheikh killed in Basra			US soldier killed in Nineveh province, 2 in Anbar			Bob Gates visits Iraq			2 US killed by roadside s			3 US troops killed			Saddam executed at 6am			in Kufa, S. Iraq, kills 36					
	Situation deteriorating, with more calling it civil war. Saudi & others approve of Iraq Study Group report. Even Shia groups want Al Sadr's Mehdi army to be brought under control. Palestinians fleeing Iraq are stranded on Syrian border.			Militants occupy Siniya, US troops seal off town			Karbala car bomb kills 6			Shia leader Hakim meets with Pres. Bush in D.C.			Shia militias torch Sunni homes			2 Shia homes attacked, 9 killed			Iraq army raid in Sadr City, 6 held			Suicide kills 15 at police recruit office			5 US killed in action			1000 UK troops/tanks raid, destroy, Basra rogue pol.stn, rescuing tortured prisoners from execution			3,000 th US soldier dies								
	Insurgents attack pol.stn. 63 are killed by army			Security vehicle raid, \$1m taken			3 US killed n. of Baghdad			Mortars kill 5 in Baghdad restaurant									Tikrit police colonel killed			Rogue police chief arrested			Car s in Baghdad kill 14+			RS s kill 6 US troops											
Syria										Syria forcibly deports Ahvaz Iranian exiles			Jordan: King Abdullah orders Jafr prison closed																										
Lebanon	Mass demonstration & sit-in outside parliament, led by Hezbollah			Protesters & Sunnis clash, 1 killed			Opposition supporters rally in Beirut			Siniora accuses Nasrallah of attempting a coup			Pres. Lahoud rejects Hariri assassination trial plans			Opposition calls for early elections - sit-in continues			Weapons seized from pro-Syrian party (SSNP)			16,000 Israeli cluster bombs defused since end of war			2 Belgian peacekeepers injured by cluster bomb			100 Malaysian troops join UNIFIL II											
Egypt				500kg explosives found in Sinai			Court frees 2 MB politicians																																
Israel	Man throws petrol bomb, is shot dead			Protester shot dead in Nablus			3 rockets hit Sderot, 20 fired since 11/26 'ceasefire'			Militant killed by IDF in Nablus			Stone thrower killed during clashes nr Ramallah			13yr-old girl killed in Tulkarm			Israeli who killed 4 Palestinians in 2005 commits suicide in prison			2 14yr-olds injured by rockets, israel threatens response																	
Nov.26 ceasefire is tenuous but holding. Report: 660 Pal's killed by IDF in 2006 (three times 2005 total)	Israel agrees to leave S.Lebanon Ghajar village			Minister suggests freeing Barghouti			Israel stops Haniyeh entering Gaza with \$30m from Iran-clashes between Hamas-Fatah			Omert meets w/ King Abdullah			Israel to transfer tax funds to PNA/Abbas			US criticizes plan for new WB settlement																							
WB & Gaza	Rocket fired from Gaza			2 trying to cross Gaza fence shot & injured			Gunmen attack govt. convoy in Gaza			Abbas calls for new elections			Hamas/Fatah withdraw forces in Gaza																										
60 rocket attacks on Israel since Nov.26 ceasefire (12/27). 14 Pal's killed in WB since Nov.26	2 more shot near Gaza border			Police in Ramallah demonstrate over lack of pay			3 sons of Fatah official shot dead			Fatah & Hamas supporters clash			Fatah gunmen attack Hamas rally in Nablus																										
	2 more shot near Gaza border			Police in Ramallah demonstrate over lack of pay			Hamas judge killed in Gaza			PM's convoy attacked, son hurt, 1 killed,			1 Fatah killed in Jabaliya camp			Two shot in Rafah camp, inc. 7yr-old																							
													Fatah/Hamas abduct opponents, released later			Abbas meets w/ Olmert in Jerusalem			5 militants arrested in WB																				
													Grenade hits Fatah office, gunbattle erupts, 2 die																										