Part 1

Part 2

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Part 5

By Gary Taphorn

Introduction

This article is the fourth installment in a series on Christian Zionism in the United States. In Part One, we explored the origins of this heretical doctrine from its seeds in the early days of Protestant England to the radical seventeenth century Puritans in New England. In Part Two, we surveyed the founding fathers of Christian Zionism as it exists today, notably the Anglo-Irishman John Nelson Darby and his American disciples Cyrus Scofield (editor of the *Scofield Reference Bible*), Dwight Moody, and William Blackstone. Last [week] in Part Three, we addressed the intriguing relationship between Christian Zionism as a theological system and its motivation for political activism among American evangelicals after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. We focused in particular on the explosion of Christian Zionist popular writings through the work of Hal Lindsey and the birth of political advocacy for Israel as pioneered by the late Baptist minister Jerry Falwell. By the 1980's, as we have seen, America's dance with the devil that is Christian Zionism was in full swing. Here in Part Four, we will examine Christian Zionism today. Among other topics, we will assess its current crop of leaders, including Pat Robertson and Chuck Missler, its perversion of Christian prophecy, and its bizarre fascination with the reconstruction of the third temple in Jerusalem. This series will conclude next [week] with a look at Christian pastor John Hagee and his organization, Christians United For Israel (CUFI). In particular, we will examine how the Falwell-Hagee strain of Christian Zionism has impacted American society, from the churches to politics to United States foreign policy. As mentioned previously, this article is written as a companion piece to the three-part article entitled "Why is There a Gaza Strip?" published last year in *Catholic Family News*, which addressed the relationship between the Jews and the land, from the time of Abraham through the current day.[i]

Evangelists Galore

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The United States is now well into its second generation of Christian Zionist leaders. Lindsey and Falwell, whose roles were addressed in Part Three, are only the most prominent among an extensive list of media-savvy preachers who have incorporated Christian Zionism into their broader, so-called "fundamentalist" messages. The list includes Oral Roberts, Kenneth Copeland, Rex Humbard, Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Bakker, Mike Evans, Tim LaHaye (better known as co-author of the *Left Behind* fictional series), Herbert W. Armstrong, John F. Walvoord, Jack Van Impe, and Benny Hinn, among others. To be sure, not all may have precisely followed the theological party line of *premillennial dispensationalism*, complete with a "rapture," but they certainly have been of one voice in support of Israel. Some, such as Roberts, Humbard, Armstrong, and Walvoord, have passed on. The ministries of others, such as Swaggart and Bakker, have suffered because of their sexual scandals. America's most well-known Protestant evangelist, Billy Graham, has steered clear of an overt endorsement of Christian Zionism but has also not denounced it. Many find it notable that Graham's father-in-law, L. Nelson Bell, editor of *Christianity Today*, described the Israeli capture of Jerusalem in 1967 as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.[ii] That said, Graham once publicly chided Falwell for "sermonizing" about political issues without a moral component.[iii] On the other hand, Graham's son Franklin, who has effectively inherited his father's religious ministry, seems totally aligned with Christian Zionism. Addressing a 2014 solidarity event at the Israeli embassy in Washington, Graham stated, *"I support Israel not only because I worship a Jew, but because of what the Bible says about Israel and the future of Israel."*[iv] Graham has also made remarks about Arabs which are not only false but incendiary. In a newspaper interview in 2000, he declared, *"The Arabs will not be happy until every Jew is dead. They hate the state of Israel. They hate all the Jews. God gave the land to the Jews. The Arabs will never accept that."*[v] Graham's two statements above collectively reflect the bizarrely racist component of Christian Zionism – Jews are to be befriended, supported, and encouraged, regardless of their actions, simply because they are Jews. On the other hand, Arabs – even the Christians – are to be demonized, or denigrated, or at least ignored. No distinction is made between the actions and attitudes of individual Jews as opposed to the policies of the state of Israel, or for that matter between those of ordinary Arabs and terrorist groups such as ISIS. In the universe of Christian Zionism, the preaching of "Christ and Him crucified" to the Jews takes a back seat to political cheerleading for the state of Israel.

Pat Robertson

Each of the personalities cited above, and many others, have made major contributions to the popularity of Christian Zionism in mainstream America. However, none deserves more credit than evangelist Pat Robertson. Son of a U.S. senator and presidential candidate himself in 1988, Robertson built his own "Christian" empire on a par with that of Jerry

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Falwell. The centerpiece of Robertson's enterprises has been the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), which is now seen in 180 countries and broadcast in 71 languages. In turn, CBN airs Robertson's own daily television program, *The 700 Club*, which allows him to purvey his Christian Zionist message around the world, seamlessly integrating it with other topics. Robertson is surely one of the very few persons listed in the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia* who has a separate entry for "controversies." Among the 29 controversies listed is Robertson's statement on *The 700 Club* in 2006 that the severe stroke just suffered by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon may have been retribution from God for his recent drive to give more land to the Palestinians. This remark ignited a firestorm among Israelis, American Jews, and Christian Zionists, which was soon papered over by all sides. In the end, Robertson's well-known, staunchly "pro-Israel" stance trumped such an inconvenient "gaffe."[vi] In fact, this was Robertson's second such inopportune remark. In 1995, following the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a radical Jew, Robertson declared that Rabin's death was God's will for his role in the Oslo Peace Accords with the Palestinians.[vii] In both cases, Robertson was merely echoing the standard Christian Zionist mantra from the book of Genesis that God would give to the descendants of Abraham "all the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River" (Gen 15:18). Such commentary from the likes of Pat Robertson and Franklin Graham has been a major reason why U.S. government efforts (which were typically half-hearted) to broker a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians were perpetually doomed to failure. On the rare occasions when the United States exerted any diplomatic pressure on Israel, the Israelis could always count on their American Christian Zionist friends to come to their rescue.

As early as 1981, the *Washington Post* dedicated an article to the "growing evangelical Christian movement in the United States as a potent ally in the long struggle between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbors." The article quoted Robertson as anticipating Israel's conflict with its neighbors as the start of an Armageddon scenario for the entire world. *"I think a war with the Soviet Union is inevitable, if I read Bible prophecy properly. The chances are that the U.S. will come in as a defender of Israel. It looks like everything is shaping up."*[viii] The following year, Robertson showed his zest for combat by riding in a jeep accompanying the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. He provided daily reports on CBN, "interpreting the events according to the end-time fulfillment of biblical prophecy."[ix] Robertson managed to blame the Arabs for the thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians killed and injured in the Israeli invasion, for the many hundreds of civilians massacred by Israel's Lebanese surrogates in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, and for the terrible damage to Lebanese infrastructure by Israeli airstrikes and field artillery. In fact, Robertson capitalized on the invasion by acquiring Lebanese-based radio and television stations which, in the words of journalist Grace Halsell, broadcast "anti-Arab, anti-Muslim

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messages" and supported the "Israeli takeover of Arab lands."[x] (The sympathies of the Reagan Administration during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, an event for which the Israeli government received widespread international criticism, were barely disguised. On the second day of the invasion, Secretary of State Al Haig told reporters that *"we"* had lost an aircraft and a helicopter.)[xi] We will more fully consider the influence of Christian Zionism on the Reagan Administration below.

Chuck Missler

Last month in Part Three, we reviewed the adventures of journalist Grace Halsell, whose book *Prophecy and Politics* documented her experiences on two Jerry Falwell-sponsored "pilgrimages" to Israel in the 1980's. Some thirty years later, in 2006, British author Victoria Clark repeated Halsell's undertakings when she joined a tour to Israel sponsored by Christian Zionist evangelist Chuck Missler. As with Halsell, Clark's resulting book, *Allies for Armageddon*, paints a disturbing portrait of Christian Zionism and its current generation of leaders. Clark describes her experience in detail through the words of her fellow travelers. One of the highlights was their visit to the fabled Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where they viewed the twin seventh-century Muslim structures – the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Not impressed by the undeniably magnificent scenery, one of her fellow tourists, a dentist from Colorado, remarked, "I wish someone would move things along here – like, just blow this whole place up."[xii] Another member of Missler's tour was Marty, a Californian who had resigned his career in the aerospace industry to devote himself fulltime to Bible study. Marty enthusiastically told Clark that he was waiting for the Jews to fulfil Bible prophecy by destroying the Temple Mount (also known as the *Haram Al-Sharif*, or Noble Sanctuary) and building the third Temple in its place. As Clark tells it, *"Marty expected the Antichrist to install state of the art cameras and recording equipment inside that new building, so that the whole world would be able to watch and worship him, as bible prophecy demanded. Not that he would be around to see that. Marty expected to have been beamed up to heaven in the Rapture by then, well out of range of all the trouble."*[xiii]

As with Halsell's tours in the 1980's, Missler's itinerary included the required stop at the plain of Megiddo in central Israel – the site envisaged by Christian Zionist eschatology for the final battle (Armageddon) between anti-Christ and the forces of good. Another of Clark's fellow pilgrims marveled, "Would you just look at that! The place is just made for strategic maneuvering, isn't it?"[xiv] Another destination was an Israeli Army outpost on the sleepy Golan Heights, where Missler donned an IDF shirt, helmet, and flak jacket. The enthusiasm of Missler and some of his follow "pilgrims" for all things military struck Clark as odd and distasteful. How to reconcile such bloodlust with the teachings of Christ, who

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proclaimed, "blessed are the peacemakers?"[xv] Like Falwell, Missler pointedly steered his pilgrims away from the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in Bethlehem and Nazareth. As Clark explains it, for Missler these churches represent Christians who do not accept God's plan for His Chosen People and who, in fact, are "incurably" anti-Semitic.[xvi] Finally, Clark noted that Missler's frequent talks to his tour group "featured precious little bible study and no prayer."[xvii]

Like Pat Robertson and Hal Lindsey, Missler is now well into his 80's and continues dispensing his particular concoction of premillennial dispensationalism. Formerly a high-flying entrepreneur and Silicon Valley CEO, Missler came late to the Christian Zionist party. After some questionable business practices and a bankruptcy, Missler moved from California to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where he reinvented himself as a Christian evangelist and enthusiastic supporter of Israel. His media creation, Koinonia House, prominently features Missler's products for sale.[xviii] Among his books are *Alien Encounters*, which proposes to answer the question, "Is there a cosmic destiny for planet Earth?"[xix] and *Cosmic Codes*, "the most complete and comprehensive reference edition on the hidden Bible codes published to date."[xx] Along the way, Missler has twice admitted to plagiarism in his writings on prophecy. Indeed, the entire publishing industry within Christian Zionism seems to have an embarrassing amount of plagiarism.[xxi] A *YouTube* video on "Israel and the Last Days" (posted in 2013 but apparently from the late 1990's) provides an intriguing look at Missler in action.[xxii] His presentation is remarkable in three ways. First is its overwhelming emphasis on military and strategic issues, at the expense of the salvation of souls. Second is Missler's glib and facile approach in which he tosses out scriptural verses almost as "sound bites" with virtually no analysis, rationale, or context. Third (and aside from some factual errors) is his treatment of the state of Israel. According to Missler, Israel is literally the only nation on the planet to which God has given a "land grant." In so doing, he ignores numerous Old Testament texts that indicate the land was part of a "covenant," which the Jews systematically violated. He laments the inability of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust to return to their homes after World War II, but apparently has no empathy for the tens of thousands of Palestinians who were and are still being evicted from their homes and homeland by the Jews.

Prostitution of Prophecy

As mentioned in an earlier installment, Christian Zionists are fixated on three books of the Bible – Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation – which they long ago concluded were the keys to unwrapping the secrets of the "last days." They acknowledge, but pay only lip service to the words of Christ in Matthew 24:36: *But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only* the *Father."* This caution was repeated almost

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verbatim by Christ after His resurrection in Acts 1:7. Moreover, Christian Zionists completely ignore the warning of Peter – the first vicar of Christ – about biblical interpretation: *"First of all, you must understand this: No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever originated through a human decision. Instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:20-21). There are still other scriptural passages which are ignored by Lindsey, Falwell, Missler, and their ilk. These include the verses which warn against self-proclaimed prophets. For example, Deuteronomy 18:20 states: *"But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die."* Seen in this light, one might pose the question to a Christian Zionist, "Did God command John Nelson Darby to proclaim a 'rapture,' or Cyrus Scofield to identify modern Russia with the "Gog and Magog" of Ezekiel?" Other harsh Old Testament warnings against predicting the future are found in Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Jeremiah 27:9-10, and Jeremiah 14:14-16. Some – not all – of these verses are typically interpreted in the context of using astrology or witchcraft. But what difference is there between use of tarot cards and Darby's claim that the concept of a "rapture" virtually jumped out of the pages of the Bible? [xxiii] Between palm reading and Hal Lindsey's expectation of a major end times event in 1988? Between horoscopes and John Hagee's much ballyhooed "Blood Moon" of last September (surely the non-event of 2015)?[xxiv] As a result, Christian Zionists have erred twice, first in attempting to forecast the future, and second in getting it wrong. One must hope that Christian Zionist "pastors" will gain the humility and prudence to realize that they themselves are among the modern targets of God's warnings as stated in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Prophecy Industry

The Christian Zionist leaders of today have "prostituted" prophecy (title of the previous section) not only because they have taken liberties with scripture, but also because they have done so for profit. When one considers the multi-billion dollar industry that constitutes Christian Zionism in the marketplace, one cannot help but think of the anger of Christ toward the moneychangers in the temple (documented in Matthew 21 and John 2). Or at least Christ's warning about "false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Mt 7:15).

One major sector of the prophecy industry is the pilgrimage market to Israel. In June of 1971, with enthusiasm still waxing in the wake of Israel's victory in the 1967 war, some 1400 Christian Zionists descended on the Holy Land. Their conference was organized by a Pennsylvania minister named Gaylord Briley who promoted the event as a "ringside seat at the second coming."[xxv] The significance of these visitors was not lost on the Israeli

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government, which rolled out its ancient first prime minister, 86 year-old David Ben Gurion, to address the gathering. As author Timothy Weber notes, this conference *"marked the beginning of a great harvest of evangelical tourism to Israel, which over time became the foundation on which the strong relationship between dispensationalists and Israel was built."*[xxvi] The market surged again after 1979 when Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin gave Jerry Falwell his own Learjet aircraft (discussed in Part Three). Weber describes the pattern of these religious/political pilgrimages: By the early 1980's,*"the Israeli Ministry of Tourism actively recruited evangelical religious leaders for 'familiarization' tours at no cost to them. In time, hundreds of evangelical pastors received free trips to the Holy Land. The purpose of such promotional tours was to enable people of even limited influence to experience Israel for themselves and be shown how they might bring their own tour group to Israel. Needless to say, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism was interested in more than tourist dollars. Here was a way of building a solid corps of non-Jewish supporters for Israel in the United States by bringing large numbers of evangelicals to hear and see Israel's story for themselves. The strategy caught on, and hundreds of tours were arranged according to the agreed-upon modus operandi: Tourists were to fly only on the Israeli airline El Al, employ only tour guides licensed by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism* [which effectively meant no Palestinians]*... and use only Israeli ground transportations companies. These tours were not the traditional religious pilgrimages that allowed people to 'walk where Jesus walked' in the land of the Bible. They were a calculated attempt to win Christian friends for Israel through a strong evangelical-Israeli network."* ***[xxvii]*** The "pilgrimages" sponsored by Jerry Falwell (described by Grace Halsell in Part Three) and Chuck Missler (described by Victoria Clark above) were the predictable results. Indeed, Christian Zionist tour groups are typically characterized by a near total ignorance of Middle East history. They rarely understand – or care – that the so-called glorious period of Israel's history under David and Solomon lasted less than a century, nearly 3000 years ago. Likewise, they typically have a skewed view of the creation of modern Israel and readily blame its problems on the side *that has been losing* for almost a century.

Commenting on Christian Zionist tourism, the evangelical association of churches known as Calvary Chapel has observed: *It…is difficult to claim that tourism is the best form of support Christians can provide the Nation of Israel when the lion's share of the population that benefits from the tourism industry is not Christian. Regardless of whether or not Christians use Christian tour agencies, the truth remains that Christians steadily travel to Israel without supporting any local Gospel ministry—or even visiting a local church. Tourism supports Israel's economy, but it barely supports Israel's greatest need of knowing Jesus."* ***[xxviii]*** Israel received a record number of tourists in 2013, totaling over 3.5 million visitors.

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The second major market driven by Christian Zionism is that of publishing – books, pamphlets, audio CDs, video products, eBook downloads, etc. You name it, they have it, and their products sell. As a prominent example, the book *Jerusalem Countdown*, written in 2006 by John Hagee, has sold well over a million copies just in English, an astonishing number for a work that is officially in the category "nonfiction – religion." However, in contrast to every previous Christian heresy, Christian Zionism has expanded the bounds of perversity by deliberately mixing truth with fiction, blurring fact with fantasy. Hagee's book is a case in point, as it was converted in 2011 into a Hollywood thriller of the same name which "highlights the reality of an inevitable conflict between Israel and Islam," according to promotional materials for the movie.***[xxix]*** Hal Lindsey and Pat Robertson have likewise branched out into the world of fiction, capitalizing on the "gloom and glee" nature of Christian Zionism.***[xxx]*** But these efforts – lucrative in their own right – pale beside the phenomenal success of the *Left Behind* series of sixteen best-selling novels by evangelical Christian minister Tim LaHaye in conjunction with novelist Jerry Jenkins. The series, published from 1995 to 2007, reaped colossal profits in sales, especially after the terrorist attacks of 2001. It includes multiple spin-offs – "*Left Behind* for teenagers, *Left Behind* for the military, three prequels and at least one sequel, computer games, a website prophecy club, Holy Land tours, prophecy conferences, merchandise, and two not very successful films."***[xxxi]*** The *Left Behind* series illustrates an aspect of Christian Zionism that is not frequently mentioned – its visceral, if subdued anti-Catholic bias. In LaHaye's case, this surely stems in part from his attendance at the intensely anti-Catholic Bob Jones University in South Carolina. A superb piece on LaHaye and his *Left Behind* saga – including its dangers – is provided online by Jimmy Akins of Catholic Answers under the highly appropriate title "False Profit."***[xxxii]*** Akins notes, for example, that LaHaye's church has funded a virulently anti-Catholic ministry run by a former Carmelite priest, and also has had connections with the Unification Church of the infamous Sun Myung Moon, who has proclaimed himself "the world's new Messiah" and "the Lord of the Second Advent." Another prominent Catholic author, Carl Olson, writes that it is "difficult to overstate the dislike, even hatred, LaHaye has for the Catholic Church, or to exaggerate the ridiculous character of his attacks."***[xxxiii]*** In summary, the expansion of Christian Zionism in recent years into the realm of fiction is yet another sign that its purveyors have strayed far from the Gospel of Christ. Can any serious Christian imagine St. Paul setting aside his evangelistic efforts on the road, say, in Corinth, in order to pen a fictional account of the coming collapse of the Roman Empire?

The Third Temple

One of the most curious and alarming ways in which some Christian Zionists have moved from observers to participants is their enthusiasm for the construction of a third temple in

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Jerusalem. Many religious Jews and Christian Zionists believe that the rebuilding of Herod's second temple, accompanied by the renewal of animal sacrifice, is the logical final step in the "restoration" of the Jews, following a return to the "promised land" and the capture of Jerusalem. The second temple, of course, was destroyed by the Roman legions of Titus in 70 AD, along with most of Jerusalem. So thorough was the Roman destruction that the actual site of the temple is not clear today. The popular notion is that it was adjacent to the so-called Western ("wailing") Wall at which Jews have prayed daily since 1967. However, a plausible case has been recently made, using the text of Ezekiel and modern archaeology, to place the temple some 200 meters to the south.[xxxiv] That theory, compelling though it is, will not likely receive much attention because of the highly emotional aura surrounding the "wailing wall." Many religious Jews and right-wing activists (citing Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2) want the temple rebuilt here, believing that it must be in place for the Messiah to come. However, a literal interpretation of both texts would seem to imply that "all nations" would become Jewish, which runs counter to Christian Zionist theology. Many secular Jews also support the building of the temple simply as a symbol of national pride. As for the Christian Zionists, many believe that the temple must be in place, complete with animal sacrifice, before the Antichrist appears; a competing theory, of John F. Walvoord, maintains that the Antichrist will actually assist the Jews in building the temple. In any case, the construction of a third temple would require the demolishing of the two Islamic structures on the Temple Mount – the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Among other results, the Israeli capture of Jerusalem in 1967 accelerated plans among the ultra-orthodox Jews to rebuild the temple and recreate all the paraphernalia of the ancient priesthood. In her 1985 tour with Jerry Falwell (see Part Three), author Grace Halsell recorded these comments from her Israeli guide: *"We have all the plans drawn for the temple. Even the building materials are ready. They are hidden in a secret place. There are several shops where Israelis work, making the artifacts we will use in the new temple. One Israeli is weaving the pure linen that will be used for garments of the priests of the temple. In a religious school…located near where we are standing, rabbis are teaching young men how to make animal sacrifice."*[xxxv] In fact, there are multiple radical Jewish organizations promoting the third temple. One is the Temple Mount Faithful Movement (TMFM), whose 1990 announcement that it intended to lay a cornerstone for the temple provoked Muslim fury and resulted in 17 dead Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli police. The TMFM's leader, Gershon Salomon, regretted only that Muslim blood had defiled the Temple Mount. Although Israeli authorities restrained him from a second attempt, evangelist Pat Robertson gave Salomon a forum on his program *The 700 Club* where he proclaimed that the struggle for the Temple Mount was "a struggle for the redemption of the world." The TMFM maintains a website, conveniently in English,[xxxvi] while Gershom on frequent trips to the United States receives generous donations for his work. Christian

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Zionist pastor Dr. Randall Price, soon to make his 100th visit to Israel, told author Victoria Clark that the TMFM movement was "98 per cent funded by American evangelicals."[xxxvii]

Cattlemen of the Apocalypse

A second Jewish group, known as the Temple Institute, maintains an exhibition of "carefully replicated vessels and garments" in the Jewish Quarter of Old Jerusalem.[xxxviii] Not to be outdone by TMFM, it too has an English language website.[xxxix] The Temple Institute came to international attention because of its quest for a perfect red heifer in accordance with the command of the Lord to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 19:1-10. As Victoria Clark describes it, the ritual sacrifice of the heifer *"will supply the ashes necessary for the purification of, first the builders, and then the future priests of the Temple. According to divine instructions detailed in Numbers 19, the animal must be without a single blemish and red from head to toe. If there were nine such heifers between the late thirteenth century BC when Moses lived and the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, there have been none at all in the intervening almost two thousand years."*[xl] (The 12th century Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides had proclaimed that the appearance of the tenth heifer would signal the coming of the Messiah). Again, American Christian Zionists came to the rescue, first in the person of Clyde Lott, a Pentecostal preacher and cattle breeder from Mississippi. After prolonged negotiations with orthodox rabbis of the Temple Institute in the 1990's, Lott prepared to ship thousands of red angus cattle to Israel, where the perfect red heifer, in accordance with rabbinic guidelines, could be bred. Lott toured the United States, speaking at churches and conferences and raising significant funds. Donors were solicited to sponsor, for example, the purchase of one red heifer for $1000, or a half-heifer, or airfare for one cow at $341.[xli] The red heifer project evoked the full range of predictable reactions in largely secular Israel where, for example, Jewish author Gershom Gorenberg referred to Lott and his associates as "cattlemen of the Apocalypse." The Temple Institute has had at least two "near misses" in its breeding efforts over the years. This includes the much publicized 1996 birth of Melody, a pure red calf which inconveniently developed a clump of white hairs on her tail before the age of two.[xlii]
Undaunted, Jewish activists with the support of American Christian Zionists continue their quest for the perfect red heifer, launching a public appeal for help in scientific breeding as recently as August, 2015.[xliii] The mania of (some) ultra-Orthodox Jews and Christian Zionists for the rebuilding of the temple and the reestablishment of ritual sacrifice is ludicrous and pathetic, but is also deserving of more serious commentary at length. However, we will end here with two remarks. First, any decision by the government of Israel to demolish the Islamic structures on the Temple Mount to accommodate a new temple would be apocalyptic in its consequences, offending the entire Muslim world. Yet the

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popular support for such a move continues to grow within Israel, largely because the birthrate of ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Jews is about four times that of secular Jews.[xliv] Secondly, we must consider the consequences in heaven of such an action – God's chosen people rejecting the salvific graces of their redemption by returning to the very rites which Christ died to abolish. Indeed, three of the four evangelists (all but John) record the tearing of the curtain in the temple upon the death of Jesus, symbolizing the end of the Old Law. Here we are reminded of the commentary of the French DominicanA.G. Sertillanges in his book *What Jesus Saw From the Cross.* In it, he describes the future of the temple after its destruction by the Romans within one generation after Christ. *"All the noise of the colonnades will be silenced. Instead of busy tumult there will be a mournful peace. Weeds will sprout between the worn paving stones of the Holy of Holies. Upon the rock where the altar of holocausts is now enthroned a Moslem mosque will rise, as if in prohibition: 'Israel shall not adore where she has betrayed.' Israel will bewail her fate by the ruins of the outer walls. The Wailing Wall will be her consolation, even while strangers mock this crumbling relic of the holy Zion of long ago."*[xlv] And so, Christian Zionists have ignored at least two more scriptural texts: *"He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which has become the cornerstone'"* (Acts 4:11, citing Psalms 118:22) and *"for no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthi

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[i] See *Catholic Family News*, Vol. 22, Issues 2-4 (February-April 2015).

[ii] http://www.equip.org/article/modern-israel-in-bible-prophecy-promised-return-or-impending-exile/

[iii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Falwell

[iv] http://www.israeltoday.co.il/NewsItem/tabid/178/nid/24655/Default.aspx

[v] Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), p. 243.

[vi] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Robertson_controversies#Comments_on_Ariel_Sharon.27s_health

[vii] Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 229.

[viii]

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/03/23/israelis-look-on-us-evangelical-christians-as-potent-allies-in-battle-with-arab-states/5259c395-4bb7-43dc-a289-e6a0a0b1511c/

[ix] Michael Prior, *Zionism and the State of Israel* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 143. Also see Victoria Clark, op. cit., p. 193.

[x] Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1986), p. 127. See also http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/lebanese-army-arrests-cbn-staffer

[xi] Juliana S. Peck, *The Reagan Administration and the Palestinian Question: The First Thousand Days* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984), p. 52.

[xii] Clark, op. cit., p. 1.

[xiii] Ibid., p. 7.

[xiv] Ibid., p. 10.

[xv] Ibid., p. 14.

[xvi] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[xvii] Ibid., p. 12.

[xviii] http://www.khouse.org/

[xix] See http://alienencounters.com

[xx] See http://cosmiccodes.com/

[xxi] See for example http://www.poweredbychrist.com/Pretrib_Rapture_Dishonesty.html

[xxii] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw10cxq9BEc

[xxiii] Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armagedd*on (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), p. 25.

[xxiv] http://www.sacurrent.com/Blogs/archives/2015/09/28/john-hagee-didnt-mean-the-apocalypse-was-coming-yesterday-silly

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[xxv] Weber, op. cit., p. 213.

[xxvi] Weber, op. cit., p. 214.

[xxvii] Weber, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

[xxviii] https://calvarychapel.com/resources/article/view/do-christians-need-to-rethink-how-they-support-israel/

[xxix] http://www.christianretailing.com/index.php/newsletter/latest/23430-jerusalem-countdown-to-premiere-in-theaters

[xxx] Among other examples, Lindsey's book *Blood Moon* and Robertson's book *The End of the Age.*

[xxxi] Clark, op. cit., p. 170.

[xxxii] http://www.catholic.com/documents/false-profit-money-prejudice-and-bad-theology-in-tim-lahaye%E2%80%99s-left-behind-series

[xxxiii] http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3396/five_myths_about_the_rapture_and_the_left_behind_industry.aspx

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