

# Joel Rosenberg: Top 5 Middle East Events in 2013

It was a dramatic year in the Middle East. Here is my list of the top 5 most important events in the epicenter in 2013:

1. Syrian death toll keeps climbing amidst horrific civil war & chemical weapons use in Damascus.
2. Iran beguiles West with “charm offense” as it moves closer to the bomb.
3. Saudis preparing to purchase Pakistani nuclear warheads.
4. Egypt’s counter-revolution brings down the Muslim Brotherhood.
5. Israeli leader declares Bible prophecies coming true in our lifetime.

What follows is a brief explanation of each development and why I believe they are so significant.

**1. Syrian death toll climbs amidst horrific civil war and chemical weapons use in Damascus.** Far and away, the greatest tragedy and humanitarian disaster in 2013 in the epicenter was the continued implosion of Syria.

- More than **130,000** Syrians have died.
- Some **two million Syrians** have reportedly fled their country, taking up refuge in neighboring countries.
- An **estimated five million Syrians** are “internally displaced” – they have fled their homes but have not yet fled the borders of their imploding nation.

A terrible evil has been unleashed. Syria is collapsing. It is hard to imagine putting the country back together any time soon. Indeed, we may be witnessing the beginning of the end of the geopolitical nation-state we have long known as “Syria.”

In August, Secretary of State John Kerry **confirmed** that

chemical weapons had been used in Syria. "What we saw in Syria last week should shock the conscience of the world. It defies any code of morality," **Kerry said**. "Let me be clear. The indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, the killing of women and children and innocent bystanders by chemical weapons is a moral obscenity. By any standard, it is inexcusable. And despite the excuses and equivocations that some have manufactured, it is undeniable. The meaning of this attack goes beyond the conflict on Syria itself. And that conflict has already brought so much terrible suffering. This is about the large-scale indiscriminate use of weapons that the civilized world long ago decided must never be used at all, a conviction shared even by countries that agree on little else. There is a clear reason that the world has banned entirely the use of chemical weapons. There is a reason the international community has set a clear standard and why many countries have taken major steps to eradicate these weapons. There is a reason why President Obama has made it such a priority to stop the proliferation of these weapons, and lock them down where they do exist. There is a reason why President Obama has made clear to the Assad regime that this international norm cannot be violated without consequences. And there is a reason why no matter what you believe about Syria, all peoples and all nations who believe in the cause of our common humanity must stand up to assure that there is accountability for the use of chemical weapons so that it never happens again."

There was a moment when it looked as if the U.S., France and Britain were going to take military action against the Assad regime in Syria. Then President Obama and the Western powers backed down. As the year ends, Assad remains in power.

Fortunately, in 2013 we did not see the **absolute destruction of the city of Damascus, as foretold by ancient Bible prophecies**. Still, interest in those prophecies—notably **Isaiah 17 & Jeremiah 49** – grew this year and millions learned about

the prophecies that may not have been familiar with them before. This was in part because of my novel, *Damascus Countdown*, and in part because of **media coverage of the prophecies**, both **positive**, **negative**, and **comical**.

**2. Iran beguiles the West with “charm offensive” as it moves closer to the bomb.** The good news in 2013 was that there was no evidence that Iran has yet finished building or deploying nuclear warheads, and war did not break out between Iran and Israel. The bad news is that the West blinked in its effort to derail the Iranian nuclear program, making a Persian Bomb more likely.

In June, Iran held rigged presidential elections. As I **noted** at the time, 686 candidates registered to run for president, but the regime allowed only eight candidates to actually compete. Then, two of those eight candidates suddenly dropped out of the race. In the end, Iranians had only six candidates to choose from, all of whom were carefully vetted, were deeply loyal to the Ayatollah Khamenei, and were fully committed to advancing Iran’s nuclear program. In the end, **Hassan Rouhani was declared the winner**. He was certainly no “moderate,” despite what the **Western media said**. Indeed, this former Iranian nuclear negotiator **once boasted about deceiving the West** while Iran steadily built its nuclear capabilities.

Israeli officials at the highest levels were stunned by how much the U.S. and Western powers gave away in the deal. Several leading Mideast analysts said there were real reasons to worry about the deal. As the year ends, Iran is increasingly close to the point of building not just an operational nuclear warhead, but an arsenal of them.

**3. Saudis preparing to purchase Pakistani nuclear warheads.** One of the biggest fears in the Middle East is that if Iran actually gets operational nuclear weapons that this will spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Such fears began to be realized in 2013.

As details emerged of the deal the West cut with Iran, **Arab leaders were horrified**. They deeply fear a nuclear-armed Iran and have long pressed the White House to do everything necessary to stop this from happening. Now they fear they are being betrayed. **“A deal with Iran would be like discovering your partner of many years is cheating on you with someone he or she claims they hate,”** a senior Arab official from a U.S. ally in the region told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Then came the **news** that the Saudis are in the process of **purchasing nuclear warheads from Pakistan**, so convinced they have become that the Obama administration has no idea how to stop Iran. “Saudi Arabia has invested in Pakistani nuclear weapons projects, and believes it could obtain atomic bombs at will,” **the BBC reported**. “While the kingdom’s quest has often been set in the context of countering Iran’s atomic programme, it is now possible that the Saudis might be able to deploy such devices more quickly than the Islamic republic...Earlier this year, a senior NATO decision maker told me that he had seen intelligence reporting that nuclear weapons made in Pakistan on behalf of Saudi Arabia are now sitting ready for delivery. Last month Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israeli military intelligence, told a conference in Sweden that if Iran got the bomb, ‘the Saudis will not wait one month. They already paid for the bomb, they will go to Pakistan and bring what they need to bring.’ Since 2009, when King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia warned visiting US special envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross that if Iran crossed the threshold, ‘we will get nuclear weapons,’ the kingdom has sent the Americans numerous signals of its intentions...Gary Samore, until March 2013 President Barack Obama’s counter-proliferation adviser, has told Newsnight: ‘I do think that the Saudis believe that they have some understanding with Pakistan that, in extremis, they would have claim to acquire nuclear weapons from Pakistan.’”

**4. Egypt’s counter-revolution brings down the Muslim**

**Brotherhood.** One of the most positive developments in 2013 was a counter-revolution in Egypt that crushed the Radical Islamic leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The **rise of the Brotherhood to power in Egypt in 2012** caused darkness to fall on the land.

- Egyptians were being **killed in the streets.**
- **The Brotherhood unleashed terrible persecution of Christians,** burning churches and killing believers.
- **Polls in Egypt in 2013** found that “more than 70% believe the economic and security situations have worsened” and that “73% of Egyptians believe President Morsi did not make a single good decision during his first year in office”

After more than **22 million Egyptians sign petition** calling for President Mohamed Morsi to step down, the **Egyptian military mobilized troops and tanks, arresting Morsi** and top Muslim Brotherhood leadership, outlawing the Brotherhood, and promising new elections and a new constitution. Morsi and his fellow Radicals had come to power after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak calling for the imposition of Sharia law and new hostilities with Israel. Shortly before being elected in 2012, Morsi had given a **speech**”He added, This nation will enjoy blessing and revival only through the Islamic sharia [law]...”

**5. Israeli leader declares Bible prophecies are coming true in our lifetime.** “**In our time the Biblical prophecies are being realized,**” Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu **declared** before world leaders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly in September. “As the prophet Amos said, they shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them,” Netanyahu said. “They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall till gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their soil never to be uprooted again. Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Israel have come home never to be uprooted again.”

Netanyahu also alluded in the **speech** to the Biblical prophecies of a Persian king named "Cyrus" that would rise up one day and set the Jewish people free from captivity. "The Jewish people's odyssey through time has taught us two things: Never give up hope, always remain vigilant. Hope charts the future. Vigilance protects it," Netanyahu said. "Today our hope for the future is challenged by a nuclear-armed Iran that seeks our destruction. But I want you to know, that wasn't always the case. Some 2,500 years ago the great Persian king Cyrus ended the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. He issued a famous edict in which he proclaimed the right of the Jews to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. That's a Persian decree. And thus began an historic friendship between the Jews and the Persians that lasted until modern times."

Isaiah was the Hebrew prophet who prophesied that a great Persian king named "Cyrus" would emerge one day to bless the Jewish people, release them from captivity, send them back to the land of Israel, and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. (See Isaiah 44:28 through 45:13.)

A Persian king named "Cyrus" did, in fact, emerge to fulfill Isaiah's prophecies.

- See 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 – "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah – the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord His God be with him, and let him go up!"'"
- See the Book of Ezra – "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the

Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah – the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may His God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1-4)

I don’t personally recall a single other Israeli leader in the modern era who has spoken so clearly of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Netanyahu’s interest in the Scriptures has been growing significantly in recent years, as I have **noted** on the blog, and are increasingly pronounced in his public statements. At a speech at the Auschwitz death camp in 2009, for example, Netanyahu **declared** that the prophecies of Ezekiel 37 – the dry bones of the Jewish people coming back together miraculously to form the State of Israel—had come to pass in his lifetime.

The declaration by an Israeli leader of the importance of the Bible to Jewish lives, and to all humanity, in our modern times should not be underestimated.

**Joel C. Rosenberg** is the author of numerous New York Times best-selling novels and nonfiction books, with nearly 3 million copies sold. He is also the founder of the Joshua Fund. His books include *The Last Jihad* (2002), *The Last Days* (2003), *The Ezekiel Option* (2005) and *The Copper Scroll* (2006).

*For the original article, visit .*

---

## **Study: Thicker Brain Sections Tied to Spirituality**

For people at high risk of depression because of a family history, spirituality may offer some protection for the brain, a new study hints.

Parts of the brain's outer layer, the cortex, were thicker in high-risk study participants who said religion or spirituality was "important" to them versus those who cared less about religion.

"Our beliefs and our moods are reflected in our brain and with new imaging techniques we can begin to see this," Myrna Weissman told Reuters Health. "The brain is an extraordinary organ. It not only controls, but is controlled by our moods."

Weissman, who worked on the new study, is a professor of psychiatry and epidemiology at Columbia University and chief of the Clinical-Genetic Epidemiology department at New York State Psychiatric institute.

While the new study suggests a link between brain thickness and religiosity or spirituality, it cannot say that thicker brain regions cause people to be religious or spiritual, Weissman and her colleagues note in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

It might hint, however, that religiosity can enhance the brain's resilience against depression in a very physical way, they write.

Previously, the researchers had found that people who said

they were religious or spiritual were at lower risk of depression. They also found that people at higher risk for depression had thinning cortices, compared to those with lower depression risk.

The cerebral cortex is the brain's outermost layer made of gray matter that forms the organ's characteristic folds. Certain areas of the cortex are important hubs of neural activity for processes such as sensory perception, language and emotion.

For the new study, the researchers twice asked 103 adults between the ages of 18 and 54 how important religion or spirituality was to them and how often they attended religious services over a five-year period.

In addition to being asked about spirituality, the participants' brains were imaged once to see how thick their cortices were.

All the participants were the children or grandchildren of people who participated in an earlier study about depression. Some had a family history of depression, so they were considered to be at high risk for the disorder. Others with no history served as a comparison group.

Overall, the researchers found that the importance of religion or spirituality to an individual—but not church attendance—was tied to having a thicker cortex. The link was strongest among those at high risk of depression.

"What we're doing now is looking at the stability of it," Weissman said.

Her team is taking more images of the participants' brains to see whether the size of the cortex changes with their religiosity or spirituality.

"This is a way of replicating and validating the findings,"

she said. "That work is in process now."

Dr. Dan Blazer, the J.P. Gibbons Professor of Psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, said the study is very interesting but is still exploratory.

"I think this tells us it's an area to look at," Blazer, who was not involved in the new study, said. "It's an area of interest but we have to be careful."

For example, he said there could be other areas of the brain linked to religion and spirituality. Also, spirituality may be a marker of something else, such as socioeconomic status.

Blazer added that it's an exciting time, because researchers are actively looking at links between the brain, religion and risk of depression.

"We've seen this field move from a time when there were virtually no studies done at all," he said.

Weissman said the mind and body are intimately connected.

"What this means therapeutically is hard to say," she added.

©2013 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.

---

## **Prophetic Word for 2014: The Righteous Will Never Be Shaken**

For many years I've heard **prophecies** proclaiming, "Whatever can be shaken will be shaken." Indeed, I'm sure I've prophesied along those lines in years past. These types of

**prophecies** are in line with Hebrews 12:27, which promises “the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

To be sure, the shaking is underway. There have been more earthquakes, famines, wars and volcanoes in the first 13 years of this century than the entire 20th century. At the same time, we’ve seen economic collapses, rising turmoil in the Middle East, the redefinition of marriage in a growing number of U.S. states and foreign nations, and a decline in church attendance. Clearly, the shaking is intensifying, just as many have prophesied.

### **A Mighty Promise From God**

But there is yet good news. The Lord spoke these words to my heart, “The righteous will never be shaken.” This is in line with a mighty promise in Psalm 112 (NKJV):

“Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed.

“Wealth and riches will be in his house, And his righteousness endures forever. Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion.

“Surely he will never be shaken; The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established; He will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies.

“He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted with

honor. The wicked will see it and be grieved;

He will gnash his teeth and melt away; The desire of the wicked shall perish.”

### **You Are the Righteousness of God**

This promise is for you, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Now, this is your legal position. Your living condition may not line up with your legal position. In other words, you may not fear the Lord or delight greatly in His commandments as you should. You may need to come up higher in trusting the Lord to battle the fearful imaginations that come against your mind. You may not be giving to the poor—or giving at all. You may need to cooperate a little more with the **grace of God** so that your living condition matches your legal position.

I beseech you by the mercies of God to come up higher this year. Yes, we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. But we still live in these fleshly tents. God wants to change us from glory to glory to reflect the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Press into the gospel, “for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith” (Romans 1:17). As you pursue gospel truths, you’ll receive **revelation** of God’s righteousness in you that will spark faith to walk in His Word.

### **Vows to the Consistently Righteous**

In the days and years ahead, you’ll want to tap into the promises to the righteous. The New King James version of Proverbs alone mentions the “righteous”—what the Amplified calls the “consistently righteous”—or “righteousness” 75 times. The righteous are promised:

Sound wisdom (Prov. 2:7)

God as their buckler (Prov. 2:8)

His secret (Prov. 3:32)

Deliverance from death (Prov. 10:2)

Avoiding famines (Prov. 10:3)

Granted desires (Prov. 10:24)

Gladness (Prov. 10:28)

Immovability (Prov. 10:30)

Direction (Prov. 11:5)

Deliverance for family (Prov. 11:21)

Flourishing (Prov. 11:28)

Recompense in the earth (Prov. 11:31)

Right thoughts (Prov. 12:5)

Excellence (Prov. 12:26)

Life (Prov. 12:28)

Favor (Prov. 14:9)

Hope in death (Prov. 14:34)

Treasure (Prov. 15:6)

Heard prayers (Prov. 15:29)

Safety (Prov. 18:10)

Honor (Prov. 21:21)

Boldness (Prov. 28:1)

Rejoicing (Prov. 29:6)

Yes, there is a shaking going on. But the Lord wants you to know this: “The righteous will never be shaken.” Those things you put your trust in apart from God—people, money, positions, or something else—may be shaken but God won’t be shaken and you won’t be shaken if you rely completely on Him. So ask the **Holy Spirit** if your living condition lacks His righteousness in any way, and then work with His grace to pursue righteousness. Jesus put it this way: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33-34). Amen.

*Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including The Making of a Prophet. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.*

---

## **The Man in the Mirror: Some Godly New Year’s Resolutions**

Here are five suggestions for the Christian man for 2014:

1. **Have a DAWG** (Daily Appointment with God). We need time with God every day. Not having daily devotions yet? Here’s a 5-minute plan:
  1. 1 minute. Invite God to speak to you in the next few minutes, unload your worries and cares on Him for the next few minutes.
  2. 3 minutes: Read a few verses of Scripture or a daily devotion, such as those in *Equipping the Man in the Mirror*.
  3. 1 minute: Grab a piece of paper and jot down a few

notes—a key verse you read, a thought the passage prompted, or things you want to pray about.

**WARNING:** In a month, it might be 10 minutes. In six months it might be 30 minutes. When you start spending time with God and His Word, it can become addicting.

2. **Find a BOB.** Every man needs a “Band of Brothers,” a few Christian men who will walk beside you, watch your back, look you in the eye and ask the tough questions. Conflict breeds connection, so embrace the difficulties of forming real, honest relationships with a few good men.
3. **Pray for your family.** Pray for your children and their spouses or future spouses. At my wedding, my father-in-law told me that he had been praying for me specifically since the day my wife was born. What an encouragement! Pray for your wife – try using *The Marriage Prayer*. Praying for your family is the first step toward spiritual leadership at home.
4. **Pray with your wife.** This might not be easy, but it is crucial. You might schedule a time daily to pray together, perhaps using a couples devotional book (such as *Devotions for Couples*). Or you can be spontaneous; as you leave in the morning or get ready for bed, give her a hug and ask if you can pray for her. Pray that God would protect her, pray for your kids, ask Him to help you love her better, and ask that she would feel God’s love today. Trust me, she’ll love it!
5. **Find a mission.** Invest in something bigger than yourself. Maybe it’s going on a short-term mission trip, getting involved in Operation Christmas Child, or volunteering at a local shelter or food pantry. Do something that takes the focus off yourself and helps you participate in the mission of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

All of us at Man in the Mirror are praying that God would work

in your life this year to bring about His good and perfect purposes. He loves you! And we do too! It's going to be a great year!

---

## Joel Rosenberg: Top 5 Middle East Events in 2013

It was a dramatic year in the Middle East. Here is my list of the top 5 most important events in the epicenter in 2013:

1. Syrian death toll keeps climbing amidst horrific civil war & chemical weapons use in Damascus.
2. Iran beguiles West with "charm offense" as it moves closer to the bomb.
3. Saudis preparing to purchase Pakistani nuclear warheads.
4. Egypt's counter-revolution brings down the Muslim Brotherhood.
5. Israeli leader declares Bible prophecies coming true in our lifetime.

What follows is a brief explanation of each development and why I believe they are so significant.

**1. Syrian death toll climbs amidst horrific civil war and chemical weapons use in Damascus.** Far and away, the greatest tragedy and humanitarian disaster in 2013 in the epicenter was the continued implosion of Syria.

- More than **130,000** Syrians have died.
- Some **two million Syrians** have reportedly fled their country, taking up refuge in neighboring countries.
- An **estimated five million Syrians** are "internally displaced" – they have fled their homes but have not yet

fled the borders of their imploding nation.

A terrible evil has been unleashed. Syria is collapsing. It is hard to imagine putting the country back together any time soon. Indeed, we may be witnessing the beginning of the end of the geopolitical nation-state we have long known as "Syria."

In August, Secretary of State John Kerry **confirmed** that chemical weapons had been used in Syria. "What we saw in Syria last week should shock the conscience of the world. It defies any code of morality," **Kerry said**. "Let me be clear. The indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, the killing of women and children and innocent bystanders by chemical weapons is a moral obscenity. By any standard, it is inexcusable. And despite the excuses and equivocations that some have manufactured, it is undeniable. The meaning of this attack goes beyond the conflict on Syria itself. And that conflict has already brought so much terrible suffering. This is about the large-scale indiscriminate use of weapons that the civilized world long ago decided must never be used at all, a conviction shared even by countries that agree on little else. There is a clear reason that the world has banned entirely the use of chemical weapons. There is a reason the international community has set a clear standard and why many countries have taken major steps to eradicate these weapons. There is a reason why President Obama has made it such a priority to stop the proliferation of these weapons, and lock them down where they do exist. There is a reason why President Obama has made clear to the Assad regime that this international norm cannot be violated without consequences. And there is a reason why no matter what you believe about Syria, all peoples and all nations who believe in the cause of our common humanity must stand up to assure that there is accountability for the use of chemical weapons so that it never happens again."

There was a moment when it looked as if the U.S., France and Britain were going to take military action against the Assad

regime in Syria. Then President Obama and the Western powers backed down. As the year ends, Assad remains in power.

Fortunately, in 2013 we did not see the **absolute destruction of the city of Damascus, as foretold by ancient Bible prophecies**. Still, interest in those prophecies—notably **Isaiah 17 & Jeremiah 49** – grew this year and millions learned about the prophecies that may not have been familiar with them before. This was in part because of my novel, *Damascus Countdown*, and in part because of **media coverage of the prophecies**, both **positive, negative, and comical**.

**2. Iran beguiles the West with “charm offensive” as it moves closer to the bomb.** The good news in 2013 was that there was no evidence that Iran has yet finished building or deploying nuclear warheads, and war did not break out between Iran and Israel. The bad news is that the West blinked in its effort to derail the Iranian nuclear program, making a Persian Bomb more likely.

In June, Iran held rigged presidential elections. As I **noted** at the time, 686 candidates registered to run for president, but the regime allowed only eight candidates to actually compete. Then, two of those eight candidates suddenly dropped out of the race. In the end, Iranians had only six candidates to choose from, all of whom were carefully vetted, were deeply loyal to the Ayatollah Khamenei, and were fully committed to advancing Iran’s nuclear program. In the end, **Hassan Rouhani was declared the winner**. He was certainly no “moderate,” despite what the **Western media said**. Indeed, this former Iranian nuclear negotiator **once boasted about deceiving the West** while Iran steadily built its nuclear capabilities.

Israeli officials at the highest levels were stunned by how much the U.S. and Western powers gave away in the deal. Several leading Mideast analysts said there were real reasons to worry about the deal. As the year ends, Iran is increasingly close to the point of building not just an

operational nuclear warhead, but an arsenal of them.

### **3. Saudis preparing to purchase Pakistani nuclear warheads.**

One of the biggest fears in the Middle East is that if Iran actually gets operational nuclear weapons that this will spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Such fears began to be realized in 2013.

As details emerged of the deal the West cut with Iran, **Arab leaders were horrified**. They deeply fear a nuclear-armed Iran and have long pressed the White House to do everything necessary to stop this from happening. Now they fear they are being betrayed. **“A deal with Iran would be like discovering your partner of many years is cheating on you with someone he or she claims they hate,”** a senior Arab official from a U.S. ally in the region told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Then came the **news** that the Saudis are in the process of **purchasing nuclear warheads from Pakistan**, so convinced they have become that the Obama administration has no idea how to stop Iran. “Saudi Arabia has invested in Pakistani nuclear weapons projects, and believes it could obtain atomic bombs at will,” **the BBC reported**. “While the kingdom’s quest has often been set in the context of countering Iran’s atomic programme, it is now possible that the Saudis might be able to deploy such devices more quickly than the Islamic republic...Earlier this year, a senior NATO decision maker told me that he had seen intelligence reporting that nuclear weapons made in Pakistan on behalf of Saudi Arabia are now sitting ready for delivery. Last month Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israeli military intelligence, told a conference in Sweden that if Iran got the bomb, ‘the Saudis will not wait one month. They already paid for the bomb, they will go to Pakistan and bring what they need to bring.’ Since 2009, when King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia warned visiting US special envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross that if Iran crossed the threshold, ‘we will get nuclear weapons,’ the kingdom has sent the Americans numerous signals of its intentions...Gary Samore, until March

2013 President Barack Obama's counter-proliferation adviser, has told Newsnight: 'I do think that the Saudis believe that they have some understanding with Pakistan that, in extremis, they would have claim to acquire nuclear weapons from Pakistan.'"

**4. Egypt's counter-revolution brings down the Muslim Brotherhood.** One of the most positive developments in 2013 was a counter-revolution in Egypt that crushed the Radical Islamic leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The **rise of the Brotherhood to power in Egypt in 2012** caused darkness to fall on the land.

- Egyptians were being **killed in the streets.**
- **The Brotherhood unleashed terrible persecution of Christians,** burning churches and killing believers.
- **Polls in Egypt in 2013** found that "more than 70% believe the economic and security situations have worsened" and that "73% of Egyptians believe President Morsi did not make a single good decision during his first year in office"

After more than **22 million Egyptians sign petition** calling for President Mohamed Morsi to step down, the **Egyptian military mobilized troops and tanks, arresting Morsi** and top Muslim Brotherhood leadership, outlawing the Brotherhood, and promising new elections and a new constitution. Morsi and his fellow Radicals had come to power after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak calling for the imposition of Sharia law and new hostilities with Israel. Shortly before being elected in 2012, Morsi had given a **speech**"He added, This nation will enjoy blessing and revival only through the Islamic sharia [law]...."

**5. Israeli leader declares Bible prophecies are coming true in our lifetime.** "In our time the Biblical prophecies are being realized," Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu **declared** before world leaders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly

in September. "As the prophet Amos said, they shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them," Netanyahu said. "They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall till gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their soil never to be uprooted again. Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Israel have come home never to be uprooted again."

Netanyahu also alluded in the **speech** to the Biblical prophecies of a Persian king named "Cyrus" that would rise up one day and set the Jewish people free from captivity. "The Jewish people's odyssey through time has taught us two things: Never give up hope, always remain vigilant. Hope charts the future. Vigilance protects it," Netanyahu said. "Today our hope for the future is challenged by a nuclear-armed Iran that seeks our destruction. But I want you to know, that wasn't always the case. Some 2,500 years ago the great Persian king Cyrus ended the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. He issued a famous edict in which he proclaimed the right of the Jews to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. That's a Persian decree. And thus began an historic friendship between the Jews and the Persians that lasted until modern times."

Isaiah was the Hebrew prophet who prophesied that a great Persian king named "Cyrus" would emerge one day to bless the Jewish people, release them from captivity, send them back to the land of Israel, and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. (See Isaiah 44:28 through 45:13.)

A Persian king named "Cyrus" did, in fact, emerge to fulfill Isaiah's prophecies.

- See 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 – "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah – the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The

Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord His God be with him, and let him go up!”””

- See the Book of Ezra – “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah – the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may His God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1-4)

I don't personally recall a single other Israeli leader in the modern era who has spoken so clearly of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Netanyahu's interest in the Scriptures has been growing significantly in recent years, as I have **noted** on the blog, and are increasingly pronounced in his public statements. At a speech at the Auschwitz death camp in 2009, for example, Netanyahu **declared** that the prophecies of Ezekiel 37 – the dry bones of the Jewish people coming back together miraculously to form the State of Israel—had come to pass in his lifetime.

The declaration by an Israeli leader of the importance of the Bible to Jewish lives, and to all humanity, in our modern times should not be underestimated.

**Joel C. Rosenberg** is the author of numerous New York Times best-selling novels and nonfiction books, with nearly 3 million copies sold. He is also the founder of the Joshua Fund. His books include *The Last Jihad* (2002), *The Last Days* (2003), *The Ezekiel Option* (2005) and *The Copper Scroll* (2006).

For the original article, visit [.](#)

---

## **Over 30K People Gather in Kansas City for Prayer Conference**

More than 30,000 people from 100 countries gathered in Kansas City for the Onething Conference hosted by the International House of Prayer (IHOPKC) in late December. The conference was also the launch of what is to be an annual summit of the major leaders in the missions, prayer and Bible translation movements and a partnership with the Seed Company of Wycliffe Bible Translators.

“We want to see the gospel preached and 24/7 worship and prayer in every tribe and tongue,” said Mike Bickle, founder of IHOPKC, in the opening session.

Bickle added, “We’re believing for 10,000 prayer chains or prayer ministries across the earth. We’re hosting the first meeting, bringing together the movements in church planting, missions, prayer and Bible translation. There’s one movement in God’s heart, and some people think a call to prayer and fasting is a call to isolation and [to] disengage. The missions movement needs the prayer movement, and the local

church needs to be filled with the glory of God.”

More than 500 leaders from around the world met for the first Onething Leadership Summit.

“We sent letters to 200 leaders, inviting them to this summit six weeks ago,” says Daniel Lim, CEO of IHOPKC. “Over 80 percent of the leaders we invited said yes. This is such a unique meeting because we have a common urgency that we need to pray.”

Mark Anderson, a leader with Youth With a Mission, calls the summit historic.

“We are in a time right now where we are launching a new expression of missions and prayer,” he says.

Johannes Hartl, a theologian and house of prayer leader in Europe, is hosting a conference in Europe on Friday that will attract up to 4,000 people and bring together 50 houses of prayer in Europe.

“Today’s meeting was mind-blowing and overwhelming,” he says. “I saw great unity and humility with all of the leaders. I’m also surprised at how far the prayer movement has come.”

The house of prayer conference in Europe will be broadcast on BibleTV.

IHOPKC leaders also unveiled the results of a survey that revealed houses of prayer are in 18 nations on six continents reflecting representatives at the summit. The main proponents of prayer are millennials, with more than 60 percent of participants under the age of 35. More than 30 percent of houses of prayer host 40 hours a week of corporate prayer.

“We actually know of houses of prayer in 60 nations,” says Brian Kim, director of the Luke18 project at IHOPKC. Leaders at the summit also pledged to pray for the more than 300 languages that still need to be translated by Wycliffe’s Seed

Company.

“Something historic that has never happened before is happening before our very eyes with the prayer movement joining hands with the Bible translation movement,” says Roy Peterson, CEO of the Seed Company.

“There are over 6,000 Wycliffe Bible translators who go to places no one wants to,” Bickle says. “They are hated by locals and unsung heroes of the body of Christ. They work eight to 10 hours a day writing and translating the Bible.”

Kim says 1 billion people have no Bible. “This is the ultimate injustice,” he added.

Bickle sees the house of prayer movement as a catalyst for missions, evangelism and Bible translation.

“We’re just hosting the dialogue and providing the platform for new relationships, new ideas and new plans every year in Kansas City,” he says. “The house of prayer movement is the banner for all of these over movements.”

The house of prayer movement has dramatically expanded in a city famous for its Prayer Mountain: Seoul, Korea.

“We’ve been in Seoul for four years,” says Hojong Boaz Park, leader of the house of prayer in Korea. “We have over 100 churches involved with 112 full-time and part-time staff. I came here in 2011 with my whole family—including my mother-in-law—from Seoul to receive training. Today’s meeting [with summit leaders] was very strategic, and I’m expecting some great things to come.”

**Leilani Haywood** is editor of SpiritLed Woman and a frequent contributor to Charisma. She is a Kansas City, award-winning writer and columnist. She has been published in the Kansas City Star, Metro Voice and other publications. Follow her on Twitter @leilanihaywood.

---

# Saying Goodbye to Hurt, Hello to Healing: Part 1

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25).

Life is full of hurts, but Jesus is full of healing.

Ministers, their spouses, and families are not exempt from being hurt. As we move into a new year, now is the time to examine the hurts of your past and find freedom in forgiveness.

How does hurt come?

## **Identifying the Sources of Our Hurts**

Who hurt you? Was it a parent, family member, spouse, children, friend, fellow minister, board member, or congregants? The closer the relationship, the deeper the hurt.

The wife of Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, said concerning her husband: “His biographers will tell of how he helped the laborers carry buckets of water, but no one will ever know that he never gave his wife a rest and never – in all these 32 years – gave his child a drink of water or spent 5 minutes by his bedside to give me a chance to rest a little from all my labors.”

Ministers are not immune to hurts caused by others. And some spouses, even of ministers, might identify with the remarks of Mrs. Tolstoy.

Pastors can also hurt themselves.

Many years ago I stood at the rim of the Grand Canyon. About two or three feet from the ledge a rock island rose from the canyon floor. Its flat surface was level with the ground I stood on. Over time, people had tossed coins onto this island. Suddenly, a 6-year-old child ran from the crowd, jumped over to this rock island, and started scooping up the coins. Along with others, I watched paralyzed with fear for this child's safety. His mother screamed, "Johnny, get back here." With his pockets full of coins, and without hesitation, he immediately leapt back to our side.

I thought later, What if he had missed on the return jump? Would his mother ever be able to forgive herself for her instinctive reaction and for not waiting for expert help to arrive to extract her son from that place of danger?

Forgiving others may be easier than forgiving ourselves.

We may also feel God has caused or permitted some of our hurts.

Early in David Wilkerson's ministry a pastor friend was backing his car out of the driveway and ran over his toddler. David Wilkerson wrestled with how God could have permitted this to happen to his friend, and his despair almost drove him from the ministry and effective service to Christ.

### **The Price of Unforgiveness**

Seldom do we discuss the high price for unforgiveness, but consider the consequences for harboring grievances:

- The fruit of the Spirit ebbs away.
- Indifference or hatred displaces love.
- Bitterness or depression displaces joy.
- Anxiety displaces peace.
- Short-temperedness displaces patience.
- Hard-heartedness or indifference displaces kindness.
- Meanness or a get-even attitude displaces goodness.

- A demanding nature displaces gentleness.
- Resignation from responsibility displaces self-control.
- When we do not forgive, we can easily blame someone else for our condition.

When we do, we forsake our responsibility to control our own responses. Basilea Schlink, founder of the charismatic Lutheran community of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary in Darmstadt, Germany, tells the story of Plumb Orchard in her book, *Realities*. The Sisterhood needed the property next to their community to expand their ministry, but the owner refused to sell. The sister who tried to negotiate never made it past this woman's front door.

One day, the woman's great nephew met the sister at the door and let her in. In his great-aunt's room she understood why they were having problems purchasing the property. The room was crowded with inherited furniture – enough to fill a house – and most of it was dilapidated. One room had 13 mattresses stacked one on top of another – a stepladder was required to reach the top.

As the sisters began to pray, the Lord began to deal with them about inviting Him to judge their own lives in relationship to what they saw in another's. They had no estate to manage, but they did have secret attachments – a pretty picture postcard, a certain personal necessity, a little wooden cross. "Oh, I hope the day will never come when God will ask this of me," each said.

But the Spirit impressed them to have a surrender week. Each one was to let loose of her secret attachment. After that week they visited the woman. She had changed her heart.

Basilea Schlink said that experience taught them the power of empathetic forgiveness, and that people cannot make progress when they blame someone else. People must deal with their own attitudes first.

George O. Wood is general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.

---

## Why I Am Expecting Great Things in 2014

How can “something” come from “nothing”? That is the question our atheist and agnostic friends must answer. They agree with us that “something” exists. And when they seek to explain the origin of the universe, they always start with “something,” usually the various forms of matter and energy necessary to provide the explosive power for the Big Bang. But where did that original matter and energy come from?

The noted Christian philosopher, the late Frances Schaeffer, use to challenge his atheist opponents to explain how “something” could come from what he called “nothing, nothing.” To illustrate what he meant by “nothing, nothing” he would draw a circle on the chalk board and say that it represented “nothing.” He would then erase the circle and say, “This is ‘nothing, nothing.’” He said that no atheist or naturalist had been able to explain to him how “something” could come from “nothing, nothing.”

The Big Bang theory, that is very popular today in the scientific community and with popular culture, begins with “something.” We are told that at some point many billions of years ago all the matter and energy of space was contained at one small and single point. But where did this matter and energy come from? For a reason that no one can explain, we are told that this already existing matter and energy began to suddenly and rapidly expand into our universe, *i.e.*, the Big Bang. But as one scientist was honest enough to admit, “What existed prior to this event is completely unknown and is a matter of pure speculation.”

So where did the “something”—the matter and energy—that are the basic building blocks of the universe come from? Genesis 1:1 says, *In the beginning God . . .* The Christian view is that God created the heavens and the earth *ex nihilo*, which is Latin meaning “out of nothing.” Only God has such creative power. Only God is infinite and eternal while the physical universe is temporal and contingent. The Bible teaches that the universe, not only had a beginning from nothing, but that it is also continually dependent on God’s sustaining power for its ongoing existence.

This wonderful Creator God has made Himself known to us in the person of Jesus Christ. He is our personal God. So in the coming New Year let’s TRUST Him, as never before, for our every need, aspiration and desire.

Let’s remember that our God is a creator and can make “something” out of “nothing.” He can take a “nobody” and make them into a “somebody.” He can turn darkness into light and curses into blessings. I pray that by the end of 2014 there will be something good in your life that today does not exist, because our God can still make “something” out of “nothing.” Our God is the Almighty Creator and that is why I am expecting great things in 2014!

**Eddie L. Hyatt** is a board member of *God’s Word to Women*, an organization that is lifting the status of women around the world by teaching them their equal standing and status in Jesus Christ. His website is [www.godswordtowomen.com](#). The website for *God’s Word to Women* is [www.godswordtowomen.com](#).