

Why the Reconnection Between Jews and Gentiles Became Necessary

In our monthly webinar, Grant Berry provided some background on the disconnection in “The One New Man” in God’s family and why it needs mending. He presented the image of a foundation crack that could weaken the integrity of a structure, comparing it to a fracture in the foundation of the present-day church.

The fracture represents the disconnection of the church away from Israel and its Hebraic roots and heritage that began to infiltrate the early church and became more widespread through the ages. As the ancestral church emerged and established itself as a world religion, it erroneously severed these ties.

A disconnection was acquired that became ingrained in the church’s theology and spiritual DNA, and the church lost its true identity in and with Israel. It is important to repair this breach, especially now as Israel awakens spiritually to Yeshua/Jesus, and God looks to restore the Jewish people.

Panelists addressed two questions that further explain the disconnection and its effect on Jewish believers in Yeshua after Rome nationalized the church.

1. What is the disconnection in God’s family? We have to remember that Yeshua/Jesus was Jewish, and Messiah was sent by God to the Jewish people first (see Jer. 31:31-34). The early disciples and followers of Yeshua were also Jewish. The movement at that time was considered a sect of Judaism. It was called the “Way,” (see Acts 9:2), and they were called the “Nazarenes” (see Acts 24:5). But as we know, it did not remain strictly Jewish, especially after the apostle Peter received

direction from the Lord to embrace the Gentiles (see Acts 10). Then Paul was sent by God as an apostle to the nations (see Rom. 11:13). Through him and other disciples, the gospel spread throughout the world, and Gentiles subsequently became the dominant force in the church. In the first couple of centuries, we find Christianity drifting away from its Hebraic roots and Israel.

In the second and third centuries, a new theology began to creep into the Gentile church, later known as Replacement Theology. This belief maintains that the church has inherited all of Israel's covenants and promises. The church thus took the place of Israel in the Bible and became the "New Israel," and the theory claims that God is in effect finished with His first-born children or has relegated them to just another people group.

Anti-Jewish teachings and sentiment gained momentum in the church, especially from the Romans, giving rise to rulings decreed at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 when Rome nationalized the church under Emperor Constantine. Some positive outcomes resulted from the council, including affirmation of the deity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity. However, there was unfortunately a negative influence as well. This council and ones that followed established Christianity as a distinct religion apart from its Jewish heritage. The church severed ties with its Jewish roots and Jewish practice, and Israel. Replacement Theology unyoked the church's identity in and with Israel that is now interwoven into the fabric of the church. These beliefs have dominated church theology for more than 1700 years despite God's promises in Scripture to restore Israel.

2. What were the choices for Jewish people who came to faith in Yeshua after the church merged with Rome? After the church was nationalized and wiped away these influences, Jewish believers in Yeshua had little choice on how to practice their faith. They had to adopt Christian customs and abandon Jewish

traditions God had established for them or suffer the consequences.

The assimilation of Jewish believers into the Gentile Church was a far cry from the early church. There, they celebrated their Jewish identity, along with believing Gentiles who were grafted into Israel and appreciative of also inheriting nearly all of Israel's covenants and promises. Jews and Gentiles were united by faith in Yeshua/Jesus and linked to Hebraic traditions. This love and unity established at that time is a pattern for believers today: Coming together as one—united in Yeshua/Jesus—in the family of believers as “The One New Man.” This body of believers had the fullness of the glory of God upon them, and together they changed the world!

God Now Looks to Restore the Former Glory for Our Future Glory

God is shifting us into the time of the fullness of the Gentiles as well as Israel's salvation. This is the moment to restore family unity. Our reconnection to one another as Jewish and Gentile believers must include love, honor and respect for each other as well as acceptance of our Jewish-believing family to express their heritage and traditions as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

The church can emerge and once again reflect the fullness of the glory of God that it has been missing through:

- Reconstructing God's design for love and unity in the *ekklesia*/church.
- Eradicating the replacement theological error along with all influences of antisemitism.
- Rediscovering the church's connection to Israel and Jewish roots of the faith.
- A strong foundation, reunited body and restored identity ultimately will lead to Israel's salvation and the salvation

of the nations, which will usher in the Lord's return.

To watch the webinar, please click here. {eoa}

The Romans 911 Project Webinar is a new one-of-a-kind virtual meeting for the ekklesia/church where believers from around the globe can enter into a deeper dialogue on The One New Man (TONM) issues. This webinar provides a platform to delve into the many issues affecting unity between Messianic and Gentile believers.

Romans 911 issues a call to transform and mobilize the ekklesia/church at this most crucial time in history to prepare the bride individually and corporately for the Lord's return through a reunited body of Jewish and Gentile believers as well as with all races and tongues according to John 17. The emerging movement in the body to reconnect God's family is a vitally important transaction, having profound end-time consequences. For more information and to join The R911 Project monthly Webinar, please visit {eoa}

*Author and speaker **Grant Berry** is the founder of Reconnecting Ministries and producer of The Romans 911 Project. Grant is a Messianic believer in Yeshua/Jesus and is promoting a new message into the body of Messiah/Christ during these last days, known as "The Reconnection." The Reconnection is a term used to describe the reuniting and reconciliation of Jewish and Gentile believers and all races and tongues into John 17 love and unity in "The One New Man" now that Israel's awakening is upon us. The Romans 911 Project has been created to bring The Reconnection message to light, which has primarily been hidden in the mystery of Israel's restoration according to Romans 11:25-27. For more information and a special offer on The Romans 911 Project, please visit*

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Connecting the Bible to 21st-Century Culture

Many of us are familiar with the Judaism of the Bible, but few of us understand how it has developed over time and how it differs today. We also struggle to reconcile the early church we read about in the book of Acts with the typical western church of today.

A brief overview of the development of these two faiths and their interaction will help connect the Bible to today.

Judaism

When Jesus walked this earth, the headquarters for Judaism was in Jerusalem, where the temple system was in full operation. There were several Jewish sects at the time and Jesus often interacted with them.

The most prominent Jewish sect in the New Testament was the Pharisees. These were the rabbis who focused on teaching the people how to observe the law of Moses. Different schools of thought existed within this sect regarding the interpretation and application of the law. Jesus sometimes spoke against the hypocrites in their ranks, and because of this, Bible readers tend to view this sect negatively. However, their contemporaries viewed them as respected spiritual leaders, and Jesus actually agreed with much of their teachings.

The second sect mentioned in the New Testament is the Sadducees. They were primarily made up of the aristocratic priestly class and were found mainly in Jerusalem, where they oversaw the temple and the sacrificial system. The Sadducees strictly followed the law of Moses but disagreed with the

Pharisees over the authority of the oral law. They were often accused of corruption due to the overbearing temple tax system that enriched them and their leadership in the Sanhedrin, which had a quasi-governing role under the Roman authorities.

The Fall of Jerusalem's Impact on Judaism

In A.D. 70, after a three-year siege of Jerusalem, Roman forces destroyed the city, including the temple and thus the headquarters of the Jewish faith. Without a temple, the priesthood and the sacrificial system came to a halt.

The destruction of Jerusalem was devastating to Judaism—it dispersed the people and their leaders and, as a result, changed the mosaic of Judaism. The only sect that survived was the Pharisaic tradition of Judaism, which became known as rabbinic Judaism. A rabbinical center in the Galilee and another one in ancient Babylon led in the development of a Jewish faith that could be practiced outside of the land of Israel and without a temple sacrificial system. Rabbinic Judaism later split into the major streams seen today, some of which are more orthodox—even ultraorthodox—and others that are less strict and more assimilated, but it helped Judaism to adopt and survive in exile.

Christianity

The destruction of Jerusalem also affected the early church which had started out as a Jewish movement headquartered there. Eventually, Gentiles began accepting Christ, and many of the epistles in the New Testament reflect the difficulty of unifying Jew and Gentile within the churches. As these churches throughout the Roman Empire became increasingly Gentile, they began losing their understanding of and appreciation for the Jewish roots of their faith.

Because of the destruction of Jerusalem as well as growing persecution of Christians there was now no centralized Jewish leadership with the authority to steer the growth of this new

faith. Instead, leadership centers developed in Antioch, Alexandria and Rome.

Tension also arose between the mainstream Jewish world and the Jewish followers of Jesus, who were resented for having fled the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. When they then refused to follow Simon Bar Kokhba as Messiah, in a revolt against the Romans in A.D. 132, the division turned to bloodshed. The split between the church and the synagogue was final.

The Roman Empire had considered Judaism a legal religion, and once Christianity was considered a separate faith, it was deemed illegal and was greatly persecuted. But all that changed in the fourth century when the Emperor Constantine became a Christian, and within a few decades, Christianity was declared the state religion of the Roman Empire.

Christians now had the upper hand and began to distinguish their faith from that of the Jews. Their preaching against the Jewish faith birthed a new theology—supersessionism, known today as replacement theology—that proclaimed the church had replaced the Jewish people in God's plans and purposes. That theology and a teaching of contempt for the Jewish people produced centuries of laws that denigrated the Jewish people.

This sad history of Christian antisemitism paved the way for the Nazis' final solution—the extermination of the Jewish people. While space does not allow a full explanation of the full history and development of Christian antisemitism, it is important that Christians today know of its existence and the importance of standing against it.

The tide began to change some 500 years ago when the Bible was translated into the vernacular and the printing press produced mass quantities. For the first time in many centuries, Christians could read the Bible for themselves and learn of the Jewish roots of their faith and the eternal promises God made to the Jewish people.

Jewish-Christian Relations

We are especially blessed to be part of that Bible-based segment of Christendom—evangelical Christianity—and engage the Jewish people today with respect and honor. Evangelical Christianity is the fastest-growing segment of Christianity and will one day be the largest. It is largely philosemitic and approaches the Jewish people with respect, if not fervent love and support.

It is a privilege to be part of this generation of Christianity and a new day in Jewish-Christian relations.
{eoa}

Dr. Susan Michael is USA director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and host of the Out of Zion podcast. To understand this history better, listen to the Connecting the Bible to Today series on the Out of Zion podcast.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Messianic Rabbi: Why the Book of Esther Should Never Have Been in the Bible

Every year in early spring, Jewish people all around the world gather together to celebrate the miraculous victory of the Jewish people over the evil Haman. Without a doubt, the story

of Esther is one of the most exciting narratives in the Bible.

But, should the book of Esther even be in the Bible? Now, before you click away angrily and reject what is said, please consider reading the whole article.

To begin, let me say that over the years many people have questioned if the book of Esther should be included in the canon of the Bible. One reason for questioning the inclusion is that Esther is the only book in the Bible that doesn't include G-D in the text. Other modern discussions relate to the fact that the book of Esther was not found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, neither of those is the reason I am saying the book of Esther should never have been included in the Bible.

To lay the groundwork for my statement, we must look in the book of Esther itself. In Esther 3:1 (TLV), we read these words:

“Sometime later King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, elevating him and setting his chair above all the officials who were with him.”

With these words, we are introduced to the villain Haman. But, as you read these introductory words, we are informed that Haman was an Agagite, our first clue that this book should not have been in the Bible. In order to understand what I am talking about, we must look back and find out who the Agagites were. So, let's read from the book of 1 Samuel 15:

Then Samuel said to Saul, “Adonai sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, listen to the voice of the words of Adonai! Thus says Adonai-Tzva'ot: ‘I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike down Amalek and put all he has under the ban of destruction—so have no pity on him; but kill both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and sheep, camels

and donkeys'" (vv. 1-3).

Notice that Saul was instructed by G-D to utterly destroy Amalek. However, if we read on in 1 Samuel 15:

"He captured King Agag of Amalek alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag as well as the best of the sheep, the cattle, even the fatlings and the lambs, and all that was good, since they were not willing to utterly destroy them; everything that was worthless and feeble, they destroyed completely" (vv. 8-9).

As you read these verses, notice the name of the king of Amalek, Agag. Saul chose to disobey G-D's direct command and instead spared Agag's life. Although Samuel does kill Agag later in the chapter, it is because Saul didn't obey G-D that the line of Agag survived. So, in Esther we read about Haman the Agagite, a descendant of Amalek, trying to exterminate the Jews.

Another other thing to consider as we read Esther is that because Saul refused to completely exterminate Amalek, the enemy of Israel, Amalek attempted to completely exterminate the Jews. If Saul had obeyed G-D and destroyed Amalek as he was commanded to, the book of Esther would never have been in the Bible; hence the book of Esther should never have been in the Bible.

Two closing thoughts: First, if you read closely, you will note in 1 Samuel 10 that Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and if you read in Esther 2, Esther is also from the tribe of Benjamin. Isn't it interesting that G-D used Esther from the tribe of Benjamin to save the Jewish people from the failure of Saul from the tribe of Benjamin?

Second, while the book of Esther should never have been in the Bible, it is in the Bible. The book exists to not just show the power of G-D, but to show the *redemptive* power of G-D.

Each of us has failed G-D in one way or another and, when our life's book is written, there will be many chapters that should never have been included in our life's story.

Many of us get all caught up and weighted down by our failures. But, just as the Bible includes the book of Esther, our life's book also included the story of G-D's redemptive and restorative work. Each year as we gather together to celebrate Purim, the Feast of Esther, we should also take the time to recognize and celebrate the times that G-D turned around our failures and made them victories. {eoa}

Eric Tokajer is the author of *Overcoming Fearlessness*, *What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?*, *With Me in Paradise*, *Transient Singularity*, *OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry*, *#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer*, *Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians* and *Galatians in Context*.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Apostle John Eckhardt: Prayers That Teach You How to Plug into God's Power Source

The source of our power in prayer is twofold: the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. We build ourselves up in faith when we

confess the Word of God. We experience greater confidence when we understand the Word and walk in revelation.

Before we can pray effectively, we must be saved. The new birth is a necessity. We also need the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Are you born again? Do you know beyond a doubt that you are saved? In addition, we must live holy lives that are submitted to the Holy Spirit. We are commanded to walk in the Spirit. This will assure us of continual victory and breakthroughs for others. Jesus cast out devils through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28). The Holy Spirit was the source of His power and wisdom. The tool that plugs us into the power source is prayer. Prayer connects us to God and allows His power to flow to us in any situation.

Prayers that teach us how to plug into the power source—God's Holy Spirit and God's Word—are not for religious people. They are not religious prayers that begin to work when someone recites them. These prayers are for born-again believers who desire to see the growth of the kingdom of God.

God Will Teach You How to War

We are told to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10). We walk and war in His strength through prayer. This requires humility and total dependence on God. We are not confident in our own strength. We cannot allow pride to open the door for destruction.

The Lord is a man of war (Exod. 15:3). He will fight our battles. We depend on His power and direction. We depend on His Word and His Spirit. Our dependence is born out of humility. We know that God gives grace to the humble.

The Lord is the strength of my life. This gives me the ability to overcome all fear. I will put my trust in Him. Trusting God was the key to David's victories. David was a king who lived in Old Testament times and knew how to depend on the Lord. David won many battles and overcame all his enemies.

The Lord taught David how to war (Ps. 144:1). He will also teach you how to war. You must depend on Him. I and my ministry team have learned to pray from years of warring and trusting in God. God taught us how to war using His Word. The Holy Spirit opened our eyes to great truths, and we are still learning through experience. We know that if we call upon the Lord, He will show us great and mighty things.

The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. A sword is used in war. The Lord will teach you how to use this sword. You will use it against the spiritual enemies of your soul. You will see great victories as you use it correctly. The Word of God is our source of wisdom. We operate in God's wisdom to defeat the powers of hell.

Confessing the Word of God is an important part of every believer's spiritual life. Christianity is called the great confession. Salvation comes from confessing with the mouth. The mouth is connected to the heart. The Word of God released from your mouth will be planted in your heart. Faith is released from the mouth. The mouth can release only what is in the heart. Faith in the heart that is released through the mouth can move mountains.

God is the source of all our victories and breakthrough. He is the source of our wisdom and strategies. His Word is the source for our understanding of the warfare in which we are involved. Our warfare originates in the heavens. We bind what is already bound in the heavens. We loose what is already loosed in the heavens. God has illuminated many Scriptures to us over the years as we have been involved in deliverance and warfare. These Scriptures have been invaluable in helping us experience breakthrough.

The Word of God is a treasure chest of wisdom and knowledge. It contains an abundance of revelation for every believer. Every believer who desires to enjoy liberty and victory must take time to study the Word of God and ask for revelation.

Revelation is the key to authority in prayer.

God has promised to make us joyful in the house of prayer (Isa. 56:7). God's house is called a house of prayer for all nations. I believe we should not only pray but also enjoy praying. Prayer should yield an abundance of miracles and rewards. Those who enjoy the results of prayer will enjoy an exciting life. {eoa}

The preceding is an excerpt from John Eckhardt's book Prayers That Rout Demons (Charisma House, 20087). For more information or to purchase the book, please visit .

Apostle **John Eckhardt** is overseer of Crusaders Ministries, located in Chicago, Illinois. Gifted with a strong apostolic call, he has ministered throughout the United States and overseas in more than forty nations. He is a sought-after international conference speaker, has authored more than twenty books and produces a daily radio broadcast. His television program Perfecting the Saints is seen weekly throughout the United States on the WORD Network. Eckhardt resides in the Chicago area with his wife, Wanda, and their five children.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Why Believers Should Join the

Jewish People This Month in Celebrating Esther's Courage

This month, the Jewish world is celebrating a story in the Bible that relays how they were saved from annihilation. It's a story most Christians are familiar with but probably do not celebrate it as we should.

The Story of Esther

The story happens during the reign of the all-powerful king of Persia, Ahasuerus (Xerxes). He banishes his queen, Vashti, for failing to appear before him when asked and selects Esther, a beautiful Jewish maiden, to replace her. The king also promotes Haman, an Agagite (likely meaning an Amalekite, the archenemies of the Jews), to the highest position in his royal staff and commands everyone to bow down to him and pay him homage.

Esther's cousin and adoptive father, Mordecai, refuses to bow down—so Haman plots Mordecai's death and the extermination of *all* the Jews. Mordecai calls on Queen Esther to save her people (Esth. 4:8), saying those infamous words: "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:14, NKJV).

Esther risks the king's wrath by boldly appearing before him. She invites the king and Haman to two banquets where she persuades the king to save her people: "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request" (Esth. 7:3). Then she reveals Haman's evil plot. The king has Haman hung on the gallows Haman had constructed for Mordecai (Esth. 8:11). But a royal decree can not be rescinded, so a second decree is issued, allowing the Jews to defend themselves against any attackers. Hence, the Jews celebrate

their survival each year in the festival of Purim.

The Significance of This Event

We love the story of Esther and quote Esther 4:14 “for such a time as this” to encourage ourselves and others that we too are called to God’s kingdom for this time in history and need to rise to the occasion, no matter what the challenge is. However, few of us understand the significance of what happened and the threat to the Jews of Persia in the story because we don’t know the context.

In the twenty-first century, we have almost 200 different countries in the world, so we read the story as a threat to Jews in a certain nation—for example, the Jews of France.

What we don’t understand is that the Persian Empire was the largest empire in history at its time and stretched all the way from India in the East to Ethiopia in the West. Therefore, the Jews of Persia made up almost all the Jews of the world.

If Haman had succeeded in annihilating the Jews of Persia, the Bible would have ended there. God’s promises to use the people of Israel to bless all the families of the world, and His promise to send them a Messiah, would have all died with them.

Without Esther, the New Testament story could not have taken place. Five hundred years later, there would have been no Jewish Joseph and Mary, 12 disciples, or the apostle Paul. Most importantly, Jesus would have never been born, much less die on the cross, for the salvation of the world.

This month, let’s join the Jewish people in celebrating the miracle wrought through the courage and intervention of Queen Esther. When you do, take a quick read through the book of her story, and you will better understand why she had to risk her life to save the Jewish people—and why God positioned her at just that place to be able to do so.

Then ask God why have you been born into the world at this time. His answer just might surprise you. {eoa}

Dr. Susan Michael is USA director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and host of the Out of Zion podcast. Subscribe to the Out of Zion podcast. Text "zion" to 72572 to receive an alert each Friday with her Shabbat Shalom devotional and end your week with a little peace.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

If You Want To Live in Good Health, It All Starts With This Spiritual Discipline

Losing an extreme amount of weight isn't just a physical issue. I've lost 250 pounds but it was, and still is, a very spiritual issue. I wanted to lose weight, eat healthy and exercise but no matter what diet I went on, even if I lost weight, I couldn't seem to keep it off. I didn't want to go back to eating whatever I wanted to eat whenever I wanted it, but I always did.

What was so confusing to me is why I did this when I really, really, really wanted to lose weight. It was because I really, really, really wanted to eat what I wanted as well. No matter what I did, I still found ways to eat what I wanted. My foundational lie that I needed sugar to survive was stubbornly in place.

The Search for Truth

In Romans 7:22-25 (NLT), Paul recognizes there is another power operating inside him, fighting against what he knows is right. This other power is an unwelcome intruder in his humanity, his flesh, his body. This is an agonizing or miserable situation. If left to himself, he will align with things that lead to sin or disobedience to God.

I had accepted Christ when I was seven, so I couldn't understand why I couldn't access His mighty power to triumph over the weight and sin, which so easily seemed to entangle me as Hebrews 12:1 (NIV) says. I had Jesus, but I hadn't grabbed hold of the total breadth of what living for Him meant.

Jesus overcame sin and death, a very unwelcome intruder in my life, but I still have to make the choice every day. I can follow Christ and live by the power of the Holy Spirit or I can choose to live according to my selfish, fleshly desires.

Living By the Flesh

Our flesh is the default pattern of our lives. "If left to myself, my flesh is aligned with the law of sin," (Rom. 7:25, TPT). Satisfying our desires is what we will always go back to, even if we have accepted Christ.

When we accept Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit, the power which raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11, NLT). We have to activate our desire to live for Him by committing ourselves to live according to the Holy Spirit's power. Until we commit to doing that, we will still be back in the confusion and conundrum of Romans 7:19: "The good I want to do, I don't do. The wrong I don't want to do, I do."

I was stuck there for many years, but I also desperately wanted to activate the full power of the Holy Spirit in my life. To do this, I was going to have to surrender everything to God, even the foods I loved.

The Profound Experience

Russ Hardesty was holding an informational meeting for a new group he was forming for individuals with harmful life patterns. He shared his story of being sober from alcohol for over 20 years.

All of a sudden, I heard Russ say something that felt like it was meant just for me. The words seemed to come out of the blue and unattached to his story. He said, "Alcohol is one molecule away from sugar. Alcohol is liquid sugar." Those words grabbed me and wouldn't let go. He had my total attention.

The truth hit me square in the face. I am like an alcoholic, only with sugar. I crave it all the time. I can't stop eating foods that have processed sugar in them, even though I know a cardiac surgeon has told me I will die if I don't keep the weight off. I am a bona fide, die-hard sugar addict.

Sugar Controlled Me

At this time, I hadn't heard anything about sugar addiction. However, right then, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt I was a sugar addict, even if it wasn't something any experts recognized as an issue. At the end of the meeting, I asked, "Can a person be addicted to sugar?"

He said, "You can be addicted to anything which controls you."

Those words sealed it for me. Sugar controlled me. It mastered me. It called the shots in my life. It told me what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat and never to stop eating.

I had willingly allowed sugar to put me in bondage. It started as something fun to do like baking cookies with Grandma. I saw how sugar had cozied up to me and made me feel like I couldn't live without it, just like a manipulative lover might. All the time, sugar was a tool of evil out to destroy me.

Time for Surrender

I was driving home after the meeting, but I was crying so hard I had to pull off to the side of the road. I said, "God, I have believed the lie that said I have to have sugar to survive. I have set sugar, the foods I crave and my appetite up as my god instead of You. Right now, in this minute and this place, I surrender sugar to you. I no longer want sugar to be my god. I want to follow only You."

This was my come-to-Jesus moment. It was as real or even more real than my salvation experience. I was a grown woman facing the results of my sin and rebellion against God. It was the start of my journey toward transformation. It was the start of my weight-loss journey, but also of a closer walk with my God that fills my soul with His sweetness. {eoa}

This article first appeared on .

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of six books and two study guides, including her No. 1 bestseller, Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds. Her sixth book, Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds, is live on Amazon. She blogs at . She is also a Christian weight-loss coach (check out her coaching group at Overcomers Academy) and speaker. Don't miss her podcast, Sweet Grace for Your Journey, available on CPN.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS..

10 Leadership Lessons We Can

Learn from Ukrainian President Zelensky

The historic global rise of Ukrainian President Zelensky is replete with applicable leadership lessons for all. His story is so compelling thus far that at this point, in my opinion, he is the leading candidate for TIME magazine's "Person of the Year."

The following are 10 leadership lessons based upon observing his life:

1. It is never too late to pivot toward your greater purpose: Zelensky, born January 25, 1978, is a former Ukrainian actor and comedian who is the sixth and current president of Ukraine. At about the age of 41, he pivoted, shifting his career and defeated an incumbent, Petro Poroshenko, becoming the president of Ukraine in 2019. Hence, he completely redirected his life at mid-age, showing that it is never too late to redefine yourself and fulfill your highest purpose.

2. You never know your leadership capacity until a crisis hits: As Winston Churchill manifested his greatness during WWII and was rejected during peacetime, Zelensky's courage and leadership abilities have manifested during the greatest crisis in Europe since WWII. History has shown that a huge crisis usually reveals the destiny and capability of its leaders.

3. Life is not worth living if it's not worth dying for something: A U.S official confirmed that Ukraine President Zelensky rejected an offer from the American government to evacuate Kyiv. A senior American intelligence official with direct knowledge of the conversation quoted the president who said, "the fight is here" and that he needed anti-tank ammunition, "not a ride." He refused to escape despite the

fact there have been numerous assassination attempts upon his life, in addition to the threat of war, which also directly impacts his family. Thus, Zelensky has demonstrated that he will die for his nation's freedom.

4. Despite all odds, take your stand for truth: When a great leader strongly believes in something, his commitment to the cause overcomes any inherent fear that can cause him to overthink or calculate based on the percentages for success and failure. He and Ukraine are like David fighting the Goliath-like Russian army to many. Nobody gave the Ukrainian army much of a chance, yet they are still resisting the Russian military, both on the ground and in the air, at the time of this writing!

5. One person's courage can inspire billions of people: Zelensky and his beloved Ukraine have already inspired billions of people worldwide, whether they ultimately win or lose the war! Consequently, Vladimir Putin and Russia have already become worldwide pariahs attacking a sovereign nation.

6. Never negotiate a compromise with your enemy: When Russian President Putin offered to negotiate with Zelensky, the Ukrainian president refused to negotiate any deals without a ceasefire and the immediate pullout of all Russian troops. He knew that anything less than that was not worth negotiating since it would have compromised their national sovereignty.

7. You must stand for truth, even if all your allies abandon you: Zelensky has taken a bold stand against Russia, despite feeling abandoned by the United States and other western nations who pledged their military support. Some of their aid came much too late!

8. Never take the easy way out if it compromises you: Zelensky could have compromised before the Russian attack by pledging that Ukraine would never join NATO. He could have also escaped with his family before the war broke out. However, he probably

would not have been able to live with himself if he did not remain faithful to his values.

9. Peace and safety should not be the ultimate priority:

Unfortunately, history has illustrated that many people would surrender their freedom for peace and safety. Conversely, the American Revolutionary War was won because they had people like Patrick Henry, who famously said in a speech, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Similarly, during one Zoom meeting, President Zelensky told world leaders that that might be the last time they see him alive. If his highest priority were merely peace and safety, he would have immediately surrendered his nation to Russia when the war commenced. Thankfully, he exhibits the attitude of one who values freedom over mere peace and safety!

10. When you take a stand, others will come out of hiding to support you:

A few days ago, after an inspiring speech from President Zelensky, approximately 16,000 fighters from foreign nations volunteered to fight for Ukraine. This new development enabled the Ukrainian army to increase its fighting and weapons capacity with people they never knew before. This happened because people often will follow a compelling vision from inspired visionary leaders who will stand despite the odds stacked against them. {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Parents, Teachers Call Out

Abusive Indoctrination in Explosive Documentary

The COVID pandemic has a silver lining: Parents are finally awakening to how their children are being miseducated and indoctrinated in many of America's schools, and good teachers are at last recognizing that their unions are the culprit.

Now, a groundbreaking documentary will educate millions to the threat posed by a corrupt system run by unions. Many private schools are also being invaded by this extreme agenda. In response, parents and teachers are among the most outspoken people on screen helping to educate the public in *"Whose Children Are They?"*

"The [curricula] actually sexualizes and grooms children to be comfortable with sexual terms and sexual conversations," says April Gallant, a parent with United Families International and former classroom teacher.

"They're teaching these kids X-rated sex acts," says Ellen Graham, a Colorado single mother of a special needs child.

Another mother, Kim Brummet, says, "One of the activities was so appalling that I said they surely would never do this."

The documentary will be released in theaters nationwide on March 14, 2022 through Fathom Events. Tickets are available to purchase [here](#).

Viewers are warned about some shocking footage taken directly from lessons being used with many schoolchildren. Offensive materials include X-rated cartoons and obscene passages from books.

"When I share with parents about today's sex education, I tell them I'm so sorry," says one of the producers of the

documentary and Parents United Founder Deborah Flora. "I'm sorry you have to be exposed to this explicit and graphic material, but we must know what they're teaching our young children in order for us to protect them."

Flora, a Colorado mother, introduced Sex Ed Transparency legislation to make it easier for parents to see the explicit material to which their children are being exposed. After it was defeated, she determined to get the information directly to the parents through "Whose Children Are They?" with her husband Jonathan Flora, an award-winning writer, director and producer.

A number of minority parents are featured who are appalled at the racist messages sent through critical race theory and other "equity" education.

"We have these union teachers that feel that they have the right to tell an entire class of mostly Hispanic children to look at themselves in the mirror, that they are worthless," said Theressah Rodriguez, a California mother who, with her husband Victor, appears in the documentary.

Several speakers explain the difference between "equal opportunity," which is a noble cause, and educational "equity," which reinforces racism.

"It trains white children to see themselves as oppressors," says Cicely Davis, former state director of Blexit Minnesota. "Therefore, they should feel guilty. So not only are they taught to be oppressors... they're also supposed to walk around with an endless, relentless guilt. For children of color, they're taught that they're victims and that they are born into a system to which they can't overcome."

One of the most powerful sequences is when two mothers are obscured in a dark frame to maintain anonymity. One describes the moment she realized that, without her knowledge or consent, her five-year-old daughter was taught that she could

actually be a boy.

“My daughter was taking a bath. She got up out of the water and her hair was slicked back and she saw a reflection of herself in the drain of the bathtub. And she started shaking and crying because she thought that she looked like a boy. And she was like, ‘Mommy, I don’t wanna be a boy. I turned into a boy, Mommy, I don’t wanna be a boy.’ It was watching her go through that that I realized that this lesson that was taught to my child was not a lesson about acceptance or love. It was a lesson that caused her to have a lot of fear and confusion.”

Also serving as producer is Rebecca Friedrichs, founder of For Kids and Country, and author of *Standing Up to Goliath*, which first gave voice to teachers exposing the radical sexualized lessons and racially divisive policies in America’s schools. Mrs. Friedrichs, who taught for 28 years, served as plaintiff in the 2016 U.S. Supreme Court case *Friedrichs v. California Teachers’ Association*, which blazed the trail for ending forced unionization of teachers and government employees.

“‘Whose Children Are They?’ amplifies the voices of parents and teachers who’ve risen up in defense of children and our culture,” said Rebecca Friedrichs. “Draconian COVID school policies, supported by teacher unions, awakened a sleeping giant. ‘Whose Children Are They?’ will help us galvanize our forces and multiply our movement for kids and country, so we can restore our authority and redeem America’s schools.”

Produced by an all-star production team, “*Whose Children Are They?*” features brave teachers, emboldened parents and frontline experts who show how schools are corrupting children sexually and indoctrinating them into believing that America is systemically racist, boys can be girls and that Marxism and socialism are morally superior to free-market economies.

The team also includes executive producer Gerald Molen, the Academy Award-winning producer of *Schindler’s List* and other

blockbusters including *Jurassic Park*, *Minority Report*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Amistad*, *Twister* and *Rain Man*.

In addition to Mrs. Flora and Mrs. Friedrichs, experts include Dr. Carol Swain, Chicago teacher Joseph Ocol, investigative journalist Alex Newman, Ian Prior of Fight for Schools, Gina Gleason of Real Impact, Mailyn Salabarria, who grew up in communist Cuba and Xi Van Fleet, who grew up in Maoist Red China.

“We’re all standing together as one voice to shine a light on the union’s dark agenda in our schools,” said Mrs. Friedrichs. “Unions have worked for decades to divide us. We will no longer allow that. We’re laboring to restore the sacred Education Triangle: parents, teachers and students working together for excellence.”

For more information about the documentary and to view the 60-second trailer, visit [. To purchase tickets, click here.](#) {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Kingdom Economics: Kingdom Guidance When There Are No Good Choices

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released a strong February Employment Report. Non-farm payrolls were 678,000 (pre-report forecast 400,000), private non-farm payrolls were

654,000 (forecast 380,000), the unemployment rate was 3.8% (forecast 3.9%) and average weekly hours worked were 34.7 hours per week (forecast 34.6 hours).

Average hourly earnings were unchanged from the previous month (forecast 0.5%), but 5.1% higher than 12 months ago (forecast 5.7%). The number of workers is still about two million workers shy of the level seen before the pandemic.

Even though there is evidence that the economy is hot, strong headwinds abound. Some could argue these headwinds are approaching hurricane force. West Texas intermediate crude prices increased about \$25 per barrel this past week. Higher prices in crude oil will filter into higher gasoline, electricity, natural gas, plastic and fertilizer prices, along with the prices of most other products as they face higher transportation costs. This week's trade deficit was a record \$-107.6 billion.

Energy prices were high before the Ukraine war due to the current administration's environmentally green policies. The war has increased energy prices exponentially. The combination of anti-fossil fuel policies and a war have moved the United States from being energy self-sufficient and an exporter of energy, to tapping the strategic petroleum reserve and begging oil-producing nations to produce more oil.

President Biden has no good choices. The United States is currently subsidizing Russia in their war efforts by continuing to import about 10% of our oil from Russia. If the United States were to stop importing Russian oil, \$5 and higher gasoline average prices are a possibility in much of the country. If the President were to reverse his anti-fossil fuel policies, he would lose the support of many in his Democratic party, which would kill future policy initiatives.

Similarly, the Federal Reserve has no good choices. Consumer inflation is at a 40-year high of 7.5%, and producer inflation

is at 9.7%. Their balance sheet has increased about \$5 trillion since the beginning of the pandemic. The federal government increased spending nearly \$2 trillion last year. Inflation can be characterized as too many dollars chasing too few goods.

To control inflation, the Fed must reduce the money supply. Two tools which the Fed has emphasized are increasing interest rates and decreasing their balance sheet—both of which will slow the economy. With the economy facing the joint headwinds of war and exponentially increasing energy prices, the Fed has no good choices.

The Bible is filled with examples of men and women who did not have good choices. Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah, was one such man. Reviewing both the events he faced and his actions can serve as a blueprint for today's kingdom citizens when faced with no good choices.

The Moabites, Ammonites and some Meunites were united and coming to attack Judah. Jehoshaphat was told that a great multitude was coming from beyond the sea to attack him and that they were already about 50 miles away at Engedi. Jehoshaphat was afraid. Some people would have mourned or even frozen in fear.

But he decided to ask the Lord for help through prayer and fasting (2 Chron. 20: 1-4).

Lesson 1: Ask the Lord for help with prayer and fasting. Jehoshaphat then went to the temple to seek the presence of the Lord through the united prayer of believers. He reminded the Lord of His promises, related their circumstances, declared their helplessness before the enemy, petitioned the Lord for His intervention and declared that their eyes were on Him. Through these few short verses, several lessons can be gleaned (2 Chron. 20: 5-12).

Lesson 2: Seek the presence of the Lord through unified

prayer.

Lesson 3: Remember and believe the promises of the Lord.

Lesson 4: Relate your circumstances, state your helplessness, give your request and confess your faith in Him. The Lord, through Jahaziel, told the congregation to not fear because the Lord would fight their battle for them. He told them when and where the enemy would be and that they were to go and watch the deliverance of the Lord. Jehoshaphat and the people of Jerusalem worshiped and praised the Lord. The next day, the worshipers went before the army (2 Chron. 20: 13-21).

Lesson 5: Expect, listen and receive your answer from the Lord.

Lesson 6: Obey any guidance the Lord gives you.

Lesson 7: Thank Him for His answer. They began praising the Lord and the enemy started fighting among themselves until they were destroyed. Corpses were lying everywhere with their spoils. Judah spent three days gathering the spoils. The people of Judah returned to Jerusalem with joy, peace, thankfulness and celebration. Judah's enemies were afraid (2 Chron. 20: 22-34).

Lesson 8: Praise the Lord in the height of the battle.

Lesson 9: Rejoice and celebrate the Lord's victory. But later, Jehoshaphat seemed to forget the Lord's faithfulness. He allied himself with the wicked Ahaziah, king of Israel. The Lord was displeased and destroyed their joint venture (2 Chron. 20: 35-37). The lessons from the life of Jehoshaphat are equally applicable to today, for our King is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Lesson 10: Learn from the experience.

We currently face more nuclear, economic, cultural and political uncertainty than we have seen in decades. Some

events are beyond our control, but they are not beyond God's control.

Now is not a time to be weak and complacent. Current times demand that kingdom citizens be strong, courageous and operate in the full power and authority of sons and daughters of God.

"And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this"? (Esth. 4:14b, NASB). {eoa}

Dr. James Russell is a professor of economics at Oral Roberts University.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Prophetic Warning: The Lord Says, 'Do Not Believe the Lies Over Ukraine'

Note: This prophetic word was released to Hank Kunneman on Feb. 22.

"Do not believe the lies, for even over Ukraine, the media—their mouth is filled. Listen to Me, the media—their mouth is filled with war rhetoric. And there are those who are pushing for war, and there are those who would desire to even make it look like Russia has done something to the Ukrainian people, inside of their borders, to bring them to war. Yet, I am and I have been speaking to the leader of the Bear.

“I’ve been speaking to you, Putin, and you are listening. Therefore, watch. Do not be caught up in the war rhetoric the media is creating. And do not believe when they report certain things that would desire to frame a picture and bring Russia and Ukraine to the place of battle. For My voice is speaking louder, and I am declaring truth. And My truth shall expose the truth over Ukraine.

“My truth shall expose even greater what they have resisted [on]—that which comes by the expression of freedom. And My voice of truth will continue to pull out of their holes, and I will pull the sheets off, and I will continue to show you what has been done in secret.

“You say, ‘But Lord, what good is it if nothing happens?’

“I said, I am the Alpha, I am the Omega—the beginning and end—and I’m everything in-between, and I know exactly what I’m doing, and I declare game over.

“In fact, this which is arising, by way of the expression of liberty and freedom, shall cause it to say, in one nation, ‘Where is our leaders? Are they hiding?’” (To watch this full prophecy, [click here.](#))

Look to the Corner—What Do You See?

Prophecy by Hank Kunneman

Word of the Lord released on Dec. 31, 2020:

“Look to the corner— this corner, that corner, this corner, and the bottom corners. What do you see? *A frame.* And in each corner, there has been Russia, there has been China, there has been Ukraine and you, Iran. And you have framed a picture to try to steal, kill and destroy concerning the United States.

“And you have cooperated and shaken hands with those in the middle of this picture frame, who have been about laundering, trafficking and an agenda to turn this nation into socialism and communism. But listen to Me carefully. What you did not

realize is while you framed your agenda, you didn't get the picture."

A New Ukraine Is Coming

Prophecy by Hank Kunneman

Word of the Lord released on May 5, 2019:

"There shall come a new Ukraine," says the Spirit of God, "in this new era. Ukraine, you shall not be held by the grip of the Bear, Russia. For there is beauty that is coming for the ashes; but watch, from Ukraine shall come truth that shall expose corruption that has been in you, United States, and it is deep and it is far and it is wide; but now it shall come because My Spirit is shedding the light upon the darkness and in the season of the new. Yes, darkness shall be here, but when does darkness outweigh when the light is turned on brighter?" says the Lord.

God Taking the Bear's Claw Out of Ukraine

Prophecy by Hank Kunneman

Word of the Lord released on Dec. 2, 2018:

"Watch, for the Bear is hungry. The Bear has been in hibernation. I speak of Russia. Hungry for power, hungry to appear as strong in the eyes of world power and influence. And so I speak because there is one—Putin, you are thirsty and your pride is driving you to bring Russia back to a place of former. So, your claw reaches into Ukraine, but it is not yours! *It is Mine!* Therefore, as I've done with kings of previous rule and previous nations, I will deal with you, and you will take your claw out of Ukraine, and there shall come a joining, a healing, a uniting that shall take place in you, O blessed Ukraine," says the Spirit of grace. "And you will not place your claws into the Baltic States."

A Revival Coming Out of Ukraine

Prophecy by Hank Kunneman

Word of the Lord released on Dec. 19, 2004:

“A revival shall come out of you, Ukraine, that shall affect Europe and Russia. Even as America has been known for raising up missionaries to go out into the earth, I will place one in a position of power in the natural, and you, Ukraine, shall rejoice, and My church will rejoice, because it will be a sign to you that not only have I heard your prayers, but revival is breaking out in the nation of Ukraine.”

The Spirit of the Lord says, “And I am going to send evangelists, apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors, and they will come out of the Ukraine.”

For the rest of these prophetic words, visit . {eoa}

Hank Kunneman is the senior pastor of Lord of Hosts Church, a thriving church in Omaha, Nebraska, and founder of One Voice Ministries. As an uncompromising voice that God is using to stir up the body of Christ, he is known for a strong prophetic anointing as he preaches. He travels and ministers extensively as he and his wife, Brenda, preach together at conferences, churches and national television programs throughout the United States and overseas. Together, the Kunnemans also host their own nationally and internationally televised weekly program, New Level with Hank and Brenda, airing on Daystar Television Network, Victory Television Network and Faith Broadcasting Network. Pastor Hank is a published author with both *Destiny Image* and *Charisma House*, with his most recent books being *The Lord Himself Is Stepping In*, *Prophecy with the Wind in Your Mouth*, *My Heart Cries Abba Father*, *The Revealer of Secrets*, *Barrier Breakers*, and *Don't Leave God Alone*. He has also written and created several children's books.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.