

Suspect Indicted in Bombing at Messianic Leader's Home

☒ Officials in Israel last week indicted the man accused of sending a bomb to the home of a Messianic minister in March 2008 that nearly killed the pastor's teenage son.

Jack Teitel, 37, was indicted for attempted murder, among other charges, for allegedly sending a bomb hidden in a gift basket to the home of David Ortiz, pastor of a Messianic congregation in Ariel, Israel.

(Photo of Ami Ortiz, Compass Direct News)

The Sacredness of the Torah

Your personal Bible may have a black, brown, blue, or red leather or imitation leather cover. The words may be a fine-print, red-letter edition distinguishing Christ's words. Your translation may be the popular 1611 King James Version, New King James Version, Amplified, or New American Standard. It may have a red ribbon inserted to mark selective passages. Your Bible might be a translation from a language other than English. In the Jewish synagogue, the Torah is in the form of a scroll and not a leather-bound book.

Standing in the Need of Prayer

Job's friends are an example of how not to treat a friend in need. What can we learn from them about how to pray for those we love?

Those of you who know the story of Job, the righteous man God bragged about to Satan, will remember that God gave Satan license to afflict Job. Job lost his possessions and his health. His seven sons and three daughters, for whom he had interceded daily, pleading their cases before God as a defense attorney might plead their cases in court, were killed in a freakish windstorm (see Job 1:18-19).

His wife lost her confidence in the Lord and any respect she had for her husband. She eventually encouraged him to forget his integrity, to "curse God and die" (Job 2:9).

But one of the greatest losses to Job was the loss of relationships. Job's friends became a burden rather than a blessing. Those who should have been sensitive to his need and supportive in their actions during his time of trial only added to his burden. Interestingly, each of them represents a type of friend no one wants when going through trial.

Let's look at Job's friends. Perhaps in them we will learn the behaviors to avoid when our friends are suffering trials. We can develop an earnest desire to become effective prayer advocates when others have walked away.

Eliphaz, Job's Religious Friend

When Job needed loving, practical friends to assist and support him in his hour of need, his friend Eliphaz decided to be "superspiritual" instead. He took it upon himself to bring correction to Job:

“Job, I know you’re in a lot of pain right now, but I’d like to have a word with you. You’ve offered counsel and encouragement to lots of troubled people in the past. And you’ve been the first to support those who have stumbled.

“But now it’s obvious you’re discouraged regarding the trouble that has come to you. I know you think you’re a righteous man. But let me ask you a question: When have you ever heard of an innocent man being destroyed?” (adapted from Job 4:2-7).

Eliphaz was out of touch with the reality of Job’s intense suffering. The unsettling truth about friends who manifest the “I can hear God better than you” syndrome is that many of them have never personally experienced a genuine breaking from God. People with a religious spirit speak out of their soulishness and not from true brokenness.

Job didn’t need religion. He needed relationship. He needed a listening ear, not a sermon. Job needed an intercessor, not an instructor. Eliphaz thought he was serving God, when in fact he was an unknowing pawn of Satan. When called to the witness stand to defend Job, he became a star witness for the prosecution instead.

When we are suffering, may God deliver us from religious friends. Decide right now that when your friends are suffering, you will relate to them with compassion and empathy.

Bildad, Job’s Idealistic Friend

An idealist is defined as “one who adheres to philosophical theories of perfection and excellence and concepts of flawless morality.” This may sound good, but real life isn’t quite this pristine.

When suffering life’s trials, we need neither religious, holier-than-thou friends to scold us nor idealistic friends to rebuke us. Hearing Job’s explanation, Bildad replied: “Job, what you are saying about your situation is nothing but ‘hot

air.'

"God doesn't pervert justice. You know your children died because of their sin. So, I think it's high time that you plead with God for your own life. If you are the righteous man you think you are, He will restore your health and other losses. If history teaches us anything, it teaches us that God won't reject the righteous or bless the wicked" (adapted from Job 8:1-7).

Many Christians today have overlooked the powerful process of suffering and trials that God has designed to produce godliness in each of our lives. Let's not forget that Timothy says, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12, KJV).

If we overlook that process, when suffering befalls our friends, we are apt to assume it is God's judgment for sin. When trouble befalls us, we are apt to be totally confused (see 1 Pet. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-10; 2:9; James 1:2-4 for the purpose of suffering).

Sometimes God, for His own reasons, allows an idealistic friend to add to our test. At times we all need false and idealistic concepts to be broken. Perhaps through an idealistic friend we can see our blindness and resolve to fully surrender our hearts to God (see Ps. 51:17).

Zophar, Job's Legalistic Friend

A person who lives a life of legalism adheres to a literal and excessively religious moral code. The New Testament Pharisees were the legalists of their day. They monitored themselves and others by the Levitical law. Yet Jesus reprimanded them for neglecting "the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Matt. 23:23, NIV).

No doubt the whole spirit of their religion was summed up in self-righteousness, not in confession of sin or humility. This was the kind of friend Job had in Zophar, the legalist!

Zophar said: "How I wish God would tell you the truth about your situation, Job! He knows deceitful and evil men when He sees them. If you repent and put away your sin, then God will remove your shame" (adapted from Job 11:4-6,11,13-15).

With friends like these, who needs enemies? Apparently there was no one to plead the case for Job. His wife and friends all testified against him in court!

Let's not allow ourselves to become "Job's friends." When our friends are going through trials, let's not be a religious Eliphaz, an idealistic Bildad or a legalistic, know-it-all Zophar who is out of touch with his own pain. Let's agree to be spiritual defense attorneys, those who come alongside to bring carefully prayed-over and gently presented godly counsel, loving support and encouragement.

Defendant Becomes Defender

When God finished the work He was doing in Job, He promoted him from the role of suffering defendant to that of defense attorney once again. "After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as my servant Job has'" (Job 42:7). What a turnaround!

Job's friends had failed to defend him in his trial. They had criticized, mocked and accused him. His friends had not understood the process of trial. Under Satan's cross-examination in court they inadvertently served as witnesses for the prosecution. In so doing, they had even falsely accused God. Now the Court's judgment weighed heavily upon them. Judge Jehovah was about to pass sentence on them.

Then our merciful Judge gave Job's friends these surprising instructions: "So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your

folly. You have not spoken of Me what is right, as my servant Job has" (v. 8).

What was the result? "So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord told them; and the Lord accepted Job's prayer" (v. 9).

Wow! The Judge gave Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar a court-appointed attorney—Job! As their attorney, Job was to plead their cases in prayer. And Job was no novice! Having defended his children and stood trial himself, Job the intercessor would not be praying detached, unfeeling, lifeless, ineffective prayers.

- He understood the pain and agony someone experiences when standing trial.
- He knew the fear, loneliness and severity of facing trial without a godly support team.
- He would represent his friends well before the Judge of heaven.

Friend, the trials you have suffered, when understood in the context of God's overall purposes and properly applied, can be used to a kingdom advantage as you intercede for others who are standing trial today. For Job's friends, the best part was that their victory was guaranteed before their case even came to trial!

That's ! Judge Jehovah said to Job's wayward friends, "I will accept his [Job's] prayer and not deal with you according to your folly."

Job Passes the Test

As long as Job remained the self-absorbed defendant, primarily concerned with his own need, he was a victim. It was only when he became a God-conscious, God-ordained, anointed defender of others that he experienced his own victory! "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends"

(Job 42:10, KJV).

Yes, Job's captivity was turned when he prayed for his friends. When Job focused on God and others, his own captivity was turned! This is what Jesus taught us to do when He gave us the two greatest commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).

Are you currently enrolled in "the school of suffering?" Perhaps you have been experiencing some Job-like trials of your own. When will they end?

That's really the wrong question. The question we should ask is, "What will they produce?" And that, friend, is largely up to you. If you are facing trial today, look for another person who needs a good defense attorney and become that person's advocate before the throne of God in prayer.

It could be that your captivity, like Job's, will be turned as you pray for your friends! Immerse yourself in their victory, and you will likely discover your own! "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12). May this also be said of you!

Eddie Smith is co-founder and president of the U.S. Prayer Center, and his wife, **Alice Smith**, is executive director. They are both internationally known conference speakers and authors.

A Woman's Place in Christ

- ✘ The Bible says in Galatians 3:28 that because of what Christ has done, there are no longer any differences among

us. “There is neither Jew nor Greek” (no ethnic or national difference); “neither slave nor free” (no economic difference); “neither male nor female” (no gender difference), “for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus” (NKJV). This verse refers to the equality we have in God.

But if we are all equal, how is it that the church has so often been guilty of sanctifying a chauvinistic system in which women are put—and not always gently—in second place? I believe it is time for us to revisit the issue of what a woman’s place is in God’s order of things.

We Must Cry Out for Holiness

✘ When I agreed to write about sexual immorality in the body of Christ, I thought pulling the information together would be an easy task. As a pastor, counselor, speaker and public health educator, I often address this topic. But as I began to wrestle with the many perspectives from which I could approach the issue, I almost lost myself in a crippling hodgepodge of psychology, sociology and theology.

Finally, I decided that the best approach was the

biblical approach. After all, God's perspective, clearly revealed in His Word, is the only perspective that really matters.

The Joy of Following Christ

✘ Sin and ill are the false notes struck by man across the harmony of God's will, and to strike upon or even remember such notes is instant banishment from the music of His presence. Where all is joy, there joy is all; and he who has not reached this joy does not know God—he is still a follower, and not a possessor, and he should refuse in his heart to remain satisfied with his condition, but climb on. Why stay behind? Climb on, climb on!

Keeping a Pure Mind

Question: Doug, I'm married and know that 1 Timothy 5:1-2 says, "Treat ... older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (NIV). But I struggle with impure thoughts when I'm around women. What is the best

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way to keep my mind sexually pure?

Answer:

I recommend a few strategies. One, wear a rubber band on your wrist and every time you lust at a woman, snap it. This will stop reinforcing this behavior. Two, memorize some Scriptures on purity so you can access them when in need. Three, do what 1 Timothy 5:1-2 suggests—view all women in the context of a relationship.

‘The Blind Side’ Spotlights Christian Family

✘ *The Blind Side*, starring Sandra Bullock and Tim McGraw, is undeniably inspirational. At a recent screening, many viewers were openly in tears.

But Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, the Christian couple at the center of the film that opens Friday, hope the story of how they adopted a homeless black teenager who eventually became a first-round NFL draft pick does more than make people cry.

“We hope people walk out of the theater and want to do something for someone else,” said the couple’s daughter, Collins Tuohy.

Based on the true story of Baltimore Ravens rookie Michael Oher, *The Blind Side*—rated PG-13 for language, violence and depictions of drug use—chronicles how a handful of Christians

helped change the life of a teen growing up in inner-city Memphis, Tenn.

First, administrators at a tony Christian school on the opposite side of town admitted him as a student, despite a GPA that began with a zero, "because it's the right thing to do," as the school's football coach argued in the film. Then the Tuohys (played by Bullock and McGraw) took him into their home after seeing him walking down a road one night in the dead of winter wearing just shorts and a T-shirt.

The Tuohys eventually adopted Oher (played by newcomer Quinton Aaron) into their family, hired a tutor to help him improve his grades and encouraged him to play football. That led to a host of scholarship offers that landed him at the Tuohys' alma mater, Ole Miss, then the 2009 NFL draft.

For some viewers, the idea of a wealthy white family rescuing a disadvantaged black youth may seem paternalistic. Many of the African-Americans depicted in the film are poor, drug-addicted or involved in gangs, and seem in need of assistance.

But 22-year-old Collins, played in the film by Lily Collins, said her family wasn't trying to make any social statements. They just happened to be there when Oher needed someone and would have helped him if he was purple, she said.

"What we did for Michael was to give him tools to succeed and to have his back when he needed it and to love him," Collins told *Charisma*. "It's amazing what happens when you give a child a little bit of love."

"The fact that he is where he is now is not a testament to us, it's a testament to him," she added. "Because I, Collins Tuohy, would not have done what Michael did to get to where he is. There is no way I would have sat in my kitchen for seven hours and studied every night. There is no way that I could have done what should have been done in four years [of high school] in two years. There's no way I could have done that."

Although the Tuohys see adopting Oher as part of God's plan for their family, Collins says her mom was likely acting on impulse when she brought Oher into their home.

"When you see a child in snow with shorts and a T-shirt walking down the road, it's usually your immediate reaction to question, and then she just happened to react," Collins said. "And that's kind of the message of the movie. If more people would just react, this world might be a little bit better of a place. ... You don't have to adopt a child. Just help someone. Then we might be a little bit better off."

Evangelist Distributes Darwin's 'Origin' With Intelligent Design Intro

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✘ Evangelist Ray Comfort and actor Kirk Cameron joined 1,200 Christians Wednesday in distributing 170,000 copies of Charles Darwin's evolution manifesto *The Origin of Species*—which features a 50-page introduction refuting Darwin's theory—at 100 universities across the nation.

Comfort initially planned to distribute copies of *The Origin of Species: 150th Anniversary Edition* at college campuses today, but atheists and students had threatened "unilateral resistance," including book burnings and protests, according to Comfort's Living Waters ministry.

"Our agenda was simply to get the books into the hands of the

students, without creating a disturbance at universities," the ministry said.

Atheists nationwide blasted Comfort online for distributing the 1859 book, which is in the public domain and was published through a partnership with Bridge-Logos Foundation.

"This is a shameful thing that Kirk Cameron and [Ray Comfort] are doing by altering another person's book in order to push their agenda," reads a post on the "Kirk Cameron has gone too far" Facebook page. "But we can help to restore the book to how it was intended and keep young minds from being brainwashed by misinformation."

Prominent atheist Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion*, told students to rip out the book's introduction. One thousand free copies of *The Origin of Species: 150th Anniversary Edition* were also distributed at the University of Oxford, where Dawkins is a professor.

Dawkins has reportedly called Comfort a fool for advocating intelligent design, but the evangelist says his goal was to make students think. "All I want for this generation of kids to do is think about what they believe," Comfort told *Charisma*. "I don't want them to turn their back on evolution. I want them to doubt it enough to look at the claims of the gospel."

Comfort said he doubts intelligent design will ever be taught in schools alongside evolution. "That's because we have to remember who we are as Christians," he said. "We're the folks who believe in Adam and Eve [and] Noah's Ark ... and so in the name of science, they are going to resist as much as they can."

But the evangelist says his mission goes beyond addressing educational needs. He says when people become atheists, they change their worldview from "I believe in God" to "I'm morally responsible" to "There are no moral absolutes," which "opens

the door for fornication and pornography and every vice the human heart so desires.”

Ultimately, Comfort hopes the book giveaway will draw unbelievers to Christ. “I want them to have everlasting life,” he said. “That’s the motive for giving these books out.”

Living Waters also supplied some of the \$ books to Christian bookstores for evangelistic purposes.

Rejoicing Every Day

Psalm 118:19-29 No matter what each day holds for us, we can rejoice in it. But you may say, “I don’t feel like rejoicing.” Often when a new day dawns, our bodies don’t want to get up and greet the day with cheerfulness because we just simply may not feel good. Our souls, however, can always rejoice in the Lord. When we greet the day with gratefulness instead of grumbling, we will set the sails of the ship of our lives to receive the wind of the Holy Spirit.