



IPC MESSENGER

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THE CHURCH, ISRAEL, AND THE WAR

TERRY JOHNSON

Since the beginning of “Operation Epic Fury” on Saturday, February 28, more than the usual number of questions have been raised about Israel, about America’s involvement in Middle Eastern wars, and about what ought to be the outlook of Christians. The near-universal support of Israel by evangelical Christians has eroded in recent years to the surprise of many of us. Let me try to explain why Israel deserves our sympathies, and this war our support.

Right to exist

We begin with Israel’s right to exist. It has “legal” title to the land it occupies by the United Nations mandate of 1947, which created the modern Jewish state. Though some might disdain international treaties, the current borders throughout Europe are a result of wars followed by international agreements. Germany, Poland, France, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic and so on are what they are today by international treaties. All of these nations looked quite different in 1914, again in 1918, again in 1940, and yet again 1945-2026. The context for the U.N. mandate and an independent Israel is the Holocaust. Sympathy for the Jews was near universal post-WWII, at least outside of the Middle East itself. The world recognized that the Jews needed their own homeland,

and with nationhood would come the ability to defend themselves. The need to do so was immediately confirmed and sustained over time, with major wars erupting in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982, as well as continuous skirmishing with Iran-supported terrorist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Somali pirates, and the Houthi Rebels. Israel in recent years has made peace with most of its neighbors. The Abraham Accords of 2020 added the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco to Egypt and Jordan on the list of Arab or Muslim nations who have normalized relations with Israel.

Iran’s Culpability

Militant Islam has been at war with the West since its emergence in the late 1960s. “Holy War,” *jihad*, is central to its worldview. Its goal is worldwide dominance. Its motto is “submission,” whether willingly or by force. It is pledged to the destruction of Israel. The U.S. is viewed as “the great Satan” and the U.K. as “the little Satan.” “Death to America” is among its habitually repeated goals. Islamists gained control of Iran in 1979, proclaiming an “Islamic Republic,” seizing the American Embassy, and holding its personnel hostage for 444 days. It has waged war with Israel and the West ever since, primarily through terrorist proxies, and also through insurgent movements in Iraq

and Afghanistan. Iran is the national embodiment of the Islamic militancy that has attacked the U.S. multiple times, most pointedly on 9/11 of 2001 in the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and seriously damaging the Pentagon. Thousands of Americans have been killed or maimed as a result of the militancy of Iran and its Islamic fellow-travelers.

Christian Sympathies

Christian sympathies ought to rest primarily with the Israelis for two reasons. First, they are the sole outpost of Western Civilization in that region of the world. This means not only that they are the only democracy, but they are also the only nation that stands for basic human rights, the rule of law, and religious liberty. Nowhere else in the Middle East will one find the freedoms of religion, press, speech, and assembly. These are principles that we believe in as Christians. These are principles that are in our interest as a Christian community. We can exist anywhere and have existed, even under totalitarian regimes. Yet it is in our interest, and in the interest of Christians everywhere that these basic rights and principles be guaranteed.

Second, Jews individually and collectively have a special status in God's plans and purposes. The New Testament recognizes three classifications of persons: Christians, Greeks, and Jews. The second of these are also called Gentiles. However, the Jews are their own category. The gospel, says the apostle Paul, is for the "the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16). They are the apostle's priority in *evangelism*. Their unbelief is the occasion of his "great sorrow and unceasing grief" and on whose behalf he could wish himself "accursed and cut off from Christ" (Rom 9:3). They are also his priority in *prayer*. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved" (Rom 10:1). He points out to us as Gentile believers our indebtedness to the Jews:

⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 9:4-5)

We are the heirs of what comes to us through them: the covenant with God, the law of God, and the promises of God; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and all the prophets; above all, Christ Himself.

The Apostle Paul asks and answers the question of the current status of Jews directly:

¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. (Rom 11:1)

He warns Gentile Christians not to become arrogant toward Jews, though most Jews have failed to believe that Jesus is the Christ. He uses the metaphor of the root and branches. Unbelieving Jewish branches have been "broken off." We Gentiles, "although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree" (Rom 11:17). He warns us, "Do not be arrogant toward the broken branches," that is, ethnic Jews. Rather, "Remember it is not you who support the root," that is, the Jewish roots of the church from Abraham to Christ, "but the root that supports you" (Rom 11:18). We are dependent upon Jewish prophecies and writings from Genesis to Revelation! The whole Bible and all of biblical religion is a product of Jewish/Hebrew teachers and authors. Israel's rejection of Christ is a "partial hardening," yet one day "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25,26).

Finally, though they are "enemies of the gospel" now, nevertheless they are "*beloved* for the sake of their forefathers" (Rom 11:28). God has not "rejected His people." The Jews still have a special place in the plans and purposes of God. Consequently, they have a special place in the affections of Christians, in our charity, and in our prayers. They are *beloved* in this era today though still *enemies* because of unbelief.

Conclusion

We must not be heard saying "Israel right or wrong" any more than we believe in "my country right or wrong." God has one law and one gospel for all and to which all are accountable. Still, given the ongoing 47-year war which we have been engaged in with Iran, a pre-emptive strike which takes out fanatical anti-American leadership, that prevents Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, from building up terror weapons (missiles and drones), and from supporting terrorist organizations is valid by what Christians call "just war" standards. The U.S. is not fighting Israel's war. The opposite is the case. Israel is on the front lines fighting our war with militant Islam. We merely periodically, and when to our advantage, join them in the battle. Venezuela without Maduro; Cuba without Venezuelan oil; Russia without Iranian drones; we could be on the cusp of something big: Venezuela, Cuba, Russia, and Iran all pacified. One never knows where events will go once the shooting starts. Yet one can know how one should pray. •

For more articles from Mr. Johnson, visit reformationtoday.org

MISSIONS: *Why Should I Care?*

DENNIS BOATRIGHT

Missions, missions, missions, what is the big deal about missions? This is a question all of us should constantly think about. Why? Because while it is God's command, it is also a missionary activity that is part of the heritage that we have in our congregation as well as in our Presbyterian tradition. Our faith as Christians, and particularly Reformed Christians, leads us to care deeply about the glory of Christ in the building of His church around the world. We seek to honor that heritage and be engaged in the great work of the gospel around the world by supporting and praying for Presbyterian missionaries. All of us can participate in mission efforts. Please take time to think about your role in mission work through IPC and remember our motto, PRAY, GIVE, GO!

This summer we are sending a team from our congregation to go on a short-term mission trip (2026) to

serve in Honduras with the Rev. Aaron Halbert whom we support and have had preach at our church. The team will be serving in Honduras from June 27- July 4. We ask that you support this trip with your prayers and, if possible, with a financial gift to help with the cost.

To support our Missions by giving:

Text "IPCSAVING MISSIONS" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.

We invite anyone in the congregation who is interested in the work of missions or who has questions to please reach out to Dennis Boatright, Missions Committee Chairman and watch this spot in future *Messengers*. We will be highlighting different missionaries and mission organizations that we support. •



Without the blessing of the Lord, your best endeavors will do no good. He has the hearts of all men in His hands, and except He touch the hearts of your children by His Spirit, you will weary yourself to no purpose. Water, therefore, the seed you sow on their minds with unceasing prayer.

- J. C. RYLE

PSALMS & HYMNS

O F T H E
M O N T H

A P R I L

(Year 1-10)

PSALM 24

*Based on the Book of Psalms, 1871,
and The Psalter, 1912*

- ¹ The earth and the riches with which it is stored,
The world and its dwellers, belong to the Lord.
² For He on the seas its foundation has laid,
And firm on the waters its pillars has stayed.
³ O who shall the mount of Jehovah ascend?
Or who in the place of His holiness stand?
⁴ The man of pure heart and of hands without stain,
Who has not sworn falsely nor loved what is vain.
⁵ He shall from Jehovah a blessing receive;
The God of salvation shall righteousness give.
⁶ Thus looking to Him is a whole blessed race,
All those who, like Jacob, are seeking Your face.
⁷ O gates, lift your heads! Ageless doors, lift them high!
The great King of glory to enter draws nigh!
⁸ O who is the King that in glory draws near?
The Lord, mighty Lord of the battle is here!
⁹ O gates, lift your heads! Ageless doors, lift them high!
The great King of glory to enter draws nigh!
¹⁰ This great King of glory, O Who can He be?
Jehovah of hosts, King of glory is He!

TUNE: GREYFRIARS II.II.II.II. S. A. Sterrett Metheny, 1909

(Year 11-15)

O GOD BEYOND ALL PRAISING (#660)

Michael Perry (1982)

O God beyond all praising, we worship you today
And sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
For we can only wonder at every gift you send,
At blessings without number and mercies without end:
We lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word,
We honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.

Then hear, O gracious Savior, accept the love we bring,
That we who know your favor may serve you as our King;
And whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,
We'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still:
To marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,
And make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.

TUNE: THAXTED 13.13.13.13.13.
From Gustav Holst, *The Planets*, 1918

ABOUT THE PSALMS

PSALM 24

Traditionally Psalm 24 has been used in association with the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, with His Advent, and with the Ascension of Christ. Its “gates” have been understood as the gates of Jerusalem, the gates of heaven, and the gates of our hearts, welcoming the King of glory (vv 7-10). Perhaps originally written to celebrate David’s conquest of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6ff; 1 Chr 11:1-10) or the transportation of the Ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6; 1 Chr 15-16), it came to be associated with Messiah’s conquest of His kingdom. Verses 3-6 describe the holiness of those who are subjects of His kingdom.

PSALM 112

The second of three Psalms that begin with “Hallelujahs,” and the second of two acrostic Psalms (111th), both of which have 22 lines beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The theme of the first is God, and this Psalm, the man of God. Many have seen the 112th as exposition of the last verse of the 111th: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever. (Ps 111:10) Matthew Henry urges us to sing this Psalm with attention to the keys to our happiness as secured through our holiness.

(Year 1-10)

PRAISE TO THE LORD, THE ALMIGHTY (#53)*Joachim Neander, 1680*

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
 O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
 All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near,
 Join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
 Shelters Thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
 Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
 Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee!
 Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee;
 Ponder anew what the Almighty will do,
 If with His love He befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, who with marvelous wisdom hath made thee,
 Decked thee with health, and with loving hand guided and stayed thee.
 How oft in grief hath not He brought thee relief,
 Spreading His wings to o'ershade thee!

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
 All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
 Let the amen sound from His people again;
 Gladly fore'er we adore Him.

TUNE: LOBE DEN HERREN 14.14.4.7.8
 Stralsund Gesangbuch, 1665;
 Arr. in Praxis Pietatis Melica, 1668

(Year 11-15)

PSALM 112

- ¹ Praise to the Lord! The man is blessed indeed
 Who makes the Lord's commands his great delight.
- ² His children will be mighty in the earth;
 Descendants of the upright will be blessed.
- ³ Abundant riches are within his house;
 His righteousness endures forevermore.
- ⁴ The darkness of the just will turn to light,
 For all his ways are gracious, kind and fair.
- ⁵ That man is good who gives and freely lends,
 And who with justice governs his affairs.
- ⁶ The righteous man will never be removed,
 And ever will his mem-o-ry endure.
- ⁷ At evil tidings he is not afraid;
 His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.
- ⁸ His heart is steady; he will never fear;
 He comes at last to look upon his foes.
- ⁹ With open hand he offers to the poor;
 His good endures; his head is lifted high.
- ¹⁰ The wicked sees and grinds his teeth in rage,
 For he despairs; his cherished hope must die.

TUNE: MORECAMBE 10.10.10.10. (181)
 ("Spirit of God Descend")

WEDDINGS:

MR. AND MRS. S. HUNTER BOATRIGHT were united
 in marriage on Saturday, February 7, 2026 at Faith
 Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, AL. Mrs. Boatright is
 the former Miss Abby Reid.

MR. AND MRS. DANIEL A. MORGAN were united in marriage
 on Saturday, March 7, 2026 at Independent Presbyterian
 Church. Mrs. Morgan is the former Miss Connie Huang.

MR. AND MRS. DAVID R. LANTINGA were united in marriage
 on Saturday, March 28, 2026 at Independent Presbyterian
 Church. Mrs. Lantinga is the former Miss Lauren Withee.

BIRTHS:

JUNE REEDER MARTIN
 Born January 30, 2026, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C.
 Conrad Martin, III (Sarah).

CLEMENTINE KATHARINE BECHAM
 Born February 3, 2026, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs.
 Andrew P. Becham (Rachel).

JAMES KITTREDGE JOHNSON
 Born March 21, 2026, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin B.
 Johnson (Kitt).



BUT WHEN HE SAW THE WIND

STEVE WOHLFEIL

“But when he saw the wind, he was afraid.” Matthew 14:30

The disciples, in their little boat on a great lake, faced two fearsome prospects: rough seas and what looked like a ghost walking on the surface of the sea. Their cry of terror prompted the ghost to reply that He was their friend and master Jesus. Seeking assurance of this uncertain statement, Peter asked for confirmation. “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water” (14:28). In faith and awe, Peter complied with Jesus’ invitation, and soon found himself safe in the close presence of his Master.

But when Peter took his eyes (and attention) off his Savior, and considered his circumstances, his fear and doubt returned in force and he began to sink into the water. “He cried out, ‘Lord, save me’” (14:30), at which cry Jesus led him back to the security of the boat, the tumult of the winds now calmed.

The men and women Jesus brings to the Chatham Transitional Ministries (CTM) are likewise in an uncertain, even perilous situation. Their stormy seas

include unstable personal relationships and a history of substance abuse and its consequences. And they often are unsure of the Savior who calls them to Himself.

Under the guidance and supervision of CTM’s Program Director Lorie Irish (and the Holy Spirit), we help them focus on Jesus, not the waves that have churned around them for so long. Through regular participation in worship services (at IPC and other local reformed churches), Bible studies, and Christian recovery group meetings, they come to know the One who calms the winds and waves. And He brings them into the safety of the seaworthy ship, His Church.

We are grateful for the many ways the people of IPC have supported this ministry the past eight years, through their prayers, the work of their hands, and their generous giving. If you would like to know more about CTM, please contact Program Director Lorie Irish (912 480-5068) or Board members Steve Wohlfeil (912 663-4480), Peter Schenk (912 596-5531), Sonny Longo (912 631-0735) or Greg Brunson (912 429-5160). •

EVENING WORSHIP SERVICES AT

Point Pleasant

May 24 through September 6

ANNUAL BBQ & HOMEMADE ICE CREAM ON MAY 24

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1 Bruce Baxley	7 Chris Hart	16 Claire Jeon	23 Barrett Gergacs
1 Jon Gift	8 Beverly Van Grouw	17 Stephen Milling	24 Brett Hudson
1 Reg Burt	9 Patrick McLean	17 Jennifer Immel	25 Laura Brodmann
2 Jonathan Thompson	10 Ivy Ann Hogan	18 Frankie Daniell	25 Silas Tomlinson
2 Jaimie Gear	11 Jon Wright	18 Carl Biathrow	25 Daniel Morgan
2 Sophia Kootsikis	11 Todd Rodenberg	18 Anna Beth DeMott	25 Andy Johnson
2 Joe Miller	11 Chris Ellis	18 Emma Grace DeMott	26 Fun Gobel
3 Rebecca Cope	11 Emi Steward	18 Dan Brown	26 Geisle Rafferty
3 Scotty Brodmann	11 Mark Bruemmer	19 Sandra Ward	26 Louise Morgan
3 Maggie Chester	12 Charlie Martin	20 Kate Jackson	27 Christian Heritage
3 Grace Kicklighter	13 Will Monroe	20 Emily Hazeltine	29 Della Roach
4 Kevin Heritage	13 Ben Smith	20 Vivian Sullivan	29 Emmy Ragen
4 Chuck Moore	14 Anna Hayes	20 Emma Christine Jones	29 Margaret Milling
5 Terry Johnson	15 Grace Jackson	20 Kristi Christopher	29 Sandra Lake
5 Mary Kate Hazeltine	15 John Toler	21 Tim Ellis	30 Dennis Boatright
5 Justine Hogan	15 John Gross	21 Meredith Johnson	30 Josh Corbitt
5 Hadley Oliver	15 Caroline Johnson	22 Sally Johnson	30 James Ivy
6 Carla MacMillan	16 Wesley McKee	22 Jessica Garrick	
6 Susan Wright	16 Kathie Taylor	23 Nikki Allen	

MAY BIRTHDAYS

1 Aaron Toly	8 Perry Whitten	17 Rob Kelly	25 Rachel Lane
1 Charles Oswald	9 Howard French	17 Ansley Reid	25 June Allen
2 Jay Helton	9 Jen Edwards	18 Fischer DeMott	25 Leighton McIntire
2 Sarah Grace Brodmann	10 Billie Hale	19 Drew DeMott	25 Heather Kicklighter
2 Holland Hogan	10 Annie Shaw	19 Grant Pavlo	26 Eddie DeLoach
2 Terry Holland	10 Nathaneal Barham	19 T.C. Michaels	26 Gwendolyn Blevins
3 Rex Immel	11 Michael Brodmann	19 George Johnson	26 Jonny Scharer
4 Patty Brodmann	11 Tristan Butler	21 John South	27 Richard Hinely
4 Greyson Corbitt	12 Rita Spitler	21 Matthew Crowe	27 Selleck Hostetter
4 Lynne Hollenbach	12 Conner Fennell	21 Carmen Bergman	28 Ruthie Williams
4 Linda Tedder	13 Nadia Nelson	22 Alton Brown	28 Felix Scharer
5 Emily Lanier	14 Wylly Bell	22 Terri Fruit	29 J.D. Youderian
5 Steven McAllister	14 Jake Helton	22 Craig Sutlive	29 Emory Corbitt
5 Ben Essenburg	14 Aaron Soutar	22 Wayne Cribbs	29 Clara Fuhrman
5 Dan Jefferson	14 Jennifer Sutherland	22 Teddy Scharer	31 Lucy Hitch
7 Faye Patterson	14 Elizabeth Brown	22 Sheila Moore	31 Garry McKee
7 Juanita Vainas	15 Lisa Bell	22 Kuyler Stone	31 Sarah Hazeltine
8 Levi Shaw	15 Judy Daniell	23 James Johnson	31 Tucker Laffitte
8 Vera Martin	16 Rhett Michaels	23 Rocket Trout	31 Catherine Allen
8 Leah Stone	16 Jackson Lay	24 Ben Melville	31 Caitlin Carter

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Save the date!



FUN IN THE SUN FAMILY DAY

**SATURDAY, JULY 4TH
10 AM - 2 PM**

**at Point Pleasant
441 Suncrest Blvd**

**Come enjoy the pool and an inflatable waterslide!
Bring your own lunch and drinks.**

Questions? Contact Lucy Biemiller