



Egypt and God's Revolution for the Middle East

By GARY ALLEY

Not since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has the world watched with as much anticipation as the changing of political power in the Middle East of 2011. Yet, our hopes for real freedom for the nations of this region are cooled by the memory of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 which “liberated” their people from one repressive rule to be enslaved by another—Islamic fundamentalism. Since the time of the pharaohs, even in the formation of the modern Middle East, this region has been known for its autocratic rulers and oppressive regimes. Here, in the cradle of civilization, democracy is rarely witnessed, and when practiced, it is often used in a charade for rigged elections, or as the means to an end. In short, revolution in the Middle East does not guarantee true reformation.

In January we all began watching Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution, where popular unrest filled the streets and brought on the ouster and abdication of their “President” of twenty four years. Now, Egypt stands teetering on the chaotic edge of the political unknown as street protests have chased their President Hosni Mubarak into a corner. If Mubarak's despotism falls, who and what ideology will fill the power vacuum? More significantly, Egypt is the most populated country in the Middle East, with nearly 80 million people, and considered a leader on the regional stage. Egypt's choices will undoubtedly create a new balance of power for political and religious agendas in tomorrow's Middle East.

Understandably, Israel warily watches Egypt, its mammoth neighbor. When American President Jimmy Carter mediated the Camp David Peace Accords in 1978-79, Israel and Egypt's unexpected peace agreement began a powerful ripple effect throughout the region. While the peace between Egypt and Israel has been dubbed a “cold peace”, Egypt's example as the Arab forerunner for peaceful coexistence with their enemy should not

be ignored. During the last thirty years of Egypt's peace with Israel, many Arab countries have come somewhere between a grudging acceptance to a silent understanding of the Israeli state.

An illustration of Israel's fears of future Egyptian relations was displayed by the gas line explosion on Feb. 5th in the Sinai. As cooperating neighbors since 1979, Egypt provides Israel with 40% of their natural gas supplies via pipelines that flow between the two countries. A suspected saboteur's blast on sent a fireball into the sky at the Egyptian terminal, cutting off the fuel flow to Israel. The example of the sabotaged pipeline does not bode well for a future relationship with an Egyptian public already known as unsympathetic to their Jewish neighbors and the potential rise of the anti-Israel Islamic Brotherhood.

Scripture also recognizes Egypt's complex and conflicted nature in history. While Egypt is known as an exemplar of ancient civilization with its hieroglyphs, temples, and tombs, biblically it is synonymous with slavery. The Bible relentlessly reminds the reader that Egypt enslaved Israel and that God freed His people with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Yet, despite the Egyptian nation being portrayed as the villain in every Passover celebration, it is also the Bible that depicts a redemptive future for the Egyptian people.

In the Bible, Egypt's inhabitants are portrayed as full of idolatry and infighting, with a Pharaonic pedigree of power, prosperity, and pride. Egypt's past, present, and future fuse into meaninglessness, until “the day” that the Egyptians recognize the LORD. In language that is reminiscent of Israel's own special relationship with God, Isaiah 19 says that the Egyptians will cry out to the LORD and He will send them a savior. The LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and they will acknowledge the Him. He will strike Egypt with a plague; they will turn to the LORD, and He will respond to their pleas and heal them (Isa 19:20-22).

Isaiah foresees a future Middle East with a highway running from Egypt through Israel to Assyria. All peoples from these countries will flow back and forth on that interstate, and Israel will be the bridge that unites the region because the LORD will be the center of Israel. Ironically, Isaiah's prophecy bestows upon Egypt and Assyria, two of Israel's longtime nemeses, titles of overt favor—“Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork.” This accentuates a theme that Isaiah consistently reiterates throughout his book—Israel is a light to the nations (Isa 49:6). Israel and its light—the LORD—is the key piece to complete this puzzle of peace.

How this will all play out in our generation or in “that day” would be mere speculation, yet we can stand confidently on God's promises. Coincidentally, Isaiah's highway of peace starts in Egypt, just as the 1978-9 Peace Accord began with Egypt. May our prayers for Israel and this region be based on biblical hope for real revolution as Egypt chooses today who to serve.



JCF STUDY TOURS

Qumran, Library of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Join Yoni Gerrish and the JCF staff on a tour in 2011 that investigates "The Backgrounds of Jesus' World". See JCFtours.com for details

Some of the most famous, mysterious writings of the ancient world are the Dead Sea Scrolls. While many people have heard of them, few really know what they are or how significant they are for understanding ancient Scripture and the world of Jesus. First discovered in 1946 in caves near the Dead Sea, the 2,000 year old scrolls were hidden by a Jewish community that some identify with the Essenes. This insular religious group lived in a nearby settlement (what is called Qumran today) and housed a great library of biblical books, religious Jewish texts, and their own theological writings. Today, most of the scrolls are displayed at the Shrine of the Book in the Israel Museum with the Book of Isaiah presented prominently. Some scholars have conjectured that John the Baptist might have visited or even lived at Qumran due to shared theological ideas and John's residence in the wilderness.



CHARITY REPORT: *Your Gifts Helped these Individuals and Families during January*

Golden Family is a Jewish family from the Upper Galilee. They have 10 children. The father is a Torah scribe and makes minimum wage, while the mother works part-time. Several of the children suffer from various medical conditions that require extra attention and care. The mother has suffered from high anxiety and depression due to the family's inability to make ends meet.

Dillon Family is a Jewish family also from the Upper Galilee. The parents are separated and in the process of divorce. They have six children, and the mother cares for the children alone. She has diabetes and high blood pressure and has suffered from two brain hemorrhages. She is unable to work, and the family, supported meagerly by the government and a little by the eldest son, lives in extreme poverty in a small, neglected, and cold apartment. Several of the children have special needs as well as other medical conditions that require treatment they cannot afford (such as dental treatment).

Sarah is an Ethiopian believer from Jerusalem. She is a single mother of four children, including two who are ill and require special care. Sarah does not receive any financial help from the government or any other source, and supports her family by cleaning homes.

Yael is an Ethiopian believer from Jerusalem. She is a fairly new believer, who is doing her best to care for her young son whom she had after she was raped. She has no family support or financial help, and attempts to make ends meet by cleaning homes.

Elizabeth is an elderly Ethiopian believer from Jerusalem. She receives a very small government pension which barely enables her to pay the bills. She has no family to care for her.

Tabitha is an Ethiopian believer from Jerusalem. She is the mother of a newborn baby boy. Neither she nor her husband are employed at the moment, which means they cannot afford to pay for their son's basic needs.

Ruth is the mother of newborn baby girl. Ruth and her husband, are Ethiopian believers in Jerusalem. Ruth works cleaning homes, but they are struggling financially.

Recently **Pastor Tal of the Beit-El Ethiopian Congregation** has visited several members of the congregation who were hospitalized for various illnesses. JCF funds helped with the cost of his visitations (gas, parking etc.).



Blessing Babies to Grow Up Big and Strong

From DANIA MINOR

The Beit-El Congregation continues to grow, especially its number of children. This is truly a blessing for the congregation, though a big concern as the majority of the families live beneath Israel's poverty line. Pastor Tal has had a desire to provide a 6-month support to families with newborns (approximately \$60/month), as the cost of diapers and baby formula is something they can rarely afford. JCF is committed to helping with this need, supporting 2-3 young families with newborns. If you would like to support this cause, please let us know.

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OUR PROGRAMS

Biblical Language Center (BLC) teaches intensive biblical Greek and Hebrew courses using a unique immersion method that makes learning fun, effective, and for everyone.

Biblical Study Tours (BST) brings the Bible to life through in-depth thematic trips that are customized to suit the specific needs of groups for any size and age.

Israel Relief (IR) provides financial assistance for families and individuals with urgent needs from all areas of the country. Ongoing funds are needed for food and clothing vouchers, housewares, emergency medical, dental, and general aid.

Educational Fund (EF) assists a number of needy students and individuals hoping to obtain degrees and skills that will enable them to rise above their societal limitations.

Children's Fund (CF) helps children in orphanages, post-orphanage situations, and kids handicapped by political and social conflicts. Ongoing funds are needed for school supplies, holiday gifts, and general aid.

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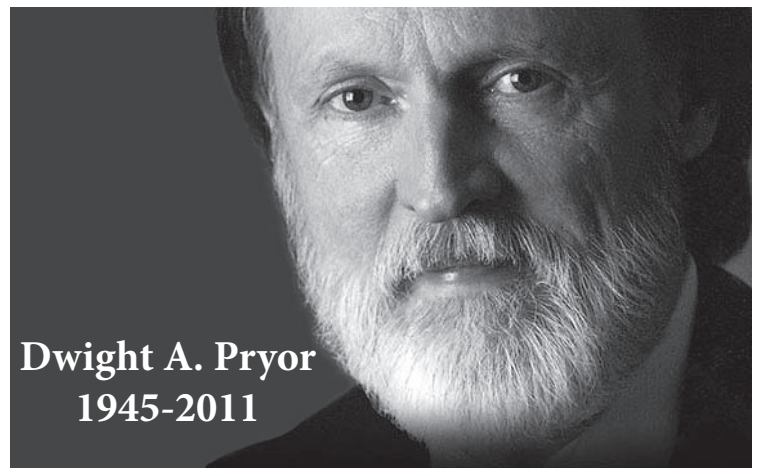
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JCF grieves with Dwight Pryor's family, friends, and students over his passing on Shabbat, Feb. 5th. Dwight was the founder and director of the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies and a founding member of the Jerusalem School for Synoptic Studies. Dwight was a passionate teacher of Scripture and the Jewish Roots of Jesus. Though he was an eloquent, highly sought after international speaker, he left a legacy of humility amidst his countless articles and lectures. He will be missed by all.

PRAYER REQUESTS and PRAISE REPORTS

Kay Wilson. Many will have heard on their news channel back before Christmas, the stabbing of two women hiking in the Judean hills. Kristine Luken who died from her wounds was an American working for a Christian ministry in England. She had made many trips to visit Israel. Kay Wilson, the other woman stabbed, is an Israeli citizen who had immigrated from England. Kay, a Messianic tour guide, was taking Kristine on a hike when they were assaulted by two Arab men with knives. Miraculously, Kay survived her repeated stabbing and was able to find help to rush her to the hospital. As the women were assaulted, Kay stabbed one of the attackers with a pen knife and with the DNA of his blood, the Israeli authorities were able to locate and arrest a gang of thirteen criminal-terrorists with multiple crimes dating back to 1999. Please pray for Kay as she recuperates from her physical and psychological wounds. Also, lift her up as she prepares to go to court to testify against her attackers. You can give toward Kay's recovery process through JCF.

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February 2011



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