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The Church

In Israel, Local Christian “leaders” (as they prefer to describe themselves) are veering between a desire for control (although there is ample disagreement as to who should exercise it) and utter autonomy (masked as the autonomy of local churches). The promotion of conferences and various speaking events featuring questionable individuals from the general evangelical scene have raised the ire of such and led to a call for some kind of scrutiny of such promotions – firmly rejected by others. The church in Israel has yet to learn the biblical tension that should pertain between local and national church life, between the application of grace and the insistence on truth, Between unity and over-reaching authority. As a result, “leaders” are driven to one extreme or the other. Perhaps, when our “leaders” become Pastors, they will be better equipped to deal with the situation and therefore to protect themselves and the flocks to which the Lord has appointed them.

In the meantime, some from the Charismatic and Messianic branches of Christian life in Israel are latching on to the desire for unity by calling for a voluntary submission to would-be apostles from their shared camps. It has been encouraging to see the firm gentleness with which such a call has been handled, and largely rejected. Circumstances are serving in the hand of a wise and patient Providence to guide the church in Israel toward an increasingly more biblical orientation. There is a great deal of sincere devotion among believers, and a growing number of professing Christians in their 20’s and 30’s. That devotion needs to be buttressed by solidly biblical teaching that is biblically committed, intelligently informed, theologically attune and expositional in practice. It is sometimes an embarrassment to witness the ignorant, inane questions raised by those who profess a Christian faith. Yet every such question is an effort to delve deeper into the glorious treasure-store of divine revelation. I am a thrilled and encouraged as I am concerned. God, please grant us solid teachers!

Israel

Israel's Prime Minister, **Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu** awaits, first the police recommendation and then Attorney General's decision whether or not he is to be indicted for promoting cronies in exchange for political favors, accepting bribes, negotiating for bribes, misuse of public funds and – recently and most disconcertedly – irresponsible conduct in matters of national security. Many of his closest advisors have turned against him. Some have become State Witness.

Efforts on his part to question the police's integrity and the State Attorney's competence have so far failed, as did a recent attempt to call for new elections, which could result in protecting the Prime Minister from further investigations and an indictment. As stated in our previous letter, Netanyahu is a poor statesman but a consummate Machiavellian politician. Efforts to find a politically expedient justification to initiate elections continue.

Mrs. Netanyahu is likewise being investigated, for misuse of public funds and employee harassment. Reports indicate that an indictment is eminent.

Israel's efforts to thwart the effectiveness of **attacks on our northern border with Lebanon and on the border with Gaza** in the south west have created tensions with Hezbollah and Hamas respectively. Purportedly spontaneous civilian mass demonstrations have been orchestrated by Hamas and then exploited to plant EDI's, breach the border fence and otherwise threaten Israel have so far led to no practical purpose, except the gleefully advertised deaths of "civilian protestors", the majority of whom have turned out to be Hamas military operatives. However, Israel is once again receiving bad press. International criticism has focused on Israel's supposed overly-aggressive behavior, rather than on Hamas's cynical use of civilians, many of whom are women and children, as a shield for its' attacks.

The repeated detection and consequent destruction of Hamas' attack tunnels into Israel territory and the fortification of the border with Lebanon aimed at rendering ground and underground attacks ineffective have caused consternation in the two organizations. They need to choose between accepting a significant erosion of their military capabilities and utilizing what is left of these in the immediate future.

The lack of hope prevalent among **West Bank Palestinians** due to the absence of any political progress has led to an increase in lone wolf attacks. These pressures combined way well lead to open conflict this summer. Iran's presence in Syria adds to the likelihood of such a turn of events.

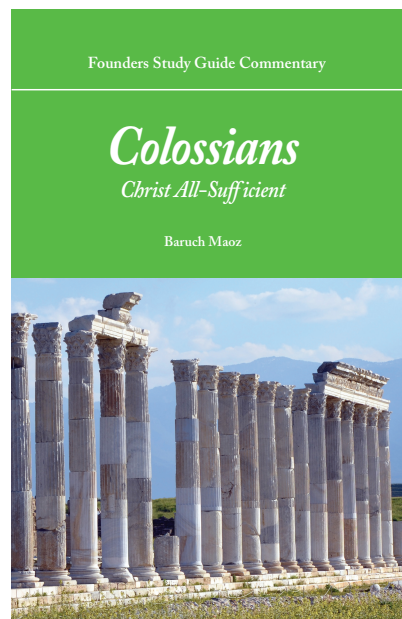
Iran's progress in establishing a front on the Syrian border with Israel and the recent of an Iranian attack drone into Israeli airspace led to Israel attacking and destroying an Iranian drone control center, leading to the death of seven Iranian servicemen, including the drone unit commander. Iran has threatened a response, which will probably await President Trump's decision whether or not to extend the nuclear agreement with Iran. But tensions are rising, especially as Saddam's forces are now poised to retake from rebel forces the Golan, including the narrow stretch of its' border with Israel. If the US withdraws its forces from Syria, the country will become a free-for-all between Iran, Russia and Turkey, none of which are known for their goodwill toward Israel.

Ministry and Family News

For my **Daily expository devotions**, I am now serializing my commentary on Colossians, which has had warm reception and a still-growing readership. I've no way to know how many are actually following these postings, but almost every day I hear from someone who writes in to express appreciation and tell me they have been reading our daily postings and on regular basis. Once a week I post a section from my book on church life. This, too, evokes encouraging comment. I have recommenced work on **the Minor Prophets**, a project I aim to complete in the next 2-3 years and which will take up a large part of my time as soon as I complete writing the book on **church life, function and structure** (fast approaching). I have just completed the **commentary on Habakkuk**, having written on Malachi, I am fast nearing the end of this project on the so-called Minor Prophets.

We completed editing **John in my translation of the New Testament**. The other three Gospels are now in the hands of control groups. Most of Paul's letters have been edited and I am in the process of reviewing editorial comments. Paul's broad and very different vocabulary will present my capable editor and me with new and fascinating challenges (how should we translate the various nuances of Paul's term "flesh" for example?). This is a learning process, honing one's understanding and enhancing one's ability to speak clearly. How I wish I had had the privilege of translating the New Testament before I undertook a preaching Ministry! But, then, it was precisely that ministry and the study it involved that has been such a help to me in the process of translation. God, the Master of all events and details, such those course, and not another. His wisdom is best.

My **commentary on Colossians** is available! The pre-publication price, valid until April 30, is \$8, for which orders may be submitted to <https://pressFOUNDERS.org/shop/fsgc-colossians/> Later online orders from Founders will be priced at \$9.50. Orders may also be placed with Barnes & Noble and with Amazon for \$12. Reviews of this or others of my books would be helpful and much appreciated. Please do assist in this way. Another way you can help is by requesting my books at your local Christian bookshop, encouraging them to carry my titles.



Come Let Us Reason Together, the book on the Messianic Movement, sells slowly but steadily and has become a standard text for all interested in or concerned about the Movement.

Plans for our **US tour** have proceeded well. We have few windows left, mostly on weekdays. These are as follows: in VA, NC, GA, Chattanooga and the vicinity, Seattle and the vicinity. Interested churches are welcome to write in. As the tour progresses, it is likely that some dates in September will become available – at this stage we are

not sure in what areas of the country. Should this be the case, I will make this known and welcome invitations. Please note that we expect no financial commitments beyond hospitality and travel expenses.

Our **church crises** continues. Your prayers are be much needed as the pastoral team deal with valid criticism that is being translated into invalid and unbiblical tendencies. Our Pastor and Elder are in need of a godly, humble combination of courage and wisdom to deal with the situation and lead the church toward biblical reformation.

Keith, Shlomit and the family will be moving to Chattanooga TN once the school year is out. Keith will take up secular employment while seeking to renew his health and strength. Your prayers are both needed and welcome.

There is little new with the rest of the family, except a vacation in Mexico enjoyed by Avital and the family, apart from Noam who is in Israel. **Noam** will be returning home to take up her college education with the view of being a diabetics nurse.

Bracha has been in the States since and I expect to join her on April 14, following which she and I will spend a short while in Chattanooga, seeking to pave the way for the Thompson's move later this summer.

Katya and family spent a vacation in Cuba, which they enjoyed greatly. Katya is working in Montreal as a surgical nurse and is neglecting a health issue that has arisen and which she declines to have resolved. Felix is studying nursing. **Rose** was enlisted as a bookkeeper for a society working among the Christian youth in Israel and is now serving in many ways as counsellor, organizer and general advisor. She pursues her studies at the Israel College of the Bible, with a view to studying counselling.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PAYERS.

In Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

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COME LET US REASON TOGETHER (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church), P&R.

This book presents Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation.

JONAH: A PROPHET ON THE RUN, Shepherd Press, a devotional commentary on the book of Jonah.

MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, a devotional commentary on the book of Malachi. Founders Press.

COLOSSIANS: The All-Sufficient Savior, a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians. Founders Press.

The commentaries are suited for personal devotions and group studies

Baruch's sermons may be heard on [Sermon Audio](#)

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Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary



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