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The Israeli Church

Fundamental questions concerning articles of faith continue to be raised and discussed among Israeli Pastors. It has been as interesting to follow the discussions as it has disconcerting on the one hand and encouraging on the other. I often wonder just how much of what is being said is the product of unconscious exposure to devout Christian thinking through the ages. Most Israeli Christians (Messianic Jews, as they prefer to call themselves) disavow so-called "gentile" influence, and yet at times come around to exactly the same kind of terminology.

Needless to say, the scripture we in Israel study is the same scripture our Gentile brethren study. The Holy Spirit who guides us in our deliberations is the same Holy Spirit who guided the church through the ages. Yet the Spirit does not abstain from using natural means, and the identity of terminology to which some of us, happily, have arrived may well betray a surreptitious influence some are unwilling to admit.

Recently, one of the participants in a discussion concerning the divine sonship of the second person of the trinity suggested that Paul's designation of him as "the firstborn of all creation" (Colossians 1:15) indicated that Jesus is to be included in the order of created beings. Few protests were raised in response. A short while later the same brother publicly corrected himself, affirming that Paul was saying that the Son's relation to all creation is that of a firstborn, that he is not therefore included in the order of things created, and that his "generation" from the Father is "eternal", describing his eternal relation to the Father, not his derivation or the commencement of his existence.

That is exactly the formulation at which the early church arrived. As the Nicene Creed puts it, "I believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." And as the Westminster confession so effectively explains: "In

the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

The brother's public correction was immediately greeted with praise and affirmation by a number of other Pastors throughout the country.

We're in a learning process. Not all will come out of this process where we ought. Some are lost on the way. But the general direction is encouraging.

Israel

Tensions on Israel's north-eastern border with Syria and south-western border with Gaza continue. Israel seems to have successfully pushed Iran away from the Israeli-Syria border, except for a limited presence of Iranian fighters disguised with Syrian uniforms. A confluence of Russian and Israeli interests, combined with Israel's substantial attacks on Iranian targets throughout Syria seem to have brought the desired result. Russia is interested in Assad's continued rule in Syria because he has accorded the Russian war fleet with its only port in the Mediterranean. Israel's attacks on Iranian targets in Syria threaten to weaken Assad's regime. Consequently, Russia has pressured Iran to withdraw.

As for Gaza, Hamas continues to waste human, monetary and material resources in its struggle with Israel at the expense of population in the Strip. Israel has repeatedly offered to help alleviate the situation in Gaza, open borders and establish economic cooperation in exchange for Hamas' disarmament, but Hamas has shown no interest. Iran is goading Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Gaza to continue on the hapless, irrational course, while the population grows increasingly despondent. There is no end in view.

In Israel itself, a recent "Gay Pride" parade drew 250,000 participants, support from the Tel-Aviv Mayor and national politicians and moved Benjamin Netanyahu to boast that "Israel is the only country in the Middle East that welcomes gay and other members of the LGBT community". Boasting in shame is all too human when God is not lovingly feared.

Ministry and Family News

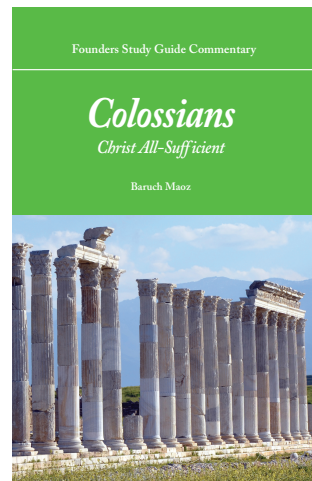
Bracha and I continue our **tour of continental USA**. So far we have driven over 11,000 miles, circumnavigating the States. It has been a privilege to visit far-flung, small and isolate congregations and to learn that believers whom we never met and of whom we had never heard have been praying for us for decades. As indicated earlier, unless the Lord intervenes, this will be the last of such tours we will undertake. In these, our closing years, such tours are becoming too heavy a burden on Bracha and I need to devote more time to writing,. There is a great deal that needs to be done and, while my powers seem not to have waned, my years are limited.

As we travel, I continue to engaged with the **New Testament translation**, with translating a study of **Jesus in Early Muslim Thought**, editorial reviews of my **commentary on Romans** and my **Daily Devotions on the New Testament**, while publishing **daily devotions on Colossians** and on **Galatians** (The former have already been written and I am engaged in writing the latter as we travel). Once these annual trips no are longer conducted, I will be able to be more productive. I hope in the Lord to continue to be available to churches, conferences, seminars and seminaries in the US and elsewhere, and welcome invitations.

Once, again:

My **commentary on Colossians** is available! Orders may be submitted to <https://press.finders.org/shop/fsgc-colossians/> and with Barnes & Noble or Amazon. 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.



Others of my books (COME LET US REASON TOGETHER – THE UNITY OF JEWS AND GENTILES IN THE CHURCH; JONAH: THE PROPHET THAT RAN, MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS) are likewise available from the same suppliers. Please help us promote these books.

Keith, Shlomit and the family have moved to Chattanooga TN. As they settle, seek out schools for the children and look for a church, Keith is seeking employment. His health has improved, but renewed bouts of his illness are expected in the next few years, in decreasing intensity.

The rest of the family are well. Thank you for your prayers.

In Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

IMPORTANT

Please note: a number of checks sent to Berean Baptist Church's street address were lost in the mail. Kindly direct all letters and contributions to the church's post office box: **Berean Baptist Church, POBox 1233, Grand Blanc MI, 48480-3233, Attn Mr. Craig Cooper**. Thank you.

You can help by purchasing copies of Baruch's books from Barnes & Noble or from Amazon, by asking for them at your local bookstore and **by posting reviews of these books** on Barnes

& Noble or Amazon websites. Positive reviews help us sell.

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](#)

To remain abreast of developing circumstances in Israel, visit the [MaozWeb](#) or "follow" Baruch on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) (@BaruchMaoz).

Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary



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