

THE OFFICIAL NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE BIBLE SEMINARY

THE SENTINEL



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The Sentinel

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About Us

The Bible Seminary (TBS) is an independent, non-denominational Christian 501(c)(3) charitable institution of higher education incorporated in Texas in 2010 to offer training for laity and vocational ministry professionals. On-campus and Distance Education programs include Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, and Dual Degree Completion programs, and non-degree Certificate of Theological Studies, seminars, and study tours.

Vision: The Bible Seminary (TBS) exists to glorify God by impacting multitudes of souls for Christ and to help fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.

Mission: Our mission is to foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, cultivate professional and lay leadership skills, and deploy trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

Key Verse: "They read from the book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read." – Nehemiah 8:8

Accreditation

The Bible Seminary is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) [15935 Forest Road, Forest, VA 24551; Telephone: (434) 525-9539; e-mail: info@tracs.org], having been awarded Reaffirmation of Accreditation (I) as a Category III institution by the TRACS Accreditation Commission on April 28, 2025. This status is effective as of July 1, 2025, and is good through June 30, 2035. TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (ED), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

TBS is an Accredited member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), participates in the Distance Education consortium of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA), is a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and holds a Candid/ GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency.

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Code Directory





»» FROM THE PRESIDENT ««

K. Lynn Lewis

CALL TO ADVENTURE

After 16 years of leasing, TBS has an *opportunity to purchase a beautiful corporate venue* and convert it into an exceptional seminary campus combined with a Biblical History Museum and Archaeological Park.



PROSPECTIVE 19-ACRE CAMPUS 🏠 fenced 🏠 4 gated entrances

25,000 sq ft of indoor space 🏠 29,500 sq ft of covered outdoor space 🏠 3 undeveloped acres

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The distinctive, interactive *discipleship* and *leadership* training venue will combine classroom learning with an indoor museum and outdoor archaeological park offering immersive “hands on” studies for people of all ages and feature:

- » Multi-sensory, interactive learning environment
- » Tactile, retreat-style spaces, immersive exhibits
- » Experiential destination with broad appeal
- » Hub for disciple making and creative resource development





This new location will be used to uniquely disciple tens of thousands of people over the next 50 years and train at least 5,000 ministry leaders who each reach 200 people during their lifetimes and together impact 1 million souls for Christ.

To view detailed property layouts, photos, renderings, videos, and more visit

TheBibleSeminary.edu/call



Funding

**Call TO
ADVENTURE
CAMPAIGN**

To fund the *debt-free purchase* and development, three years of TBS operations, and start an endowment fund, we have launched a daring, faith-filled, and impossible-except-with-God three-year \$18.25 million *Call to Adventure* campaign.

We are praying for at least 1,000 donors. Since we first started quietly exploring this adventure in June 2025, 150 donors have led the way by giving and/or making pledges for up to three years. **If you are not already, would you be one of the 1,000?**

Total given or pledged is currently approaching \$2.6 million. Of that, nearly \$1 million has been designated toward facilities—about 13% of the immediate \$7.5 million we need to purchase the property and relocate the campus. by this September and move by next Spring.

Please consider joining this **UNIQUE, HISTORIC ADVENTURE!**

(see page 55 to **DONATE** or **PLEDGE**)

About Us

The Bible Seminary (TBS) is an independent, non-denominational Christian, 501(c)(3) charitable institution of higher education incorporated in Texas in 2010 to offer training for laity and vocational ministry professionals. Over the past 16 years, TBS has successfully established accredited academic programs, Bible-based seminars, study tours, archaeological excavations, and a museum. With the help of generous donors and program income, all this has been accomplished DEBT-FREE, including graduating all 100+ alumni free of seminary debt.

➤ **MISSION:** To foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, cultivate professional and lay leadership skills and deploy trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

➤ **LOCATION:** Based in Katy, Texas, with learning options offered on campus, online, and on location in churches, schools, Israel and other countries—building global community.

➤ **ACADEMICS:** Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Arts (4 majors), and Dual Degree Completion, plus archaeological excavations, a non-degree Certificate of Theological Studies, seminars, and study tours.

➤ **ACCREDITED:** Member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) with recent renewal good through 2035.

➤ **DISTINCTIVE:** Leadership includes world-renowned material culture and literary artifact experts and a museum that affirms the veracity of the Bible and draws nationwide visitors.



Leadership

Dr. K. Lynn Lewis
President

Dr. Scott Stripling
Provost and Vice-President
of Donor Relations
and world-renowned
archaeologist

Dr. Craig Evans
Distinguished Research
Professor and premier
New Testament scholar
and expert

Dr. Israel Steinmetz
Dean of the Graduate
Programs

Board of Trustees

Numerous **adjunct faculty, ministry professionals, and mentors** who serve as part of the teaching team



Lynn.Lewis@TheBibleSeminary.edu



	IMMEDIATE	Buy the campus FACILITIES by Fall 2026, do minimal renovations, and move by Spring 2027.	\$7.5 million
	SECONDARY	Fully develop the FACILITIES over the next three years.	\$3.75 million
	ASSOCIATED	Fully fund OPERATIONS for fiscal years 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28.	\$5 million
	DREAM	Toward ENDOWMENT funds.	\$2 million
	TOTAL = \$18.25 million		



1968 » IN MEMORIAM « 2026 DR. ISRAEL LOKEN

*professor
author
music & sports enthusiast
devotional king
silly joke master
scholar*



Israel and Kim Loken

New York Yankees Stadium

June 2026

Long-time TBS adjunct professor, author, scholar, devotional king, silly joke master, and music and sports enthusiast Dr. Israel Loken died suddenly of a heart attack on June 28, 2026 at the age of 58. He taught 19 courses at The Bible Seminary (TBS) between the Fall 2009 and Fall 2025 semesters, including the Old and New Testament Bible Certificate courses and Church History graduate courses.

Recognized as TBS 2021-22 Faculty of the Year and celebrated at his retirement announcement during the 2026 Spring Semester Faculty meeting, Dr. Loken and his wife of 34 years, Kim, enjoyed the next few months visiting family and friends, attending his 40th high school reunion, visiting the White House, and attending sports events (*see above photo taken at New York Yankees Stadium in June 2026*).

Born April 28, 1968 in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, he grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania where he graduated from Lancaster Christian School and Lancaster Bible College. A Th. M. and Ph. D. graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), he helped launch programs at the College of Biblical

Studies (CBS) in 2000 where he served as Senior Professor and Chair of the Bible and Theology Departments over the next twenty-five years.

As noted in his obituary, "Israel was a loyal supporter of the Los Angeles Lakers, Green Bay Packers, New York Yankees, and Villanova Wildcats ... Whether discussing Scripture or the latest game, his passion was unmistakable, and those who knew him will always remember the joy and excitement he brought to both."

According to his mom, Dawn Loken,

What a wonderful blessing our son was, not only to us but to hundreds of his students and friends and colleagues. God was lifted up and glorified in his life. His deep love for God's word will be his legacy to hundreds of students whose lives are richer because of his passion!

"Israel had a big, beautiful heart and tragically, that heart simply gave out," wrote his brother, Lance Loken, and sister, Hope Loken Klein. "Though our hearts are broken by this unimaginable loss, we find peace in knowing that he is now in the loving arms of his Heavenly Father, whole and at perfect peace."

"Dr. Loken's deepest legacy was ... a profound love for Christ, an unwavering commitment to the authority of God's Word, and a genuine passion for equipping men and women for Christian service," noted Dr. Bill Blocker, CBS President. "His only stated ambition in life was to teach God's Word and to help others learn the Bible, and he lived that dream every single day."

"Dr. Loken played a significant role in helping establish TBS academic programs," says Dr. K. Lynn Lewis, TBS President. "He also modeled comprehensive, constructive, and simple ways of joyfully enlightening the Word of God. Through his students and publications, his profound teaching and wisdom will reverberate throughout eternity."

Paul Helbig, founding TBS professor who originally hired Dr. Loken remembers, "Izzy once dressed up as the Apostle Paul and taught Philippians by quoting the entire book. When I told him it was greatest message I'd ever heard, he thanked me, smiled, and said 'The Bible is AWESOME!'" 🏆



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- Study all 66 books of the Bible
- No prior degree required



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- Lifelong Learners
- Ministry Leaders
- Business Professionals
- Church Volunteers
- Those New to Bible Study

“There’s not just a focus on the historicity of the Bible, but also a focus on spiritual growth.”

Jacob Figueroa, TBS Graduate

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THE BIBLE SEMINARY

PROVOST'S PEN

Scott Stripling, Provost and Vice-President of Donor Relations

It is **no secret** that The Bible Seminary (TBS) is growing.

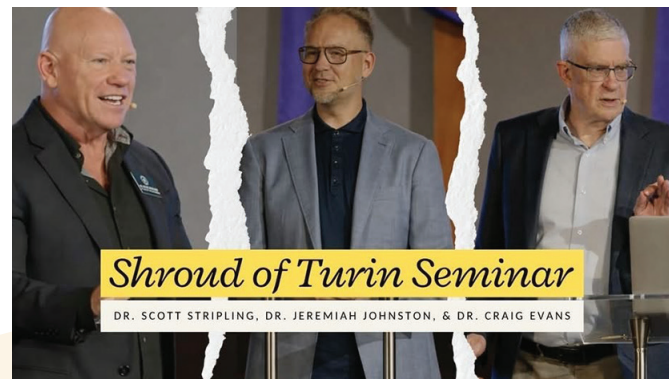
..... In fact we are, *bursting at the seams.*



All one needs to do is to try to find a seat in my office without bumping into a crate of pottery or arrive late for the Public Reading of Scripture (PRS) on a Monday and try to find a seat. This past academic year we experienced record enrollment in our courses, programs, and seminars. We will no doubt exceed these levels in the coming academic year. Our incoming cohort of students is the largest since the initial cohort. **These are exciting times with new challenges and new opportunities!**

Shroud of Turin Event

In partnership with the Christian Thinkers Society (ChristianThinkers.com) and Grace Fellowship Church (WhatIsGrace.org), we hosted a hugely successful “Who is the Man in the Shroud?” exhibit the week spanning Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday 2026. We are aware of numerous people who came to faith in Christ through the Shroud exhibit. Many also discovered TBS for the first time, including some who have already matriculated as new students. This exhibit helped showcase the high quality, gifted personnel, and type of lifechanging discipleship and leadership training experiences we aim to bring regularly to the Houston-area (and the world!) on our new campus.



Nearly 10,000 people toured the Shroud exhibit and around 1,200 people attended the 90-minute “Shroud of Turin Seminar” in-person. Tens of thousands have watched the virtual tour and seminar online and millions have watched some of the online video shorts.

Faculty

Our faculty continue to go above and beyond the call of duty to train and empower exegetically equipped servant leaders. Dr. Evans continues to publish his research at an astounding rate. Dr. Lewis, Dr. Steimetz, Dr. Billington, Jordan McClinton, and I also published important works recently. This year we honor Dr. Jim Leggett as TBS Faculty of the Year (see p. 48). Key to the launch of TBS sixteen years ago was Dr. Leggett's vision of an accredited seminary that taught all 66 biblical books and is rooted locally but making a global impact. Thank you Dr. Leggett for founding TBS and for teaching students in the "PRE 501 and PRE 502: Expository Preaching and Teaching" series how to communicate with excellence.

Our Faculty Are
Top Notch

2026 Graduates

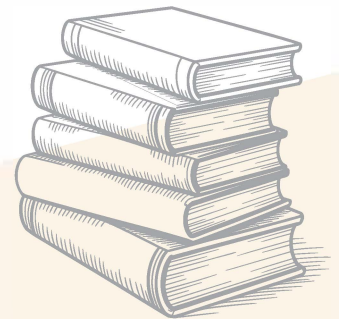
The six members of this year's graduating class are Tommy Chamberlin, Ruth Farthing, Brennan Hack, Margaret Haughen, Paul Kabore, and Anita Murillo (see pp. 50-52). Margaret is the final graduate of our original Bible Certificate (BC) program that is now a Certificate in Theological Studies (CTS). Ruth, Brennan, and Anita earn their CTS this year, and Tommy and Paul celebrate completion of the rigorous requirements of the Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA). Paul, a pastor and overseer of several churches in Burkina Faso (central Africa), is our first international graduate student. Tommy, an attorney from Pikeville, Kentucky and founder of Expedition Archaeology, is our 2026 valedictorian.



Congratulations
TO THESE
AMAZING
STUDENTS

Library

Our library continues to grow. This past year we doubled our library space and expanded our academic collection. We also provide students with a variety of digital resources, including JSTOR which is the gold standard for accessing academic resources. TBS librarian Angela McClinton does an excellent job of managing our collection. This year the Lanier Theological Library made another donation of high-quality resource books to TBS, and a retired pastor donated his collection. We also purchased dozens of new books to update our resources. The library space on our new campus will allow continued expansion for the coming decades.



Call to Adventure

For those who cannot travel to the Bible lands, we are making plans to bring the Bible lands to you through our indoor and outdoor museum on the new TBS campus (see pp. 3-5 and visit TheBibleSeminary.org/call to view detailed layouts, renderings, and more). We thank you for partnering with us on the *Call to Adventure* campaign. Your prayers and financial partnership make all we do possible.

.....
Great days
lie ahead!
.....

Alumni Updates

TBS alumni experienced some **significant milestones** this past year.



Kevin Alvarez (MDiv 2016), Pastor of Celebration Community Church in Pana, Illinois, was recently recognized for his pastoral excellence and tasked by his denomination to facilitate church growth in his region. He now serves as Central Regional Consultant for the Illinois Baptist State Association (IBSA). Kevin is married to TBS alumnus **Yvette Alvarez (MABS 2021)**.



Cassia Glass (MACHT 2023) has been accepted in the Doctor of Ministry in Leadership program at Denver Seminary.



Angela McClinton (MDiv 2018), TBS Director of Development and Librarian, transitioned from part-time to full-time employment at TBS. She also teaches and coordinates TBS PRS (Public Reading of Scripture) and JSU (Just Show Up book club) initiatives. Angela is married to TBS alum **Jordan McClinton (MABHA 2022)**.



Shannon Stubblefield (MDiv 2019) is currently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at The King's University.



Abigail (Leavitt) Van Huss (BACS and MABHA 2021) completed her Ph.D. in Archaeology and Land of Israel Studies at Ariel University and was promoted to Co-Director of the Shiloh Excavation. Abigail is married to fellow TBS alumnus **Clayton Van Huss (MABHA 2023)** who is about to start his Ph.D. program at Ariel University.

Tours and Trips

I just completed ten years as TBS Provost and I love every aspect of my job. My favorite part is spending weeks, and sometimes months, in Bible lands with our faith community. I am writing today from Jerusalem, with twenty TBS students and alumni who comprise almost one-fifth of the Shiloh dig team this summer (DigShiloh.org). This is where character and destiny are forged in the fire. I am incredibly proud of these world-changers.

Earlier this year Mike McGown (Senior Pastor at Parkway Fellowship and a member of the TBS Board of Trustees) and I co-led a “Footsteps of Paul” Mediterranean cruise. The trip blended “empty nesters” from Parkway Fellowship with TBS supporters. Trips like the Shiloh excavation and the “Footsteps of Paul” build community, culture, and character. They also lead to a quantum leap in understanding the world of the Bible. 🏰

I
LOVE
MY
JOB

Contact
Provost Stripling



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CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Scott Stripling, PhD

Many misconceptions exist about Zionism—one of the hottest geopolitical-religious topics in today’s world. Unfortunately, like the 50 million viewers of Tucker Carlson’s 2025 Zionism debate with Texas Senator Ted Cruz, most people have more questions than answers. ***Perhaps this review can provide some clarity.***

Historical Background

Two seemingly unrelated sociological forces emerged in the Nineteenth Century—Dispensationalism and Zionism. By the mid-Twentieth Century, they merged and fundamentally reshaped the world’s geopolitical landscape and the message of western evangelicalism.

Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) is the father of Dispensationalism. Disillusioned with the Anglican Church, he helped found the Plymouth Brethren in Dublin, Ireland around 1830. While premillennial eschatology (Greek *eschatos* means “last”)—theology of end times belief that Jesus Christ will physically return prior to a 1,000-year, earthly messianic reign—existed since the early church, Darby introduced new views as follows:

- » *Christ would secretly rapture and rescue true believers prior to a great tribulation.*
- » *Christ would return later, accompanied by those rescued believers and the righteous deceased to inaugurate a millennial (1,000-year) kingdom on earth.*
- » *God offered two redemptive paths: 1) one for natural, ethnic Israel on pause until the current church age, or dispensation, concludes; and 2) another for Christians.*

The Plymouth Brethren split in 1848, and Darby led the stricter “doctrinally pure,” literalistic Exclusive Brethren group. He translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek manuscripts into

English, German, and French and zealously spread his new revelation.

Prior to the War Between the States (1861–1865), most American Christians leaned overwhelmingly postmillennial in their eschatology. As such, they believed Jesus would return after successful completion of the Great Commission and most people believed in Christ, resulting in a worldwide, indeterminate “millennium” of peace, prosperity, and longevity. This theological impetus undergirded Manifest Destiny—belief that God predestined America as a global force to extend his kingdom from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans and to ultimately make disciples of all nations.

Conversely, American slaves (comprising about 6% percent of the total sold worldwide, primarily by black slave traders to white slave traders) embraced a premillennial eschatology. They believed Jesus would return very soon to rescue them from their difficult, earthly plight.

Then, over the span of five Aprils, Americans killed approximately 700,000 fellow citizens out of a 31 million population (including slaves). Adjusted for today, that would equate to 7.7 million dead Americans, plus many more injured.

In the aftermath of the American Civil War, most evangelical Christians abandoned their optimistic postmillennialism for a more somber premillennial and increasingly

dispensational view of the future. In an unprecedented anthropological shift, white Americans adopted the eschatology of black Americans. When their lived experiences contradicted their theology, theology lost. Historian Vernon Louis Parrington and others presciently observed the shift “From the Marriage Supper of the Lamb to the great barbecue.”

Darby’s views grew slowly but steadily as America descended into the Gilded Age of the Industrial Revolution that produced both extreme wealth and extreme poverty. The 1909 Scofield Reference Bible systematized and popularized Darby’s ideas and helped shape 20th century evangelicalism and American foreign policy into the 21st century.

Zionism

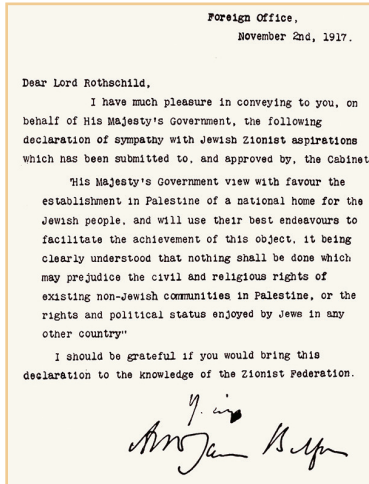
Meanwhile, another sociological movement began accelerating on both sides of the Atlantic. From the 1st century to the mid-19th century AD, the Jewish population in the Holy Land declined from an estimated 85% majority to a small minority. Via Roman tyranny, influx of Christians during the Byzantine era, and Arab-Muslim conquests up through the Ottoman empire, Jews scattered worldwide. However, recurring Jewish persecutions throughout Europe and Asia resulted in various waves of Jews returning to their native homeland, most notably in the 1500s and early

1800s. By 1860, a strong “Proto-Zionist” movement emerged promoting the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland.

Moses Montefiore (1784–1885)—an Italian-born Orthodox Jew raised in England, successful businessman and investor, Sheriff of London, High Sheriff of Kent knighted by Queen Victoria in 1837—zealously advocated for Jewish rights worldwide. His passionate philanthropy throughout the Ottoman Empire until his death at age

101 helped solidify the growing Zionist movement.

Inspired by Montefiore and others, French Jew and philanthropist Baron Edmond James de Rothschild (1845–1934) began financing the relocation of European Jews to the ancient Bible lands and helping establish agricultural communities, factories, and other enterprises. He strongly advocated



Balfour Declaration

Image Credit: Public Domain

for a revival of the Hebrew language and bought land through shell corporations and third parties to disguise his identity. Unlike others, Edmond initially quietly sought to avoid conflict with Ottoman rulers while privately laying groundwork for the future.

His British second cousin, Lionel Walter Rothschild, served as liaison between Zionist lobbyists (including Chaim Weizmann, President of the Zionist Lobby and future first President of Israel) and the British government. Rothschild encouraged former British Prime Minister then serving as Foreign Minister, Arthur James Balfour, to openly endorse a “national home” for Jews. Balfour did so in a November 2, 1917 public governmental letter to Lord Rothschild. The 67-word Balfour Declaration became the first institutional step toward a modern state of Israel. The British Mandate for Palestine incorporated his language and the League of Nations confirmed it into their 1922 charter with the provision that non-Jewish populations (Christian and Muslim) not be displaced.



British Mandate of Palestine

Image Credit: Public Domain

Following the post-World War I collapse of the Ottoman Empire and partitions formalized by the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, the British Mandate encompassed 46,500 square miles on both sides of the Jordan River. At that time, both Jews and Arabs referred to themselves as Palestinians. New countries formed in the region under the British and French Mandates included Lebanon (1920), Iraq (1932), and Syria (1946). Jordan claimed the 35,500 square miles (76% of British Mandate for Palestine) on the east side of Jordan River, or Transjordan, and formally declared independence in 1946.

Meanwhile, ensuing German reparations following World War I helped fuel the rise of the Nazis and Adolph Hitler. The combined extermination of 6 million European

Jews and millions of Christians during World War II, the lack of British action to formalize a Jewish state, and the post-war surge of sympathetic public sentiment influenced the newly formed United Nations to approve a Partition Plan (Resolution 181) on November 29, 1947. The plan proposed dividing the remaining portion of the British Mandate west of the Jordan river into independent Arab (42%) and Jewish (55%) states, with Jerusalem (3%) under international administration. Jews accepted the plan, Arabs rejected it, and civil war broke out.

On May 14, 1948, a few hours prior to the midnight expiration of the British Mandate, David Ben-Gurion (first Prime Minister of modern Israel) publicly declared Israel an independent state. The next day,

Arab forces from five surrounding countries invaded the newborn nation and captured the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and the Old City of Jerusalem before the Arab-Israeli War concluded incrementally over the next year.

Current Status

Modern Israel has existed for 78 years. Following a significant territorial expansion in 1967 resulting from the Six-Day War, the 1993 and 1995 Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) divided ancient Judea and Samaria—commonly referred to as the West Bank—into three zones. Zones include Area A (total Arab control), Area B (shared governance), and Area C (total Israeli control). Over 60% of disputed areas lie in Area C.



Most American Evangelicals have staunchly supported Israel's independence. The U.S. Government annually allocates billions of dollars to support Israel's continued existence. Influential podcasts regularly challenge these alliances with Tucker Carlson, Megyn Kelly, and Candace Owens among the most prominent. The recent war with Iran has exacerbated the divide among Evangelicals, and Christians living in Israel (many without citizenship rights) have raised difficult questions about social justice, which all leads back to dispensationalism.

Tel Shiloh, Israel, 6/12/2026

« Mike Huckabee (L)—current U.S. Ambassador to Israel and former Baptist pastor and governor of Arkansas—visiting with Dr. Scott Stripling (R) on the last day of the 2026 Tel Shiloh excavation season.

Summary

A Christian Zionist is a self-identified Jesus follower who believes current geopolitical events are fulfilling ancient biblical prophecies, including the formation of modern Israel. Christian Zionism is a religious and political movement that supports the right of the Jewish people to return to their ancestral homeland and maintain a sovereign state in Israel. Unlike secular Zionism, Christian Zionism is primarily driven by biblical (eschatological) interpretations that view modern Israel as a fulfillment of divine prophecy.

However, a growing number of Evangelicals support Israel because they believe it is the only stable democracy in the Middle East, not simply because of eschatology. A 2024 Pew Research Survey found that 25 percent of Evangelicals support a Two-State Solution in which Arabs would form their own nation. Christian Zionists clearly have many nuances in their application of biblical prophecy to contemporary geopolitics.

Most dispensationalists look to Jesus's Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) regarding the fig tree: "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened" (Matthew 24:32–34). They interpret the fig tree as representing Israel and the 1948 formation of modern Israel as marking the final generation before Jesus returns to establish His earthly kingdom. In this paradigm, "this generation" refers to those alive today, not the late Second Temple period Jews to whom Jesus spoke.

Others emphasize God's promise to Abram (later Abraham): "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites'" (Genesis 15:18–21).

The Apostle Paul addresses the relationship between natural Israel and the church in *Romans* 9–11. When he wrote the epistle (circa AD 58), several things seemed obvious to him:

1. **God was not yet finished with natural Israel (9:29–32; 11:1–2).**
2. **Not all ethnic Jews inherit the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (11:14).**
3. **Some non-Jews do inherit the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (10:23–24).**
4. **God does not revoke his covenants (11:28–29).**

To be clear, neither the current U.S. Government administration nor the Israeli administration represents the kingdom of God. Even so, Romans 13:1–7 clearly states that God does work through imperfect humans and governments to accomplish His will.

Christians who live in western countries can certainly critique government actions, policies, and leadership, including those of President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu. At the same time, Christians are commanded to pray for governmental leaders (1 Timothy 2:1–3). Unfortunately, more criticism than prayer often generates more heat than light.

I pray this information helps people involved in this arena more accurately frame their perspectives, reflect with better understanding, and act according to godly principles. 🙏



Dr. Scott Stripling serves as Provost and Vice-President of Donor Relations for The Bible Seminary (TBS), Director of Excavations for the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR) at Ancient Shiloh, and President of the Near East Archaeological Society (NEAS).



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»» 2026 «« FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Adam Peters

God is always at work. As I take time to see what He is doing around, in, and through me, my faith grows. And when I step out and trust God with big, specific needs aligned with His will, He delivers over and over again. Even when I can't see a way, God makes a way, and His Glory is revealed.

As I look back and see his continued faithfulness, I am reminded of the freedom that comes from surrendering my hopes, dreams, achievements, failures, strengths, and weaknesses to Him. He never fails! I can see this in my own journey, and it is clearly evident in the journey of The Bible Seminary (TBS).

God has been so faithful throughout the seminary's existence and I am excited about what God continues to do through TBS! Year after year, we see increased fruit with rising enrollment and expanded opportunities to further the mission He has given us to foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, while cultivating professional and lay leadership skills, and deploying trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

We are blessed with a world-class staff fully engaged in this mission. We see the fruit from 3J Museum using historical artifacts to share the Gospel, including the Shroud of Turin exhibit hosted at Grace Fellowship Church this past Easter season.

Last year, I mentioned our excitement about God-inspired dreams for future TBS. These are now taking shape as we step out in faith to secure a new home that will enable us to greatly expand our reach. Our *Call to Adventure* campaign is clearly a big goal only possible with the Lord's blessing and provision through His people.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please pray for the *Call to Adventure*, God's work at TBS, and ways you can share this amazing journey. I pray our adventure proves a faith-building testimony of God's Providence for His Glory. 🙏

Thank You

**for your continued
prayers and support.**



Please Pray

**for the *Call to Adventure*,
God's work at TBS,
and ways you can share
this amazing journey.**



JESUS

NEVER

said

K. Lynn Lewis, TBS President

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Jesus Christ first spoke publicly at the beginning of his ministry perhaps in the late 20's AD (CE). Ever since the Lord first projected his inaugural words and vibrated the tympanic membranes of his earliest hearers, Jesus' ministry and teachings have influenced people, institutions, and cultures near and far for nearly two millennia.

The Literary Record

Four authors known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John penned quotes—most likely originally spoken in Aramaic—excerpted from an estimated three years of Jesus' preaching and teaching. Along with added explanatory details and commentary, their four books became known collectively as the "Gospels" and are included with other religious texts in the book of books commonly referred to as "The Bible." Divided into an "Old Testament" selection of ancient Jewish holy books originally written mostly in Hebrew and a "New Testament" selection of

Christian holy books written mostly in Greek, copies of the Bible were later translated into Latin, English, and many other languages.

In the late 1890's, Louis Klopsch (1852-1910)—then owner of *Christian Herald* magazine and fervent proponent of people reading and understanding the Bible—read these words of Jesus Christ, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which I shed for you" (Luke 22:20 KJV). Aware of the medieval stylistic practice of rubrication—highlighting literary features to draw attention to specific

headings, words, or phrases—**Klopsch decided to publish the Gospels highlighting the words of Jesus in red letters (symbolizing the color of Jesus' shed blood).** He first published *The New Testament: With All the Words Recorded Therein, as Having Been Spoken by Our Lord, Printed in Color* (1899, New York: World Publishing Company) and then *The Holy Bible: Red Letter Edition* (1901, New York: World Publishing Company). Others followed suit and have since published additional red-letter editions of the Bible.

— The Gospels  Matthew • Mark • Luke • John —

A more recent version is *The Red Letter Gospel: All The Words of Jesus Christ in Red* (2009, 2014, 2017, 2021. Smart Publishing Ltd. Surrey, British Columbia Canada). Compiler Daniel John reports that people regularly ask, “What percentage of the Gospel is just the words of Jesus Christ?” He explains that those books in the English version of the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) contain 83,680 words. Combining those into synoptic form and removing duplications reduces the word count to 65,460 words. Of those, original words spoken by Jesus recorded in the four Gospels total 31,426 words.¹

Single annual State of the Union messages by U.S. presidents have averaged around 12,500 words. Harry Truman’s 1946 written 27,500-word address almost equates the length the entire body of words the Gospel writers attribute to Jesus. Jimmy Carter’s 1981 record 33,667-word State of the Union message exceeds them.²

Experts assert that people commonly speak at an average rate of 150 words per minute (wpm), although rates vary with context.³ Presenters often range between 100–150 wpm, audio book and radio/podcast speakers between 150–160 wpm, while auctioneers average 250 wpm and commentators 250–400 wpm.⁴ Taking the number of Jesus’ original words recorded in the Gospels and dividing by a common 150 wpm rate approximates 3.5 hours.⁵ A slow rate of 100 wpm amounts to just over five (5) hours.⁶

Five hours.

Five hours—the length of an afternoon—that have influenced major world events, transformational communication technologies, the colonization of countries,

the frameworks of governments, the purpose and vision of hundreds of thousands of organizations, and the lives and work of billions of people.

Yet, surely over the course of years in ministry Jesus spoke more than five hours. Studies indicate that some people talk that much in a day and most speak more than that weekly.⁷ A pastor preaching 20-minute sermons for 50 Sundays a year for three years vocalizes approximately 50 hours of words.⁸ A full-time college professor teaching for three years talks nearly 300 hours.⁹ A full-time schoolteacher teaching 180 days per year for three years talks more than 2,000 hours.¹⁰ An executive or employee talking four hours per day at work accumulates about 1,000 hours per year and 3,000 hours over three years.¹¹

The author of the Gospel of John—an apostle and close friend of Jesus—asserted that Jesus did much more than what he wrote. “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book,” he summarized. “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31).

He ended his Gospel reiterating the overwhelming content from among which he selected. “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

Similarly, the other Gospel writers apparently excerpted key information from among a much larger volume of Jesus’ words and deeds.

JESUS' ORIGINAL WORDS

at the rate of 100 wpm  divides out to only FIVE hours



... and the lives and work of billions of people.

Suggested Caution

Firstly, no apologist—amateur or professional—can claim with absolute certainty that Jesus NEVER said anything about something unless privy to the vast trove of records of everything Jesus EVER said. Earnestly claiming such either requires access to knowledge unattainable by most, ignorant arrogance, or unbridled hubris.

Secondly, one may certainly assert that Jesus did not appear to directly and specifically address a certain subject in the Gospels. However, some subjects are referenced indirectly, and many are addressed elsewhere in Scripture. If Jesus is the Lord indeed and “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9), the words of the Lord throughout the whole Bible should be considered relevant before making any case utilizing the argument that “Jesus never said” one thing or another.

Thirdly, countless topics are not explicitly mentioned among the red-letter words, and many not specifically addressed in the rest of the Bible either. Yet, some non-mentions have been considered significant and even claimed of divine import throughout history.

Fourthly, Ezekiel offers a prophetic warning to vain usurpers who claim to speak for the Lord. “Their visions are false ... the Lord has not sent them,” he writes, and “they lead my people astray” (13:6,10). “By lying to my people, who listen to lies, you have killed those who should not have died and have spared those who should not live” (13:19). He conveys the Lord’s promise of punishment “because you disheartened the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives” (13:22).

Fifthly, claims that “Jesus never said” regularly seem to appear in conjunction with excuses to pardon and often promote what elsewhere and otherwise is considered sinful. Thus, the danger harkened by Ezekiel seems as real today—and probably as prevalent—as in antiquity. Whether prophet or priest, preacher or part-time apologist, advocating “Jesus never said” is a bold claim one should probably never make, certainly not flippantly, and if so, in full acceptance that doing so may fraudulently imperil souls, including one’s own. 🇺🇸

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8. Pastor calculation based on 20 minutes per week, 50 weeks per year for three years = $(20 \text{ min/wk} \times 50 \text{ wks/yr}) \times 3 \text{ yrs} = 3,000 \text{ minutes}$, or $3,000 \text{ min} / 60 \text{ minutes/hr} = 50 \text{ hours}$.
9. Professor calculation based on a 3-hour course teaching 2.5 hours/week for 13 weeks per semester for 3 courses/semester for 3 semesters/year = $[(2.5 \text{ hrs/wk} \times 13 \text{ wks}) \times 3 \text{ sem/yr}] \times 3 \text{ yrs} = 292.5 \text{ hours}$.
10. Schoolteacher calculation based on 4 hours per day for 180 days for 3 years = $(4 \text{ hrs/day} \times 180 \text{ days/yr}) \times 3 \text{ yrs} = 2,160 \text{ hours}$.
11. Employee calculation based on 4 hours per day, 5 days per week, and 50 weeks per year for three years = $[(4 \text{ hrs/day} \times 5 \text{ days/wk}) \times 50 \text{ wks/yr}] \times 3 \text{ years} = 3,000 \text{ hours}$.

Mary Thanks CAROUSEL

Israel Steinmetz, Academic Dean and Professor



Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

IT IS THE LORD CHRIST YOU ARE SERVING.

Col 3:23-24

7

years of service

Having Carousel on Team TBS these past seven years was like having Priscilla from the book of Acts on our staff.

Dr. Stripling

**TBS OFFICE MANAGER
AND REGISTRAR**

May '19 thru April '26

Carousel Pieterse's welcoming personality gave me my first impressions of The Bible Seminary (TBS) family in 2022. Her warm, professional female voice greeting me with an Afrikaner accent was the first sound I heard when responding to an email regarding my application to join TBS as Graduate Dean and Associate Professor. She facilitated my first connections with Dr. Lewis and Dr. Stripling, my first campus visit and job interview, and her smiling face was the first to greet us when my wife and I first walked through the seminary doors. Little did I know how important her partnership as a colleague and presence as a confidant would become over the next few years.

During her almost exactly seven years of service from May 2019 to April 2026 as part-time TBS Office Manager and Registrar, Carousel similarly greeted thousands of people who called and walked through the doors of TBS and visited the 3J Museum. While "receptionists" commonly welcome people and connect them with others, "registrars" similarly welcome students into an academic relationship with an institution, process admission applications, register them, and open doors to educational paths and lifetime adventures.

Carousel modeled work as ministry. She incarnated the spirit and truth of the Gospel in typically mundane actions of answering phones and responding to emails, offering food and drinks, managing paperwork and keeping records. She embodied the apostle Paul's admonitions to "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God," (1 Cor 10:31, NIV) and "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Col 3:23-24). In daily conversations and interactions, meals prepared and events

planned, words of encouragement and even rebuke when warranted, Carousel worked as unto the Lord, glorifying God in her quotidian duties.

"Having Carousel on Team TBS these past seven years was like having Priscilla from the book of Acts on our staff," recalls Dr. Stripling. Affirming her work paired with prayer, he notes, "Her prayers and steadfast support contributed significantly to our success."

Much of what she brought to TBS was not included in her job description. Carousel regularly adorned the TBS office with winsome art and décor, often featuring the incredible artistic talents of her husband, Dawid. She led the planning and successful implementation of numerous events, often engaging her network of family and friends in exhibiting great class and taste, delicious food, and joyfully creating beautiful spaces to eat and enjoy shared activities. Her wealth of life experiences and wisdom from her native South Africa and devotion to helping people permeated her work and shined like a comforting beacon.

While working for TBS, Carousel began volunteering as executive director of Katy Cares, a not-for-profit ministering to single parents. Ultimately, it was her excellent leadership, the growth of that ministry, and her stellar doctoral project with national prospects that led to the need to commit full time to Katy Cares.

Over the three-and-a-half years we shared at TBS, I spent many mornings in the lobby, coffee in hand, drinking in Carousel's wisdom and knowledge she shared with me and so many others.

"Carousel was always there to listen," notes TBS Business Manager, Yami Soto. "I knew that not only did I have a coworker but a wonderful and wise friend."

I'm personally drawn to people with big hearts and broad minds, and Carousel Pieterse is the rare individual with both. 🍷

A TRIBUTE FROM *President Lynn Lewis*

During her seven-year tenure, Carousel Pieterse helped shepherd hundreds of students, along with Board members, faculty, and staff, as well as helped welcome and communicate with thousands of museum visitors. She served key roles in helping TBS achieve initial accreditation and 10-year renewal of accreditation, including the strategic organization and review of all TBS student-related records.

She, along with key family members and friends, has been a driving force and creative genius behind numerous beautifully hosted TBS events, including banquets, fundraisers, graduations, seminars, and other special occasions. To the delight of us all, she was a key instigator in helping TBS transition to Populi. Her emotional and spiritual discernment, unique style, visionary thinking, and quiet service have deeply blessed our TBS family and visitors in many ways. She has also served a crucial role in helping keep our campus freshly appealing and delightfully decorated. Her joyful welcome and willing, personable engagement has been a light and witness of Jesus Christ to all who have called and/or entered our doors.

As her faithful dedication to earning her doctorate and helping build the Katy Cares (KatyCares.org) ministry over the past few years has led to this exciting opportunity,

I hope you will join me in celebrating her new position with Katy Cares and praying the Lord's continued blessings on Carousel, the Pieterse family, and their work and ministries.

"Carousel was always there to listen," notes TBS Business Manager, Yami Soto. "I knew that not only did I have a coworker but a wonderful and wise friend."



Friends and students of The Bible Seminary (TBS) are well aware of the importance of

archaeology for informed interpretation of Scripture. It is the correlation of archaeological discoveries with the Bible that gives us confidence that what the ancient writings contained in this book say about the past is true and must be taken seriously. This conviction underlies the ongoing excavation at ancient Shiloh led by my colleague Dr. Scott Stripling. But not all ancient artifacts are stones, pottery, and coins unearthed in archaeological digs. Some of our most important artifacts are manuscripts, preserved for centuries in monasteries, synagogues, and wilderness caves. Many of these old manuscripts help us understand key

moments and teachings in the life of the early Church. Allow me to provide an important example.

In a vision, the apostle Peter learns that Gentiles may also hear the gospel and respond in faith. The good news of Jesus isn't restricted to the Jewish people. Soon after, Peter says to Cornelius the Roman centurion, "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:34–36).

Commentators recognize that the phrase, "preaching good news of peace," echoes Isaiah 52:7's well-known proclamation, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace..." As he continues to speak to Cornelius, Peter alludes to words and phrases from Isaiah's famous song of

the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52:13–53:12). The context suggests that the "good news of peace" (meaning peace, or reconciliation, with God) is based on what the Suffering Servant has done.

We find the same linkage in Paul. In Romans 10:15 Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7, then in the following verse he quotes Isaiah 53:1, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" For both Peter and Paul, the "good news" (or "gospel" or "glad tidings") proclaimed by Isaiah is none other than the prophecy of the Servant who suffers for his people. Was this a Christian innovation? **Did Christians dream up this connection because of what happened to Jesus? Would first-century Jews who heard this apostolic preaching agree that the gospel foretold by Isaiah really does center on the Servant who suffered?**

Many Jews would have seen such a connection, if their ancient manuscripts

are anything to go on. In the Hebrew Bible we find a large *samek* (the Hebrew letter “s,” an abbreviation for *seder*, a “division” of Scripture) in the margin opposite Isaiah 52:7. A smaller *samek* appears after 52:12. This primitive punctuation indicates that 52:7–12 introduces the song that follows. That is, the good news that the prophet proclaims concerns the Suffering Servant. We see a similar connection in the Targum, that is, the Aramaic paraphrase of Hebrew Scripture. In 53:1, the prophet asks, “Who has believed our good news?” (instead of “what has been heard”). “Good news” connects with the proclamation of good news in 52:7. By the way, the Aramaic paraphrase explicitly identifies the Suffering Servant as the Messiah (in 52:13; 53:10).

Our Hebrew Bible is based on the Masoretic Text and our oldest principal manuscript of this text is Codex Leningrad, which dates to AD 1008. That’s not very early; and the Aramaic paraphrase is not especially early either. So, we must ask if the connection between Isaiah 52:7 and the Suffering

Servant Song had been made in these Isaiah manuscripts in the time of Jesus and the apostles. Apparently it was, for in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsaiah), found in a cave at Qumran in 1947, we find the same marginal notes. Opposite 52:7 (in column 43 of the scroll) is a prominent circle (which looks like a *samek*) resting on a horizontal line, perhaps representing the Greek *paragraphos* (see Figure 1). This hat-shaped siglum introduces a major section; and, sure enough, we find a smaller *paragraphos* opposite 53:1 (in column 44 of the scroll; see Figure 2). The paragraphing of the Great Isaiah Scroll of Qumran, which dates to about 150 BC, is essentially the same as that of the much later Codex Leningrad. The good news proclaimed by the great prophet Isaiah concerned the Suffering Servant, whose ministry of suffering was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. An ancient copy of Scripture confirms that the preaching of Peter and Paul would have made perfect sense to their Jewish contemporaries. ■

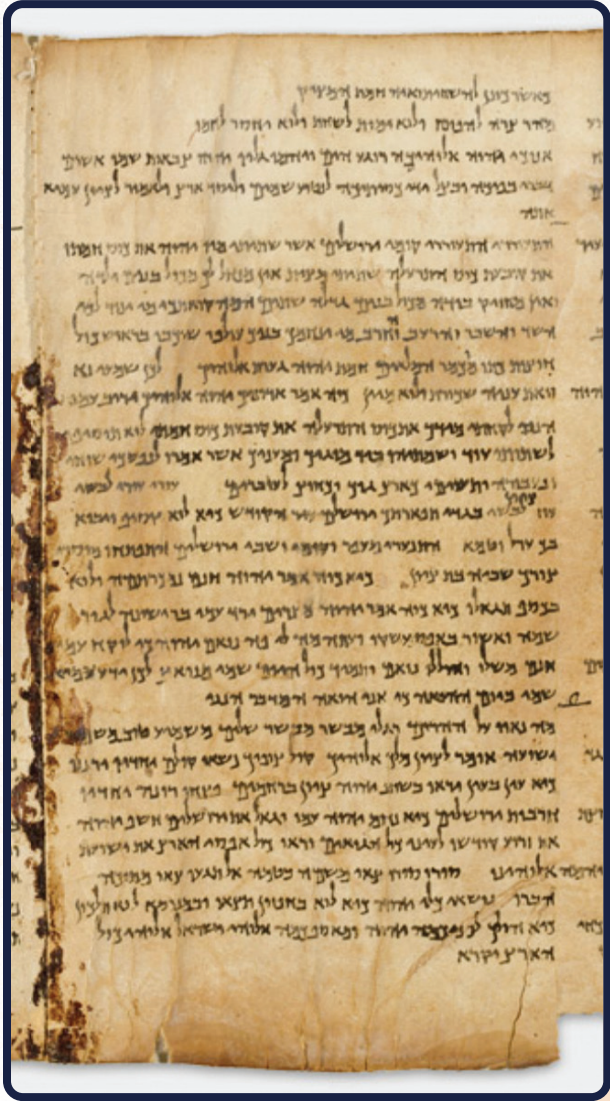


Figure 1. Great Isaiah Scroll, column 43 (= Isaiah 51:20–52:12): In the right-hand margin, three quarters of the page from the top, one observes the horizontal line (*paragraphos*) with a circle (*samek*) resting upon it.

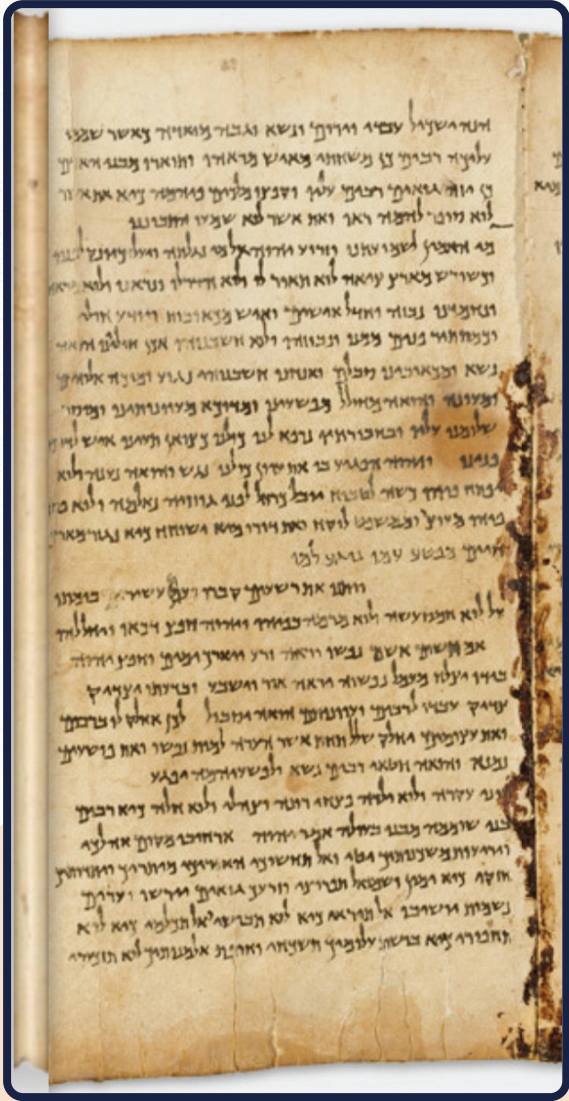


Figure 2. Great Isaiah Scroll, column 44 (= Isa 52:13–53:8): In the right-hand margin, four lines from the top, one observes a horizontal line (*paragraphos*).

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

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Scan to
learn more!

FRONT ROW *OF HISTORY*

Yamile Soto,
TBS Alum (CTS 2025) and Business Manager



(L-R) Delilah, Omar, and Yami Soto

MY 11TH GRADE DAUGHTER'S **GRADUATE SCHOOL ADVENTURE**

Homeschooling is a unique journey. Some moments loom particularly large, especially when your careful cultivation opens exciting doors to something unexpected that will mark your child for life. For our family, even I did not see this coming: my eleventh-grade daughter, Dalilah, is scheduled to take a graduate-level Church History course at The Bible Seminary (TBS) this fall.

Let that sink in for a moment. A sixteen-year-old, seated alongside adults pursuing theological education, studying the sweeping story of the Christian church across two millennia. It seems improbable. But when you have invested years in homeschooling and watching your child grow into a young believer with a genuine love for the things of God, improbable starts to look a lot like providence.



Family Ministry

Ministry has never been background in our family, but the main thing. Dalilah has grown up watching people serve, sacrifice, teach, and pour themselves out for the sake of others. She has attended more church meetings than most adults. She has heard my husband Omar and I talk theology over dinner for years and seen what it looks like when faith moves from beliefs to a way of life.

For her, walking into a seminary classroom is not a leap into an abstract, unfamiliar territory. In many ways, it is a homecoming—a formal introduction to the theological tradition that has shaped our family's life from the highchair to the church pew.

HOMESCHOOLING
IS A
UNIQUE JOURNEY



It's Personal

Located in Katy, Texas, TBS is a place where serious people wrestle with deep things of faith, and rigorous academic study and sincere spiritual formation are not opposites but companions. Faculty bring both credentials and genuine pastoral hearts to the classroom. Learning is not a mere intellectual exercise, but a truly engaging and formative experience.

I know this firsthand because TBS is not just Dalilah's school; it is mine, too. It is where I work and where I earned my own Certificate in Theological Studies (CTS). My journey deepened my faith, sharpened my thinking, and provided a framework for understanding the world. Hers is a familiar opportunity in a familiar place that I believe in deeply because I sat in the classroom myself and experienced its transformational power.

To see similar possibilities open to her is one of those amazing full-circle, unplanned, unmanufactured moments I accept with incredible gratitude. In that Dalilah is one of the young learners welcomed by TBS, I could not be more proud.



TBS Church History Studies

The upcoming course is not a survey designed for beginners, a flannel-board retelling of Paul's missionary journeys, or puppet show of Christian who's whos. It is the story of a God-ordained, Christ-inspired, Holy Spirit-powered institution spanning two thousand years, across every continent, through empire and persecution, reformation and revival, schism and reconciliation.

Church History students explore hard questions. How did the early church decide what belonged in the Bible? What forces shaped the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD? Why does the Nicene Creed still matter today? What were Martin Luther's specific grievances? How did the Protestant Reformation reshape not just the church but the entire Western world? How did the faith spread through Africa, Asia, and the Americas and at what cost?

These are not simple questions. They require the ability to wrestle with complexity, to read primary sources, to think across centuries. Honestly, when I reviewed the course description, I felt a flutter of maternal anxiety. But, Dalilah reads heavy books for fun, asks probing questions, and engages deeply with ideas. I think she is ready for this, maybe even more ready than she knows.



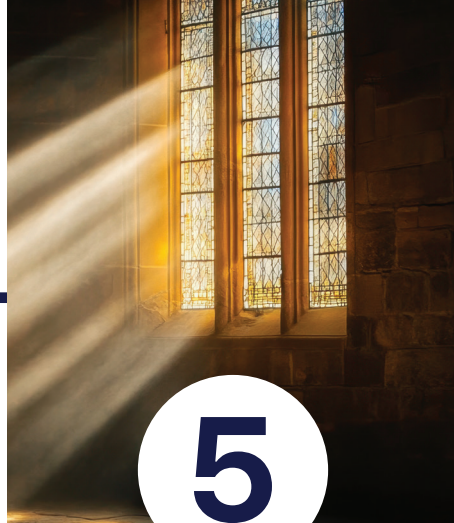
4

The Educational Calculus

The “THE 511: Church History” course will count as a history credit on Dalilah's high school transcript—a legitimate academic credit backed by an accredited graduate institution. When college admissions offices review her record, they will not see a correspondence course or self-directed study, but a graduate-level course completed alongside seminary students. That carries real weight.

But the transcript entry, as meaningful as it is, may be her least important gain. I care far more about the formation that happens when a young person shares this type of journey with people who have decided that a life of faith is worth pursuing with all they have or ever hope to be. Dalilah has been surrounded by such people her whole life. Now she will sit alongside them as a student and peer.

She will have the opportunity to manage a reading load challenging for most adults, to sit with questions that do not resolve quickly, to be the youngest person in the room, and discover she is welcome.



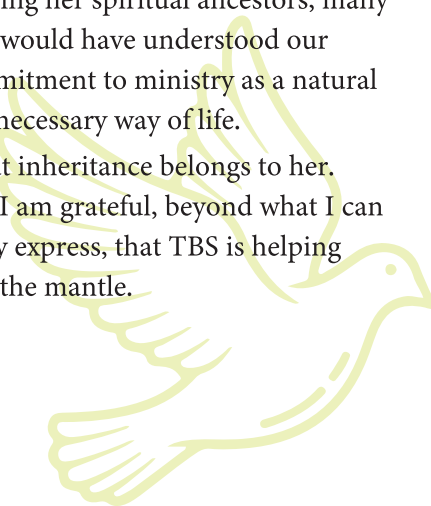
5

A Living Inheritance

Church History is the story of a called people—flawed, faithful, sometimes heroic, sometimes deeply shameful—who have carried a message across the centuries and delivered it, however imperfectly, to us.

Delilah's studies of Christian martyrs, reformers who risked everything for their convictions, and missionaries who carried the gospel to the ends of the earth will not be a simple historical review. Rather, she will receive an inheritance in meeting her spiritual ancestors, many who would have understood our commitment to ministry as a natural and necessary way of life.

That inheritance belongs to her. And I am grateful, beyond what I can easily express, that TBS is helping pass the mantle.



6

A Seat for You and Yours

If you wonder whether your own child might be ready for something like this: ask. Ask the seminary. Ask the professor. Ask your child. For that matter, consider taking a course together. The worst that can happen is "not yet." But you may be surprised. TBS understands that education is a formative journey over a lifetime, not just a credentialing process for a season. The seminary has previously welcomed serious young students—usually at least 16—who show up with curiosity and humility.

Dalilah will walk into that classroom carrying both. The rest, I trust, will be history. 🏡

If you wonder whether your own child might be ready for something like this: **ask.**

Ask the seminary.

Ask the professor.

Ask your child.

Contact Yami | Yamile.Soto@TheBibleSeminary.edu

Paints and Pintos

Sammy Jafari,
TBS Certificate
of Theological
Studies student



While writing my final paper for my Spiritual Formation and Ministry class (SFM 501), I recalled this saying about horses, “All Paints are Pintos, but a Pinto can’t be a Paint.” My professor and academic advisor, Dr. Israel Steinmetz, encouraged me to expand this idea as it relates to our spiritual lineage in Christ.

“How do horses relate to spiritual lineage?” you may ask, “Nonetheless, Pintos and Paints?” While working with horses for several years, I learned that Paints are not just Paints because of the usual splotches associated with the breed. Paints can lack the colorful patches of color, even if their parents had splotches.

Rather, Paints are Paints because of their breeding; i.e. their patrilineage. Paints must be registered with the APHA (American Paint Horse Association), as well as have breeding from at least one registered parent, and otherwise meet the standards required to register.

Conversely, Pintos are Pintos due to their superficial coloring only. Any horse breed can be a Pinto—a Quarter horse, a Thoroughbred, a Pony, etc.—but only Pinto’s with Paint lineage are true Paints.



Both a Paint
(due to
patrilineage)
and a Pinto
(due to
superficial
coloring)



Pinto only
(no Paint
patrilineage)

Our spiritual lineage from Christ is like Paints and Pintos.

We **are not** children of God because of any superficial, religious acts we do. Rather, we **become** children of God through:

Conversion

Calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21), believing in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:31), and trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-13).

Rebirth

(John 3:7, “You must be born again”)—the changing of our spiritual patrilineage from the Father of Lies (John 8:42-44, “the devil”) to the Father of Truth (John 1:14, 14:6, 15:26, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit).

Transformation

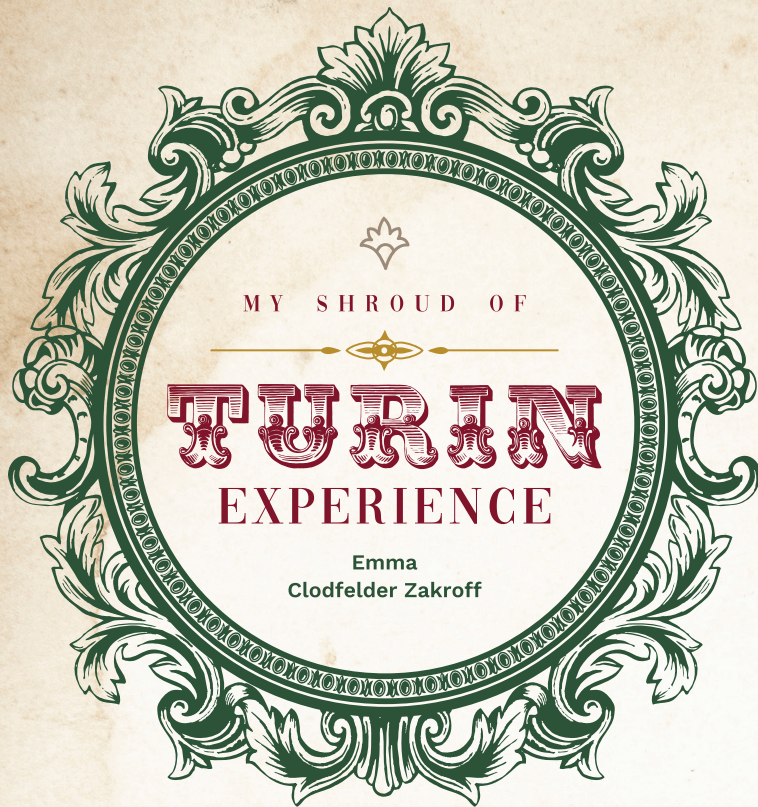
Though His Holy Spirit increasingly bearing Christ’s image (2 Corinthians 3:18) and having His mind (Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5).

Anyone can look like a believer from the outside by doing superficial religious acts (a Pinto). But only by the blood of Jesus can one become a child of God able to produce fruit in keeping with their inward patrilineage (a Paint).

My favorite part of the correlation is that a Pinto CAN be a Paint if it meets certain requirements. Just as a Paint is a

Paint due to breeding and a Pinto is a Pinto due to superficial coloring only, believers become children of God via a new spiritual lineage in Christ. Thus, a non-believer who resembles a child of God on the outside but is inwardly unconverted (a Pinto), if they then turn to Christ, they can inherit the spiritual lineage of Jesus and become a genuine Paint. 🐾

Only by the blood of Jesus can one become a child of God!



During Passion Week of 2026, The Bible Seminary (TBS) partnered with Jeremiah Johnston of Christian Thinkers Society (ChristianThinkers.com) and Grace Fellowship Church (WhatIsGrace.org) to host the Shroud of Turin exhibit in Katy, Texas. Featuring an authentic depiction of the Shroud, the exhibit showcases the power of the resurrection and archaeological and scientific evidence related to Jesus and the Shroud.

As a student in biblical archaeology and TBS staff member, I was thrilled to serve as a docent as we **hosted more than 9,500 visitors on campus** plus millions of online viewers. Watching people of all ages come face-to-face with the physical realities of Christ's suffering was an incredible experience.

One of the most impactful moments for me happened the Saturday night before the official opening on Palm Sunday. About forty guests gathered for a special VIP preview beginning with a short video introduction providing historical context followed by an exhibit tour led by Dr. Scott Stripling and Dr. Craig Evans. I watched amazed as people listened, observed the evidence, and reflected on the suffering Christ endured on our behalf. A sense of reverence filled the room as people from different churches, backgrounds, and denominations shared gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice.

Toward the tour's conclusion, I noticed a man whose legs seemed unsteady. As I watched his knees buckle I suddenly found myself shouting, "Catch him! Catch him!"

The room's attention shifted away from the tour to the now unconscious man resting limply in the arms of another visitor. Several people quickly pulled a bench over and carefully laid him down. I ran to the lobby and asked someone to call 911.

I returned to see the entire room focused on him. Some people were kneeling, some had hands placed on his shoulders and arms, and voices were raised in fervent prayer. By the time emergency responders arrived, his spirit had revived, color returned, consciousness regained, and he was eventually able to stand and walk on his own.

I think the moment stood out because I watched people practice what they believed. It is one thing to study the resurrection and another to live in the light of it. Amidst an exhibit teaching about Christ's suffering, death, and victory over the grave, I observed people living out their belief in the healing and lifegiving power of God Almighty and displaying the type of compassion and unity Christ urges His followers to display. The museum had moved from walls, banners, and artifacts to real life.

As a young Christian, I am concerned about the state of the Church in America. I can easily focus on division, conflict, and discouraging headlines, but that evening gave me hope. People set aside their schedules, differences, and interests to care for someone in need. I have never felt more grateful to be part of an institution that strives to put Scripture into practice. I regularly witness servant leadership at TBS, but that night served as a powerful reminder that the Church is at its best when we live out the truth we proclaim. While the Shroud of Turin exhibit pointed people toward the reality of the resurrection, my most impactful moment had nothing to do with the exhibit itself, but with watching believers demonstrate Christ's love in action. 🙏



A Dual Degree Completion (DDC) and MABHA student and TBS Student Services Coordinator, Emma married Aaron Zakroff in their hometown of Littleton, Colorado on March 14, 2026.



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Stepping Forward in Faith

Jamie Munoz, TBS Dual Degree Completion (DDC) student



Like Abraham, who answered the divine call to leave his familiar home for an unknown land, my life has been a journey of stepping forward in faith. Abraham relied on God's covenant and chose divine promises over human logic. He launched a lineage of faith that yields control to a sovereign God. Even when he did not know the destination, he trusted God and believed the promises ahead were greater than what he left behind.

At age fifteen, I left Santiago, Chile on March 23, 1982 with my parents for what was supposed to be a brief vacation in the United States. I left behind a large, precious family, entirely unaware that God was permanently rewriting my itinerary. Forty-four years later, I am still in Houston, now a proud American citizen, and still marveling at how a temporary trip became a lifelong appointment. Throughout every obstacle, challenge, and victory, God's goodness has consistently hovered over my life.

My deepest transformation, however, didn't happen when I crossed international borders but when God crossed my internal borders.

Prior to 2000, I was a spiritual shipwreck, navigating life with my own clever thoughts and sinking ideas. But when tragedy struck and shattered my self-reliance, I turned to God in devastating brokenness. He quickly grabbed me, refused to let me drown, and let me know that I wasn't just a rescue; He wanted spiritual intimacy with a sinner like me.

During that difficult time, my heavenly Father showed me victory after victory and taught me lessons I will never forget. Even when He seemingly answered my prayers with silence, He was always at work! I learned that the old man in me had to die for me to truly to live a life greater than anything I could have engineered on my own.

The Lord's strategic grace extended beautifully into my family. He guided me to my wife, Maribel, and now across 37 years of marriage and raising two wonderful boys, I thank Him daily for His sovereignty. In fact, it was Maribel who took me by the hand, pointed toward a godly community, and announced, "This is a good place to serve God." For the last 26 years, we have made our spiritual home and served at Church on the Rock in Katy.

Learning that God knows best, I stepped into full-time ministry. I have served as an associate pastor for the past 15 years—seven in children's ministry, three guiding the youth, and now five years counseling married couples along with my wife to help others build the same foundation that sustained us, as well as teaching Sunday school and preaching on occasion.

God continued to bless me six years ago when I met Dr. Lynn Lewis who planted the first seed in my spirit to study at The Bible Seminary (TBS). The idea of returning to the classroom after so many years seemed daunting, but I took it to prayer and dusted off an old dream I had long abandoned. God later used Dr. Scott Stripling to help me step forward in faith to embark on a journey that is not only transforming my own life but actively changing the lives of others. I will forever be grateful to Dr. Lewis and Dr. Stripling.

I believe my coming to TBS was not a coincidence, but an extraordinary series of divine appointments. Though I've not always understood the terrain, I've learned to trust God since His orchestrations and blueprints are always superior to my own.

TBS is a spiritual oasis with strong family bonds that unite us with an ancestral community forever changed by the goodness of God. I feel blessed to study with likeminded believers following Abraham's commitment to stepping forward in faith and serving to multiply God's kingdom until His followers are as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the shore. 🏡

I've learned to TRUST GOD since HIS orchestrations and blueprints are always SUPERIOR to my own.

FIRST CENTURY

ROMAN TAXATION

Heidi Arneson, TBS Bible Certificate (2011) and Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (MABS) student



I work as a professional CPA (ArnesonCPA.com) and recently took a course in Biblical Archaeology (THE 520). For one class assignment, I decided to combine my two interests and explore taxation in the Roman Empire—the ruling empire during the lifetime of Jesus.

It seems that early Rome did not initially set out to develop a ground-up system of taxation. As successor of the Hellenistic Empire, Rome adopted many Greek practices, including systems of taxation. Also, as they incorporated new territories, they often adopted local systems. Though lacking a uniform imperial system, Rome still expected Roman citizens and provinces everywhere to pay taxes, except Italian citizens, who enjoyed some tax exemptions.

Without fair and equitable overall methods, Rome had no way of predicting tax revenue. This occasionally necessitated emergency tax collections, especially during wartime. They regularly enacted tax reforms, most notably under Ceasar Augustus in AD 6 (Rathbone 1993, 94). But, new Ceasars did not each necessarily build on previous systems and that resulted in systemic weaknesses.

Unlike United States taxation which depends on citizens to self-assess and self-report income and taxes due, Rome assessed taxes. Prior to the tax reforms of Caesar Augustus,

tax assessments were sloppy. The Augustinian census helped Rome calculate rates of direct taxation to impose on citizens.

The Gospel of Luke references this reform, “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.). And everyone went to his own town to register” (Luke 2:1-3).

The Roman census included information on people, land, and animals—basically any property available to tax, including adults from the age of fourteen who were considered property. Census takers recorded information, sent compiled registries to the prefect and his vicar, and then quotas were assigned per the registries.

Rome collected taxes in coinage and agricultural products such as grain, ox hides, wine, and oil. Poorer families often did not have gold coins, and sometimes only gold coins qualified for submission. Therefore, imperial granaries helped serve the purpose of collecting taxes paid in kind and then tax collectors often exchanged other metal coinages for gold coins (Bang 2008, 35).

Rome outsourced tax collections to tax farmers called “publicani” (Hopkins 1980, 122). Rome offered the task up for auction every few years. Bid winners paid state tax collections in advance and Rome paid interest on them. Publicanis’ work including collecting taxes and converting properties and goods into coinage, which alleviated that

Unlike United States taxation which depends on citizens to self-assess and self-report income and taxes due, **Rome assessed taxes.**

Tax systems and problems often go together and did so in Rome

1

The Roman Empire did not prioritize establishing strong financial, administrative leadership.

2

All provinces did not pay an equal share.

3

Corruption and deceit riddled tax collections.

hardship from the treasury. Publicani assumed the risk up front and hoped for a good return at the end. For most, tax farming proved extremely profitable.

Not surprisingly, they often resorted to abusive powers, including employing cruel police support (Contarato n.d.). The masses grew to hate them, as evidenced in the negative response of Pharisees when Jesus associated and ate with them. “When the teachers

of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Mark 2:16).

Tax systems and problems often go together and did so in Rome. First, the Roman Empire did not prioritize establishing strong financial, administrative leadership (Pulliam 1924, 549). Second, all provinces did not pay an equal share.

For example, while Italians paid little or no taxes, Egypt bore an extremely heavy tax burden. Pulliam writes “one of the most noteworthy achievements of Augustus was a complete re-organization of the system of taxation upon a broader, more orderly and more equitable basis” (Pulliam 1924, 550). Even so, inequities remained. Third, corruption and deceit riddled tax collections.

Tax assessment came in two different forms

DIRECT TAXES

Direct taxes applied to individuals, and eventually provinces (to help ease the strain of tax assessment). *Tributum soli* (land tax) applied to land under cultivation (Contarato, n.d.).

INDIRECT TAXES

Indirect taxes were collected in connection with the movement of goods, such as in port cities. Land and sea crossing points between provinces paid customs taxes, typically at a rate of 1%.

Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Mark 2:16

Goods imported from abroad bore the burden of indirect customs taxes or duty taxes, including, at least some cases, a “twenty-five per cent duty on products coming from the Orient by way of the Red Sea and Arabia” (Pulliam 1924, 551). Slavery sales commanded a four percent tax. Taxes were applied to craftsmen and others who received fees for their work, including prostitutes. Rome also had an inheritance tax.

To encourage marriage and childbearing, woman and orphans who owned property had to pay property taxes to help fund military protection. Unmarried men and unmarried women of childbearing age were also taxed, so singleness had little rewards. Essentially, if something could be seen, used, or enjoyed, Rome taxed it. As Solomon wrote, “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

As Rome conquered new territories, funding a strong military proved necessary. The military’s work to create a safe, stable empire to facilitate trade included driving thieving pirates from the Mediterranean and building a vast, comprehensive road network extending an estimated 200,000 kilometers (Licio 2021, 6). Roman taxes also funded public buildings and public works (aqueducts and other hydro technologies), as well as arts and industry.

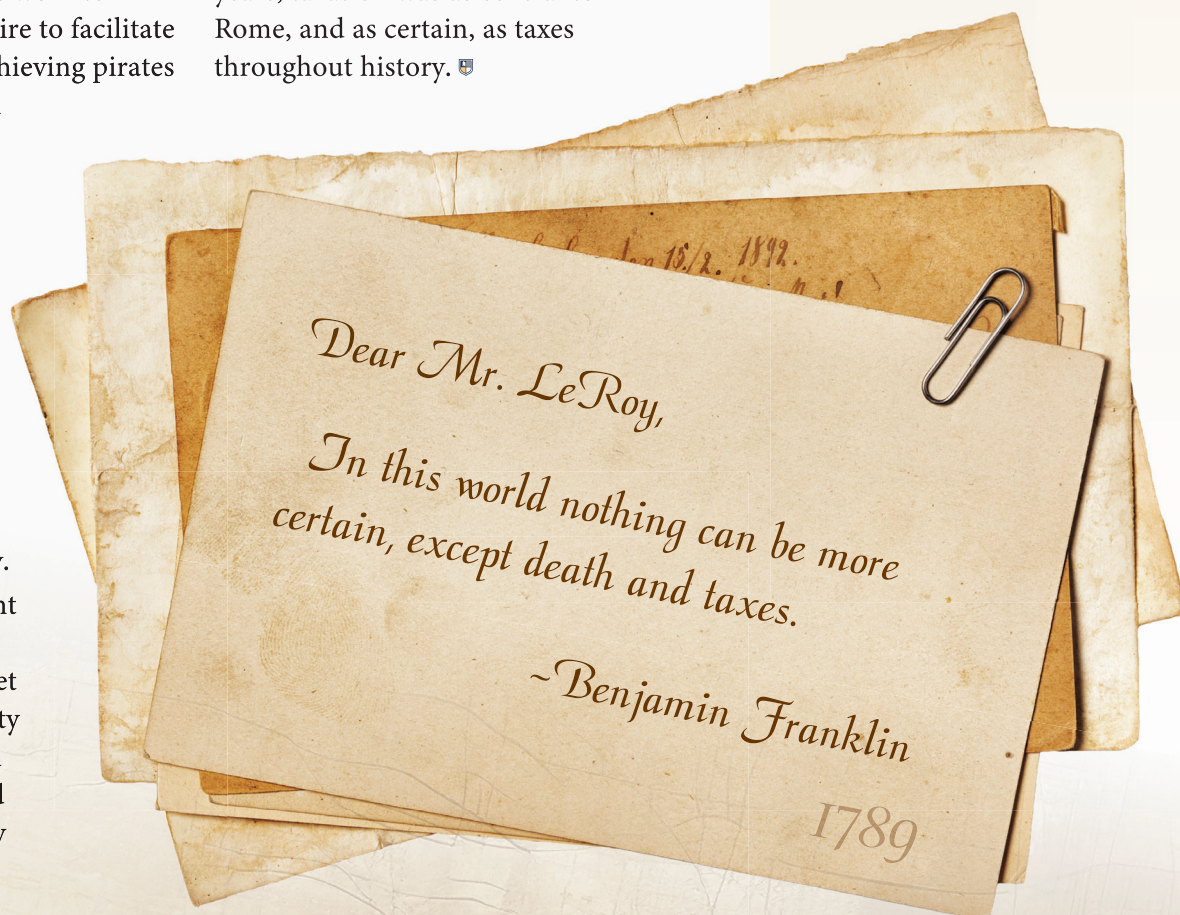
The Roman government had a central treasury like the United States, yet efficiency and practicality led to scattered imperial granaries. This provided farmers closer proximity options to deliver

commodities to pay taxes.

Rome liberally took revenues from one province and spent them in others, which led some provinces to suffer while funding luxuries in others. Tax equalization did not exist until Augustinian reforms and, even then, only in early form.

Benjamin Franklin once commented in a 1789 letter to a friend, Jean-Baptiste LeRoy, “In this world nothing can be more certain, except death and taxes” (Sparks 1856). Jesus answered a question posed by Pharisees about the legitimacy of paying taxes, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Mark12:17). The Apostle Paul affirmed the role of taxes in obedient citizenship, “This is why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes” (Romans 13:6-7a). While how taxes were collected, who collected them, tax rates, tax types, and the purposes of taxes have varied throughout the years, taxation was as central to Rome, and as certain, as taxes throughout history. 🏛️

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SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR OF SELF



Niki Lainhart, TBS Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA) student

A current cultural inclination devalues human life and glorifies the massacre of the most vulnerable. Even some Christians accept the lie that ending an innocent life is acceptable on the premise that it can thwart potential present or future suffering.

In a heartbreaking 2015 report, Sam Smith of the Christian research group Lifeway reported that an estimated 70% of women who aborted at least one child identified as Christian and 42% of those attended church regularly.¹

A 2025 study found that 45% of Christians agreed abortions should be an option in all or most cases. Approximately 33% of Christians ages 30–49 held that view along with 30% of the 50–64 age group, a signal that pro-choice views are not simply a millennial or Gen Z trend.²

As stewards of God's Word, we must ask, "What went wrong?" Smith heartbreakingly noted that 76% of women who had an abortion reported that their church had no influence in their decision.

Perhaps Christianity's increasingly passive attitude towards difficult social issues has unintentionally aided cultural demise. Perhaps defending the right to life for the unborn has become a such polemical issue that we

are cultivating defectors of justice instead of defenders of truth.

Support for abortion is high even among academic institutions. A 2025 report by The Pro-Life Generation (Students for Life of America) found that 114 Christian colleges and universities had ties to the abortion industry—a staggering 39% increase from 2024 (Childs 2026).³

Human nature tends to shun the unknown. Fears about financial stability, career goals, or mental unpreparedness for parenting have transformed what used to be family planning into family eradication and created a lucrative business that will profit an estimated \$4.3 billion in the U.S. this year.⁴

What is the root cause of this apparent hunger for violence against unborn children? Beneath the surface, the prevalent truth seems to have originated with the fall of mankind from fellowship with the Lord in falling for the enemy's duplicity in the Garden. When the desire for knowledge overrode the instinct for self-preservation, when trusting God became less appealing than trusting in the power to choose one's own future, the most innocent became and remain an object of sacrifice on the altar of self.



Carthage funerary stelae as they stand today.

While sacrificing a child to a deity in modern times would seem unethical, outlandish, and outright barbaric, the act of aborting an unborn child in the ancient world was just as taboo. In his article “Redeeming the Carthaginians?”, Henry Smith notes the importance of Christians recognizing the unlawful and hedonistic aspect of abortion and summarizes Meredith Kline:

IT WAS SO UNTHINKABLE THAT AN ISRAELITE WOMAN SHOULD DESIRE AN ABORTION THAT THERE WAS NO NEED TO MENTION THIS OFFENSE IN THE CRIMINAL CODE... THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN LAWS ATTEST TO AN ABHORRENCE THAT WAS FELT FOR THIS CRIME EVEN AMID THE HEATHENDOM AROUND ISRAEL.⁵

Though abortion is routinely culturally sanitized in the modern era, it is comparatively obvious to see the same spiritual rot in ancient human sacrifice. According to Smith, “Since 1973, over 53 million unborn children, image-bearers of God Himself, have perished at the secularist altar of self.”⁶ A 2022 study reported 73 million abortions annually worldwide from 2015 to 2019.⁷

Many Christians appear to have a highly watered-down idea of historic idol worship. Though aborting children in utero was not common in antiquity, offering live children to a deity was a chief ritual collectively practiced by entire nations. We see this in God’s attempts to realign Israel with holiness through His judgments when even His people fell prey to such evil practices.⁸

THIS TYPE OF WORSHIP WAS NOT JUST BOWING DOWN TO GIANT STATUES, AS YOU MIGHT THINK. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, THE GODS NEEDED TO BE APPEASED TO BLESS YOUR FOOD PRODUCTION AND NATION. AS THESE GODS WERE UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE CARNAL DESIRES, RITUALS FOR WORSHIP REFLECTED THOSE IDEAS. THE WORSHIP OF ASHTORETH (I.E., ISHTAR) INVOLVED LEWD ACTS OF SEXUAL DEGRADATION, WHICH HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS “DISGUSTINGLY OBSCENE” BY SCHOLARS, WHILE THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS CHEMOSH OR MOLECH REQUIRED CHILD SACRIFICE BY BURNING.⁹

One of the most significant examples of ancient mass child sacrifice has been found at Carthage. An ancient people of Phoenician descent who appear to have settled the North African city of Carthage (modern Tunisia) in the mid-ninth century B.C., Carthaginians followed the religious practices of their Canaanite ancestors and regularly sacrificed to their gods. The tophet or “place of burning” at Carthage is the largest sacrificial burial site found to date. Encompassing an area of 54,000 to 64,000 square feet, it has an estimated 20,000 urns containing infant remains.¹⁰

This barbaric infanticide reflects a culture that mirrors our current society. Though not burning newborns to the gods Ba’al Hammon or Tanit-Ashtart in hopes of gaining favor for a fruitful year of crops, we nonetheless acquiescently “pass our children through the fire” for convenience and self-gain.



Funerary stela discovered at Carthage portray Tanit-Ashtart, the Canaanite goddess of fertility.
GIRAUD Patrick/CC By-SA 2.5.

**WHAT IS THE
ROOT CAUSE
OF THIS
APPARENT HUNGER
FOR VIOLENCE
against
UNBORN CHILDREN**



Sacrificial burial urn discovered at the tophet in Carthage.

For millions, the demand for individualistic autonomy, success, and productivity leaves no room for the lofty weight children bring to bear. The driving goal is the same as that of the ancients—sacrifice another to obtain personal favor.

Our society routinely justifies the horrendous evils of the massacre of the innocent. So, has culture really changed at all? Aren't many desensitized, distracted, and deceived by the same spirit of destruction in the modern world as in antiquity?

Let us seek truth and justice in our work as the Church. Proverbs 6:16–17 rings true throughout history, “There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood...”

Let us also not let attempts to exemplify humility and understanding overshadow the courageous character of a Christ follower. We are called to protect the defenseless. Modern cultural realities, though harsh, can find enlightenment in the Word of God written in ancient historical contexts very similar to our own. 📖

THE DISCIPLES CAME TO JESUS AND ASKED, “WHO IS GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?” JESUS CALLED A LITTLE CHILD TO HIM AND PUT THE CHILD AMONG THEM. THEN HE SAID, “I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, UNLESS YOU TURN FROM YOUR SINS AND BECOME LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN, YOU WILL NEVER ENTER IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”

Matthew
18:1-3, NLT

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“Offering to Molech” in *Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us*, by Charles Foster, 1897. Public Domain. Illustrators of the 1897 *Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us* <http://associate.com/photos/Bible-Pictures--1897-W-A-Foster/page-0074-1.jpg>

IRAN in the Bible

Shelley Neese

Shelley is a TBS Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA) student, an author, President of the Jerusalem Connection, leads a non-profit mission to educate and mobilize support for Israel and the Jewish people, serves Editor of *The Auschwitz Album Revisited*, as is Coordinator for American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI).



The Book of Esther is the only book in the Hebrew Bible in which God is never named. Because of the absence of the divine name, Jewish sages debated whether the book even belonged in the Bible. A holy text without a single mention of God felt out of place in a sacred collection. Martin Luther was also hostile toward the Book of Esther. He argued that the narrative was too vindictive, heathen, and lacking God’s presence. The irony, however, is that the divine hand guides every unlikely twist and turn of Esther’s rise and the salvation of the Jewish diaspora in Persia.

Two thousand years later, the hand of God seems to be at work once again in the fall of an evil regime in Iran. On Saturday, February 28, 2026, surprise U.S. and Israeli airstrikes succeeded in killing all the top officials in the Iranian regime. It was the eve of Purim—the Jewish holiday celebrating the success of Esther and Mordecai in rescuing the Jewish people from a genocidal Persian plot. Like the book of Esther, the news headlines announcing the death of the Iranian Supreme Leader may not have mentioned God, but astute believers marveled at the timing.

Every year on the Sabbath before Purim, Jews read *Parshat Zachor*, the “Portion of Remembrance,” from Deuteronomy 25. This text commands the people to “remember what Amalek did to you.” Because Haman was a descendant of the Amalekite king, the reading is meant to prepare celebrants for the story of Esther, Mordecai, and Haman. Just as synagogues were reciting these exact words, the modern-day “Amalek” in Tehran was dismantled.

IRANIAN PROTESTS

The current uprising did not emerge from a vacuum. Iran has been a pressure cooker for the last six years, boiling to the point of explosion. By December of last year, the Iranian people had reached a collective breaking point. Hyperinflation made basic goods like bread and medicine unaffordable for most families. Yet, the leadership in Tehran prioritized the nuclear program and the funding of terror proxies in Gaza, Lebanon, and Yemen. This decision to fuel conflict abroad while the people starved at home provided the final catalyst for the revolution.

Learning the lessons of past uprisings in 2019 and 2022, the protesters decentralized their tactics. Instead of gathering in large, central squares, they organized flash protests

in neighborhoods and small towns. These groups would congregate rapidly and then disperse before the security forces could arrive in significant numbers. Activists also used encrypted messaging apps and VPNs to bypass the government-imposed internet blackouts. They were finally able to share footage of the regime’s brutality with the outside world.

During the peak of the uprisings at the start of 2026, the Iranian forces raided hospitals to arrest protesters. Security forces targeted medical staff who tried to shield their patients. They even fired tear gas into emergency rooms. While war is a nightmare, the Iranian people were already dying by the thousands two months before the first missile from the West arrived.

PERSIAN CHURCH

In the middle of this chaos is the Persian church, now among the fastest growing in the world. For 40 years, Iranian authorities have broken into house churches and hauled believers off to prison. They use “national security” as an excuse to silence the movement, but the church has only gained speed. These Christians live under a constant threat of arrest, but they find hope in the gospel that no regime can touch. As the Iranian people have become disillusioned with a leadership that uses religion as a tool for oppression, the message of Christ has spread rapidly through the country. These believers are living proof that even under the shadow of a modern-day Haman, the Lord is calling a people to himself.

The restoration of this region is not just a modern hope; it is a prophetic promise. Ancient Elam occupied the southwestern territory of modern-day Iran and was centered on the capital city of Susa. Biblical writers often used the term Elam to describe this geographic region. Jeremiah stated:

I WILL SET MY THRONE IN ELAM, AND DESTROY THEIR KING AND OFFICIALS, SAYS THE LORD, BUT IN THE LATTER DAYS I WILL RESTORE THE FORTUNES OF ELAM, SAYS THE LORD.

Jeremiah
49:38–39

Prophecy enthusiasts look to the recent attacks and wonder if this was the predicted disposal of the king of Elam. In antiquity, Elam was renowned for its excellent archers.

Jeremiah used that reputation in his prophetic metaphor that the Lord will “break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might” (Jeremiah 49:35). In a modern context, many observers connect this “bow” to the ballistic and nuclear capabilities of the Iranian regime.

However one interprets Jeremiah’s prophecies, the Lord is already setting his throne in the hearts of the Persian people through the explosive growth of the underground church. This movement represents the first fruits of the promised restoration for Elam.

Isaiah 45:1–4 famously named Cyrus as the Lord’s “anointed” long before he was born, tasked with subduing nations and opening doors. If the Lord once used a Persian king to end the Babylonian exile and rebuild the temple, perhaps he could once again use ancient Elam to change the entire landscape of the Middle East.

The situation in the world remains chaotic, and this war and its fallout are far from resolved. However, as believers in a God who intervenes in history, we recognize that true peace is not found in the signature of a treaty or the outcome of a strike. The upheaval of our times reminds us that all of creation groans for the return of Jesus. The book of Revelation portrays Jesus in the Messianic Age, sitting on his throne and declaring once and for all to a waiting world: “See, I am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5). Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and make all things new. 🙏

SEE,
I AM MAKING
ALL THINGS NEW.
Revelation
21:5

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Called TO Dig Shiloh

Brittany Young, TBS Dual Degree Completion (DDC) and Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA) student

A geology teacher and pastor, my grandfather traveled the world lecturing in U.S. Department of Defense schools. Probably due to his influence, I have always loved exploring and used to dig up “artifacts” on the playground and make up stories about them.

After my first trip to Israel in 2018, I discovered a rich trove of biblical archeology videos online. I stumbled across the Shiloh dig in 2019. Pleasantly surprised to find it connected to a school near where I live in Texas, I bookmarked it for “someday.” As a single mom living back home after a divorce and working full-time, the dig sounded like an amazing opportunity, but not for me.

I continued to receive emails and see Facebook posts over the next few years. But, between the COVID pandemic, stringent travel requirements, a new marriage, pregnancy, and caring for a newborn, the timing never seemed to line up.

By 2024, I was restless for a project compatible with motherhood. I decided to finally enroll at The Bible Seminary (TBS) with secret hopes that maybe I could dig at Shiloh someday. I soon met a fellow student with a son a few months younger than my own. When she casually mentioned she planned to take her whole family to Shiloh the next summer, that opened my eyes to a new possibility. I joked that maybe our boys could play together in Israel, but didn’t really believe it could be possible.

However, when I mentioned the idea to my husband, he was all in. He immediately called his boss (also his mom!) to request time off. When she replied, “No problem at all,” I looked at him and said, “I guess we’re going to Israel!” From that moment on, God opened every door. Despite my doubts and fears, I remembered the little girl digging at recess and that I had felt such a strong connection to the dig that I named my dog Shiloh. I embraced faithfully living out God’s plan and trusted He would keep us safe.

At the same time, many family members and friends were puzzled that we seemed so eager to go to a “war zone.” A missile hitting the airport a few days before our trip did not help, but we persevered and God was faithful.

I didn’t think of the dig as merely a vacation or school assignment, but *as a calling*. I discovered that many of my colleagues felt the same.

We each had our own story of how we ended up at Shiloh. I found it incredible to witness how God brought together so many people united by a common vision and passion. Students, retirees, widows, families, locals, and seasoned experts—we gathered from around the world to share in God’s work.

For us, biblical archeology is not just digging dirt but helping affirm the truth and veracity of Scripture. The Bible

Three Things Stood Out For Me

1

I absolutely loved wet sifting! The Shiloh excavations have helped pioneer this technology.



2

Opportunities don't necessarily require waiting until kids are older, the political climate is perfect, or whatever other issue might seem like a barrier.



3

I am so grateful for my husband, Anthony, and the sacrifices he made to share this time together as a family.



records stories of real people, real places, and a very real God. While we can't prove everything in it, we repeatedly discover and scientifically verify finds that accurately match and shed light on biblical passages. Year after year, new discoveries continue to prove critics wrong and challenge secular interpretations of history. Skeptics have long claimed that King David and numerous other people, events, and places mentioned in the Bible weren't real, but archeology keeps finding artifacts buried for thousands of years that confirm Scripture. Not just in Israel, but discoveries in other countries from other ancient cultures also continue to corroborate information recorded in the Bible.

Our joy is that we get to share in helping others affirm their biblical convictions and worldview through world-class scientific methods and with tangible artifacts.

Three things stood out for me. One, I absolutely loved wet sifting! Thankfully, the Shiloh excavations under the leadership of Scott Stripling have helped pioneer this technology. Without it, we have shown that nearly 70% of small finds would not happen. In just one day from only a few bags, I uncovered 2 beads and a significant artifact bearing an inscription! A nearby colleague found a scarab (very dateable) and together we recovered dozens of pieces of painted pottery, flint, glass, and bones. Without wet sifting, all those finds would have ended up in the dump pile.

Two, opportunities don't necessarily require waiting until kids are older, the political climate is perfect, or whatever other issue might seem like a barrier. If God puts something on your heart, trust Him, and wait for Him to tell you when the time is right.

One early morning devotional in the bus on the way to Shiloh included this phrase, "To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways." Two days after landing in Israel, I found out I was pregnant! I almost didn't go at all and would not have planned to go while pregnant. But, with few dig seasons left at Shiloh, I likely would have missed my opportunity had I decided to wait. Our team was so supportive and helpful, and I was able to fully participate in everything including the excavations and pre-dig tour.

Third, I am so grateful for my husband, Anthony, and the sacrifices he made to share this time together as a family. He took time off from work, abandoned the comforts of home for a month, and wrangled a toddler in another country. Luckily, he shares my adventurous spirit and we enjoyed the extra bonding time with little Anthony. Our second son, Elijah James Judah Young, was born in December 2025 and it is such a special feeling knowing he shared Israel and Shiloh with us, too!

I will forever be thankful to TBS and ABR (Associates for Biblical Research) for making this experience possible. It was a privilege to participate in something greater than myself and sit among world-renowned experts while fulfilling a childhood dream. I'm not sure what I will do with my degrees or what direction my career will take, but I trust God will keep revealing enough for me to take each next step. 🙏

I WILL BE *forever thankful* TO

TBS AND ABR (ASSOCIATES FOR BIBLICAL RESEARCH)

FOR MAKING THIS EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE.



Truth, Freedom, AND Transformation

Rajat Dhiman, TBS Dual Degree Completion (DDC) and Master of Arts in Church History and Theology (MACHT) student



I was born and raised in a Hindu family in Chandigarh, India, where idol worship was a normal part of life. Every Hindu home has their own gods and goddesses. As a child, I sincerely believed in those gods and goddesses

and regularly visited temples, trusting that the idols I prayed to could hear my thoughts and respond.

Until the age of sixteen, my life was stable and structured—then everything changed. That’s when my father, our family’s sole breadwinner, suddenly passed away. His death plunged us into financial instability, emotional devastation, and deep uncertainty about the future. During this dark time, a cousin who recently became a follower of Jesus came to console us and shared the message of the Gospel. I initially dismissed Jesus as a mere “Western God,” but my brother and I agreed to visit a local church.

While I initially remained indifferent, something remarkable happened to my brother. He was deeply moved and encountered God in a powerful way during our first visit. As I continued attending mainly to accompany him, a church banner displaying the words “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32) captured

my attention. The words “truth” and “freedom” stirred my curiosity and I began searching for answers researching about Jesus, asking questions, and examining the Christian faith intellectually. Eventually, as I became convinced that Christianity was not blind belief but truth grounded in reason and reality, I surrendered my life to Christ, was baptized, received the Holy Spirit, joined the worship team as a drummer, and began actively sharing my faith.

However, my journey was not without struggle.

A second personal tragedy occurred when I failed my 12th grade exams. This happened repeatedly—three times over three years—and brought deep frustration, shame, and self-doubt. Watching my peers move forward while I remained stuck led me into a season of discouragement and wavering faith. Though I eventually passed with the support and prayers of my family and church, I chose not to pursue further academic studies at that time and instead turned toward entrepreneurship.

Success appeared to follow but unfortunately led to my third and most dangerous downfall. By age 21, I had built startups, gained recognition, and received praise from influential figures, including government officials. Yet, my success slowly gave rise to pride, self-dependence, and a growing love of money. In my pursuit of great ideas and intellectual growth,

Was Not Without Struggle.

My Journey



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**Biblical
Dhiman**

dedicated to
defending the
Christian faith
and helping people
discover the
living God

I turned to substances such as marijuana, cigarettes, and alcohol with the belief that they would enhance my thinking and creativity. Instead, they led me into deep confusion and spiritual decline.

My life became a reflection of 1 John 2:16—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. I adopted unethical business practices and immersed myself in secular philosophies, reading thinkers like Socrates, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Osho. Their ideas began to appear more intellectually satisfying to me than the Bible, which I reduced to a rigid system of rules.

Gradually, my faith in Christ weakened. I became a nominal Christian—attending church outwardly while internally rejecting its truth. Pride gripped my heart and led me to argue with believers in attempted displays of intellectual superiority. At the same time, my relationships began to deteriorate. Friendships broke down, isolation increased, and my supposed success turned into emptiness and collapse. Eventually, my startup declined, my team fell apart, and I found myself at a personal and spiritual low point.

In this broken state, my restoration began.

Exhausted and searching for meaning, I discovered Jordan Peterson's lecture series, "The Psychological Significance of the Biblical Stories." It struck me deeply how someone who did not claim to be Christian could explain the Bible with such depth and seriousness. This unexpected encounter compelled me to return to Scripture—this time with fresh eyes and a sincere desire to understand.

As I began reading the Bible in its proper context and exploring the works of Christian thinkers, my worldview began to transform. I humbly realized that I, even I, was a sinner in need of a Savior, Jesus Christ. During this time, the Holy Spirit began to move in my heart, bringing deep conviction, clarity, and renewal. The desire for substances vanished almost instantly and I experienced profound inner transformation.

I discovered that the Bible was not a mere book of restrictions, but a message

of true freedom made possible through Christ's work on the cross. I came to understand that real freedom always includes boundaries. For the first time, I fully grasped the meaning of those words: truth and freedom.

With renewed faith and purpose, I felt called to ministry. I started a Christian apologetics YouTube channel, Biblical Dhiman (@BiblicalDhiman), dedicated to defending the Christian faith and helping people discover the living God. Over the past six years, I have been actively involved in youth ministry, media ministry, evangelism, and discipleship, faithfully serving in my local church.

At the same time, I developed a strong desire to pursue formal theological education. Though I applied to several seminaries without success, I continued to wait patiently for six years. Finally, in 2025, I reached out to The Bible Seminary (TBS). Within a week, I received a positive response from Dr. Scott Stripling inviting me to apply. For me, it was a powerful testimony that God's timing is perfect.

Today, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to engage in theological studies at a seminary I could never have afforded. I sincerely thank the leadership, faculty, administration, fellow students, and donors who are investing in me. My time at TBS has already begun to deepen my understanding of Scripture and strengthen my conviction in the truth of God's Word. I am finding myself regularly shaped academically AND spiritually better equipping me to serve more faithfully as I seek to use my theological training to help believers in India grow deeper in Scripture so they may love God more fully and delight in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

I am now 33 and have been married to my wife, Drishti, for three years. She is my greatest supporter and ministry co-laborer and together we are faithfully and joyfully serving the Lord and others in and through our local church and regional communities. 🇮🇳

reflections

on the

ministry of

intercessory

prayer



Jarred Martin, *TBS Dual Degree Completion (DDC)*
and *Master of Divinity (MDiv)* student,
and *Student Government Association (SGA)* Chaplain

During my service as The Bible Seminary (TBS) SGA Chaplain, I have developed a deeper appreciation of prayer as a formative activity through which God continually reshapes the intercessor.

Measured by institutional authority alone, the office carries little significance. However my position has offered me grace-enabled opportunities to participate in the priestly ministry of Christ, who lives to intercede for His people. Chaplaincy offers opportunities for pastoral presence, communal burden-bearing, and sustained

intercession as a single formative practice. The gathered inventory of students, faculty, pastors, churches, ministries, and unreached peoples that populate our Prayer Parchment has become a tangible centerpiece of our ministry. More than a simple list of needs, it has become a visible witness that the redeemed do not pray in isolation but as members of a covenantal body whose life depends upon the gracious initiative and sustaining presence of God.

In his apostolic summons that “requests, prayers, intercession, and

thanksgiving be made in behalf of all people” (1 Timothy 2:1), Paul draws the church outward toward neighbors, strangers, the suffering, and even the unknown. Our Prayer Parchment helps us fulfill the exhortation to “bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). In using it, we participate in holy love to persons awakened, sustained, and sanctified by grace. Grace precedes, enables, and perfects human response, yet it does not erase it. Our disciplined structure offers responsive cooperation with God’s redemptive purposes.

Benefits of Intercessory Praying

Functions as a means of grace rather than a mechanism seeking to compel divine action.

Through prayer, God draws persons into communion with Himself and conforms them to the character of Christ. This distinction is crucial. If prayer becomes transactional, it subtly reorders the soul around control. If prayer remains a means of grace, it trains the soul in dependence, surrender, attentiveness, and love. My use of the Prayer Parchment has deepened my own spiritual formation, especially when I am praying over situations whose outcomes remain unresolved. Though my intercessions do not always remove ambiguity, they continually summon me to trust the Father whose wisdom exceeds my perception.

Engages the whole person before God.

It engages the mind in theological reflection, the eyes reading, the hands holding or scrolling, the voice speaking, the memory rehearsing God's faithfulness, the heart experiencing compassion, and the body in pastoral presence. This full body posture of worship aligns itself with Paul's exhortation to "present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1). For our bodies are not neutral instruments, but participants in the Spirit's sanctifying work. When I see prayer requests, touch the document, speak names aloud, and carry requests in conversation and silence before the Lord, my participation moves from abstract to tangible.

Has moved me beyond pure sentiment.

It has become formative because it repeatedly places my whole person before God in truth. Accordingly, my spiritual life is not reduced to isolated devotional acts but transformed into an integrated pattern of relational dependence through which character, desire, and habit are progressively reordered toward Christlikeness. Week after week, the practice cultivates dependence in practicing the presence of God. It trains my attention, teaches me to notice burdens I might otherwise overlook, increases my patience, and allows the needs of others to interrupt the self-protective rhythms of my own life.

Helps clarify the distinction between divine sovereignty and human participation.

In Exodus 3:7, the Lord declares, "I have certainly seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their outcry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings." God reveals that He has not been previously indifferent, but their cry stirs the covenantal context within which God reveals His plan of action. Divine deliverance arises from God's covenant faithfulness in His time and according to His plans. Human intercession allows participation in God's economy of redemption and blessings, not as controllers of grace, but as witnesses. Deuteronomy additionally presents remembrance as a formative discipline; Israel must remember the Lord's acts, not as mere history but as covenantal reorientation. Forgetfulness leads to autonomy; remembrance nurtures faithful dependence. In my life, Prayer Parchment requests help me remember that God's providential care extends beyond my immediate concerns. Each answered prayer becomes a testimony to divine faithfulness, while unresolved prayers invite persistence and endurance. Intercessory prayers foster compassion and theological patience that require holding sorrow and hope together without collapsing into either denial or despair.

Has helped me improve my pastoral presence.

Suffering often opens doors to anxiety rather than wisdom, yet my chaplaincy has helped me understand that faithful presence often precedes faithful speech. Prayer requires attentiveness, humility, and restraint. Sitting with another person under the weight of grief, uncertainty, or fatigue demands more than doctrinal correctness, though doctrine remains indispensable. It requires doctrine embodied as love. Christ's command that His disciples love one another as He has loved them (John 13:34–35) is not an abstract ecclesial ideal but a pastoral criterion. Our Prayer Parchment helps extend prayerful presence among a body of intercessors.

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

GALATIANS 6:2

My time as the SGA Chaplain has convinced me that intercessory prayer is a vital means of grace and a profound instrument of spiritual formation. It forms the redeemed by training us to see, name, carry, and surrender others before God. It forms the minister by resisting the illusion that ministry depends primarily upon eloquence, efficiency, or control. It forms the community by coalescing scattered

concerns into shared intercession. Most importantly, it witnesses to the God who hears, remembers, sustains, and sanctifies. Though the Prayer Parchment began as a ministry tool, it has served as an avenue for theological tutoring. Through it, I've learned that prayer is not peripheral to formation, but one way through which the Spirit works to conform His people to the cruciform love of Christ. ▣

A Funny Thing Happened

ON THE WAY TO A

Research Paper

Janet Fischer,
TBS student



Over the last three years working towards my Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA) at The Bible Seminary (TBS), I have learned not to approach a research paper with a thesis written in stone.

For one, a literary masterpiece that might seem to rival a Hemmingway novel may elicit this response from a professor, “What you have

written may be okay for an English Literature class but not for an archaeology paper.”

Or you may start with a topic like whether someone in the Bible (like Melchizedek) was a historical figure or a Christophany, but then end up writing how the person impacted the Messianic beliefs of the disciples and various Jewish sects in the second temple period.

Or you may find yourself surprised to discover that an assumed simple heretical schism actually may have served as a precursor to the Reformation with centuries of ripple effects. But, perhaps the most entertaining aspect of research is falling down a rabbit hole.

Research Rabbit Holes

I LIKE TO GET A HEAD START ON MY CLASSES.

I recently found myself researching both for an upcoming class and what I thought might be my Capstone project. I accessed our JSTOR account to download articles with seemingly relevant titles, including “Eve, Melchizedek and the Magi in the Cave of the Nativity” by a man named Igor. Suddenly, I found myself in a research rabbit hole so deep that by the time I resurfaced, I had enough material to write three dissertations, a documentary script, and possibly a blockbuster musical.

It all began so innocently. I began a single search determined to clarify one small point. Before long I found myself wandering through an intellectual forest with no map and only a vague memory of my original intent.

Rabbit holes have a peculiar gravitational pull. One moment, you are attempting to contextualize a historical date. The next, you’re reading a 47 page

PDF about an obscure archaeological artifact from the third century AD. You tell yourself it’s still relevant—context is important—but deep down you know you’ve drifted far from the shores of your thesis. The Internet rewards curiosity all too well and every footnote becomes a doorway to another world. Before long, you’re juggling tabs like a circus performer with each representing a new tangent that feels absolutely essential. After all, who doesn’t want to know Athanasius’s opinion about Melchizedek and the difference between Epiphanius and pseudo Epiphanius? Before long you’re on your way to the Lanier Theological Library to read a book of Armenian homilies.

Yet, there’s strange joy in this chaos. Rabbit holes remind you that research is not a mere task to complete but an adventure to experience. Therein one finds unexpected connections that spark new questions and occasionally deliver insights far richer than the ones you initially sought.

One big challenge is knowing when to climb out, dust off, and actually write the paper. Another is culling enough to focus and not distractedly include rabbit hole content irrelevant to your course. Of course, footnotes can help—

therein you can sometimes include seemingly connected but really just extemporaneous information degrees of separation away from your topic.

Another challenge is navigating relationships while regaling people with your newfound knowledge. You have to learn to read the crowd and decide whether they care, are considering anathematizing you as a heretic, or gathering enough data to commit you to the nearest asylum.

Rabbit holes have space for company. When a classmate starts sharing their journey, you can start sharing yours. It is very satisfying to do so, learn together, and sometimes—in a summiting Mount Everest type of experience—discover something your professor didn’t know, and then continue to learn while they add perspective to your erudition.

Ultimately, winding through tunnels becomes part of our stories, and tales of our trips can be as exciting as the finds. While writing research papers demands discipline, rabbit holes often provide serendipity that bring our learning journeys to life. Plus, in the giant landscape of research circles, your paper might someday become the entrance to someone else’s rabbit hole. 🐇

Balk Talk



Suzanne Lattimer
Senior Staff, Shiloh Excavations

Archaeology is **not really** about pottery.

Or rocks.

Or loci.

Or even ancient trash.

Those things matter.

A LOT.

But they aren't the goal.

The goal is understanding people.

Archaeology allows us to meet people we can never meet.

We often talk about broken pottery, walls, bedrock, architecture, and use strange vocabulary. We learn that a pottery sherd can help date a layer. That a line of stones might be a wall. That trash can be treasure. And that archaeologists get excited about things most people walk right past.

But every clue points to something bigger.

People.

The people who built the walls. Who carried water in the jars. Who cooked meals, raised families, worked, worshiped, celebrated, worried, laughed, and lived their lives here.

Archaeology allows us to meet people we could not otherwise meet. Not face to face, but through traces they left behind: a broken pot, a floor, a hearth, a storage jar, or a forgotten object lost thousands of years ago.

Each is a small reminder that history isn't just a collection of dates and events. It's people. Real people.

At Shiloh, that reminder carries special meaning. When we read the Bible, it can sometimes be easy to think of its people as characters in a story. But archaeology reminds us they were real. They walked real roads. Used real pottery. Built real homes. Raised real families. And worshiped the very real God we still worship today.

Archaeology doesn't replace faith, but it does help illuminate the world in which previous generations of faithful believers lived.

And that's why archaeologists keep coming back. Not because we're looking for treasure, but because every season gives us another opportunity to better understand the lives of those who came before us—and the world in which God chose and continues to choose to work through ordinary people.

Including me, and you. 🇺🇸

Every clue points to something bigger.

PEOPLE.



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

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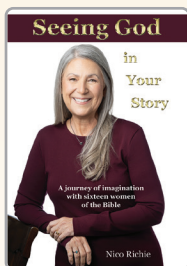
• • • • • EQUIP PEOPLE FOR HIS GOOD WORKS • • • • •

A division of The Bible Seminary (TBS), Nehemiah Press helps develop, produce, and distribute resources profitable for training in righteousness, nurturing faith, and equipping people for good works that glorify God and serve others in Jesus' name. **Proposals in keeping with TBS foundational commitments are welcome** (see NehemiahPress.com/guidelines).

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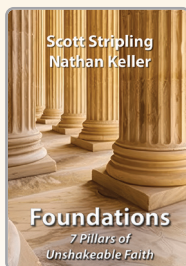
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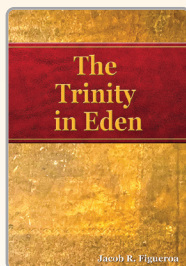
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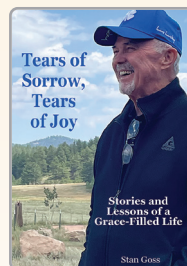
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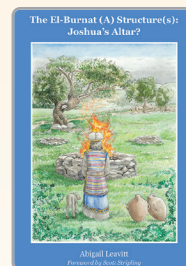
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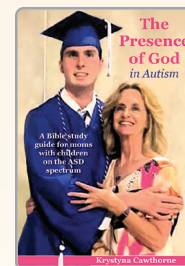
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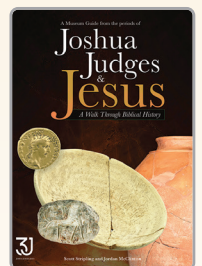
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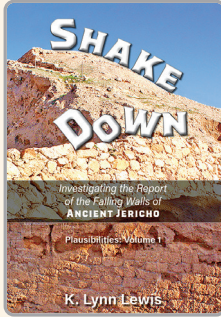


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Scott Stripling and Jordan McClinton
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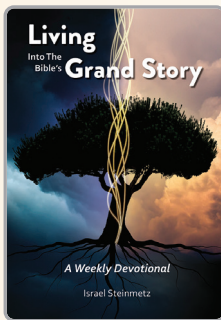
OCT 2025
175 pages

Shake Down

Investigating the Report of the Falling Walls of Ancient Jericho

by K. Lynn Lewis

Explore the historical reliability of the Bible, miracles, science, and engineering in this unique investigation into the plausibility of the storied falling walls of Jericho. Recorded in the biblical book of Joshua, the narrative popularly branded as Joshua and the battle of Jericho describes an intriguing strategy resulting in a collapse of fortress walls that enabled an army of Israelites to enter the ancient city of Jericho and destroy it. This modern analysis attempts a balanced shake down—a thorough search—of those claims. The exploration includes defining investigative parameters, reviewing site surveys, studying fundamental concepts and calculations, reviewing modern incidents, and pondering additional considerations. Ultimately, readers will gain a more informed opinion on whether it seems reasonably plausible if any structurally compromising interactions could have produced stresses that exceeded the strength of the defensive wall system at Jericho and initiated the cascading sequence of destruction just as described in Joshua 6.



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SEP 2025
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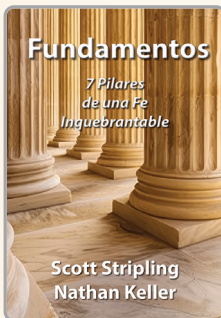
Living Into The Bible's Grand Story

A Weekly Devotional

by Israel Steinmetz

What is the Bible all about? The Bible is a collection of sixty-six different pieces of literature. These 'books' of the Bible include everything from ancient history to erotic love poetry to personal letters! Reading the Bible—to say nothing of understanding and applying it—can be overwhelming and confusing. Is there a single drama that runs throughout Scripture? Is there a grand story of which we are a part? The answer is "Yes!" This devotional guides you through four major themes in Scripture over the course of a year. Each week includes short reflections and invitations to discover parts of the narrative of Scripture to help you find your place in the Bible's grand story.

What is the Bible all about?



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MAR 2026
127 pages

Fundamentos

7 Pilares de una Fe Inquebrantable

by Scott Stripling and Nathan Keller

Con demasiada frecuencia, los nuevos conversos al cristianismo nunca alcanzan la madurez espiritual. Permanecen tímidos e ineficaces en lugar de crecer en el poder del Espíritu. Fundamentos ofrece un plan para que cada persona construya una vida victoriosa y de excelencia. Stripling y Keller identifican claramente los principios fundamentales del cristianismo y guían a los nuevos creyentes por un camino que ellos mismos han recorrido. Comenzando con el nuevo nacimiento en Cristo, demuestran cómo leer las Escrituras y orar de manera efectiva. Enfatizan la importancia del poder transformador del Espíritu Santo y cómo este ayuda a las personas a convertirse en miembros productivos de la iglesia. Los capítulos finales explican cómo vivir una vida con propósito, honrando lo que Dios honra y, en última instancia, abrazando la Gran Comisión para colaborar con Jesucristo en la redención de la humanidad caída.



FACULTY OF THE YEAR

»» Dr. Jim Leggett ««



26 binders of sermon illustrations

The Bible Seminary (TBS) is pleased to celebrate Dr. Jim Leggett as our 2026 Faculty of the Year. He led the founding of The Bible Seminary (TBS) in 2010, served as its inaugural President, then on the Board of Trustees for 6 years, and continues to invest in students as Adjunct Professor of Expository Preaching and Teaching.

Dr. Leggett has been a Christ-follower for more than 45 years. He met his wife Lisa at Texas A&M where he was a chemical engineering nerd. She dated him anyway, and they now have 3 adult children and 6 grandchildren. The Leggetts have lived in Wilmore

(KY), Waco (TX), Hearne (TX), and Katy (TX). In 1996, they helped plant Grace Fellowship Church (WhatIsGrace.org) where Jim continues to serve as Senior Pastor.

He holds a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University (1987), a Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary (1991), and a Doctorate in Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary (2003).

Jim really likes his wife, his children and grandchildren, reading, food, movies, exercising, music, chilling and, most of all, Jesus. Favorite movies include *The Princess Bride* and *Forrest Gump*. 🇺🇸



Preacher and Professor

Living out a lifetime goal of preaching through all 66 books of the Bible

over the course of his pastoral ministry at Grace Fellowship and investing himself in training Christian disciples, future preachers, teachers, and ministry leaders, Dr. Leggett brings decades of experiences to TBS students in the classroom

(along with preaching and teaching resources collected in 26 binders of sermon illustrations)!

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Tommy Chamberlin

Master of Arts in
Biblical History
and Archaeology
(MABHA)

A resident of Pikeville, Kentucky, Tommy has been married to Erin for twelve years and they have one daughter, Annah Elizabeth (her photo graced the front cover of *The Sentinel* magazine last year). He has a Bachelor of Science in History with a minor in Mathematics from the University of Pikeville (1996) and a Juris Doctor from the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville (2000).

A dedicated public service professional and lawyer in Pikeville for 24 years, Tommy currently serves as Chief Assistant Pike County Attorney. His passion for biblical archaeology led him to pursue advanced theological education to help prepare for greater involvement in Holy Land archaeology during his future retirement years.

Founder and Director of Expedition Archaeology—a nonprofit dedicated to helping churches and schools understand how archaeology illuminates Scripture—he also serves as Vice-President of the Board of Directors for the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR). He believes TBS has helped provide the educational foundation necessary to accurately share the historical and archaeological context of the Bible and with greater depth.

He is grateful for the high-quality education and meaningful relationships with faculty, staff, and fellow students. He first enrolled at TBS in 2017 and has earned the title of the seminary's longest active degree-seeking student. He still wants to be Indiana Jones when he grows up, but plans to continue his legal career, continue serving in ministry, and spend more time with their daughter. He credits the patience, care, and friendship of the TBS community for helping him complete his studies while also balancing his responsibilities as a prosecutor, adjunct professor at Pikeville University, husband, and father.



Ruth Farthing

Certificate of
Theological
Studies (CTS)

A resident of Katy, Texas living temporarily in Brisbane, Australia, Ruth and her husband, Alisdair, have been married for 15 years and have three children: Callum, Kyle, and Alexandra. Ruth has a Master of Engineering with First Class Honours in Electronics and Electrical Engineering from the University of Edinburgh (2005), as well as a Master of Science in Petroleum Engineering with Distinction from Heriot-Watt University (2007) in Edinburgh, Scotland. Prior to pausing her engineering career in 2021, she spent 14 years working as a Reservoir Engineer in the oil and gas industry.

Having lived on three continents over the last decade—the United Kingdom, North America, and Australia—Ruth values the diverse experiences and perspectives that have shaped her journey. After graduation, she plans to continue auditing TBS classes and may pursue additional postgraduate studies. She especially appreciates the strong sense of community and meaningful relationships she has built and shares this encouragement with fellow students, “True learning is uncomfortable because it requires taking risks and being vulnerable. The TBS faculty and staff have made a deliberate effort to create a safe place for that growth to happen, and for that I am deeply grateful.”



Brennan Hack

Certificate of
Theological
Studies (CTS)

A resident of Katy, Texas with a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas State University (2022), Brennan has served as the Communications Pastor at Parkway Fellowship for two and a half years. He leads photography, social media, and front-of-house production ministries and uses storytelling and creative engagement to help support Parkway’s mission of leading people to encounter Jesus and take their next step with Him. He also serves in Worship and Media ministry where he combines theological insights with practical ministry leadership. His TBS experiences have helped deepen his understanding of Scripture, strengthen his biblical foundation, enhance his ability to disciple others, and equip him to better serve the church. He is thankful for the learning opportunities to communicate God’s truth with greater clarity, wisdom, and intentionality across every ministry platform and environment.

Recently engaged, he looks forward to continuing his ministry career and helping more people encounter Jesus. He is especially grateful for TBS professors and their genuine care for students and real-world ministry experiences that helped make learning both practical and transformative. He encourages fellows students to “Keep pressing on. What you’re learning today will bear fruit in ways you may not see yet.”



Margaret Haugen

Bible
Certificate (BC)

After both experiencing the loss of their spouses, Margaret and Patrick are celebrating 14 years of marriage and their second chance at love. They live in Fulshear, Texas and share a blended family with five children and spouses and six grandchildren.

Prior to retirement, Margaret enjoyed a distinguished nursing career spanning more than thirty years. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois, and dedicated her professional life to caring for others through healthcare.

After decades focused on nursing, she found great joy studying Scripture and exploring subjects outside of her professional field. The opportunity to deepen her understanding of God’s Word strengthened her faith and brought her closer to the Lord in a meaningful journey of faith and personal growth. Her TBS graduation marks the achievement of a long-held educational and spiritual goal.

She enjoys cooking, baking, and traveling, and is grateful for her TBS friendships, learning experiences, and spiritual encouragement.



**Paul
Kabore**

Master of Arts in
Biblical History
and Archaeology
(MABHA)

Paul Kabore lives in Burkina Faso, Africa with his wife, Catherine. Married since 2009, they continue to pray faithfully for God's blessing of children. An ordained pastor for more than twelve years and a preacher and teacher for over fifteen years, he has devoted his life to serving the church through ministry, biblical teaching, and discipleship within the Assemblies of God Burkina Faso.

His degree represents an opportunity to expand biblical education in Burkina Faso and beyond. He looks forward to teaching biblical archaeology, a field largely absent in his country, to help better glorify Jesus Christ. While formerly mocked and ridiculed for desiring to learn Hebrew, he hopes to offer Hebrew instruction to those who once belittled him.

Paul is deeply grateful for the acceptance, encouragement, and generosity offered by the TBS administration, faculty, and fellow students. Despite initially fearing racial or financially-based rejection, he found a welcoming Christian community and the blessing of receiving scholarship assistance. His participation in the archaeological excavations at Shiloh, Israel have been particularly impactful by providing both rich educational experiences and powerful demonstrations of worldwide Christian fellowship.

He plans to continue teaching and promoting biblical archaeology, supporting the TBS mission, and encouraging others to pursue their calling and faithfully serve the body of Christ.



**Anita
Murillo**

Certificate of
Theological
Studies (CTS)

Anita and her husband, Jody John, live in Richmond, Texas. They have been married for 35 years and are the proud parents of three children—Jacob, Jordan, and Jonah—and grandparents to Arie Tinsley Murillo and Nile John Murillo, with another grandson, Levi Lucien Garay, expected in August.

A NASM Certified Personal Trainer and Certified Biblical Life Coach, Anita is an entrepreneur in marketplace ministry bringing more than three decades of experience in women's fitness leadership, sales, customer service, and administrative support. Through health, wellness, and faith-based coaching, she is passionate about helping others grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically. She believes her TBS studies have strengthened her biblical foundation and enhanced her ability to integrate Scripture into her ministry, equipping her to lead, teach, and serve with greater wisdom, clarity, and spiritual maturity.

In 2023, she founded Deborah's Arise Ministries, a women's ministry that has grown into a vibrant community offering conferences, Bible studies, prayer gatherings, mentorship, workshops, and online fellowship. She plans to continue expanding the ministry through digital outreach, community engagement, and women's empowerment initiatives, while prayerfully considering advanced study in neuroscience-based counseling and coaching.

She is especially grateful for the depth of biblical teaching, diverse community of learners, and unique perspectives brought by each professor. She credits her husband, children, and the many women who have supported and prayed for her throughout this journey. A lifelong advocate for holistic wellness, she enjoys combining faith and fitness through prayer walks, strength training, and healthy living. Her encouragement to others is to remain steadfast in their calling, stay rooted in God's Word, and trust the Lord's timing, confident that He will faithfully complete the good work He has begun.

**The TBS faculty and staff have made a deliberate effort to create a
safe place for growth to happen, and for that I am deeply grateful.**

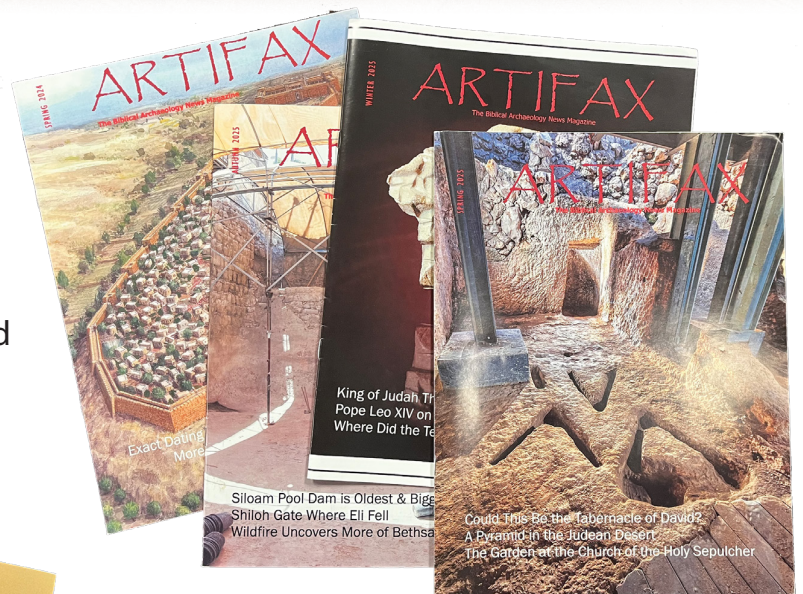
— Ruth Farthing

CLASS OF 2026 | CERTIFICATE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (CTS)



The **Near East Archaeological Society (NEAS)** was founded in 1957 to facilitate involvement of evangelical Christians in research in the lands of the Bible.

Members view the Bible as an inspired ancient text which can be illuminated and clarified by properly conducted and interpreted archaeological research.



NEAS provides a program of informational papers and reports in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), publishes *Artifax* magazine and *Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin*, and supports archaeological excavations in biblical lands.

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THE BIBLE SEMINARY

GENERAL NEWS



THEBIBLESEMINARY.EDU



SGA OFFICERS *ELECTED*

Congratulations to the following **2026-27**

Student Government Association (SGA) officers:

Emma Zakroff President *Janet Fischer*Activities Director

Jacob Kohlmaier Vice-President *Jarred Martin* Chaplain

Rebekah Yi Secretary/Treasurer *Rajat Dhiman* Virtual Liaison



WELCOME STACY LYNCH



The new Registrar/Operations Manager at TBS, Stacy brings a strong background in education, student support, and administrative leadership. She has over ten years of teaching experience where she served as a lead instructor at Wharton County Jr. College in the Adult Education & Literacy program helping students obtain their GED and advising them as they transition into vocational school, college, military or a different career path. Stacy is passionate about connecting with people in a real and genuine way, and greatly values creating a welcoming environment where individuals feel seen, supported and encouraged to grow in the Lord. She and her husband, David, live in Richmond, Texas and enjoy “flipping” houses and have two teenage children.

Welcome

Donation/Pledge Form



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Vision

» The Bible Seminary exists to glorify God by impacting multitudes of souls for Christ and to help fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.

Mission

» Our mission is to foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, cultivate professional and lay leadership skills, and deploy trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

Key Verse

» "They read from the Book of the Law of God making it clear and giving the meaning so the people could understand what was being read."
—Nehemiah 8:8

Core Values

LORDSHIP

» Because He is Lord (Philippians 2:11), we will continually ask Jesus Christ to sit on the throne of the seminary and on the throne of the lives of its faculty, administrators, and students for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

BIBLE

» Because the Bible is the fully true Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16), we will offer and require the study of all 66 books of the Bible before graduation with a degree. We will seek to creatively integrate classical theological disciplines and ministry training by studying books of the Bible (e.g. Church History will begin with the Book of Acts and keep going; Pastoral Leadership will come through the study of the Pastoral Epistles; Systematic Theology will flow out of the study of the Pauline Epistles).

PRAYER

» Because apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), we will continually seek to plug into the Vine Jesus Christ through yielding to Him in prayer. We will offer a unique emphasis on prayer, integrated with the curriculum, in classroom settings, meetings, and continual prayer opportunities in the life of the seminary.

UNREACHED PEOPLES

» Because the return of Christ awaits the evangelization of all people groups (Matthew 24:14), we will keep our eyes on the unreached peoples of the world and train our students to have a heart for the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) by seeking to reach millions of souls for Jesus Christ.

LOCAL CHURCH

» Because the church universal (the body of Christ) is God's plan (Matthew 16:18), comprised of local churches (Acts 5:42, 20:28; Romans 16:3-5), we will have a symbiotic relationship of service, training and education with local churches and parachurch ministries.

COMMUNITY

» Because we were created for community (Genesis 1:26; Romans 12:5), we will seek to build a campus-based fellowship where the "one anothers" of Scripture are lived out, where authenticity and accountability are practiced, and where integrity is modeled and taught.

COMPASSION

» Because God has a huge heart for the poor and overlooked (Matthew 25:31-46), we will strive to motivate, equip, and train students to minister to "the least of these" as a lifestyle.