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THE MYSTERY OF ZION

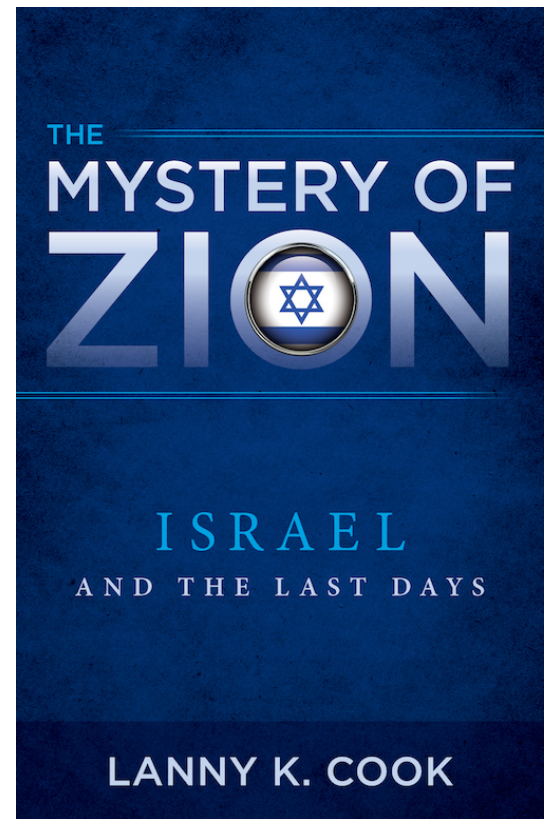
ISRAEL AND THE LAST DAYS

LANNY K. COOK

Within the early teachings of the Christian Church, a mindset developed, assuming that with the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God was no longer intimately involved with the affairs of His chosen people—the Nation of Israel. However, there is undeniable evidence that God’s everlasting covenant with His chosen people requires Him to maintain a personal involvement in their existence, their provision, and their purpose, not only through this age of grace, but into the future, including the Tribulation and the Messiah’s Millennial Reign. Israel’s existence is essential for God’s end-time plan for humanity. Israel is key to the mystery resulting in the consummation of God’s kingdom at Christ’s Second Coming. Biblical prophecies indicate, and historical facts substantiate, the premise that God is still involved with the affairs of Israel.

The Mystery of Zion: Israel and the Last Days provides an in-depth look into biblical prophecies concerning the end times, while identifying the role Israel will play in God's plan for all of humanity. Through research of the Bible and relevant literature, along with the gathering of information from notable pastors and individuals with profound expertise, this book provides astounding evidence that God still has a divine plan for Israel and the Jewish people. It’s a must read for anyone who supports Israel, as well as anyone who questions Israel’s right to exist as a nation today.

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About the Author

LANNY K. COOK

As a teenager, **Lanny K. Cook** developed a lasting interest in Israel that began with his parent's participation in various Bible studies. His parents would continue their discussions at home, making prophetic topics an everyday conversation with the family.

After spending 28 years in the public schools, Lanny retired to pursue a second career as a pastor. He earned a master's degree in education from Colorado State University and a master of arts in school administration from the University of Phoenix. He obtained a doctorate of ministry and a PhD in biblical studies from Newburgh Theological Seminary.

Lanny's published works include *Children of Promise*, *Fingernails on the Chalkboard*, the co-authored devotional *They Called Him... Jesus!* and *Sons of the Eastern Plains*. He serves as an associate pastor, overseeing the ministry purpose of his church. Lanny shares messages and teaches throughout the year, which allows him to actively study God's Word and use his pun-filled repertoire to keep the congregation on their toes.

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What Others Are Saying About **The Mystery of Zion**

“Did you ever wonder what the Bible says about the future for Israel, the church, and the end times? *The Mystery of Zion* won’t disappoint! It’s every believer’s guide to what the Bible says about Israel’s future and so much more. **Lanny Cook takes the intimidation factor out of studying biblical prophecy.** In an easy-to-read format, he carefully unwraps the Bible’s message about the future and answers tough questions about prophecy. Great for corporate or personal Bible study, you will find *The Mystery of Zion* hard to put down!”

—**K. Douglas Brown, Associate Pastor of Family ministries, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Oklahoma City; Author of *Shotgun Rider: Restoring Your Passion for the Ministry Trail***

“Lanny Cook has authored a relevant and insightful explanation of God’s commitment to Israel and the world. By applying historical and biblical insights, this book gives undeniable confirmation to the realization of Israel’s role in history through to the final days. This a very important read as world events unfold!”

—**Barb Malone, Mission Purpose Leader, Christ Street Fellowship; Former Inductive Bible Study Leader and Missionary**

“Dr. Lanny Cook, in true stewardship fashion, distinguishes himself in sounding the depths of the biblical mysteries of God. His dispensational hermeneutic really makes the most reasonable sense of the exhaustive biblical material of God’s covenants, promises, and fulfilments as relates to the past, present, and future of God’s chosen, the Jew. With scholastic integrity, he superbly interprets history from beginning to end, including recent events of the United Nations. The charts included clearly display the panorama of the manifold wisdom of God. I was truly blessed.”

—**F. Robert Serrao, Author and Pastor, President of Father’s Heart Publishing**

“For those of you that thirst for knowledge and understanding regarding the end times in which we live and desire an understanding of the integral part the Nation of Israel plays, here is a book that is worthy of your time. It is a book that is meant to be read and digested—prayerfully and carefully. Dr. Cook has produced a work that will shed much-needed light on a subject that is so vital to all of us that are in the last days. God gives certain people revelations to unveil some of His mysteries regarding these times, and this is an excellent example of

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God’s faithfulness to let us see beyond the popular culture news and explore the deeper things of God. Without being overly scholarly, the book is sufficiently researched to provide the necessary foundations for this topic. I really appreciated the use of God’s Holy Word to show us how God’s promises are sure and His plans always come to pass. So congratulations, Lanny, on producing a much-needed and timely work—to give us hope and joy in the Last Days—for our Redemption and Salvation are truly drawing nigh!”

—Ralph Kirkbride, Associate Pastor and Worship Leader, Faith Bible Chapel, Boulder County, Colorado

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Suggested Interview Questions

For Lanny K. Cook, author of

The Mystery of Zion

Israel and the Last Days

Q: What made you decide to write a book regarding God's plan for the Nation of Israel?

A: For most of my life, Israel has been in the news, but for the last several decades, it seems that those headlines have increased exponentially. Israel and the Jews are maligned and misunderstood throughout most of the world, and even in the Christian Church there is an ignorance regarding God's continued plan for the Abrahamic lineage. I had been accepted into a doctoral program at Newburgh Theological Seminary and as part of my program of study, I had to choose a dissertation topic. I mulled over all kinds of possible topics, but the one that kept coming back to the forefront of my mind was the topic of Israel and God's plan for this tiny, little nation the size of New Jersey. What started off as a dissertation to meet the requirements of my degree continued on after its submission to the realization of a book that will allow people to finally see the evidence associated with God's plan and a purpose for Israel and the Abrahamic race. Israel's history has been unlike any other nation's story either in the past or the present. Not only were they a vital part of God's initial plan of salvation for the world, but they also hold the key to the return of Jesus Christ and the introduction of His Millennial Kingdom. I want to help people, especially Christians and the Church, see that God's covenant with Israel is still intact and He still has a special plan and purpose for His chosen ones.

Q: How did your life experiences prepare you for writing this book?

A: As a teenager, I developed a lasting interest in Israel that began with my parents' participation in various Bible studies. My folks would continue their discussions at home, making prophetic topics an everyday conversation with our family. Their Bible studies were in-depth prophetic examinations of the end times,

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intricately woven into a format of dispensational research. Those conversations created an extreme curiosity that stayed with me for nearly fifty years. They stirred within my heart for decades as divine prophecies discussed during my youth unfolded into profound reality in my lifetime. As an adult, I became active in a church focused on supporting Israel and providing frequent programs associated with Christians United for Israel. A mission trip to Israel in 2006 with Bridges for Peace unleashed a deep passion to share the realization that God's hand is still upon this tiny nation and the lineage of Abraham.

Q: Why do so many people around the world hate the Jews and denounce Israel's right to exist?

A: The biggest challenge facing Israel today is foundational to the same challenge she has battled throughout the thousands of years of her existence. Israel has never been shy in sharing the fact that she has been chosen by God for a special purpose. The Jews have been set apart for a specific purpose by God Almighty. That type of a claim never sets well with others. It's like having a sibling who always taunts you with the claim that they are the parent's favorite child. We read about a boy named Joseph who made such a claim in the Old Testament. Joseph was the son of Jacob, also known as Israel. Joseph along with his 11 brothers were the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel. What Joseph's brothers did to him is pretty much the same response that the world has toward the Jewish proclamation that they are God's chosen people.

A current example of how the world responds to such a claim, whether it's a real claim or an imagined one, involves the nations that surround modern Israel. These surrounding nations, along with most of the nations associated with the United Nations, believe that the biggest obstacle to peace in the Mideast is mainly attributable to Israel and their lack of willingness to negotiate a Two-State solution. The proposed Two-State solution would require the dividing of Jerusalem, along with splitting this tiny little nation in half. This solution isn't a viable option because of the stance taken by the proposed Palestinian State that Israel doesn't have a right to exist in any capacity, in any way, or in any form. The reality is that no matter how many concessions are offered and no matter how

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much land is conceded by Israel, there will never be peace in the region. Why? Because God gave the Promised Land to Israel through a divine covenant, and even more important, because Israel remains a key component to God's plan for humanity and the coming age. Since Israel plays an integral role in the completion of God's plan, Satan is hell-bent on wreaking havoc on Israel and the Jewish people. One of his best tools to continue his attack is through the nations of the world and the surrounding countries that totally encompass this miniscule nation.

The continued existence of Israel is paramount to God's kingdom and because of that, it's a major obstacle to the accomplishment of Lucifer's campaign of rebellion and defiance against God Almighty. This is the foundational premise of antisemitism and the battle raging against the Jews and Israel's right to exist.

Q: What is the biggest misconception Christians have about Israel and the Jewish people?

A: The biggest misconception regarding Israel currently stems from the viewpoint of many Christians that God is finished with Israel and He no longer has a divine purpose for their existence. After all, Jesus's arrival into this world, along with His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave, ushered in a new age, known as the age of grace. Replacement Theology began to take root almost immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and it continues to this day. It was the catalyst for the actions taken against the Jews during the times of the Crusades, as well as the driving force of various inquisitions throughout the centuries. Many Christians see the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the main reason for believing that God is no longer concerned with the affairs of the Jews or Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem was the exclamation point to the belief. This has led to the contention that because of grace, the church has replaced Israel regarding God's plan of salvation for all humanity. However, through an intense study of prophetic Scripture, it becomes clear that even though salvation for humanity can only happen through the grace and Lordship of the Messiah Jesus, Israel still serves as a piece of the puzzle regarding the end of the age and the ushering in of the Millennial Reign of the Messiah. The Bible boldly proclaims in the New Testament that all of Israel will be saved. The idea that the Church has taken the place of

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Israel or that it has become the New Israel is nothing more than wishful thinking by those who falsely believe they have the heart and mind of God in their scholarly research. Sadly, they put down the book before getting to the very end of the story and ignore the Scriptures that specifically speak of Israel's role in the end times!

Q: Was there a specific event that triggered your interest regarding Israel's role in God's plan for the world?

A: Maybe not so much an event, but a series of events that triggered my intense interest in the subject of Israel's role in the end times. I belonged to a church that boldly embraced the notion that God has a plan for Israel and that God will bless those who bless Israel and He will curse those who curse her! The leaders of this church were very active with Christians United for Israel. In fact, the senior pastor, George Morrison, is a board member for CUFI. They hosted annual events called "A Night to Honor Israel," where they would take an obvious stand for supporting Israel while proclaiming God's continuing plan for Israel. These events would be multi-day events that thousands of people attended. I was actively involved in the drama department of the church at the time and not only did I have a part as an actor for a myriad of productions, but I also began to write some of the materials, scripts, and production pieces presented during those events. The guest speakers for the final evening were some pretty well-known individuals, including notable figures such as John Hagee and Dennis Prager. There were always a multitude of Jewish leaders and community members who enjoyed these events, including ones who came from Israel to attend these spectacular presentations. Because of my interest in biblical prophecy, as well as the curiosity I always had for Israel, my research and my interest in Israel's role in the end times intensified. In 2006, I took part in a short-term mission trip to Israel, where our team worked with Bridges for Peace in order to reach out and help those less fortunate in Jerusalem. Those two weeks included welding and installing handrails in the homes of senior citizens, along with taking after-work tours of Israel. That experience lit a fire of passion within my heart to share with the world that God still has a significant plan and a purpose for this tiny little nation that so many countries and individuals stand against.

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Q: In researching this book, what is the most profound concept you discovered regarding God's plan for Israel?

A: The one concept that literally hit me like a ton of bricks and the one that I found to be the most profound during this study deals with the well-known parable of the prodigal son. Growing up in the church, I can't even begin to estimate how many messages I've heard regarding this particular story shared by Jesus. In my nearly 60 years of attending church on a very regular basis, the story has always alluded to the need for repentance, or a message relating to the importance of coming back to the Father. Forgiveness, God's love, and turning away from the ways of the world always predicated the sermons on this topic. Within the premise of this story, I was always left a bit confused and just a tad bedraggled. I never got it as to why the older brother refused to enter in the celebration and refused to participate in the great feast for the younger brother's homecoming. I was confused as to why the older brother had always been faithful, staying home to take care of the homestead, and yet he never had a fatted-calf butchered and a huge feast prepared on his behalf. The part where his father tells the oldest son that the inheritance was his all along never quite clicked in my mind. I got to the point where if a pastor would start presenting a message on this familiar old parable, I would check out and my mind would wander endlessly until the message was over. But, as I began to research the concept for this book on Israel, I stumbled across this weather-worn story of the prodigal son and I had a real epiphany. It was like someone walked in and turned on the lights. Instantly, I realized that Jesus wasn't sharing a story just for the sake of sharing a story. He was speaking directly to Israel. You see, the older brother is the representation of Israel. The younger brother is the representation of the church. The great celebration is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb where the older brother refused to accept the Messiah's invitation and decided to wait outside. The inheritance that was the older brother's all along is salvation that will ultimately be realized at the end of the tribulation times when the remnant of Israel finally realizes that Jesus is the promised Messiah and they cry out to Him for salvation. This is the ultimate repentance that ushers in the Second Coming of Christ and marks the beginning of His 1,000-year reign, along with His entering into His New Covenant with Israel.

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Q: In your opinion, how did the Holocaust impact the birth of the modern nation of Israel?

A: The Holocaust was by far the most horrific event of human history. There is nothing that compares to it. Throughout the history of Israel, they have been conquered, enslaved, suffered persecution, bigotry, intolerance, exile. The Crusades were a horrendous attack against the Jews where hundreds of thousands were killed because they refused to convert to the Crusaders' view of Christianity. Even as terrible as those times were, they don't even begin to compare to the atrocities endured by millions of Jews who were murdered just because of their ancestral ties. This was the first time in the history of the lineage of Abraham that his descendants had faced a systematic and deliberate attempt at complete annihilation. With that being said, I personally believe that it was the atrocities of the Holocaust that pushed the world powers of those days to find a solution to the Jewish issue. It was the Holocaust that became the catalyst for Israel rebirth as a nation. Even though it was the evil of man that was responsible for the murder of millions, God turned the evil intent of humanity into something good, in order to perpetuate His purpose and His plan of salvation for humanity. I want to make it clear that God didn't cause the Holocaust, but out of that evil He brought forth and placed in a position of prominence His chosen nation. A nation that was necessary for the ushering in of the end of the ages as far as world history is concerned. An often-ignored fact regarding the rebirth of Israel is that United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947 recommended the partition of the British Mandate for the land referred to as Palestine into both an Arab and a Jewish state. The Arabs emphatically rejected this resolution. The Jews embraced it wholeheartedly. Why? Because it was God's plan for Israel to be reborn. He had promised the Land to the Jews and it was to be returned to them as a necessary component for the ushering in of the final days!

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