

CHRIST REVEALED

Episode 9

Transcript

Gretchen Jensen: I can't believe we are at the end of the series of Christ Revealed episode number nine. You know, Patrick, you talked about saving some of the most compelling, the most live changing interviews till the very, very last episode. So tell us, what can we expect from this?

Patrick Gentempo: Well, you can expect a lot. There is a dense amount of very powerful content in our episode nine here. We start out with Dr. Eli Shukron. And Eli is the person who discovered the Pool of Siloam. The Pool of Siloam is something very significant biblically because this is one of the great miracles that's best known that Christ performed, where we had a blind man who He had come across when He was by the temple in Jerusalem. And the blind man asked, "Why am I like this? Am I being punished?" And Christ had an amazing message for him. And He asked the blind man to go down to the Pool of Siloam after rubbing mud on his eyes, and said, "Wash this mud off and you will see." And sure enough, the blind man saw after this.

Now, many of the skeptics said, "Well, it's never really been found, this Pool of Siloam. We think it's sort of a myth. It doesn't really exist." And there were some speculation about where it might exist. But Eli discovered the actual pool of Siloam not that long ago. So it's a very recent discovery. And not only do we discuss this, but we actually take a walk and go right into the Pool of Siloam.

So, it's a very, very moving thing. It's something that has biblical significance, it's very inspiring, it also adds to the evidence that we've been covering all through the Christ revealed series.

Next, we have my interview with Governor Mike Huckabee. What an amazing human being. Someone who did not hide his faith while he was running for the most powerful office in the land, the presidency of the United States. Sincere individual, powerful faith, and I have to tell you that there's a new dimension to understanding what it means to walk in faith when you're a very public person, especially when you're competing for a very powerful office. So you're gonna be riveted by that interview.

And then, we conclude episode nine with my interview with [Atin Shishcoff 00:03:19]. And I have to tell you, Atin is getting an amazing story. He grew up as a hippie in the United States. How he came to faith is something, you just have to listen to that story.

But then he went to Israel, and he's been there for decades. And also, as a part of his journey in Israel, had his church fire bombed. So you wanna talk about somebody who really had to go through a lot of trials and tribulations based on his faith, this is a great interview to end our final episode nine with.

So, I really look forward to jumping into this with you. Make sure that you dive all the way into it. You're gonna get a lot out of it. Soak it up. I look forward to this experience with you.

Eli, I'm very excited to be standing here with you. We're in a pretty remarkable place. So tell us where we are.

Eli Shukron: We're in the City of David, and we're in the eastern slope of the City of David. And this is where Jerusalem started. Everything started here. Everything began here in the City of David where we are standing now.

Patrick Gentempo: What was the approximate date that this was all built?

Eli Shukron: We go back to the Middle Bronze Period. We talk to you about the time, if we connect it to the Bible, it's a time Malki Tzedek, Abraham. This is the time before 3,800 years ago.

Patrick Gentempo: So this was almost 4,000 years ago that this area came to life under David?

Eli Shukron: By the finding, we found some finding earlier than the Middle Bronze Period, in time of Malki Tzedek, or the time of Abraham. But when we talk about Jerusalem as a city, we're talking about Middle Bronze Period, we talk about the time of Abraham, a time of Malki Tzedek.

Patrick Gentempo: So you have been an archeologist for how many years now?

Eli Shukron: I'm an archeologist from ... I finished my education in the University, but in the City of David I started, the director of the excavation from 1995.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Eli Shukron: Till 2012. Then I retired during excavation here in this place.

Patrick Gentempo: So, when you were studying in school and decided you wanted to become an archeologist, did you ever think you'd get a project like this? This is one of the most significant archeological sites in the world.

Eli Shukron: Yeah, you're right. No, I never thought about that, that I'm going to do excavation in the City of David. I knew when I was in the University, I knew that it's very, very important site. The already Kathleen Kenyon, McAllister, Bliss and Dickie, and [Eagle Shelup 00:05:56], professor from the University, already did excavation in the City of David.

I never thought that I'm coming here to this area to do excavation, but in the life you are not planning what are you going to do in the future. And this what's happened. They asked me if I want to be here to do some excavation here in some areas, some site, because in that time, 1995, the government of Israel say, "Okay, let's celebrate 3,000 years of King David." And this what's happened.

To do that celebration in the City of David we must do some small excavation here in some area in the City of David to make it more available for the people to come to see, to be, and to do that ceremony here. And that's ceremony was in 1995 here in the city of David.

And because that they came to the City of David to do that small excavation in some site. From that moment, I started in the City of David, I finish in 2012.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow. Wow. So, this area would be considered Mount Zion, where we are.

Eli Shukron: Yeah. Look, if you follow the Bible, and the first time that Zion mentioned in the Bible, I think talking about King David taking the Citadel of [inaudible 00:07:19] of Zion from the [Jebasize 00:07:21] king, and change the name to the City of David.

For example, in 1 King, in chapter eight, verse one, talking about King Solomon taking the holy Ark of the Covenant from the City of David to the temple that he built on Mount Moriah from City of David, that is Zion. So when we're talking about the City of David and we talk about Zion, we are in Zion and we are in the City of David.

Patrick Gentempo: And the Ark of the Covenant was here.

Eli Shukron: This is what the Bible says. The Bible says that they bring the Ark of the Covenant from [inaudible 00:07:50] all the way to the City of David. And they put them in the City of David. It's a fantastic story about what's happened here in that time, because when King David brought the holy Ark of the Covenant to the City of David he started to dancing like all the other people.

And there is another very, very nice story with his wife Maacha, she's told him, "Why are you dancing like all the other people?" "I'm dancing for the Lord." This is fantastic.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. So, we are just kind of in our position, I see a big part of the dig right behind you, which is very interesting. What is this area here?

Eli Shukron: This area, it's called Area G, they founded before more than 100 years ago. And the dig here, a different kind of excavation. What we see, we see the city wall of Jerusalem from the second temple period, started in the [inaudible 00:08:41] period. They say that the ending, when the Roman destroyed Jerusalem, and other finding from the first temple period, from the eight century, some say ninth century, tenth century. We go back with some finding here that some scholars say that [inaudible 00:08:58] to the [inaudible 00:09:00] period.

But this is different finding that they found here in this area, it's very, very interesting to understand the field. This is what we are doing when we are doing excavation, to understand what's happened here in the ancient time.

Patrick Gentempo: When I came in it seemed like across the street I think they took off a parking lot and dug down. What is over there?

Eli Shukron: I started to do the excavation there in 2003. What they're doing, they want to build a parking lot before doing ... You building that parking lot, the [inaudible 00:09:31] parking lot, we must do excavation.

And to find what everybody finding, and from there, that's fine, you continue with permission, without the permission, to continue doing whatever in that field. And what we have there, there's different kind

of [inaudible 00:09:47] of Jerusalem from different period from there. First temple period through the Hellenistic Period to the first century to the Roman to the Byzantine and to the [inaudible 00:09:59] period, ninth century A.D. So we have enabled.

And you must understand, Jerusalem is not just temple. Jerusalem is the place where the people was living.

Patrick Gentempo: Yes.

Eli Shukron: And there's a neighborhood, so the people living in Jerusalem from the time of, for example, [inaudible 00:10:14] through the modern time, today. So this is what I'm seeing in my excavation, we found that some neighborhood from the different kind of period, it was there in the western slope of the City of David.

Patrick Gentempo: So this is the crazy thing about Jerusalem, somebody wants to put up a parking lot, the next thing you know they're on an ancient archeological site.

Eli Shukron: Everything in Jerusalem is crazy. You know?

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

Eli Shukron: You know?

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

Eli Shukron: Everything. The atmosphere is crazy here.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

Eli Shukron: Everything started when David choose that place as a capitol of the Kingdom of Israel, this one. But from that end, what are we talking about? We're talking about the place where the people of Israel built the house of God, the temple to god on Mount Moriah. And this makes this city as the capitol of the world.

Patrick Gentempo: This is an amazing site because you're saying it's on the slope of Mount Zion, but if you look over my shoulder you'll see the Mount of Olives, you had the Kidron Valley underneath. So, from standing in one place you see a lot of history all around you.

Eli Shukron: You see a lot of history. And, like you said, Mount of Olives. You say you see the Kidron Valley. And then you see all the cemetery here. But that cemetery didn't build today, it's built a thousand years before, because we have found here some tomb from the Middle Bronze Period, some tomb from the Led Bronze Period, talking about 1800 BC or 1500 BC they found here, from the first temple period, the tomb.

So, this was the cemetery of Jerusalem. It's close to the city, but outside of the city.

Patrick Gentempo: Yes, so that's the oldest Jewish cemetery in the world, correct?

Eli Shukron: This is the oldest cemetery, Jewish, in the world.

Patrick Gentempo: Almost 4,000 years old in some place?

Eli Shukron: I don't know [inaudible 00:12:05] don't know. It wasn't the Jewish. But when you talk about the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of David, and we are here in Jerusalem, this is one of the earlier cemetery for the Jewish people in this land.

Patrick Gentempo: So for all the years that you worked in this excavation, what was the biggest highlight for you?

Eli Shukron: Look, there's different highlights here, because different finding that connected to different period. And, for example, to found the Pool of Siloam or the Pool of [Shelock 00:12:36], and we will say Shelock, to find it. You know?

Think about that before, in the fifth century AD, [inaudible 00:12:46] name of [Dokia 00:12:45], she built a church. She saw the end of the [inaudible 00:12:49]. They built a church there. She say, "This is where it was, the miracle with the blind man." Period. That's it.

From that moment till 2004, all the people, all the Christian people, other people that want to see the Pool of Siloam, going there. Today it's close to the end of the Hezekiah Tunnel. Above it there's a mosque they built on the top of that church. But from that moment everyone going there. They're going there taking the water because they're [inaudible 00:13:20], this is the water touching the stone, this is where it was the miracle.

But in 2004 I found the real place, because it's a little bit southeast of where all the people going. And when you see in this area you say, "Oh, it's making sense." Why all the people more than 1,500 years going to the wrong place. This is the truth. This is the real place. Here, where we found in 2004.

What I'm saying, I'm saying it's amazing that you can give to the people the truth about the Bible, where all that happened, where all that connected. It's mean, the people going to the Pool of Siloam, where I found it, today, they can sit there, they can read from the Bible. This is the connection the pool with the temple. And that pool, for example, found in 2004. And it's a fantastic story.

And they got the permission to put the pipe in the place. And I was there because I was walking around the spring, I'm going there, and then I'm hearing that the bulldozer crushing the stone. I didn't [inaudible 00:14:27] the stone, because the finger of the bulldozer, it won't fit. So everything covered with dirt. No one saw the stone. It's mean, maybe it was up in even one, two, three days before that the bulldozer scratching the stone. But no one pay attention about that there's something below it.

And I said to myself, "Oh, what's going on? Maybe there's something there." So I told them to stop. And I said, "Okay, let's clean the dirt." And

I told to the guy that is in charge of dirt work, and he told, "Okay, I will send my workers. Let's start to take the dirt." And took, let's say, three inch of dirt. He told me, "Oh, there's nothing there." But we talk about one feet of dirt above it. And say, "It must be something there."

And I took the oldest stuff, I start to take off the dirt, and then I found three stairs. That's it. Boom. I found it.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Eli Shukron: In that moment I say, "This is it. I think that this is the Pool of Siloam. Let's continue the excavation there." Then all the people coming. They come where the money came from. Okay, all that over, and we continue doing the excavation, and then I found all the stair of the pool, because it means that for the people walking inside to the water, and then you found the stairs of the pool, you found the ceramic and the coins, and they tell you when they built that pool. And boom. First century BC, first century AD. This is the pool. This is the Pool of Siloam.

So, how we can connect the Pool of Siloam with the Bible. Because, what I did, I didn't say I'm going to found the Pool of Siloam, because it's mentioned in the Bible. I'm going to Pool of Siloam, I found the Pool of Siloam, because I found it. Then, I go to check what the Bible talk about. And then, John chapter nine, talking about the blind man washing his face in the Pool of Siloam. It's amazing.

Patrick Gentempo: It is. Here's what's really amazing, and again, it goes to the craziness of Jerusalem, is that the pool is sited in the Bible, so it's talked about, so people know about it, and people have such a thirst to have an experience with it, and they think the location is somewhere else. And they go there to basically try to see if they can connect with that part of history and the pool where the miracle was performed.

Eli Shukron: Yes, of course, to connect the experience that was there.

Patrick Gentempo: And, of course, in the general area, they're right. But then you just happen to be doing work somewhere else and suddenly it appears.

Eli Shukron: This is what I'm saying, this is suggesting God. It means when God want us to found the Pool of Siloam, we found it. This what happen. We found in 2004, not 1900. No. This is the time that we need to find it. And we found it, and this is amazing that you can now connect the Bible, this story, with this place. It's amazing.

Patrick Gentempo: And we're looking at the history and then the evidence. There's a historical record in the Bible of this place, and there is only a guess as to where it might be, but it was never found. But as you continue to dig it starts to validate what's in the Bible, saying that what's written here is accurate, and it's true.

Eli Shukron: This is it. It's mean that when talk about the Pool of Siloam, this is the real Pool of Siloam that's mentioned in the Bible. And this is amazing to do that connection.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. So even thousands of years later here we are still finding things that, as you find more, it just brings more to life what was written thousands of years ago.

Eli Shukron: Look, I just want to tell you something. We can not prove everything by doing excavation. For example, I can not prove that blind man wash his face, but I can prove the place. The details. The small details that's mentioned in the Bible, it's real or not? It's real, the name of the pool mentioned in the Bible. This is real Pool of Siloam. It's fantastic.

For example, and then, what I start to do, I start to do the excavation on the road, and to connect the pool with the Western World, with the temple, because this is what the people want, the experience.

And what I start to do, I found that road that's going to the temple. And why that road, it's important, because a lot of people was walking there in that time, all the Rabi, Jesus, the disciples, all the people was walking. And I believe that the people knew the Pool of Siloam because they came to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is not a big city, small city. You know everything what's happened in Jerusalem.

So, this from one hand. But in the other hand, when Jesus talking with the blind man, tell him, "Go to the Pool of Siloam," the blind man was walking to the Pool of Siloam. Which way? Why? He was flying to the Pool of Siloam? No. He was walking on the street. So, where is that street? That street.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow. That's fascinating.

Eli Shukron: So, we're talking about the street that connected the pool. We're talking about the street that connected to the temple. We talk about the pool that the miracle was there. John chapter nine, we talk about the blind man walking back to the temple. So, all that, this is the connection. And this is amazing because the finding, the small, little [inaudible 00:19:52] that say the Pool of Siloam, the street, give you alive the Bible.

Patrick Gentempo: And, you see, that's where it really comes to life. Right?

Eli Shukron: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Patrick Gentempo: Because as we sit here and say, "Well, here's the pool here, this is where the blind man had his miracle with Jesus." But then you're saying, "Well, the temple is sort of like ..." As I experience it here, it's across the street over there, in that direction. But now, you excavate and find here's the road, this is the way they would have walked, this is the connection between the temple and the pool. And it brings more of the actual history to light.

Eli Shukron: Yeah. It's the pool mentioned also in the Jewish [inaudible 00:20:31], so we can ... Celebration in the tabernacle time, the feast of the water, that took in the water from the Pool of Siloam and put it on the altar before the winter. We talk about this time. We were in this time here.

We're close to the tabernacle time. So this is the experience that the people can do when they're coming here.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. And it's different ... I've read about these things before, but it's very different when you stand amongst it when you're here with it.

Eli Shukron: Yeah. This is like you say, you make the Bible alive and you get the people to understand what the Bible talk about. Okay, He put the mud on his eyes, told him to go to the Pool of Siloam. Why? He jump? No. He would walk here, he was in the Pool of Siloam, he's washing his face, he's walking to the temple. You can see it is here. It's around it. The [inaudible 00:21:17] going to the temple, the pilgrimage people going to the temple, they're going from the pool to the temple.

This part of the life of the people. For us it's something very, very fascinating. For them, in that time, it's simple, this is what they are doing, this is what they used to do. Going to the pool, purify themselves, [inaudible 00:21:36], they clean themselves, going to the temple, sitting here, talking there, groups from [Degalie 00:21:39], groups from Alexandria. This is the life. And this is what's happened in Jerusalem in these days. In these days, because we are very close to our [inaudible 00:21:49].

Patrick Gentempo: There's something else you wanna talk about that's very interesting relative to the high priest. What's that?

Eli Shukron: Look, we're talking about the high priest, we're talking about the temple, we talk about Mount Moriah. What is the most important place in the temple? The most important place in the temple is the holy of the holy. Today, what's left of the holy of the holy? Nothing. Everything destroyed by the Roman in 70 AD.

In my excavation close to the wester wall, in the foundation of the wester wall, in the tunnels there, I found very, very, very important finding. I found the golden bell.

Patrick Gentempo: What? The golden ...

Eli Shukron: Golden bell.

Patrick Gentempo: Bell.

Eli Shukron: Yeah, bell.

Patrick Gentempo: Okay.

Eli Shukron: And the golden bell, it look like a ball. But it's very, very interesting because when I touch it I didn't understand that this is a bell. When I shake it I hear the sound. And when I heard the sound I understand, I say, "Golden bell." Everyone say, "Oh, the high priest golden bell."

Because when you go to Exodus 28, they describe the dress of the high priest. When they describe the dress of the high priest, talking about the golden bell in the bottom of his garment, and 72 golden bell, but

they're talking about golden bell and pomegranate. Golden bell and pomegranate, they say [inaudible 00:23:00] golden bell inside, in the pomegranate.

It's very interesting to talk about. But what we have in the temple? We have the holy of the holy. Who's going inside to the holy of the holy?

Patrick Gentempo: I was gonna say, only the high priest.

Eli Shukron: The high priest.

Patrick Gentempo: Yes.

Eli Shukron: Once a year. We're very close to this day [inaudible 00:23:14] Yom Kippur.

Patrick Gentempo: Yom Kippur, yeah.

Eli Shukron: Just in this day, when you're going to the holy of the holy, what we have in the holy of the holy? We have the gate to the heaven.

Patrick Gentempo: Yes.

Eli Shukron: And we have the spirit of God there, because in that time we don't have the holy Ark of the Covenant there because somewhere in the end of the first temple period these disappear. So the holy of the holy in that time, it's empty. But the spirit of God is there. Because we know from [inaudible 00:23:41] the General of Pompeii was the Roman General that [inaudible 00:23:43] directly inside to the holy of the holy because he felt that going to find the treasure, it is nothing. And God. The Jewish people, they're crazy people. There's nothing there.

But you don't understand that, for us, the spirit of God, to get to the heaven, that what we need. What's happened? The high priest was walking inside to the holy of the holy with that, the golden bell inside, and get in this spirit of God, and get to the heaven. So, if we want to say today, what's finding that we know that was in the holy of the holy, this is the golden bell that I found in my excavation, so it's amazing thing to say that this was there in the holy of the holy before 2,000 years ago.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow. The holy of the holy is obviously the most sacred place.

Eli Shukron: It's amazing. And to hold some finding that was there. It's amazing.

Patrick Gentempo: It's really amazing. You hear people talk about coming here, spiritually, it's transforming, because it lives in your mind, and you have a certain abstract understanding. But when you show up, and I'm just looking behind you and seeing the ruins of the City of David here, and then knowing that I could turn around and say, "Well, there's the Mount of Olives, there's where the Ascension took place."

And then, knowing these varying pieces all come together and you're walking around it, I don't know how to communicate that it's different to be here than it is to learn about it. But it is different.

Eli Shukron: Yeah. This is what I say all the time. When you're sitting in Washington D.C., or you're sitting in Utah or in Texas, and you read in the Bible, it's a Bible and you don't understand what it looks like. You read about the Jordan River, you read about Jerusalem, you read about ... It's not just to read what the Bible says, it's the feeling.

Even what you think about the Jordan River, it's not same. Like you see in reality, but it's still, I'm here, I'm part of it. And this is amazing, when you're here and when you see it.

Patrick Gentempo: You're 100% right. I was in the Jordan River yesterday. Yeah, you're 100% right.

Eli Shukron: You understand what I'm talking about.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, I understand exactly what you mean.

Eli Shukron: It's not the Mississippi, it's not the Nile.

Patrick Gentempo: No.

Eli Shukron: No way. But, the Bible talk about it. But, Joshua crossed the Jordan River. But, Jesus baptized in the Jordan River. It's amazing.

Patrick Gentempo: It's amazing.

Eli Shukron: This is the connection with the Bible. And the finding and the feel.

Patrick Gentempo: Eli, thank you very much. You've lived a very inspired life, and sharing this, I hope brings it to life so people will know and experience what you're talking about now. And the work you have done has really made a difference to a lot of people.

Eli Shukron: Thank you very much. Thank you.

Patrick Gentempo: Thank you.

Eli Shukron: Thank you.

Patrick Gentempo: So what is this place?

Eli Shukron: We're on the road of going all the way to the temple. This is where the building the beginning of the first century, but the people was walk from here to the temple. This is the way to go to the Pool of Siloam from the temple.

You can see the stairs going all the way up to the temple. You can see, on the side, you can see opening for shop. It's been street shop. People walk in, go in to the temple, purify themselves. This was the main street in Jerusalem in that time, in the first century.

Patrick Gentempo: So, literally, when you walk these steps you're walking the steps where Jesus might have walked 2,000 years ago.

Eli Shukron: This is the step that the people was walking to the pool or to the temple before 2,000 years ago. This is original. All of what you see here, it's original. And I found it just like that. All was covered with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman. A lot of stone that covered all this area from when the Roman destroyed Jerusalem, destroyed this place. We found this ...

Patrick Gentempo: So, Eli, we're actually standing in the Pool of Siloam here.

Eli Shukron: Yeah, we're in the Pool of Siloam. You can see that that's been built as the stairs. Why did they build it as stairs? Because the people walking in the water.

Patrick Gentempo: So, this famous story from the Bible, this is where Jesus healed the blind man.

Eli Shukron: Yeah. We talk about New Testament, John chapter nine. And Jesus put the mud on the eyes of the blind man and sent him to the Pool of Siloam to wash his face. And we're in the Pool of Siloam, this is the place. This is the real one. We talk about some other tradition place, but this is the real one, because this is the true place, because we found it, we found the ceramic, we found the coins, we found all the evidence.

This is from the first century BC, first century AD. This is where the Jewish people came to purify their self before them going to the temple. And the blind man was sending to the Pool of Siloam where we are now.

Patrick Gentempo: It's quite a large area.

Eli Shukron: It's a pool, it's one acre. One acre. What are we talking about? What pool? Huge pool. Why the build it that way? Because we talk about the people in the first century. How many people came to Jerusalem? By the [inaudible 00:28:26] some 100 thousand, 200 thousand, a lot, a lot of people came to Jerusalem. They need to worship in God in the temple, they need to purify themselves. Once a lot of people here, in this place, in the Pool of Siloam, the water, they purifies themselves before they go into the temple.

Patrick Gentempo: So you excavated this.

Eli Shukron: I am not just excavated, I also found it. [crosstalk 00:28:47]. So, in 2004 I found it, and then I started to direct the old excavation here all the way inside to the stair to the street, all the way to the Roman [inaudible 00:29:00] all the way to the temple.

Patrick Gentempo: So, how does it feel that you see thousands and thousands of people coming through here and having the experience that you gave them through your work?

Eli Shukron: This is great. This is what I say all the time. When you're doing something, and the people enjoying your work, coming, understanding, talking, visiting, seeing, sitting, this is fantastic, this is what I want because this is what should be. Because if you're doing some excavation and no one coming to visit you, that excavation, what is the point? It's good for the scholars, but I want the people to touch, I want the people to feel what it means in the Bible in 3D.

Patrick Gentempo: I'm hoping for all the people around the world who are watching this, they now get to experience your work, too.

Eli Shukron: Thank you very much.

Patrick Gentempo: Thank you.

Eli Shukron: Shanah tovah.

Patrick Gentempo: Shanah tovah.

Gretchen Jensen: I really love how I felt like I was virtually at the Pool of Siloam. I just think that was amazing. But right now we wanna hear about the interview you had with Governor Mike Huckabee.

Patrick Gentempo: I have to tell you, one of the highlights of this entire experience for me was being able to sit down and interview Governor Mike Huckabee. It is something to say that you are running for the office of the most powerful person in the free world and you also have a faith that you walk in and you're willing to freely express it.

So when he accepted our invitation to be a part of Christ Revealed we were all very excited about it. So we went to Nashville, we were by TBN Studios in Nashville to interview him. And you're gonna see some extraordinary wisdom come from an amazing man during the course of that interview.

Also, I wanna say that while we're airing Christ Revealed right now, we're in episode nine, our final episode, we are still offering Christ Revealed for 50% off. You can own it and you should own it.

I wanna thank you for your support throughout this process. Remember that not only you might benefit from Christ Revealed, but so would people that you care a great deal about. So take advantage of the 50% off now, get Christ Revealed, own it, and revisit it over and over again over the years.

Enjoy this interview with Mike Huckabee.

Governor, thank you so much for taking the time with us here today.

Mike Huckabee: My pleasure. Thank you, Patrick.

Patrick Gentempo: Tell me, what role has faith played in your life?

Mike Huckabee: It's really been the essence of my life. I became a believer at the age of 10. And since that time it's been a growing experience of understanding what God wanted out of me, and what that meant.

I think when I was 10 years old I was in a church that basically said, "Get saved, go to church, go to heaven." That was about it. And when I was 15 I realized that the faith of a believer was not about just getting saved, going to church, going to heaven, holding on for dear life until the afterlife. It was about this life. It was about walking with Christ in this life to be light and to be salt.

And that was life-changing for me. And at 15 a verse of scripture that changed my life was Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And that was really a breakthrough to believe that God could call us to something that was beyond ourselves, and He could accomplish it in us.

And that's the key. He would accomplish it in us. It's not that we would accomplish it, He would. We would simply be the vessel through which He worked.

Patrick Gentempo: Were there times along the way that it got shaken, your faith?

Mike Huckabee: Many times along the way my faith was shaken. I think it's not faith if it's so juvenile that you don't question it as you grow. It's part of life. The more you experience, the more things, I think, become challenging.

Thomas, one of the disciples, questioned. And a lot of times people have said, "You know, that Thomas, he should never have doubted." Actually, it was his doubt that led him to a deeper faith. And it wasn't that we should criticize him for his doubt, we should celebrate the fact that his hunger for the reality of truth was so intense that he was willing to forego all of the celebrations around him, where everybody was saying Hosanna. And he said, "I'm not gonna believe until I touch the scars and I touch where I saw you wounded."

And that was a powerful statement, not of so much doubt, but of, "I wanna be sure, because you're gonna ask me to give my life. I wanna make sure that it's real." The beautiful thing is that Jesus didn't rebuke him. And I think we sometimes believe that if we have any doubts that God's really mad at us. That's not true. God welcomes us being honest with Him. God's big enough to handle it. We're the ones who sometimes aren't big enough to be honest about it.

One time when my faith really was shaken early in my adult life was in the first year of my marriage to my wife. She began to have back trouble and we thought it was just maybe strain and stress of working as a dental assistant. Many trips to the doctor and various attempts to make it better, things didn't get better. More doctors. Hospitalizations. Ultimately, schedule for surgery for what was said to be a textbook case of a slipped disk.

And the orthopedic surgeon came in the day after the myelogram, which is a test to determine wear the disk should be operated on. And

his face was as white as his lab coat. And this very confident, cocky doctor who had said all along, "Textbook case slipped disk," pulled me in one of those little hallways in the hospital, which is never to give you good news, and he said, "We're not gonna do surgery on your wife for the disk." "How come?" "Your wife doesn't have a slipped disk." "What does she have?" "She has a tumor in her spinal canal. She has cancer." And he said, "I can't operate on that. I've called in a neurosurgeon, he'll come see you tonight."

And the neurosurgeon came in and he said, "This may not be operable. And if it's not your wife is just not gonna make it, and we'll do the best to make her comfortable. But if we can get to the tumor we'll probably have to sever her spinal cord and that will save her life but she'll be paraplegic for the rest of her life."

That was the good news. I gotta tell you, when you're 20 years old and you think, "I'm trying to serve the Lord and I don't understand why this would be happening to me. I'm not selling drugs out on an elementary school campus to kids, so what's this about?"

And it was a real time that shook me to everything I was. I learned some important lessons. Number one, the rain falls on the just and the unjust, as does the sunshine. And we're not exempt as believers from the toughest experiences in life. What we are blessed with is not an escape from those, but it's God's grace through those.

The second thing I learned was that God is big enough to handle whatever doubt I have, and I can be brutally honest with Him, I can even be angry, and express that, because God already knows what my heart is anyway. God's the only one that knows my heart. And for me to pretend, "Oh, I just love Jesus, this is fine, I'm just trusting God." When I really was angry.

And the breakthrough for me was when I was really honest and said, "Lord, this isn't fair." And it was like His love enveloped me. And I've always found that He meets us at the point of our candor and our honesty with Him.

But there have been other times in my life. I ran for office the first time, I didn't win. It was devastating, because you think, "I'm doing this because I feel God led me to do it." And when things don't work out like you envision them to, it's easy to think you failed or that God failed. And, in fact, it may not be either one. It may be in the great scheme of God's plan that He was directing you, but He knew that He'd never get you to go from A to B so He took you to C and then over to B. And that's what I've seen time and time again.

Patrick Gentempo:

So, right now I think the world, there's so much tragedy in it. And it becomes very public in the 24 hours news cycle, as far as how it gets exacerbated through the news. And I think, what you said earlier, people are looking for, they have doubt, but they're looking for a reason to have faith.

So with all the trials and tribulations of the world right now, what do you think the right message is for them to find this faith?

Mike Huckabee: If there was any real desire I would have for how the gospel is communicated, it's that it would be more honest. I think sometimes we've given people this false sense that if you just love Jesus everything's coming up roses. You're gonna be rich, you're gonna be healthy. Well, you're gonna die sooner or later, so how healthy can you be and how healthy can you stay for how long, because the truth is we're gonna die.

And there's an easy believism that I think is permeated the Christian faith that makes it as if I have any calamity then it must be that I really either was sinning and God's punishing me for my sin, or I just didn't have enough faith. And I find that really troubling because neither of those views is a biblical view. Following Jesus does not necessarily make my life easier, it may make it more difficult.

Simon Peter was crucified upside down. Most of the apostles were horribly treated. And many of them died as martyrs. Was theirs a lack of faith? Hardly. They put it all on the line. I'd like to hope that following God makes everything just skippy and dandy, but it doesn't.

The question is not whether or not my life is going to be easy, but whether or not I will be found faithful in the midst of whatever life delivers.

Patrick Gentempo: It's interesting because you talked about that you find that you connect with God when you have candor in the relationship. And this is very interesting, one of the things that's really come out, I think, of the interviews we've done for this series of Christ Revealed is the concept of relationship, not necessarily just ritual or religion, but having the relationship. And that you put together, in fact, saying when I'm having candor, as compared to trying to pretend that I'm a certain way, I'm just really being truthful about what I'm experiencing right now, and that's when you find the connection. Can you speak to that a little bit more?

Mike Huckabee: If I go to the doctor because I'm having some kind of pain, and he says, "Where are you hurting?" "Oh, I'm not hurting anywhere, I feel great." "Well, why did you come?" "Well, because I feel so great I wanted you to tell me how wonderful and how healthy I am." "Well, you're really kind of wasting my time." "No, no, no, no, I just wanted you to just affirm how healthy."

That's absurd. We laugh at that because it's silly. How silly is it to go to God and say, "Oh, heavenly Father, I thank you for this wonderful day, and how blessed I am." When deep down what we're really feeling that day is, "Lord, I'm really angry. I trusted a friend in business and he cheated me, and now I've lost my life savings. How did you let this happen to me?"

That's what the person is thinking. Be honest about it. God is more than able to handle everything we throw at Him, and a little bit more. And I just find that when people pretend, and I hear prayer sometimes, and

I'm thinking, "I know that guy, I know what he's going through, and what he's feeling is nothing like that prayer he just prayed out loud. He might as well have saved his breath." Because what he should have been saying was, "Lord, I come to you today and I'm mad at you. I'm just mad at you. I'm mad because I don't think things worked out like I thought they would, and I'm blaming you today, God."

And I know that sounds, "Oh, that's so harsh." It's like we think God has our emotional makeup, and that we're gonna hurt His feelings so much that He's gonna run and hide from us. He's the creator God. He handles everything that we deliver to Him. And it's only when we're honest with Him that then He can be really honest with us.

The biggest lesson I think I have to learn day after day is that ... I never pray because I'm trying to change God, I'm praying because I'm waiting for God to change me. I don't know how many times I've heard people when they pray, and it's like they're praying their Christmas list. "God, I have seven things I need today." And they have it all spelled out just like it's supposed to happen. And you wanna just tap them on the shoulder and say, "You know, I think if you just said, 'Not my will but thine be done,' probably get a little further along." But that's not how we end up praying most of the time.

Patrick Gentempo: You're a well-known public figure, held public office, did your advisors ... Because you're very open about your faith, right?

Mike Huckabee: Yeah.

Patrick Gentempo: Very forthright about it. Have your advisors ever asked you to kind of tone it down a little because you might be losing or polarizing some people because how you profess your faith?

Mike Huckabee: I think most of the people that ever worked around me knew that that would be a wasted conversation, and they understood who I was. Many of them were people of faith, as well, and so they understood it. Others who weren't may have wished that I had dialed it down a notch or two, but they knew that that's who I was and I think they recognized that trying to get me to maybe hide my candle under the bushel was never gonna happen. And it wasn't because I was some super saint or that I believed better than others, it's just that that was the only way I could be honest.

There was a particular bill in Arkansas that came through, and it will seem minor to a lot of people. It was after we had had a rash of deadly tornadoes, and a lot of people had been killed and millions of dollars worth of damage. And there was a provision in the legislation that defined natural disasters as acts of God.

And I know this to many people was petty, but I said, "I will not sign the bill if you use the term 'Acts of God' because you are attributed to God the killing of dozens of people, and the horrendous effect of this damage that has been so very difficult for people. And they said, "Well, but it's just insurance language." I said, "It doesn't have to be. It's whatever we decide it's gonna be in the legislation." And I said, "I see

the acts of God with the first responders rushing in to pull debris off of people. I see acts of God when the Salvation Army shows up with their truck. And I see the acts of God when people who aren't even being paid bring a chain saw and start helping people get their lives." I said, "I'm not seeing that the effect of a broken world in a weather system that is emblematic of this entire planet, the effect of sin and evil in it."

I'd like to think that those are natural disasters that come from this world of ours that is broken. But the act of God? I see it, but not in what killed people. I see it in what saved their lives and what reached out and put a hug around a mother whose son got killed, that's an act of God.

You wanna define that? Let's do it, I'll sign that. And people thought I was being petty and silly. But I held my ground because I just said, "It's time for us to be more candid about how we define it in the public realm."

And I guess what was particularly difficult was that so many people didn't wanna talk about God in the public square, don't ever bring it up, stay away from it. And then, there were legislatures who wanted to attribute things to God. And I'm thinking, "Why don't you attribute wonderful things to God? You only wanna attribute bad things, what does that say to kids?"

Just a small example of those moments where you just say, "You know, say what you want. Call me crazy, but I'll hold my position on it."

Patrick Gentempo: Words matter.

Mike Huckabee: They do matter.

Patrick Gentempo: And these are thematic. So, as you're saying, children grow up learning this language, learning these themes and not maybe even understand why they're having trouble when they get older with the concept of God, because these things are ascribed.

Mike Huckabee: If I thought every time there was thunder, lightening, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes, God showed up, I'd think maybe God wasn't somebody I wanted to hang out with. He's really messing up a lot of stuff. I'd probably run from Him. He'd be worse than the childhood vision of the booger bear under the bed. So, why would we teach kids something that ridiculous.

Patrick Gentempo: And I'm guilty as charged here in the sense of being in business for a lot of years and reading those clauses and contracts, and just being numb to it and saying, "Okay, that's just the description." But you really have broken it open and said, "Wait a minute here, this is a mis-characterization that's inappropriate, and just because it's legally traditional doesn't mean it's accurate or right." So there's a lot of wisdom to be able to pick that out and capture that and then make a point of it.

Mike Huckabee: I thought it was a little bit disingenuous for the government to say that you can't have a Christmas carol in a public school, don't put the Ten Commandments on the capitol grounds, but we can talk about God if we want to attribute deadly tornadoes and floods to Him. Then, oh, talk about God. Let's blame Him for this stuff. I just found that terribly disingenuous.

Patrick Gentempo: And you see the people now have ... I think they're very fragile in their psychology, because there's the spiritual side, the social side, but then there's the individual psychological dimension of faith. What do you see? Because I think one thing that's emerged in my experience with this whole project has literally almost seeing faith as a human need; food, water, love, shelter. But I'm seeing the need for faith, because, as you said earlier, we're gonna die, we're mortal.

And in a sense, the psychological aspect of the human experiences that we're orphans who don't know who our parents are. So, there's gotta be some role for faith here, especially in fragile times and psychologically fragile time. So, how do you see the role of faith?

Mike Huckabee: I would say to someone, if you know it's gonna rain, do you get an umbrella? If you know it's gonna be below 30 degrees, do you carry a coat with you? Why? Because you are anticipating something that you're pretty sure is gonna happen. How sure are you that you're gonna die? Not next week, or the month after that, but how certain are you that at some point this human fleshly body is gonna give way and you're gonna die?

And if a person says, "Oh, I'm never gonna die." Well, they got bigger problems than anything I can help with. But most people say, "Well, I know it's gonna happen, it may be 50, 60, 70 years from now, but it's gonna happen." If you prepare for a half of inch of rain, don't you think you might oughta prepare for something that you yourself admit is absolutely going to happen?

And if you don't believe that anything happens after you die, okay, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die. But if you have even the slightest hint that there may be something beyond this physical life then maybe you oughta think about preparing for it. And if you don't think there's anything then explain to me why you would live righteously, morally, in any way, what would be the point?

If you see money laying on a counter and someone turns his head as the clerk, why don't you reach and grab it? Why not? Well, because it would be wrong? What made it wrong? You needed it, they don't need it, take it. Why not? If there's somebody that is in your way and if you bumped them off, you'd be better off, get rid of them. Well, that would be terrible. Well, who made it terrible?

People can't answer those questions because you can not take God and extract Him out of society and culture and make sense of why we would ever behave in a thoughtful, kind, rational way. It makes no sense. We oughta act utterly out of our selfish desires, we oughta act completely in our self interest unless we think somewhere there may be a God

we're gonna be accountable to, and that maybe He does know what we're doing. We don't wanna be caught.

Patrick Gentempo: Well, especially because you have such a strong life in politics, you've talked about moral values, and politics is applying these values to social functions. And one of the challenges that a lot of people are feeling, especially parents, I'm a parent, you've obviously raised some very impressive children I might say.

And right now I've seen all kinds of data about how a Christian household sends their kids off to college and some alarming percentage of them lose their faith while they're at school because of the environments that are there. What advice would you have for them?

Mike Huckabee: Don't spend hard-earned money sending your kid to a college that will destroy everything you've spent a lifetime trying to teach them. I can't understand why a parent would say, "I'm gonna write a check for \$60,000 a year so my child can go and unravel everything that I've worked for the past 18 years to build into him in terms of conviction and character." That makes no sense to me.

Some Christian kids can go to a secular university, even a very liberal one, and come out on the other side of that stronger in their faith because they already were equipped and they were prepared for the battle. But if your child is not prepared for that battle and are easily swayed, rescue them from that environment. And I'm not saying send them to a monastery or a convent. But put them in a place where they will grow not only academically, but where they'll grow spiritually.

I think we have some great Christian universities. I feel like I went to one, and it was such a blessing. And I'm better prepared, not just for being able to explain my faith, but I've stood on a stage and debated graduates of Harvard Law and Yale Law and some of the finest universities in the world. I never felt disadvantaged academically, but I felt advantaged spiritually because there was a perception and depth of my world view that many of them did not have because there's was limited to the five senses. They had no understanding of something bigger than themselves. That's where, I think, a Christian university and a Christian education is actually capable of better preparing a person for life.

Patrick Gentempo: And I think that seems to be a meme that's out in the world that it's mutually exclusive to have high standard academics and have high level spirituality in the same place. It's like you can't deliver great academic education in the face of high spirituality.

So, I think what you're saying is true. And what I've noticed in this project, dealing with a lot of the apologists, that it's in the Christian world, that these are extraordinarily brilliant scholars who have studied at very prestigious universities and have created literally the logic and the rational for their Christian faith in profound ways.

So, what I started to see is strong spirituality matched to great academic rigor integrated, as compared to saying they had to be split apart.

So, with this, one of the things that I've concluded is that I think the brand Christianity is misguided in the outside world, not within the Christian world, but outside the Christian world what people see is blind faith, you gotta check your rational bind at the door if you're gonna accept all these types of things, et cetera. But there is an academic side to Christianity that's profoundly rational.

Mike Huckabee: You don't have to commit intellectual suicide to follow Christ. In fact, I think you really have to put aside a big portion of your brain to not accept the rational, archeological, historical claims of a resurrected Christ.

And some of the greatest scholars of all time have sought to prove that Jesus was a fraud. And inevitably if they approach this with a real intellectual honesty, they end up saying, "My Lord and my God." Because they can't argue the evidence. Again, looking at it from an archeological or historical perspective, it's just remarkable, and there are more tangible reasons for us to believe in the gospels than there are for us to believe that the moon shot in 1969 really did happen on the moon and not some remote desert in Arizona.

Patrick Gentempo: Right. So, with that, you have been to Israel many times.

Mike Huckabee: Lost track of how many.

Patrick Gentempo: What keeps you going back?

Mike Huckabee: First time I went to Israel was 1973, and it was part of a larger trip that a friend of mine and I were making as recent high school graduate. I was very poor as a kid, and I could never have afforded to go. But he was very wealthy. This was a Prince and the Pauper story. And he wanted to go to the Middle East and take this trip after graduation. And his dad said, "Well, I'm not gonna let you go over there by yourself. But I'll tell you what, if Mike Huckabee goes with you I'll pay his way, and I'll let both you guys go." And somehow his dad trusted me I think more than he did his own son.

So we went. We went to Jordan, we went to Syria, we went to Lebanon, we were in Turkey and Greece. We were all over the Middle East. And one of the stops that we made was Israel. And I'm 17. This was three months before the Yom Kippur war.

But we get there, and Israel in 1973 was a sleepy little country, there wasn't a whole lot going on. A little bit of tourism, selling a few oranges, doing their best to keep themselves from being annihilated by the enemies who surrounded them.

I didn't know a whole lot about the big picture of the Middle East, but something happened when I got to Israel. I can't explain it other than to say here's a land I've never been to before, but I felt at home.

Something about that whole experience was as clear as dialing in the frequency of a radio station and getting a perfect signal. And I account it unto bearing witness with my spirit.

But I knew that this is God's land. And there's something really special. And that was the first of what has become now numerous trips. In 1981 I started bringing groups of people to Israel. And then, throughout the '80s and '90s I would continue to do that.

I took a period of time when I didn't get to take trips and go because I was in office as governor and it's a little awkward to try to do that. But after I left office and I started back taking groups, and then I started going making speeches and doing various business opportunities there.

And the one thing that has been consistent in all my trips to Israel is I never exhaust the extraordinary learning. People ask me, "How come you keep going? I mean, you've been so many times." I said, "Because every time I go I learn something that I didn't know, I'm refreshed spiritually, because I feel like, as Forrest Gump so wonderfully said, that deep theologian Forrest Gump, 'God shows up.' And He does."

And I get on the airplane to come home already trying to figure out when's my next time to come back. And I just never tire of it, because of what, for me, is an incredibly spiritual connection being where the Bible comes alive.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, my wife and I had the same reaction, it was our first trip, we just got back, and it's like, "When are we going back?" And we're planning on a month with our kids, because, I agree, there's something very, very special there.

Really, one of the things that I took away from it is that having a faith that reaches back into the distant past, into history for thousands of years, it's a critical dimension. Because a lot of people talk about, "Well, yeah, I'm spiritual, and I have a spirituality." But where are the roots? And the feeling I got while I was there, is that these deep roots that reach way back into the past, and then to see current day archeological collaboration to something that was written a long time ago, and disregarded by factions of people saying, "This is all a story, none of it can be proven," is an experience. When you have it first-hand it's something that I think strengthens faith. Strengthens the position you take in your life about what the meaning is in it.

And it's good to know that you can keep going back, and keep having this experience. So, as you described, starting at a young age, I think you said 10 years old when you started to walk in faith, and now, all these years later, and keep going back. What has it meant to get deeper into those roots by going back to Israel and actually walking in those places?

Mike Huckabee: For me, every time there's the connection of sensing that I'm where God did miracles. I'm in a place that, for whatever reason, He chose to be. He chose this land to reveal Himself, not only in the scripture and in the Word, but also in the flesh of Christ.

And it also is not lost on me that everywhere I step I'm seeing prophecies fulfilled. The desert is blooming again. From my perspective, having now gone for over 44 years to Israel, I can remember places that I went that were absolutely barren. There was nothing but rock and dust. And I go to those same places today, and they are lush with vegetation, growing crops that are now being exported all over the world, out of what was nothing.

So I see that truly the desert blooms. Sometimes we've ... Remember that passage in Ezekiel that the dry bones live again. I've seen the dry bones live again. I've watched this land that was just barely getting by, now galloping with extraordinary technology, economic advancement, and this has been in my short lifetime that I've seen this. It's pretty remarkable.

I'll never forget what one of my seminary professors told me. It was an archeology class. And he said that there has never been one archeological discovery that is controverted one single verse of scripture. And I thought that was a pretty audacious statement. But now, 40 years later, he was right, there's never been a single archeological discovery that did in fact controvert a scripture.

Patrick Gentempo: And since he made that statement there have been several more discoveries.

Mike Huckabee: Many more.

Patrick Gentempo: It still hasn't happened. And that's the thing. When we were there we were in a dig that was, I think, within months old, there's still more and more emerging. And the collaboration is startling. And again, if you're intellectually honest, it's hard to not take notice and say there's something here that matters and that's supportive in nature.

So, with a Christian family that you're raising kids in this value system and in this spirituality, and you have these roots that go back, you spent time as a pastor also. Right?

Mike Huckabee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Patrick Gentempo: So, as you were in that position working with these families, what was the experience from that side of it? Because we all experience it maybe from the side of sitting and watching people like you. What's it like from the side saying that your activities are in pastoring to a congregation?

Mike Huckabee: For me, pastoring was an incredible school. It wasn't so much what I gave them, it's what they gave me. I sometimes feel like they really go the worst end of the deal. The two churches I pastored over a period of a little over 11 years were great years, but I see it as an amazing education for me.

And heres what I mean by that. I learned something about people and about the challenges people face. And I've often said because there's a view that if you've been a pastor then you're really kind of living in this very departmentalized world, you don't understand much beyond the

church and this very narrowly focused world of theology. And I find that ridiculous, because as I've said to many people, nothing better prepared me to be in public office than having been a pastor. And here's why; every social pathology that exists in our culture today I saw first hand and can put a name and a face on it because I was a pastor. And I don't know of any other profession that a person can have in which you are so confronted with every human frailty as you are if you're a pastor.

You see people who lose a child, you're with them when they bury their parents, you're there when the children become the parents of their parents because their parents lose mental capacity and have to have someone care for them. You're there when a child is addicted to drugs, you watch when people make the tough decision to take off artificial life support. You also see the best moments of life. You see the birth of a child, the marriage of a daughter, everything from the cradle to the grave, the best, the worst, you're there for it. And there's nothing out there, doesn't matter.

A person says I'm really concerned that I'm in the wrong gender. You've dealt with people like that. These are real issues for you. A teenage girl who's 14, she gets pregnant, she tells her pastor sometimes before she tells anybody. So these are not abstract issues that you've read about in a book, these are people that you've cried with, and you've talk to, and you've counseled.

And so, there's nothing out there that you haven't put your arms around. And I think that that is a powerful learning experience for every person who has done it. And I know that there was never a public policy issue that did not get affected by my having been a pastor.

And when people talked about poverty and how do we deal with poverty, I had a perspective of it because I had been in people's homes when there was no food in the cupboard. I was the one who went over there and took them a sack of food, so I get it in a way that a lot of people have only heard about it.

Patrick Gentempo: It's really interested because this is not, in your experience, an abstract, intellectual, or academic issue, you lived in it with people. And it's not a single issue, there's the broad spectrum. So almost this sounds like it should be a prerequisite for someone who wants to hold public office, that you don't just abstractly understand this, but you actually experience it first-hand, and many times a confidential way, I'd imagine, as people are confiding in you.

Mike Huckabee: One of the aspects of being a pastor is that you do have to keep a confidence. You have to be able to be trustworthy. I can't think of anything more valuable to go into public office with than an understanding that there's certain things people are gonna tell you that you have to keep to yourself, and you have to be able to keep your commitments.

The greatest frustration of politics is people look you in the eye and tell you they'll do something and then turn around and not do it. It's pretty painful.

I'm not saying every person who runs for public office should be a pastor, but every person who runs for public office oughta have lived some life. I worry about people who come right out of college, they get into a political life, they maybe are a staffer, then they run for office, and the only thing they've ever done is to work off a government paycheck and they've maybe helped develop policy or carry it out, but they've never gone out there and touched the people that are gonna be directed affected by whatever legislation they're pushing. And I wish every person had at least some real-life experience before they try to hoist that upon others.

Patrick Gentempo: It's interesting because there's the whole concept of the separation of church and state, yet at the same time getting into the spiritual dimension of human beings and understanding what they're doing in life to try to get by and what their experience is, it's like where do you draw lines and did you find yourself having to find a place to say, "Okay, I've gotta draw a line here to separate these two things?"

Mike Huckabee: I think there were people who, because of my background, thought that if I got elected to public office that I would try to replace the capitol dome with a steeple, that I would push for legislation that everyone would be required to go to Wednesday night Bible Study. And that was never the agenda. I didn't feel like that I was trying to bring my faith and impose it upon other people by government edict. In fact, I would find that repulsive.

But it was also that my faith helped shape my view toward, "How do we help somebody who is poor? What is my biblical responsibility?" And, frankly, there was never a time that I could find that a biblical conviction was in conflict with or was somehow hurtful to the best interest of the people that I was elected to serve. If it's an education issue, do we want an education to be equally accessible to everybody, whether they're black or white, rich or poor? I think most of us would say, "Well yeah."

Well where did I come to get that view that every person has worth and value? That's what made me pro-life. How can I say that the child with Down Syndrome isn't worth as much as the captain of the football team. How could I ever come to that conclusion? Only if I decided that some people are worth more than others.

If I believe there's a God, and God made the kid with Down Syndrome and He made the captain of the football team, He made them with equal love and worth and intrinsic value. One is not more valuable than the other. How can I say that we should take the life of this unborn child, regardless of why I justify it, because isn't that child equally important as the one whose parents put the picture of the sonogram on the refrigerator and make everybody look at it everywhere they go? What's different? Both children in the womb have equal value and worth, and there's not a distinction in God's mind between, "This one is worth something, this one, it's expendable, it's disposable."

When we ever get to the place where we think another human being is disposable and expendable we've really shaken our fist in God's face and

said, "You really made a mistake on this one. I don't wanna stand before him and try to convince him of that."

Patrick Gentempo: With your time in public office and serving as Governor for all the years that you did, and especially, you were a republican governor, which was a rarity in Arkansas.

Mike Huckabee: It sure was, yeah.

Patrick Gentempo: Did people try to use the fact that you had such a foundation in your faith against you to try to weaken your political position in the state?

Mike Huckabee: There were times when people would maybe say, "Well you're a Christian, how could you be so difficult on this issue?" It's interesting because the same people who thought that I should never be politically tough were also the same ones who didn't think I should ever be a Christian in public office. So there's the great irony. And it's a double-edged sword.

I would say this; if a person plays NFL football and that person happens to be a believer, is he going to hit the opposing lineman any less hard? No, because his job is to knock that guy on his backside every time the ball is snapped. His job is not to go up and touch him and say, "Tag, you're it." It's to tackle him and put him on the ground. He may be a believer but this is a tough job. It's a sport in which there's full contact.

I try to remind people that if you're gonna get into the realm of politics it is a full-contact sport. You need to play with integrity and honor and play fairly, but if you're not willing to play hard enough to win, I don't care if you're a Christian or not, that's not the game for you. Do something else.

And again, I don't know of a better analogy than saying football is a tough sport, if you play it and you're a Christian, you still tackle people, you still block them, you hit them and you hit them hard. You try to knock the ball out of their hands and make them fumble, you try to intercept a pass that was not intended for you, but that's the rules of the grid iron. And when you're playing in the realm of politics you're trying to get things passed, you're trying to change the culture that you're serving. And if you're not willing to play hard and be tough about it then I wouldn't advise getting in it. If you can't stand to see the sight of your own blood, don't run for anything.

Patrick Gentempo: That's good advice. What advice would you have for voters, as far as what they should be looking for in their leaders that they want to vote for?

Mike Huckabee: I would say the number one thing I wish people would look for in their candidates is authenticity. And everybody thinks I would say, "Oh, elect people who are Christian." Well, I know a lot of people who pretend to be Christian but they're biggest phonies I've ever met.

I always worry when the first thing somebody says is, "I just want you to know I've love to enter this business deal with you and I'm a Christian." I

never want to get into those. So I've learned the hard way that that's usually a recipe for disaster. People are using faith as an entree to try to get you to trust them, not because they are people of integrity, but because they're using that as a cover for the fact that they are not.

Now, I'm not saying if a person has a declaration of faith you should avoid them. But I'd rather have somebody who honestly says, "I'm not a Christian, but I'd like to be your senator," than somebody who says, "Oh, I just love God. I'm gonna show up at church the four weeks before the election. You won't see me for another four years, but this month I'll be there because it's right before voting time." I can't stand that.

Patrick Gentempo: And we've seen it haven't we?

Mike Huckabee: Oh, we see it all the time. I hate the duplicity. I hate that entire phoniness that causes people to stumble and to say, "Well, if that's Christianity I don't want any part of it." So I'd rather a person just say, "Hey, I'm an atheist." Okay, at least I know where you stand. And that part of your life I totally don't agree with, but at least you're honest about it.

And honest atheist is less a threat to the Kingdom of God than is a dishonest Christian, a person who professes it but has no intention of actually living it.

Patrick Gentempo: So much of this in the end, I think, emerges in inspiration. There is a history. There's the evidence of that history. But it translates into this inspiration in life and for life. Our forefathers in this country, to me, I think, our Declaration of Independence, our Constitution, may be the greatest intellectual feat in human history. I find inspiration there.

What do you find as far as inspiration in the founding of this country and how it's emerged over time, and how does that relate to faith?

Mike Huckabee: I personally don't think that it's possible to explain America apart from faith and God's direct intervention. His answer to the prayers of people who came here to escape from the galloping terror of tyranny in order to establish real freedom for their families and their future. They wanted their families to be able to believe, to believe out of their convictions without the government giving them restrictions and limitations on what they could believe and how that could be manifest.

And we forget that our history as a nation is first and foremost a history in that people were in a quest for religious liberty. And the very foundation of our system is based on that. The first amendment to the Constitution begins with religious liberty. Because the founders understood that if the government could limit what you could believe then the government could limit what you could say. They could limit with whom you associated. They could limit what criticism you could have of the government. They could limit everything. It has to start with that sense of faith and perspective.

So, I can't think of anything more critical than recognizing as we step back that this country had a unique foundation. I think about it this

way; when we broke from the mother country and said to King George, "We're done with you," we challenged the greatest standing army on the globe at the time. His army was better equipped, they were better trained, they were better manned, and they were even better dressed. And everything about the British army was vastly superior to ours.

We had a bunch of farmers and merchants who were grabbing the muskets off the mantle, muskets that were better designed for varmint hunting than fighting a war. Our Navy was a couple of rowboats. We had no business saying we're gonna be an independent nation. That was absurd. How did we win? I think you can only say, "By the grace of God." There's no other explanation for this.

Patrick Gentempo: It's miraculous.

Mike Huckabee: I truly believe it was a miracle.

Patrick Gentempo: Well, I will say that, number one, you've been a great inspiration to me and to many that I know.

Mike Huckabee: Thank you.

Patrick Gentempo: And you've contributed greatly to this project, so I thank you for your time. And I wish you God's speed in all your endeavors.

Mike Huckabee: Thank you, Patrick. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Patrick Gentempo: Thank you.

Gretchen Jensen: And our final interview is with Aton Shishkov. Tell us about that.

Patrick Gentempo: The interview with Eitan Shishkoff is quite riveting. He's got an amazing history. Start out as a hippie in United States, ends up in Israel. And the things that happened to him there are really unbelievable. So you're gonna enjoy this interview, it's a great way to just end the series, to tie this all together.

I also want to remind you that right now Christ Revealed is 50% off the normal price. Thank you all for your support, it's been overwhelming and very, very heartwarming. I really wanna say that this has been an amazing journey for me personally. The things not only that I learned, but more importantly the things that I felt have changed my life forever. I will never be the same again as a result of what my experience was during Christ Revealed.

And I want you to also keep that experience, to share that experience, to own that experience. Right now, again, while we're broadcasting, it's still 50% off. Please get the gift of Christ Revealed. It's something that will change your life on an ongoing basis. I look forward to revisiting it over and over again throughout the years. So enjoy this final interview with Eitan Shishkoff.

Eitan, thank you so much for taking some time today. You've got a fascinating story. Tell us a bit about your background.

Eitan Shishkoff: Well, I was born of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father. My father's people came from Bulgaria to the United States in the beginning of the 20th century. And my mom's folks came primarily from Germany, German Jews. I was raised in a humanistic environment. Neither Jewish nor Christian.

And by the time I hit high school I was evaluating the condition of the world and realized that a lot of things needed to be changed. This was the era when racial prejudice was really a hot issue, still is unfortunately, but in the mid '60s all the more so. The war in Vietnam.

And those dynamics drew me into a place of really of radical decisions. And things like demonstrating in the streets of California against the war, doing some jail time for that adventure. And on through those years, which were the late '60s, coming to the conclusion that I and my friends were not going to be able to create the degree of change that we felt was needed, and we had met some people that were moving into the back to the land idea. Let's just detach ourselves from civilization and start all over again with teepees and adobe bricks and some hoes and shovels, and that's what we did. And it wound up being more than a short-term experiment.

My wife and I lived that way for six years in the mountains of New Mexico, no electricity, no running water inside the house, and two children were born to us during that time, and we learned a lot.

Patrick Gentempo: So, six years of the experiment, as you refer to it. Then what happens?

Eitan Shishkoff: Well, actually, about 2/3 of the way through that time, Patrick, there was a tragedy. After living communal style with people that we really loved and were really committed to and beginning to raise our children together, spending long hours trying to coax food out of the ground, as suburban kids, that took a little while to learn how to do. One of the people that was dear to us was murdered by a total stranger.

And this even really caused the entire construct of eastern mysticism and Native American mythology and some psychedelics thrown in to just crumble. And I knew that I didn't know what the truth was. Where is this man's soul? Does a person live after they die? And what's up? What the universe about? I felt at a zero point, and began to cry out to God, literally yelling. So I'm crying out to somebody that I don't even know. Now, how smart is that?

But it worked, because after yelling at God and saying, "What's going on here?" He actually sent some Jesus people. If you remember back in the day there were people that externally were still in that hip mode, but they had come to faith in Jesus. And they were traveling all over the country.

So they go tall the way up into the high mountains where we were living, we were in the high mountains of New Mexico. And they came over one day, my friend and I were off in another field harvesting. They spoke to our wives, our wives had a very good impression, in fact,

secretly they prayed with them to receive the Lord, but they didn't tell us.

And so we came home and they said, "Hey, these guys are really interesting, they're really cool, we want you to meet them." "Fine." They come over for our typical dinner of beans and tortillas. And while we're eating, they're telling us about Jesus and how wonderful and the things that He did and what He said. And I'm really warming to this because I've been searching, I've been asking.

But I didn't want any part of the Bible. Okay? I'd already encountered sort of an institutional Christianity and whatnot. But while they're talking I'm not seeing the room anymore, and it's just about the distance between the two of us right now, I'm looking into the face of Jesus on the cross suffering for me. And what he communicated to me were, "I see how you want to be pure and you totally aren't. I am not accusing you, but I'm hanging here on your behalf and I love you with an everlasting love. I'm what you've always looked for."

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Eitan Shishkoff: I was a goner.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Eitan Shishkoff: And just as I communicated it just now, it's never left me. And I came out of this waking vision, if you will, everybody's still in the room. And the next words I heard from these two long-haired Jesus people were, "Well, so are you ready to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" And I'm going to myself, "What else can I do?"

So, I knelt down on the dirt floor of our cabin with my buddy, also a Jewish hippie, and we received the Lord then and there. It was October of 1972, 45 years ago. And in the several years that unfolded we both moved down out of the mountains to go to Bible School, because I felt like, "Hey, I've been trying to save the world through every other means that wasn't the truth, now I've been given the truth. What else can I do but prepare to share this truth with anybody that I can?"

So I figured I needed to know the book, get some training, get with some other people that had experience. That was a great era. And during that era in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the mid '70s our children were still small, I was reading the account of The Last Supper. And, call me slow, I wasn't really an expert on the whole history of the Bible and the Jewish people and all this. It came to my awareness that this was the Passover Supper that was The Last Supper. And I had just never seen those two things collide that way. And it made the Bible one book for one thing.

For another thing, immediately I sensed the relevance of being born Jewish. And my wife, by the way, is Jewish on both sides and she was raised with at least a reformed Jewish background, so she had more awareness. And what happened was that our Jewish heritage became integrated with our New Testament faith.

But because we had been discipled by people that were non-Jews and we love them and they were like our spiritual parents, there was never any thought of, "Oh well, we need to do some kind of a separate thing." That wasn't in our mentality whatsoever.

So we're part of this world-wide movement for Jesus, let's say. But God is drawing us back to understand what does it mean to follow him living a Jewish life as He and His disciples did in the first century.

So, this picture is me with my older son David. He now has five sons. And we're in the back of a pickup truck on our way to church in the mountains of New Mexico in the winter. So, that's how much we wanted to go and worship the Lord and hear the Word of God preached. It was preached in Spanish, because it was a Hispanic Pentecostal church, and we loved every minute of it.

It took us all day to get ready to go, that's why we didn't go in the morning. But they have an evening service. And I used to take my drum set and set it up, and we wouldn't arrive until the song service was almost over. And they were so loving and so patient with us that they would say, "Hermano, hermano. Brother, brother. Come. We want you to play the drums." And, basically, what we realized was they pretty much were at the end of their praise time, but they didn't care. And my buddy played guitar and banjo, and those people loved us.

So, we're in the back of a pickup truck in this picture. That's why my hat is pulled down like this, because it was winter, and we didn't care, we just wanted to go and worship the Lord.

Patrick Gentempo: You're speaking to something that since I've been here in Israel has been a rising awareness looking at really the deep connection between Judaism and Christianity and how it all really has such common strong roots. Not even like there's some relationship between it, but the roots are extraordinary.

But now it gets interesting if we fast forward because you coming to Israel, and I wanna find out how you got here, but it's not that the Jews in general are accepting of this type of an act or action-

Eitan Shishkoff: Certainly no.

Patrick Gentempo: ... or purpose that you bring with you.

Eitan Shishkoff: That's very true.

Patrick Gentempo: Because I've come to find out that the facility we're in is not the first facility.

Eitan Shishkoff: That's true.

Patrick Gentempo: So, what happened to the last one?

Eitan Shishkoff: Well, the last one, which was the first one, is a rather humble warehouse that exists just 50 yards from where we're sitting right now,

because this is an industrial area. And it was our first congregational home. We had started a Messianic Jewish Congregation here, had several house groups and they came together in December of '95.

And two years later, October of '97, I was awakened in the middle of the night by a phone call from one of the young members of the congregation, he said, "The building is on fire. You better come quick." Well, that was one of the reasons not, because I expected a fire, but I had purchased an apartment not far from here because I wanted to be close. So I got here in several minutes, and when I arrived flames were shooting out of the warehouse.

And on one level I wasn't surprised because I really felt the parallel between our being here now and what was happening in the first century. The Book of Acts really is a tale that, in a way, how should I say, it's a preview or it's a magnification of what's happening now. It was much more intense, people were dying. Thank God nobody's died as a Messianic Jew for their faith yet. But there was one bomb that was intended to kill a family, and should have killed the young man that opened this gift package unknowingly back several years ago. He survived, which was really a miracle.

So, the lever of persecution is not what it was in the Book of Acts, but it's the same kind of dynamic. So, here we are, we're only two years into this congregation. And the congregation, as we had understood our vision, was to reflect full Jewish identity as believers in Jesus.

So, one of the things that you find in any synagogue in the world is a Torah scroll. It's a scroll with the first five books of the Bible. It's the scripture. What anybody has in their Old Testament Bible. And we wanted that as a reflection of our identification with our people. This is what Jesus read from when He was on the scene.

So, we're establishing in a very basic, very humble way. Can you imagine? We're meeting in a warehouse, at the most, maybe at that time we had about 70 people. The kids are meeting in a van, there's not even a decent room to have a classroom. And there's this fire bombing.

So, who did you firebombing, you probably wanna know. It was never specifically proven because the police didn't want to go that far to prove it because the basic attitude was these people are foreign missionaries trying to take us out of our Jewish reality, out of our identity as a people, and convert us to becoming gentile Christians.

Well, that is definitely not our message, and it's not who we are, it's not who I've been living. I've been living this way now for well over 40 years, celebrating the biblical festivals and Shabbat and, of course, learning the Hebrew language from coming here, and raising our children to understand their heritage as part of the Jewish people.

But history has played a wicked, wicked trick on this conjunction of Jesus and Jewishness. And that wicked trick has been murderous persecution at the hands of those claiming to be Christians, claiming to be functioning in the spirit of Christ, but rounding Jews up into

synagogues, burning them alive, and ultimately even the theology of Luther's later writings, which was vitriolic against the Jews, justifying the Holocaust, at least in the minds of the German Lutherans who were a part of what happened in those years.

So, this fire bombing, it was a wake up call, Patrick. It was as if we were confronted with the significance of what we were doing. But think about it. What's a few dozen people in a rundown warehouse? It's like we didn't ascribe that significance to ourselves, but someone, and I'm saying a spiritual enemy, the devil, wanted to stop the testimony of Jesus, we call him Yeshua, His Hebrew name, in Israel because this is part of what will lead to His return.

And, of course, it didn't stop. All it did was really encouraged people from around the world to pray for us, to send unsolicited gifts, which wound up in our being able to begin purchasing and renting this building that we're in right now. And it was really one of the best things that could have possibly happened.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow. So, once that did happen, and you realized that it wasn't an accidental fire, but somebody literally fire bombed it.

Eitan Shishkoff: Yes, exactly. The investigator came the next day and he looked down at the floor. Now, the bombs were set off in a little loft, and in that little loft we had our humble little office with our little plywood, homemade desk, and our not-so-homemade Xerox machine, and the heat from this fire, by the way, brought the Xerox machine into the appearance of toasted cheese. Like all the plastic of the Xerox machine was just in this wavy melted place. And it was actually on the other side of a double-thick sheetrock wall.

But on the concrete floor the guy knelt down and he picked this up, and there's some powder. And he said, "Do you know what this is?" I said, "No." He said, "This is phosphorus, smell it." And I smelled it, this yellow residue. He said, "That was a phosphorus bomb." And they used those in Vietnam. This is very serious explosives. Somebody with knowledge had to do that. It wasn't just one little stick of dynamite or something that people drop through the roof.

So, it was obviously a job for hire. But really, without question, it would have been the extreme orthodox who oppose us, who believe that we're traders to Judaism, who want to stop this movement at any cost, and not dissimilar from what was happening in the first century.

Now, we prayed for them. And we know that Yeshua said that you should pray for those that persecute you, and that this is an important part of our heart condition. So we did, we prayed for them. But I wanna tell you that only good came from that outburst of hatred and trying to stop us.

I often think of the verse toward the end of the Book of Genesis where Joseph is facing his brothers, who have not done right by him. And he says, "What you have done ..." He said, "What you meant for evil God used for good." And they were his brothers, his natural brothers. Well

these were our natural brothers. And I'm not a foreigner, I have Israeli citizenship. I have Jewish children, they've married other Israeli Jews from different nations all over the world. And this is our home.

Patrick Gentempo: And that's really the interesting thing. First of all, it seems counterintuitive that you'd have Messianic Jews, almost seems like a contradiction in terms. Right? But yet, there's a culture here and it's a strong culture. And the Jewish foundations in their lives is very strong. Yet some find it threatening. It's interesting that there's that cultural class, which it seems it's within the family if you will.

Eitan Shishkoff: It is within the family, and it's the result of the heinous acts that were performed unfortunately by the church through the ages believing that God was through with the Jews, believing that the church had replaced Israel, believing that they were doing God a favor by really, ultimately, eliminating the Jewish people that was God's judgment against us. But they did a very incomplete reading of the Bible, because from the Torah onward, from Moses through the prophets, it's one continual message of, "I've given you this way of life, you're going to violate it, there's going to be punishment, you're gonna pay for it, but ultimately my love for you is everlasting and I am going to bring you back to this land and I'm going to bless you and I'm going to give you a New Covenant."

So, the awakening of the Jewish people to the New Covenant/New Testament, same word, which is predicted in Jeremiah chapter 31. That awakening is keyed in context to the return of the Jewish people in our day. So think about it. And he's not the only prophet. Hosea spoke about this, Ezekiel spoke about this, Joel spoke about this. These ancient Hebrew prophets said that when the ultimate return of the Jewish people from exile takes place that is when you will recognize David, your king, which is prophetic language for Yeshua, for Jesus, because he's the Son of David. I think we're in the right place at the right time.

Patrick Gentempo: It would certainly seem so. Now, talking about the return, how did you end up coming to Israel?

Eitan Shishkoff: Thank you for asking. The primary inspiration came from the scriptures because some of these same prophets that I just mentioned, in reading those passages and hearing people speak about it, some of the early Messianic Jewish pioneers in the modern era who had returned to Israel were exhorting us, inviting us, saying, "Come on, this is our destiny, as to establish a reborn community of Yeshua in the land of Israel for the end times."

And over the reading of those scriptures and then just a very personal interaction from God, where the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "Your destiny is to live in Israel. This is where I want to take you one day." Now, there was a 15 year process from that moment until we step foot on Israeli soil to live here permanently, which happened 25 years ago in 1992. But during that 15 years God was preparing us, so it wasn't a matter of foot dragging.

But the encouragement ... So, during the '80s, this was in the late '70s when I received this message inside from God about our destiny, through

the '80s we were part of a Messianic Jewish congregation in the Washington D.C. area. And that was an important learning process. How do you integrate New Testament faith with Jewish practice? And because this hasn't really existed much since the first or maybe the second century, it's a rediscovery, it's a reinvention if you will. There aren't any video tapes of how they did it back then. Sometimes we wish there had been because everybody's got their own version. But that's okay, too.

So, in the '80s I was serving a Messianic community in the states. And all through that time began to develop relationships with believers who were living here in Israel. So a buddy of mine and I had an interview program on radio. So we would interview people in Israel and, "Hey, how's it going over there?" "Well, you know, there's a riot and, you know, the Western Wall was on fire," or whatever, all these different reports.

And in the meantime we were receiving really a magnification of the invitation. Then finally, in '87 my wife and I visited here. And people said, "When are you coming?" When they found that I was involved in the Messianic Movement in the states, they said, "We need shepards. We need people to come." Interestingly, Jeremiah prophesized about that. He says, "I will raise up shepards for you when you come back to the land."

So, it was in our heart. And five years after that visit we were able to come and bring our stuff, our household, at the time we already had two college aged children, one four and a half year old tyke, and Connie was six months pregnant at the age of 45.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Eitan Shishkoff: She's my hero. That was gutsy, to come to a land, even though it's our ancient homeland, didn't know the language, it's a very different culture here, it's the Middle East, it's not Europe, it's not North America. But our coming was the result of scripture, inspiration from God, prayer, and the encouragement of other believers who saw this as being a relevant step in what God was doing in this Jewish movement for Yeshua.

Patrick Gentempo: You talk about inspiration from God, how do experience that?

Eitan Shishkoff: Well, first of all, inspiration is one of my favorite words, concepts, realities. Of course, literally it means in-breathed. And when you think about the breath of God, God created man with His breath. It says that He breathed into the nostrils of Adam and he became a living soul. It's a very visual, it's a very vivid image.

Again then, in the Book of Ezekiel in chapter 37, God breathes into, the spirit breathes into the dry bones, same verb, and the dry bones of Israel come to life. So, in a way, that concept of being inspired is receiving the breath, the spirit of God, the heart of God.

Patrick, I believe that whatever God wants to do in the earth, He does it by a transmission, a communication, a giving to us of His heart into our heart. So, that's my understanding of inspiration, is God, in modern

language, gives us a download. It's something of an awareness that takes us beyond, I would say, takes us beyond our limitations.

This whole thing that we're sitting in right now, this mama congregation that spawned daughter congregations, that spawned a national youth ministry that's on its way to spawning a national center for Jews and Arabs to study the scriptures and encourage one another. It just started with inspiration. It started in a moment of prayer way back in 1989 in the states when God showed me an oasis in the desert.

And the inspiration from that vision, which I realized He wanted to establish an oasis in Israel, something where people were being helped, and we have a huge amount of humanitarian aid going on right under our feet right now are boxes and shelves of clothes and food and supplies for new immigrants, humanitarian aid. And that He wanted this to be called Tents of Mercy. That was an inspiration. That was a moment in time. And these kinds of moments in time, like when God said, "Your destiny is to live in Israel." I would call that inspiration.

It's something that is being transferred to me from the heart of God that takes me beyond my normal existence, beyond my normal abilities even, and gives me a sense of what we call faith for that which is greater than which I'm able to do.

Patrick Gentempo: So, when you experience the inspiration, as you're describing it personally, is it clear that this is an inspiration, or to use the vernacular download from God, or are there times when you're saying, "Geez, I'm wondering. I kind of feel something, I'm not so sure." Is it clear and profound? Or is sometimes is it a little be elusive?

Eitan Shishkoff: The clear and profound incidence, they're sort of like mountain peaks within a long journey. In the day-to-day matter of things, it's generally not lightening bolt. The lightening bolts, I could point to three, four, five maybe. And so, by the grace of God, I've been walking with Him for 45 years now, so there's a lot of non-lightening bolts. There's a lot of drizzle, and there's a lot of even fog, and there's a lot of on your knees crying out, "God, what do you want? I think this is what you want."

You know, I had a mentor very early in life in my life in the Lord and he gave this old fashioned illustration, and he was a little bit of an old boy. I don't remember if he was from Arkansas, but he kind of talked like that. And he said, "Well, you know, in order to turn a car, is it easier when the car is standing by itself or when it's moving?" Well, obviously it turns a lot more easily when it's moving. "Well, so, you see, you need to move out and begin to do what you believe God wants you to do and then He'll help you turn in the right way." Never forgotten that.

So, there's something to what people call stepping out in faith. I don't think it means stepping out in presumption, I don't think that it means getting crazy schemes and emptying your bank account or suddenly going online and developing this huge website that says all that you're gonna do.

In fact, when I received that download, that inspiration, for Tents of Mercy, for this work, I just held onto it for years, because there was something sacred about it. I felt like this is not mine, I don't really know exactly how God wants to do it. And so, let's take it the next step further, because this is good illustration.

So I get to Israel, which I knew God wanted me to be here, and I knew that He wanted to do something called Tents of Mercy, but I didn't know what it was supposed to look like. What is this, a parachurch ministry? Is this a congregation? Is it an album of songs? I don't know what it is. And so, I went up on Mount Carmel. I took a day, I took my Bible, took a journal, I fasted. And you know what? God directed me to the Book of Acts.

Now, there was a little conversation that I had with Him. It wasn't quite as revelatory as the others, but because I waited on Him, and because I said, "Here I am, I'm available, I'm putty in your hands. I know some of what you wanna do, but please, you have to give me some more instructions. What does this thing look like? I don't even know what it looks like. I know it's supposed to be called Tents of Mercy, but I've never done a Tents of Mercy before, so give me some help here."

And it was as if He asked me a question in response, "What did it look like the last time you guys were here?" Which I thought, "That's a clever way of putting it, Lord." Meaning when there used to be Jewish believers in Jesus in the land of Israel. "What did that look like?" I said, "Well, it looks like the Book of Acts to me." He said, "Good. Open it up."

And then I opened up the book, because the book also directs us naturally. It's not all downloads directly. There's guidance in the scriptures. And so, as I read those early chapters of the Book of Acts I got it, I got the direction, because they did humanitarian aid out of community. It was out of the context of people meeting together, learning together, worshiping together, and they helped everybody that had a need.

I love the question, because really how then do we live? Francis Shaffer quoted the apostle Peter. And that really is the question. I love where you went with that.

Patrick Gentempo: So, this is a fascinating journey. Once you knew that you needed to come to Israel, and it's quite a different experience to learn about Israel than it is to step foot on it. Yes?

Eitan Shishkoff: Very true.

Patrick Gentempo: And as you learn this story abstractly in the Bible, the history, and it kind of lives in your mind a bit. I could tell you just being here a few days, it's very, very different to actually be here and be standing in the land and looking at this stuff. It has an entirely different meaning experientially.

When you got here you had some sort of anticipation I'm sure.

Eitan Shishkoff: Of course.

Patrick Gentempo: Did it turn out the way you anticipated? Or has it been completely different?

Eitan Shishkoff: You know that it didn't turn out the way I anticipated. It's interesting because I made several scouting trips between our first encounter and actually moving here. On my last scouting trip to Israel before we actually moved here, it was getting very close, the time of our actual arrival, and I came through the airport and something was different. And immediately my interactions, and I wasn't trying to speak Hebrew, I didn't really know enough to do anything conversationally at the time, but my mentality, my attitude, about myself was, "This is now my country. I'm a part of this."

Patrick Gentempo: I've arrived?

Eitan Shishkoff: I was slammed. I wound up standing on the street in Haifa literally in tears not knowing how to function. I was 45 years old, a college degreed person, had traveled around the United States speaking and being received by people and understood as part of this movement, and so forth and so on, and knowing how to function as an adult. And I just realized, "I am started all over again, I don't know bupkis, which means beans in Yiddish. I don't know anything about how to live here.

And so, that was the beginning of what still occasionally brings me to tears even 25 years later. But you know what? It's a healthy process, because the scriptures say that the sacrifice of God is a broken heart and a contrite spirit He will not despise. There's something about being broken and not being able to function in your natural ability linguistically, culturally, conversationally, educationally, economically, that forces a dependence on God and a realization, "I'm not gonna make it on my own." This is not a solo flight, this is outright, total dependence, and I'm only here by the grace of God, and if anything of value happens it's Him.

And by His grace we never gave up. I never thought, "This is too tough, I'm gonna go back." I never thought, "I can't stand another day of this." There were desperate moments, there were broken moments, there were times of frustration, still are occasionally, of course that's part of life.

But I wanted so much to be a part of this nation. I wanted so much for our people to understand that Yeshua is not only one of us but He's the greatest one of us, and He's the one that we're all looking for. Do you know that the ultra orthodox movements around the world, but especially in Israel, are intensely expecting and preaching that the Messiah will come? This is the Messianic expectation is getting higher and higher because the days are getting more and more desperate, and the Rabi's know that this is the end of days. And they know that the Messiah has to show up.

What they don't know is that He already did show up and He suffered for our sins according to the prophets, and that He's coming back

triumphant. And so this is what made it worthwhile. So every step of the way to learn the language, I'm still learning it. Do you know what that means? As a 69 year old man having been at something for 25 years and still hitting walls.

But you know what? God is pleased. If I can step out of my own humiliation and my own frustration I know that this is pleasing to God. Number one, because I just give it to Him. Number two, I don't stop. I'm not gonna stop ever learning Hebrew. And hopefully there will be some courses in heaven that I could continue this thing.

The culture. The culture here is crazy. People fly off at the drop of a hat, but then they'll hug you the next moment. And it's like everybody ... Not everybody. Many people take on a sort of a defensive posture that the rest of the world is against them. Well guess what? The rest of the world has been against us, and for the most part still is against us, but you don't have to be against me I'm on your side.

But that's what happens psychologically. And so, it took me several years to begin to key in on this. People are so mashugana here, so wacky, because we have absorbed thousands of years of opposition and it creates this tension.

So, how does it feel if all the neighboring countries around you want to push you into the sea and never see you again? That has an affect under the service. But what a motivated people. What has been done in this country in less than 70 years is absolutely off the chart, it's unreal. And this is part of what we celebrate.

The other night ... This is a good place to bring this response to a point. Just last week we went to the Western Wall. The Western Wall is one of the favorite, if not the favorite, place for the army to lead the brand new soldiers and taking the oath of service, where they're sworn in. They actually take an oath to be willing to die to defend this country.

In that ceremony was my oldest and first grandchild. My 18 year old grandson, who was born here in this country. He took the oath to defend this country in front of the Western Wall, which was the retaining wall of the Great Temple, of Herod's Temple, 2,000 years ago. And the sense of history uniting, the sense of ... And there were Israelis of every stripe and every shape and every dimension in that plaza next to the Western Wall. It's this big open area, if people haven't seen it. There were religious people, there were non-religious people, families, all there to honor these young men and to cheer them on and to thank them and to be a part of the country together.

I'm telling you, it is worth it all. Every moment of brokenness, every moment of awkwardness, every moment of not understanding, "Why did you respond to me that way?" You know? Or, "Why can't you just answer me in a civil degree of courtesy?" Or, "Why is this thing valuable and that thing is not valuable?"

And I won't go into all that because it's a little bit embarrassing for our country. But anyway, there are certain values that I have. I value the

environment, that's not always valued here. I told you the story of living in the mountains and it's like every pitcher of water was sacred and so forth and so on.

But this people has been through a lot. And I need to be patient. And anyway, it's the love of Messiah, it's not the love Eitan that's gonna get the job done.

Patrick Gentempo: It had to be quite an experience to say that I have grandkids born here. So, to come here, and I have to imagine you're staying here. Right?

Eitan Shishkoff: Absolutely.

Patrick Gentempo: You're living out your days?

Eitan Shishkoff: You couldn't move me.

Patrick Gentempo: And you now see grandchildren that are actually now charged with defending the country. This is an interesting thing culturally because there is, of course, the religious side, if you will, but all the people in Israel share this history, which goes back thousands of years, live in the context of what you're surrounded with here. Not far from here there's some serious threats to the existence of Israel.

Eitan Shishkoff: Just over the northern border.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, we're not far from that. Right?

Eitan Shishkoff: [inaudible 01:59:12]

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, the [inaudible 01:59:13] is right there.

Eitan Shishkoff: They're far more powerful now than they were in 2006 when they sent 4,000 rockets on us, to this area.

Patrick Gentempo: Right to here.

Eitan Shishkoff: Yeah, yeah, yeah, we were running for bomb shelters.

Patrick Gentempo: In Haifa. So you were [crosstalk 01:59:25].

Eitan Shishkoff: The whole Haifa bay area.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow. So, well, since you brought it up, you came from the mountains of New Mexico, and now you got shells raining down from Lebanon from a terrorist organization that's intent on destroying you.

Eitan Shishkoff: It's true.

Patrick Gentempo: What was that like psychologically?

Eitan Shishkoff: It's really an experience that, first of all, the entire country unites, because you're under attack for your existence, and people throw away their differences to a very, very great extent. We found ourselves

supplying orthodox food kitchens in Northern Israel with food to distribute. And they knew that we were Messianic Jews. So the barriers begin coming down for one thing.

For another thing, you obviously take stock, "Why am I here? Is this worth ... What if a bomb goes off?" Because bombs were shaking our neighborhood, literally. And if a bomb had fallen, one man died when he went back to his apartment to get a blanket for his child, because he left the bomb shelter. We have a bomb shelter just like that in a park next to our apartment house. And I thought about it, I thought, "Okay, well, a rocket could land in the yard here outside of our door." And one of the safe places to stand was wherever there is a series of cement stairs, as long as you're not exposed to the outside.

But I opened the door and I looked at the outside, and I said, "So, you know, if, at this moment, a rocket fell ..." And those rockets were packed with all kinds of nuts, bolts, glass, whatever. So, when it hit the ground all of that spread out like that, just psheew, immediately. So anything in the path 360 degree radius from the point of that bomb was gonna be shredded, and that could have been me.

So you begin to evaluate, you say, "Well, what if I would die, has this been worth it? Is this worth dying for? Is this worth giving my life for?" And, of course, we felt, "Yes, it is." But then you take precautions. So we were moving a lot of the children and women to take care of them to the south, because that particular war was here in the north, and maintaining what we could.

In those kinds of times I found myself identifying with other portions of humanity through history. I'd never personally been under that kind of attack. I didn't go through any battles, I didn't serve in an army, and I didn't know the reality of being shot at, or being in a field of battle. But there's something about the reality of it that caused me to identify, and it was just something that, I don't know, it touched me in a way, the suffering of mankind, the reality in general of war and of man killing man.

But then, of course, it heightened my faith and my realization that what God said in the scriptures about this land, this place being opposed, and our presence here being opposed, it built my faith, it increased my desire to be here rather than subtracting from it.

Patrick Gentempo: And this is interesting. I see some things that are, in many respects, a package deal, in a good way. For example, history and faith, trying to have some sort of a faith that's developed with no history. It seems like there's no foundation to a faith. So it's interesting that you're trying to say, wow, I'm sensing and understanding a shared history that we all have, even though our faith or beliefs might be somewhat divergent in nature. But the importance of history, which is why, I think for me, and I'm still processing what it means to show up here and be on this land, and the story of the Bible is so much about the land, it's very interesting.

But the other question I have is does it seem like God's inspiration, as you received it, is always accompanied with purpose, with a purpose that comes with it?

Eitan Shishkoff: I would say so.

Patrick Gentempo: It's not just a matter of saying, "I feel inspiration."

Eitan Shishkoff: Yeah, it's not just being jazzed. It's not just a good feeling. There's a destiny. I like the word destiny. God creates us intentionally and for a purpose. And if you think about it, there's nothing that man creates that's purposeless. Anything, these lights, the camera, I see a fire extinguisher in the distance, screens, you name it, anything that has passed through our hands has been created for a purpose. How much more, the human being, who's created in the very image of God Himself.

And when I start thinking that way I get very inspired, because then I say, "Wow, God, my life belongs to you, you have redeemed me from my own helpless independence and emptiness of what I think ought to be, and given me a purpose."

And you're absolutely right. I would like to come back to what you were saying about history. And it's an important point, and that is the way God has authored history and the prophetic direction that He's taking us in scripture is that it's not separate, Patrick, there is a joint destiny of Israel and the nations. There's a joint destiny for those who bow to the King of Israel, Yeshua. And that joint destiny has to do with His ultimate reign in the earth.

And He says through the ancient prophets that His light will rise and shine upon us, upon Israel, and the nations will be drawn to the shining of that light, to the rising of that dawn. And this theme is repeated over and over again, especially in the Book of Isaiah.

So, what I see from that is that we might have divergent ... Well not even divergent, let's say complimentary cultures, because really Jewish culture is at the foundation of the New Testament. Jesus and the apostles lived a full-on Jewish life according to the Torah. That's what is too often missed.

And so, Christianity or people who love Jesus who are not born Jewish don't become Jewish, and they don't have to, and they're not supposed to, but there's a rich heritage and a rich root system, as Paul says in the Book of Romans, that is part of the deal, it is part of the faith. And to enjoy that and to be linked through that and linked through the understanding that God is not through. His promises to Israel will still come true.

And this is where I would like to enlist the people who are watching us, and to say you have a part in this drama. You have a very significant part to play, it's not all about us at all.

Patrick Gentempo: And I think the assertion that nothing could be made without a purpose, and certainly, especially a human being by God can't be made without a purpose. And then the invitation that you're offering is to say there's a destiny here, answer the call.

Eitan Shishkoff: Absolutely.

Patrick Gentempo: Now you're doing this in your congregation here through the years that you've been here. And I have to imagine now that when you first got here maybe locals would say, "How long is this guys gonna last?" But I imagine once you go through your first bombing and you're still here, they maybe have some confidence in the fact that you're serious about this gig.

Eitan Shishkoff: Well said. Well said. I did inject that. If you don't run it builds you up.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. So now maybe you're this new level of ... You've got some street credibility around here.

Eitan Shishkoff: Listen, not to mention that right now we're in a relatively large building. It was built for speculation. At the time of the fire bombing nobody was in here, it wasn't finished, we were the first and still almost the ... We now own almost the entire building.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Eitan Shishkoff: There's a huge warehouse underneath here. This is our sanctuary, and on the other side there are offices and classrooms. And compared to that little warehouse, there isn't any comparison, which all of which to say that there was a purpose, there's a ... I love writing, I love stories. Unfortunately, I'm not much of a fiction writer, but I love reading fiction. And God, He is an author with a capital A. He's a director with a capital D.

The way that God wants to weave our lives together, even you guys showing up here today, I've never saw you before, but there's something really special. Just in getting to know each other, sharing stories, and this is God's method, He's a story teller. But we're the ones that are in the story. And when we give Him our total will and total availability, wow, you know what happens here? It blows my mind. I could never have imagined, this is not one congregation, it's five. And it's not just a congregation, but it's humanitarian aid with thousands of people over the years being helped with food and with clothing and with items for their home, furniture. The opportunity to serve the youth of Israel.

Patrick, we got involved 18 years ago in doing youth camps. I couldn't even understand the kids. I have a favorite story where this kid, I thought that he was asking for prayer because he wanted to commit suicide. But I wasn't hearing his Hebrew accurately. And what he really wanted was to be emersed in water to seal his faith in Yeshua. Quite a bit of difference between those two verbs.

But, what am I doing here? What is this? How did God invent this? He takes a stoned out hippie dirt clod from the mountains of New Mexico

and over-processed, brings him to Israel to the Galilee to be a part of the renewal of faith in Yeshua in the end times in Israel. It's outrageous.

Patrick Gentempo: Outrageous is really the way to describe it.

Eitan Shishkoff: Pretty laughable, but also outrageous.

Patrick Gentempo: Are you in-touch with any of your old hippie friends back in the states?

Eitan Shishkoff: Yeah, a few. Some of the people, especially that came to faith, and a few of them have gone on to be with the Lord. One very close friend, he was a hippie in the mountains with us, I remember, I was a young believer, and he had barely received Yeshua, and he was wrestling with the issue of marijuana. And we had smoked a good amount of marijuana together. And I went, ["Rube 02:11:33], marijuana's really not part of the deal, and it'll actually get a lot better if you are able to let that go." He said, "Okay, pray for me." I prayed for him and he never smoked another joint in his life.

Now I'm in touch with his son. This man founded a Messianic Jewish congregation in Sacramento, California. And his son is now leading that congregation.

So, it's like also the generational transfer. It's my son-in-law, who is originally from Ethiopia, is now the senior leader of this congregation, I'm not. I passed the baton.

Patrick Gentempo: It's amazing when you start looking at a succession process. Right?

Eitan Shishkoff: Yeah.

Patrick Gentempo: You certainly have all the energy of your youth. So it doesn't look like you're slowing down at all.

Eitan Shishkoff: Thank you. A few people are trying to say, "Shishkoff, you know, wouldn't you consider a little bit more modest schedule?" I guess I'm still inspired.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. And it all goes back to inspiration. And when you see people who come to the congregation, especially new people, now you've got the internal experience of inspiration, as you described it, what is the external experience when you watch it in other? How would you describe that?

Eitan Shishkoff: Wow, that's a deep question. Obviously, it's a process of discovery. Usually for people to visit here there's already an openness. They pretty much know what they're coming to. It's not like people just walk in off the street and say, "Oh, you know, I saw your sign. By the way, what must I do to be saved?" It's not quite like that.

It's very relational, through friends, through family. But I also love watching especially people who are a part of Israel and they come here and they've never experienced a Messianic celebration. And especially when we bring out the Torah scroll, and we read from the Torah scroll,

and we pray traditional prayers before we do that. And somebody reads from the Hebrew and the scroll and gives a little bit of an interpretation, a little bit of inspirational talk.

And one of the things that's interesting is that we have both native Israelis and then many, many immigrants from different countries, many immigrants from the former Soviet Union. And so, these people are getting up and they're speaking Hebrew with a pronounced Russian accent, reading from the scroll of Moses, the Hebrew in a Russian accent, and a native Israeli is sitting out there and he's listening to this.

Well, one of those native Israelis is now leading one of our congregations just up the coast. He became a spiritual son of mine 20 years ago.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow. Well, I'll say that the inspiration is certainly more than palpable in your presence and the presence of your facility here.

Eitan Shishkoff: Thank you.

Patrick Gentempo: And I really appreciate you sharing your heart and your mind and this inspiration with us in Christ Revealed, and I'm praying for you and the future and the purpose that you have.

Eitan Shishkoff: It's been a genuine joy. You know, when a person relates things like this, it brings them back up within his own awareness and he becomes extra grateful and also, should I say, energized.

Patrick Gentempo: Thank you.

Eitan Shishkoff: [foreign language 02:15:07] Thank you.

Gretchen Jensen: This has been the most amazing experience for me personally. I feel like I know Christ better. I feel like I've walked where He has walked. And I just wanna thank you, Patrick, for letting me be a part of this journey, I really, really have enjoyed it. What are your final thoughts on this?

Patrick Gentempo: You know, it's hard to find the words to express the range of what this experience truly meant. We embarked on this project, there's no way we could have predicted how it did unfold, which was so magnificent, and so far beyond anything that our imaginations would have allowed. We always thought that it was a great exploration to look at the history, the evidence, and the inspiration of Christ. And it's one thing when you abstractly think about that, but when you go forth and you immerse in it and you experience it directly it is something else.

I have come to many conclusions as a byproduct of my Christ Revealed experience. One of which is I look at faith as a human need much like air and water, that the need for faith in a world full of angst when people have to understand what it means to be mortal in this world, faith is the thing that I believe carries us to a place that nothing else can.

And as we've gone through this experience with Christ Revealed it is elevated me, it's elevated my experience, and by proxy, the people around me because of my ability now to have a sense of life that can bring smile and light to areas of darkness.

So, I can't tell you how much it's meant to me to share this journey with you and to know that this isn't something that was just a private experience, but something that was a shared experience, which is something that all human beings, I believe, need to have.

So, thank you for giving that to me. And I also just wanna say that owning Christ Revealed is something that I encourage everybody to do. Fifty percent off is how we're offering it right now. We have multiple packages to make it easy, so people can find the right fit for them.

I know that this is information that I'll be visiting for the rest of my life, sharing with loved ones, et cetera. I want that for you, too. So, in just summarizing here, I'll just say that I can't tell you how transformative this has been, how enlightening it has been, and more importantly, how much of a privilege it has been to be with you while we took this journey.