

## Heisrael: Conversations After an Awakening to a New Life

**Alvin E. Jenkins, Jr.**

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With an emphasis on avoiding the temptations of the earthly world in order to enjoy the rewards of the afterlife, *Heisrael* is a long and frequently incoherent exhortation to follow the ways of Christ.

*Heisrael* is a book charged with the energy of a true believer whose only goal is to win more converts to the Christian cause. A humble man with few pretensions, Jenkins clearly is passionate in his desire to help others walk the straight and narrow path that will keep them in Christ's ways and lead them to a heavenly union with the triune of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Drawing from his own experiences, Jenkins knows the pitfalls that beset people. He sees a world saturated with sexual innuendo, seemingly overrun with alcohol and drugs and violence. With God pushed to the background, even in the hearts of people who claim to be Christians, Jenkins knows that the path of least resistance is the one most people are on. To maintain Christ-like attitudes in a hyper-materialistic culture is never easy, and Jenkins is at his best when reminding people that the current state of affairs plays perfectly into Satan's hands. If you want a closer relationship with God, Jenkins' advice might be to turn off the television and resist another trip to the shopping mall. His mantra is simple: pray, fast, study the Bible. It's the only way to ensure you don't get caught up in Satan's snares.

The great downfall of Jenkins' work, however, is that conviction alone is not enough to make his message clear, and from the first page to the last, *Heisrael* is a bewilderingly difficult book to read. The most charming characteristic of Jenkins' prose is the unusual singsong rhyming that flows from one sentence to the next. But even that is irreparably marred by syntax, grammar, and vocabulary so garbled as to be almost nonsensical. One small example, out of dozens, will suffice to make the point: "Even in the mist (sic) of constant strive (sic) He's consistent and provides a way of escape for Himself to ensure His purpose is performed because in unity He's decided; that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will accomplish their will no matter the crisis." No doubt, a determined reader can paraphrase such a sentence to make sense of it, but that's exactly what a reader should not have to do. Jenkins' verbal slip-ups are legion, and almost painful to encounter. Additionally, certain readers will cringe to see an entire chapter titled "The Holiest of Hollies (sic)," that Joseph was "betrolled (sic) to a pregnant girl," and that Jenkins himself "got up off of [his] shoulders and went back to church."

Good intentions can only carry a book so far, and despite Jenkins' best efforts to reach his brothers and sisters in Christ, *Heisrael* may require more effort to read than most readers are prepared to offer.

DIANE TAYLOR (July 29, 2011)

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