

Israel and Bible Prophecy

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Lesson One

The Land of Israel

The world is a vast stage with the end-time actors preparing for the last scene in the great drama of world history. One can hear the commotion of stagehands behind the curtains as they hustle around, setting the arena for the last climatic scene for the history of mankind. The play, “*Man’s History*,” is about over, there remains but one more scene to be preformed.

Hurricanes have storm centers that men give names. There is a storm gathering upon the world and its “*storm-center*” is Israel. The nations of the world, suspecting their own possible destruction, are still being drawn, irresistible, into that storm.

The hottest spot on the face of the earth is Israel. No other land is so persistently and predominantly in World News. The spotlight of the world is focused again and again on the Middle East, a piece of land only 150 miles long and 60 miles wide. The whole country could be thrown into lake Michigan.

Israel is the only nation in the history of mankind, that is:

1. foretold in Bible prophecy before it ever came into existence;
2. the geographic center of the world;
3. the religious center of the world;
4. to be the capital of the world;
5. the richest in the world in natural resources;
6. where the last battle of all time will be fought;
7. where Jesus Christ will personally return too;
8. is to be the scene of Satan’s final, and total defeat;
9. given by God to a single people for an everlasting possession.

While it is true that many nations have possessed the land of Israel, however, they were unlawful and unscriptural intruders in the land. Listen to Genesis 13:14-17,

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”

Genesis 17:7-8, *“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”*

No fact in Scripture is more established than the fact that the land known as “*Palestine*” belongs to Israel.

However, God told Israel that if she disobeyed Him they would be dispersed throughout the whole earth.

Deuteronomy 28:64-66, “And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life.”

God’s Word is faithful in relating Israel’s shortcomings. God does not fail to expose the sins of even her greatest heroes and to reveal Israel’s dark past. However, while other nations of the world wallowed in the orgies of sin and gross darkness, Israel still remains the only champion of Jehovah. Israel was not perfect before God and, for this, God chastised her many times. Yet, in the dark hours of universal idolatry, it was the heroes of Israel who faced the lion’s den and the fiery furnaces and, in comparison to the depraved nations that surrounded Israel, she was a heavenly people.

But Israel did *disobey* God’s Word and we read in Ezekiel 36:17-19,

“Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.”

Jesus prophesied, “*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”* (Luke 21:20-24).

History records the fulfillment of this prophecy when, in 70 A.D., Titus and his Roman hordes destroyed Israel’s great Temple, burned the city and scattered the inhabitants. Israel was, indeed, “*scattered to the four corners of the earth,*” just as God had prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

Even though Israel was dispersed, God miraculously preserved her. One of the greatest miracles in the history of mankind is the fact that Israel remained a race of people even though she was broken into fragments and scattered to the four winds of the earth. It is, indeed, almost unbelievable that for 2000 years Israel has remained as homogenous as any race of people, living within the boundaries of their own country.

Even though God would “*cast them off for a season*” (Romans 11), He was not through with them. Another emphasized truth in Scripture is the *restoration* of Israel to her own land.

Leviticus 26:42, “*Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.*”

Isaiah 14:1, “*For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land.*”

Jeremiah 16:14-15, “*Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.*”

Ezekiel 37:21, “*And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.*”

Deuteronomy 30:3-5, “*That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.*”

Jeremiah 23:7-8, “*Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.*”

Amos 9:14-15, “*And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.*”

The restoration of Israel is, certainly, in full swing today and has been going on ever since May 14, 1948. Don't minimize the importance of this momentous event. And keep in mind Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this generation (that is the generation that witnesses the signs given in Matthew 24 – especially the sign of the "*budding of the fig tree*" – (and it is Israel that is likened unto a fig tree in the Old Testament) – *will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened*" (Matthew 24:34).

Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel in 1948 to 1963, said on May 14, 1948, "*Ezekiel 37 has been fulfilled and the nation of Israel is hearing the footsteps of the Messiah.*"

The land of Israel becoming a nation of the Jewish people on May 14, 1948 is the greatest prophetically significant event to have taken place since the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Just think of it! In our generation the Gentiles are relinquishing their power of the Holy Land and Israel is a nation again after being buried among the nations of the world for almost 2000 years. We are seeing the revival of the nation of Israel. She is, as God predicted for the last days, "*blossoming as the rose,*" and "*the fig tree is budding*" in our generation!

If you want to know what time it is on God's Prophetic clock, just look and see how He is dealing with Israel.

There were a couple of essential facts one should realize as he looks at the fulfillment of these events.

1. What is taking place in Israel today is not the entire fulfillment of Bible Prophecy because the Jew, by and large, is returning to Israel in *unbelief*. God's Word predicts that Israel will turn to God in true repentance. The complete fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies will not come to pass until Israel accepts Jesus Christ as her true Messiah.
2. God's Word predicts that Gentile nations will "*divided the land,*" that is, the land of Israel. Joel 3:2 prophecies of the time when "*they parted the land,*" and Daniel 11:39 prophecies, "*They will divide the land for gain.*" This is exactly what happened at the end of World War I with the *Balfour Declaration*. When the British General, Allenby, captured Jerusalem during World War I (1917) he liberated Jerusalem from the Turks and the land was "*divided.*"

Jesus prophesied that "*Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*" (Luke 21:24).

Lesson Two

The Struggle Over Israel

The struggle and unrest in the land of Israel in these modern days is nothing new to that region. It is, rather, a continuation of the strife that for centuries has characterized that particular portion of the globe. Many wars have been waged, and much blood has been shed as the armies of succeeding generations have battled again and again for possession of the same parched, barren and bleak area.

The conflict started in Abraham's day, when his two famous sons; Ishmael, the eldest son born of an Egyptian slave woman and Isaac, the youngest son, born of Sarah (Genesis 21:8). For centuries, Ishmael dwelt in the land, then, in 1948, Isaac arrived. The clash between them brings the fear of a full-scale war, involving the whole world.

Not only are the nations of earth interested in the Middle East, but that part of the world has always had – and continues to have – a very unique position in God's program and purpose. This area is the cradle of human civilization. Adam and Eve were placed by God in the Garden of Eden located near the Euphrates Rivers (Genesis 2:14).

The nation of Egypt was in world-power in the days of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and boasted of a longer line of kings than any other nation in the history of mankind. Egypt was considered the granary of the world. Egypt was eminent in science, a nation of luxury and magnificence. Egypt led all of civilization in her progress. Like the pyramids, she defied time, or the forces of nature, to change her.

God prophesies in the 29th and 30th chapters of Ezekiel concerning Egypt, and in 29:14 He says that Egypt would never *“be completely destroyed, or utterly extinction but that she would become the bases (weakest) of all the kingdoms of the world and ruled by strangers.”* Centuries passed after Ezekiel prophesied these words, however, the time came when Egypt fell. Egypt would do just as God said. No nation will ever change God's Word. One historian writes, *“One of the greatest calamities of all the world happened when Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians in 571 B.C. The invaders burned Egypt's world-famous library, which supplied fuel for six months.”* Since that time, Egypt has been ruled by eight different nations, just as God had predicted.

The writing of the prophets of old read like today's newspaper!

I will speak of Egypt in Bible prophecy in a later lesson, but, now back to Israel.

Israel is a natural corridor between the north as an outlet for trade with the southern countries. Israel is a bridge between three continents – (Europe, Asia and Africa). – And nations, seeking to control the world, needs the resources of untapped and undeveloped wealth, which lie in Israel, making her the most strategic and desired piece of real estate in the entire world.

Presently, it would seem that Russia's policy is to let others do the fronting of conflict while she merely stirs up trouble, letting others do the fighting, planning to swoop in at the end and reap the harvest.

It was to Canaan that God called Abraham when He commanded him to leave his father's house. Genesis 12:1-3 tells us, *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”*

Although the land of Canaan was not specifically named by God in this promise, Abraham knew this was where the Lord wanted him to go for verse 5 declares that, *“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered,*

*and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and **they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.***”

It was to the descendants of Abraham that God gave the entire land from the River Nile in Egypt northward to the River Euphrates and bounded by the Mediterranean Sea. This is an area of some 250,00 square miles. It includes most of the Sinai Peninsula, Edom, Transjordan, Negev, Syria, and in general the areas occupied by the Arabian nations.

We read in Genesis 15:18, *“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”*

This is the only area upon earth thus given by God to a certain people long before they actually became a nation.

In addition to this the Lord specified which one of Abraham’s sons would be the heir of this portion of land. *“And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; **for in Isaac shall thy seed be called**”* (Genesis 21:12).

The descendants of Abraham through Isaac are the rightful owners of the entire land of Canaan.

We also find that God gave this land to Abraham’s seed without any strings attached. The unconditional nature of this gift is clearly declared in Genesis 17:7-8, where the Lord said,

*“And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, **for an everlasting possession;** and I will be their God.”*

When the Lord, some 400 years after Abraham, gave Israel its constitution at Mt. Sinai, He predicted that the people would disobey Him, and that they would be driven out of Canaan and scattered among the nation. Verses 32-33 of Leviticus 26 record God’s word concerning this. He said,

“And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.”

History stands as proof of the literal fulfillment of this prophecy. In 721 B.C. the northern ten tribes were carried away into captivity by Assyria. About 140 years later in 586 B.C. the southern two tribes were taken into Babylon. Seventy years later a handful of about 40,000 returned to the land of Israel under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, but all the rest were scattered to the four corners of the earth. In 70 A.D. under Titus the Roman, Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and the remnant dispersed among the nations. Bible Prophecy has a great deal

to say about other countries, but only of Canaan do we find such a complete and entire history so minutely foretold.

It was in Canaan that Jesus Christ was born, lived, died and rose from the grave. It was from this land that the teaching of the Gospel went out to all the earth.

The glorious message of redemption, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, had its beginning in this area of the world.

The significance of the land of Palestine did not end, however, with the ascension of Jesus Christ, nor even with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. God is not finished with the Jewish nation, nor with the land that He gave them to fully possess. One of the greatest miracles of all ages has been the preservation of the Jews in fulfillment of God's promise found in Leviticus 26:44-46, "*And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD. These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.*"

Today, after centuries of catastrophic judgments, there are many times more Jews than there were in the most splendid days of David and Solomon. This is amazing when we consider that one million, one hundred thousand, Jews were killed by Titus in 70 A.D., and that for 1800 years the Jews were homeless and bitterly persecuted. In addition to this, our own generation has witnessed the brutal massacre of some six million of them under Hitler. The fact that there are Jews today is a miracle in itself. Other peoples living under such extreme circumstances would long ago have lost their identity. Their very existence in the state of Israel today makes this a double miracle that is absolutely without parallel among the nations. The words of God in Isaiah 66:22 have been fulfilled. Listen to them.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain."

In the light of the prophetic Scriptures, the presence of the Jews in the land of Israel today is of tremendous significance, even though they have returned to the land in unbelief. According to Ezekiel 36:24-28, it is after the return of a remnant that the nation of Israel will be converted to Jesus Christ, and begin to live for God's glory. Here are the Lord's own words as recorded in Ezekiel 36 and directed to God's chosen people,

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God"

(Ezekiel 36:24-28).

Moreover, in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14, the bones are brought together and are clothed with flesh ***before*** they receive the breath of life. The regathering of Israel in unbelief, then, is a necessary condition for the complete fulfillment of prophecy.

The land of Palestine also holds a unique place in God's program since it is here that the final overthrow of the armies of Russia will take place. Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, give a vivid description of its supernatural and crushing defeat. That this passage of Scripture deals with Russia is clear both from linguistic considerations and from the geographical location of that country as the great power directly to the north of land of Israel. When Israel shall be dwelling in peace and safety, feeling completely secure, then Russia will come down upon the land, The prophet Ezekiel records God's prediction of that day when these words,

“And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land...And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes” (Ezekiel 38:11-12 and 16).

The rest of this 38th chapter of Ezekiel and a large portion of chapter 39 describe the defeat of these armies from the north. Ezekiel places the fulfillment of this prophecy in “*the latter years*” and “*the later days*” (38:8 and 16). The time is further specified as coming before the final regathering and conversion of Israel (Ezekiel 39:22-29).

Another reason God is vitally interested in the land of Israel is that this area will play an important part in the career of the Antichrist, the coming political world ruler. In Daniel 9:27, we are told that this dictator will make a seven-year pact with those Jews who are in the land of Israel at the time of his accession to power. In the middle of this seven-year period he will deliberately break this treaty and inaugurate an intense persecution of the Jewish people that will precipitate the most dreadful time in their troubled history. Here is the exact account as given in Daniel 9:27,

“And he (the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many [of Israel] for one week [Israel counts seven years as ‘a week.’] and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

The Battle of Armageddon, in which the Antichrist meets his final defeat, will also be fought in the land of Canaan. This battle is described in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19.

When Jesus Christ return to earth “*in power and great glory*” to destroy Israel’s enemies and to establish His earthly Kingdom, it is upon the Mount of Olives that he feet will stand (Zechariah 4:14). He will then bring peace, justice and prosperity to this weary world.

The city from which the Lord will rule will be Jerusalem, Isaiah tells us,

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:3-4).

The land of Canaan, its capital city, Jerusalem, and the nation of Israel are indeed precious in God’s sight. In fact, the Lord has given both a promise and a warning in relation to Israel. God said,

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
(Genesis 12:3).

The prophet Zechariah, declaring God’s love for the historic people of Israel and their beloved city of Jerusalem, said, “*Whoever touches you touches the apple of His (God’s) eye.*”

Godly people the world over should “*pray for the peace of Jerusalem*” (Psalm 122:6). When we do so, we are in reality praying for our Lord’s return since Jerusalem and the world will never experience true peace until Jesus Christ returns again as Prince of peace.

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

Lesson Three

The Rightful Heirs of the Land of Israel

The descendants Abraham were given the land of Canaan in a free, unconditional and unchangeable grant from God. This can be very clearly seen in verses 7 and 8 of Genesis 17, where God declares,

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Not all of Abraham's offspring have a right to this promised land, however, since the Lord specifically identified the son through whom this promise would be realized. God said to Abraham in Genesis 21:12, "...in **ISAAC** shall they seed be called."

The rightful possessors of the land then are only those descendants of Abraham through Isaac, and these people are known to us today as Jews, or Israelites.

The unmistakable condition laid down by God Himself that, "...in Isaac shall thy seed be called," rules out the Arab nations as legitimate claimants to the land. Although the lineage of some of them can be traced to Abraham, it goes back not through Isaac, but rather through Ishmael. It was Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar, who became the father of the Bedouins, the wandering nomadic tribes of the Middle East. Isaac, on the other hand, was the progenitor of the Jewish people also called Israelites. It was to them, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that God gave the title deed to the land of Israel – also called "*Palestine*."

The history of the Israelites is such that some dispute the identity of the Jews as the true Israel and relegate their promises and rights to others. You will recall that by a series of providential circumstances, including the sale of Joseph by his brethren into slavery, God arranged that the family of Jacob should spend 400 years in Egypt. Here they were able to live in isolation and become a great nation. When the time came for them to leave the land of Egypt, the Lord in His providence brought about conditions that made the people of Israel eager to leave. Through a series of supernatural judgments God secured their release and then miraculously guided them through forty years of wilderness wandering. He gave them His law, granted them entrance into Canaan, and helped them defeat their enemies.

However, Israel never fully obeyed God, and therefore did not enjoy the complete realization of His promises. Although He gave them a period of great blessing under the reign of David, and the power of the nation reached its zenith when Solomon was King, Solomon's luxurious living and expensive tastes placed a great burden of taxation upon the people. Under Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, the unrest led to a split into two separate kingdoms. The ten northern tribes who did not accept as king the descendants of David, soon fell into gross idolatry and vile pagan practices. The two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, retained the Davidic dynasty and the Divinely ordained Temple worship. Israel, (the 10 northern tribes) was conquered by Assyria in 721 B.C. and the most desirable people were taken captive into the various parts of the Assyrian empire. A similar fate befell Judah (the 2 southern tribes) at the hands of Babylon in 586 B.C. some 140 years after Israel's captivity began.

Because of all this division and dispersion, you may hear some Bible teachers claim that the ten tribes called "*Israel*" are the Anglo-Saxon people, and that the present-day Jews represent the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin only. These theorists tell you that the ten tribes, after being taken into captivity, migrated to England, and that England and the United States are not the true Israel. They falsely relate the promises that apply to the millennial kingdom age to present-day England and the United States.

This whole system of thought leads to utter confusion and is hardly worthy of consideration. A few historical and Scriptural facts will prove this position to be untenable. There is nothing that indicates that the ten tribes were ever really lost. When they were taken into captivity in 721 B.C., the depopulation of Canaan was by no means complete. Many of the remaining inhabitants joined with Judah at that time. Furthermore, when the two tribes were

taken into captivity 140 years later, they went to the very same area when the ten tribes had been carried. Ezekiel was taken captive under Nebuchadnezzar just ten years before the complete conquest of Judah. But the River Chebar in the district of Gozan, he was in one of the very points where the people of the ten tribes had settled (Ezekiel 1:1). After 70 years some of the Jews return to Palestine, and they were recognized as representing the *twelve* tribes. In Ezra 6:17, we read that the children of Israel,

*“For the dedication of this house of God...**for all Israel, twelve** male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel.”*

The history of Israel and Judah after the captivity is no longer the story of two distinct national groups – some from all **TWELVE** tribes returned to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah. With the accession to power of Alexander the Great, many Jews settled in what is now known as Palestine, and also in colonies – in Asia Minor – Cyprus, – Crete – on the coast and island of the Aegean Sea – in Macedonia – and other parts of southern Europe – even in Egypt – and the northern coast of Africa – while some even made their way eastward as far as India and China. Wherever they went they established synagogues where they met weekly for the reading of the Old Testament Scriptures. When the celebration of the great Jewish feasts were held, millions of Jews crowded into Jerusalem. All those whose religious faith was connected with Moses, and who still looked to Jerusalem as the Holy City, were considered Jews. They represented all twelve tribes. Therefore, when James wrote to Jewish Christians of the dispersion, he addressed them as follows:

*“...to the **TWELVE** tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings.”*

Occasionally you may hear something said about the Stone of Scone, the stone under the coronation throne in Westminster Abbey where the Kings and Queens of England are crowned. Legend has it that this stone, which once resided in the famous Abbey of Scone, a village of Scotland, is the stone Jacob used for a pillow when he fled from his brother Esau. Scientists who have analyzed the stone and found it to be definitely of Scottish origin have proved this legend used to substantiate the Anglo-Israel theory, to be a ridiculous legend and completely untrue.

The assertion that England and the United States are now the true Israel is without a semblance of truth. It has no foundation either in Scripture or secular history. **The Jewish people are Israel!** There are many who hate them, and who, therefore, resent the glorious destiny the Bible portrays for them. We certainly do not contend that the Israelites are right in everything they do. On the other hand, we know that much of the hatred for, and propaganda against, the Jew is Satanically inspired.

Every Christian owes a great debt to the Jews, for “...they have been entrusted with the very words of God” (Romans 3:2).

Furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and therefore was a Jew. He lived His life in obedience to the Law, and presented Himself to the Jews as their Messiah. The Jewish people, miraculously preserved by God through over 2000 years of dispersion and persecution, will one day realize their glorious destiny.

Today millions of Jews are living in Palestine and, to a great extent are reviving many of their distinctive historic features and customs. However, the religious faith of the vast majority is

neither true Judaism, nor Christianity. Only a few are *orthodox* Jews, who seriously live that the nation should live under the Mosaic Law in genuine expectation of the promised Messiah. Most of them hold to a modified and liberalized Judaism, and some are atheists. We thank God for what he is doing among the Jewish people, however, percentage wise, very few accept Jesus Christ as their true Messiah or look for God literally to fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures sometime in the future. However, they still look upon the land of Israel (“*Palestine*”) as the country of great promise for them.

The present condition of Israel was depicted by one of the prophets over twenty-five hundred years ago. Hosea’s wife, Gomer, had been unfaithful to him – she left him and lived wickedly, falling so low that she was offered for sale at a slave market. Hosea goes to the slave market, purchases her, and brings her back to his home. He told her that she would no longer be able to consort with her former lovers, and that she would abide in his home for many days, but not as his wife. She would be free from her former sinful companions, but would not be in true marital union with him (Hosea). By application of this principle to Israel, God inspired Hosea to say,

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim” [an image to consult for guidance] (Hosea 3:4 – King James Version)

“It will also be a long time before Israel has a king or before sacrifices are offered at the Temple or before there is any way to get guidance from God” (Hosea 3:4 – Contemporary Version).

From the year 70 A.D. onward this has been true. The Jewish people have been without a king or a prince. They had had no united sacrificial system, but they have also been free from the superstitious relics of heathenism as represented by the image, ephod, and teraphim. They have not continued in their own ancient faith, but neither have they embraced the false religious systems of others.

Remember, it is not until Israel, as a nation, accepts Jesus Christ as their true Messiah, will this world see universal prosperity, economic justice, political righteousness and international peace. Before Israel turns to Jesus Christ, it will pass through a period of persecution and suffering beyond anything yet experienced. The Bible has a great deal to say about this dreadful time. From the human standpoint it will be most unpleasant, but out of it will issue a nation that has turned to God. Daniel and Zechariah agree on this. We read in Daniel 12:1,

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

And Zechariah writes, *“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is*

tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God” (Zechariah 13:8-9)

Israel’s restoration to God’s favor will be the means by which they will become indeed a great blessing to all the earth. Even Egypt and Assyria and the other nations that now hate Israel so bitterly will share in the blessing if God – Isaiah 19:23-25 declares,

“In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”

When the Jews turn to God, they will have undisputed possession of the whole land of Canaan, and all the earth will share in the blessings of the coming golden age.

Lesson Four

Daniel’s 70th Week

One of the key passage to a proper understanding of Bible prophecy and the future of Israel is found in the 9th chapter of Daniel. A correct interpretation of this portion of God’s Word is a key that will unlock many other prophetic pronouncements.

Let’s look at Daniel 9:24-27:

Daniel 9:24, *“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (25) Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. (26) And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”*

This is a mysterious and perplexing sounding passage of Scripture, especially to those who have not made a study of it previously. However, if we keep a few things in mind, it isn’t as difficult to interpret as it at first appears.

Notice first that the predictions in these verses concerning the Jews and the city of Jerusalem. God reveals to Daniel *“Seventy week (literally, ‘Seventy sevens’) are decreed for YOUR PEOPLE and YOUR HOLY CITY”* – [in order to accomplish six things]: “(1) to finish

the transgression – (2) to put an end to sin – (3) to atone for wickedness – (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness – (5) to seal up the vision and prophecy – and – (6) to anoint the most holy.”

Since Daniel was a Jew, and the Jew’s holy city was Jerusalem, we must of necessity apply that which follows to *Israel*. This does not have reference to the Church.

Keeping in mind that these predictions concern *Israel*, let’s analyze the significance and the real meaning of some of the key phrases in verse 24. Note that they all point forward to some wonderful blessings awaiting God’s chosen people. There are six statements in this verse that foretell some of the glory awaiting them.

The King James translation states, “seventy WEEKS,” however, there is universal agreement that the Hebrew word translated “weeks” (or “sevens” in some translations) in verse 24 actually means “SEVEN YEARS.” The Hebrews reckoned 7 years as “a week,” as well as 7 days. Daniel’s seventy weeks – or 70 7’s – would add up to 490 years. According to this it will be after a period of 490 years of God’s special dealings with the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem that the six-fold blessings enumerated in verse 24 will become a reality.

1. First, we need to understand that the declaration that “Seventy ‘WEEKS’ [70 7’s – or – 490 years] are decreed...to finish the transgression.” This means precisely what it says in our English versions. The Hebrew word “kala” that is translated as, “finish” means “to complete.” For that reason it would be erroneous to render this phrase, “to atone for transgressions,” as some render it. Daniel had been confessing the sins of Israel, and is assured by God that the time will come when they will no longer live in disobedience to Him
2. The phrase “to make an end of sin,” declares that sin will be brought under complete control. In Job 37:7 this Hebrew word translated “make an end of,” found here in Daniel 9:24, is rendered as “He (God) seals up.” Here in Daniel 9:24 it refers to the fact that sin will be brought under full restraint by Christ’s Divine government.
3. The expression, “to make reconciliation for iniquity,” refers to the effective realization of the reconciliation the Lord Jesus wrought at Calvary. This will take place when Israel, as a nation, turns to Jesus Christ in faith.
4. “To bring in everlasting righteousness,” also expresses a promise that awaits Israel’s conversion and will be experienced under the righteous rule of the Messiah.
5. The assertion that “seventy sevens are determined to seal up the vision and prophecy,” obviously points to something still future. Many of the prophetic announcements are yet unfulfilled, but their absolute authenticity will be established when Christ returns in power and great glory.
6. “To anoint the most Holy,” definitely refers to the Holy of Holies in a reconstructed Temple. The Jews will have a new Temple that God will anoint and acknowledge at the beginning of the millennial Age, as He did the Tabernacle, and also the Temple built by Solomon.

All of these things were promised by God through Daniel to Israel and are yet future, for He declared that they would follow the period of “seventy sevens” – or 490 years!

Let’s continue studying in verses 25 and 26:

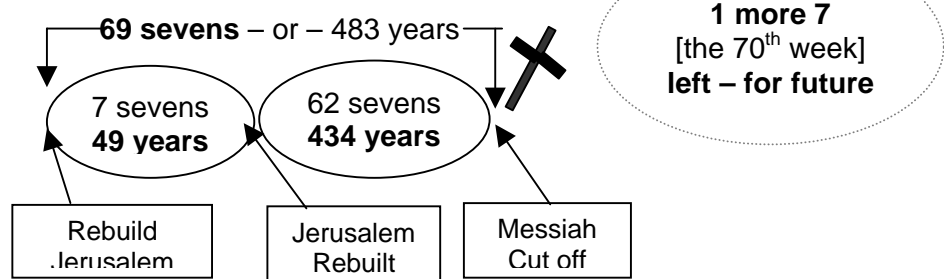
*“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be **seven weeks**, and **threescore and two weeks**: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself...”*

Or, as the Living Bible translates verse 25 and 26 as:

“Now listen! It will be 49 years plus 434 years from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One comes! Jerusalem's streets and walls will be rebuilt despite the perilous times.” ²⁶ "After this period of 434 years, the Anointed One will be killed, his kingdom still unrealized . . .

Notice that Daniel prophesies that there will be, first, seven sevens (or 49 years) followed by 62 sevens (or, another 44 years) – from the date of the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the appearance of the Messiah there would be a span of 69 “sevens” – or 483 years.

Looking at it as a graph, it might look something like this:



Scholars are not completely agreed concerning which decree begins the time measurement here indicated. Some follow Sir Robert Anderson who calculated that from the time of the issuance of Artaxerxes’ decree in 44 B.C. to the day of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem amounts to the exact 483 prophetic years. A “prophetic” year consists of 360 days (and 483 such years would total 173,880 days). Others contend that we cannot be completely certain about some of these dates, and believe instead that the reckoning should begin with the return of Ezra to Jerusalem in 458 B.C. Using standard chronological years, 483 years from that point, would bring us to the beginning of Christ’s ministry at His baptism – about 26 A.D. In either case we have a striking fulfillment of prophecy as the Messiah appeared on schedule. If we had all the facts and could construct a completely accurate chronology, we could pinpoint the exact date foreseen by the prophet Daniel, and the coming of the Lord, when he came to earth to die, would perfectly coincided with it.

Verse 26 tells us what will happen *after* the 69 sevens, or 483 years, and *before* the beginning of the last week – the 70th – of this prophetic period described by Daniel for “his people” – the Jewish nation. Here Daniel clearly portrays the crucifixion of Jesus Christ – “Messiah shall be cut off.”

However, verse 26 continues, “...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

Living Bible – “*and a king will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple. They will be overwhelmed as with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed from that time to the very end.*”

Not only is Christ’s crucifixion – (“*Messiah would be cut off*”) – is described by Daniel in this prophecy of verse 26, which he declares will take place *after* the 69 sevens of years (or, 483 years), but he also clearly describes the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. – (“*the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.*”)

Verse 26 clearly predicts our Lord’s crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem after the 69th “*seven of years*” (or, 483 years) – but before the 70th seven of years – (or, 7 years).

It is important to note that, after Messiah is cut off, the phrase, “ <i>and the people of the prince,</i> ” a small “ <u>p</u> ” used for the word “ <i>prince,</i> ” and not a capital “ <u>P</u> ” – whereas “ <i>Messiah,</i> ” is capitalized – “ <i>Messiah, the <u>P</u>Prince</i> ” is capitalized in verse 25.

The New International Version uses the term “*ruler*” in verse 26, but it is all the same thought.

The reason a small letter “*p*” for “*prince*” in verse 27 is because it does not refer to Christ, but to the Antichrist, whereas, in verse 25, when “*Prince*” is used, it is capitalized, because it refers to Jesus Christ our Lord.

“*...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined*” vs.26.

There is a “*gap*” that exists between the 69th and the 70th “*seven of sevens!*” Some who do not accept the premillennial view of the return of Christ have accused us of importing this “*gap*” to bolster our position. However, both the declaration here in verse 26 – and history itself – makes it obvious that the 70th “*seven of years*” (week) does not directly follow the 69th week. There was a “*break*” in God’s dealings with Israel at the time of Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection and the Day of Pentecost, with the commencement of the Church Age. God’s time clock, that had been ticking off the 69 “*seven of years*” of Daniel’s prophecy, stopped, and will not commence again until the Lord takes the Church out of the world.

We must keep in mind that this prophecy of Daniel deals with “*his people*” (the Jewish people) and “*his city*” (Jerusalem), Daniel 9:24, and the events predicted have to do with Israel.

Note, too, that verse 26 refers to, “*the PEOPLE of the prince [the antichrist] that shall come to destroy the city and the sanctuary.*” The “*people of the prince,*” the armies of the Roman Empire, did come, in 70 A.D., and destroy Jerusalem. Titus and his armies swept down upon the land of Israel and destroyed the city and the sanctuary, and drove the children of Israel into all the lands of the world – fulfilling this prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and its Temple, bringing the desolation prophesied in Daniel 9:26, all, exactly as God said would happen, and on God’s time table.

It is any wonder that Jesus, a few days before He was crucified, recalling the words of Daniel prophesying of this terrible coming catastrophe, wept, as He said, *“The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you in the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you”* (Luke 19:43-44).

The “gap,” or parentheses, between the 69th seven of years and the 70th seven of years, is this present Church Age – held a “mystery” in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:3-6). Romans, chapter 9, 10 and 11, makes it clear that God, for this period of time (over 2000 years now), has “set aside” Israel and is dealing with all mankind through His Church, the Body of Christ on the earth today.

Now, looking at verse 27 we see some very precise statements concerning Israel’s future during the 70th “seven of years,” (or, week) when God’s plan and purposes for the nation of Israel will be rendered in a very specific way. Daniel says that . . .

“And he [the antichrist, introduced in verse 26] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27 – King James).

The Living Bible renders it as, *“This king will make a seven-year treaty with the people, but after half that time, he will break his pledge and stop the Jews from all their sacrifices and their offerings; then, as a climax to all his terrible deeds, the Enemy shall utterly defile the sanctuary of God. But in God’s time and plan, his judgment will be poured out upon this Evil One.”*

The “he” in this verse, 27, refers back to the coming prince, the one whose people (the Romans) destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. He will make a seven-year pact with Israel – [Remember that this prophecy has to do with Daniel’s people, the Jews, and his holy city, Jerusalem] – The Jews, at least a representative group of them, will be in the land of Israel (or, Palestine), and they will feel secure in this agreement with the wicked prince, who is the Antichrist. He will honor his contract for three and one-half years. During that time the Jews will build a Temple, and they will set up some form of worship. Suddenly, however, this world dictator will turn against them, and in the wing of their Temple he will erect an image that he will insist they must worship. Daniel predicted this when he said in this verse, 27,

“In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the Temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

The final words found in this verse, *“for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate,”* are clearly related to a prophecy that Jesus Himself made concerning this abomination of desolation. Jesus says in Matthew 24:15-16, *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.”*

Other Scripture passages, including 2 Thessalonians 2:4,

“Who opposes and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

and Revelation 13:14-18,

“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”

. . . indicate that an image will be erected by the coming Antichrist, and that refusal to worship this idol will trigger a period of dreadful persecution, primarily for the Jews, but for all the other inhabitants of the earth as well.

Let’s look briefly at the 11th chapter of Daniel that tells us that Egypt and Syria are also involved in a very special way in God’s prophetic program. In addition to a preview of Israel’s history from the time of their subjugation by Persia onward, we see in Daniel 11 the rise of Alexander the Great – the division of his kingdom at his death – the appearance of Antiochus Epiphanes and his cruel persecution – and – the Maccabean revolt. Many other historic details are foretold with astounding accuracy. All these things prophesied in the first 35 verses have been literally fulfilled.

Verses 36 through 44, however, point to the future. Almost all Bible commentators, regardless of the position they take concerning the antichrist and the return of Jesus Christ, agree that these predictions have never yet been fulfilled. Beginning with verse 40 it reads,

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. ⁴¹ He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. ⁴² He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

(Daniel 11:40-

43).

There are three powerful characters in this picture: the king of the south; the king of the north and the king who is introduced in verse 36 as the one who “will do according to his will” – the Antichrist. “*The king of the south,*” in the Bible is always Egypt – and, “*the king of the north,*” is Syria – probably in a confederacy with the other Arab nations. They will unite in their opposition to the Antichrist, but he will be victorious. The Antichrist will then pass through Israel (Palestine), permitting some countries to escape his vengeance, but plundering Egypt along with Libya and Ethiopia.

Now hear what Daniel says as he continues in verses 44-45 and predicts what is to follow:

“But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him”

While the Antichrist is engaged in securing his victory over the rebels in the Middle East, he will receive news from the east and the north that will trouble him. He will come up through Israel (Palestine) with a fury and a rage that will lead him to destroy and exterminate many in that land. He will build a palace on the Mount of Olives from which a person would be able to see both from the Mediterranean and from the Dead Sea. This will be done in a blasphemous attempt to insult the true God, the very one to whom many of the Jews will have turned.

Here in the Holy Land, however, the Antichrist will meet with disaster. The Lord Himself will bring about his overwhelming defeat.

Further details concerning the final doom of the antichrist in Israel are given in Zechariah 14. Jerome, writing in the 4th century, declared, “*No one shall be able to assist the Antichrist as the Lord vents His fury upon him...Antichrist is going to perish in that spot from which our Lord ascended to heaven.*”

Yes, the day is coming when Israel, Egypt and the Arab nations will have a common enemy. This man, the Antichrist, will cause them great suffering as he unwittingly becomes God’s chastening rod. When God’s purpose has been accomplished through him, however, the Lord will destroy him utterly.

What a comfort it is to know that although the world scene darkens and sin runs rampant on every hand, the day is coming when “*the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*” (Habakkuk 2:14).

The things which are transpiring before our eyes today should alert us to the lateness of the hour, the nearness of our Lord’s return. “*When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*” (Luke 21:28).

Lesson Five

Israel and Moses' Prophecy

The book of Deuteronomy is both a moving personal document and a striking prophecy. Moses, knowing that he would soon die, reiterated God's covenant with Israel and also face the new generation that was to enter Canaan with the demand that they pledge their loyalty to Joshua, his divinely appointed successor. He pronounced glorious blessing upon them for obedience, and dire curses for disobedience. In addition to this, he gave a detailed picture of Israel's future that is amazing in its accuracy.

Moses predicted that the Israelites would not obey God and that they would be removed from their land, scattered among the nations and delivered to their enemies who would bitterly persecute them. Listen to Moses as he declares in Deuteronomy 28:63-67,

“And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to naught; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.”

This is indeed one of the most amazing prophecies in the entire Word of God, and all of it has been accomplished to the letter.

Moses also foretold that day when the nation of Israel would return to the land of Canaan. He said in Deuteronomy 30, verses 1 through 3 and verse 6,

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee...And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

Comparing this prediction with that of Ezekiel 36:24-28, and the prophet's vision of the dry bones in chapter 37, it appears that although a remnant will return to the land of Israel in unbelief, the complete regathering of the Israelites and their permanent establishment in the land will not be realized until they have genuinely repented and returned to God.

Down through the centuries the Jewish people in general have ignored some of their own Scripture. Speaking of the messiah, Psalm 22 declared, *“they have pierced my hands and my feet”* (Psalm 22:16)

Concerning the coming Christ, Isaiah wrote, *“He was pierced for our transgression, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:5).

Zechariah 12:10 tells us that someday the remnant of Israel, that has survived the Tribulation, will see the Savior, recognize Him, and weep tears of repentance and gratitude. Here are the prophet’s own words,

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

At first sight, Old Testament passages such as this would seem to indicate that the return of the Messiah *causes* Israel to repent. Other verses, however, make it clear that it is through the fires of affliction that the remnant turns to God. Peter plainly told the Jews that the promised times of refreshing, the Millennial Age, will not come unto they turn to Christ. We hear Peter preaching in Acts 3, verses 19-20,

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.”

The New Scofield Reference Bible in the margin gives us the proper translation of these words. It renders these verses in this way, *“Repent...so that the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send...Jesus Christ.”* This is unquestionable the proper translation of the Greek text. We must therefore interpret the statements of the Old Testament in the light of this clear declaration. Israel’s conversion will precede the return of Christ when He returns **WITH** His saints to rule and reign in His glorious kingdom.

The Great Tribulation, that will follow the Rapture of the Church, will be the means of Israel’s conversion and this will precede the glorious second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. During the Tribulation, the world will experience its most grievous time in history. The opening of the fourth seal (Revelation 6:7-8), bring about the death of one-fourth of mankind. On the basis of our present population this means in the neighborhood of one h billion people will die through various judgments. The judgments of the sixth trumpet, (Revelation 9:13-21), destroys another one-third of those who survive the earlier plagues. Zechariah 13:9 tells us that only one-third of the Jews will survive this period of Great Tribulation.

The brighter side of the picture can be seen in chapter 7 of Revelation. God seals 144,000 Jews who apparently turn to Him in genuine faith early in the Tribulation, and they become His *“witnesses”* – or *“preachers”* during the Tribulation. God supernaturally protects them, and they boldly proclaim His message. As a result of their ministry, *“a great multitude from every nation, kindred and tongue are saved”* (Revelation 7:9), many of whom will die in that day of trouble

(Revelation 7:14). God, however, will preserve a remnant of saved Jews who will enter the millennium. The 144,000, who are sealed in Revelation 7, are still intact when we see them in Revelation 14. These, together with those who have responded to their message, are the nucleus of a godly remnant who will welcome our Lord when He returns to reign.

The Israelites who survive the Great Tribulation without turning to Christ, who have worshiped the Antichrist and his image (Revelation 13:8), will be purged out and will not enter the kingdom age. Ezekiel 20:34 and 38 declares,

“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out...And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

Thus only a relatively small percentage of the Israelites who go into the Tribulation will live through it to enter the Millennium. Only those who have been truly born again through faith in Christ will enter that glorious kingdom age.

The government that the Lord Jesus will establish upon the earth will have its center in Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:3-4 prophesied of that day with these words,

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Moreover, restored Israel will inherit the land God gave to Abraham and his seed for an **everlasting** possession. Ezekiel declared, in chapter 36, verses 33 and 36,

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded...Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.”

In Zechariah 14 we have a very graphic description of the tremendous topographical changes that will take place in the land of Israel when the Lord descends to the Mount of Olives. The prophet pictures the armies of the nations converging upon Jerusalem for battle. Just when all appears very dark for the city of Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus returns, His feet standing upon the Mount of Olives. The armies of the enemy nations are destroyed as described in verses 12 through 15. A great earthquake brings about a radical transformation of the entire land. The mountains that now surround Jerusalem will be flattened into a plain, and the Jerusalem will be elevated above the rest of the terrain. The city that is now nestled between the mountains will be

situated on a high hill, and from it will flow living water into both the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. This supernatural water supply will break forth from the ground in Jerusalem, and become a great stream. Zechariah predicted that,

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south...And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be...All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” (Zechariah 14:10-11).

Even Egypt and Assyria, bitter enemies of Israel down through the ages, will have a part in the blessing of this glorious age. Isaiah 19:22-25 contains a wonderful message of hope for all the people of the Middle East. Listen to this prophecy:

“And the LORD shall smite Egypt: He shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and He shall be intreated of them [respond to their pleas] and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance” (Isaiah 19:22-25).

The Bible expressly declares that Egypt will someday turn to God, and along with Assyria and Israel, enjoy great prosperity in the Millennial Kingdom. Inasmuch as Assyria does not exist by that name today many commentators agree that it has reference to Syria and her neighboring powers. Though Israel is mentioned “*third*” in verse 24, this does not mean the third in power or rank. The priority of Israel is still indicated in that Israel is called “*God’s inheritance.*” Peace will come to the troubled Middle East. The Arab nations and Israel, along with Egypt will live together in beautiful harmony. God will call Egypt “*His people,*” and the land will know blessedness beyond anything it has yet experienced.

That which God has in mind for Egypt and Assyria will be shared by all other nations. All the earth will participate in the benefits of the reign of Jesus Christ. Looking forward to this day of universal blessing, the Psalmist said,

“Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge

the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth” (Psalms 96:10-13).

Those wonderful prophetic truths are thrilling to those who know Jesus Christ, but are without blessing to you if you are unsaved. The frightening prospect of a dreadful Tribulation period and an eternal Hell looms before you. To you I extend an invitation to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. He died for you and, if you believe on Him, God will forgive your sin, adopt you into His family, and give you eternal life.

Why not bow your head in prayer and settle this matter of your soul’s salvation? Here is a suggested word of prayer that you might offer,

“Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and could never save myself. I believe that You did die for me and shed Your blood for my sin, and that You did rise again from the dead. And now I am receiving You as my Savior, my Lord, my only hope of salvation. Lord, be merciful to me a sinner, and save me according to the promise of Your Word. Amen!”

If you prayed this and really meant it, you are saved. The Bible says, *“Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Romans 10:13).

Lesson Six

Why Such Hostility between the Arab and the Jew?

The hostility between the Arab and the Jew is not something unique in our generation, but is a conflict that has been going on since the birth of Ishmael, Abraham’s eldest son, born of an Egyptian slave woman – and Isaac, Abraham’s youngest son, born of Sarah.

“And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac” (Genesis 21:8-10).

Genesis 17:19-21 gives us the details, *“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”*

And, Scripture reveals that this clash between Isaac’s and Ishmael’s seed will eventually bring on a full scale war, involving the whole world.

Egypt was the world power in the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and boasted she had the longest line of kings than any other nation. Egypt’s granaries were full, containing more

than any other nation in the world. She was extremely eminent in all of the sciences. She was a nation of extreme luxury. She had all civilization in progress and development. Like her pyramids, she seem to defy time or, even, forces of nature, to change her.

However, God says of Egypt in the 29th chapter of Ezekiel, that even though Egypt would not be utterly extinct, she would be “*a desolate and waste ‘base’ [weak] nation,*” ruled by the hand of strangers. Centuries passed after Ezekiel prophesied these words, however, the time came, in 571 B.C., when Egypt fell. History states of Egypt’s fall, “*One of the greatest calamities of all the world happened as invaders burned Egypt’s world famous library, supplying fuel for six months.*” Since that time, Egypt has been ruled by eight different nations, exactly as God had prophesied in His Word.

The writings of the prophets of the Old Testament certainly reads like history prewritten.

God’s prophet, Ezekiel, prophesied that Egypt would say of the river Nile,, “*my river is my own*” (Ezekiel 29:3), speaking of Egypt’s laying false claim to international waters for all nations, and denying its use, especially to Israel.

Yet, Egypt will come to know the Lord, “*And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance*” (Isaiah 19:22-25).

Another essential fact is the study of “Israel in Bible Prophecy” is Russia’s conflict with Israel –

I deal with this whole subject in another Bible study, however, to keep our present study in perspective, I will give the main Scriptures on this subject.
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Ezekiel 38:14-16, “*Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? ¹⁵ And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.*” (Verses 18-23), “*And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an*

overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am.” (39:4, 11) *“Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured...And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamongog.”*

May I suggest that God here describes the scene as something akin to a checker game, with the opponents faced with a decisive, final move? A wrong move by either one, could well mean the game. Russia has been brought into the Mediterranean theater, making it a “*tender-box*” ready to explode into World War III. One news commentator states, “When Russia has used the Arab nationalists for her own advantage, they will have about as much change as a naked man in a dark room with a grizzly bear.” Russia will find an opportunity to attack Israel and, thus, will fulfill Bible prophecy.

We must admit that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the many threads of Bible prophecy as they converge upon end-time events and to see them in their proper relationship to each other, however, there are some prophetic Scriptures that are clear. Note the following:

This battle between Russia and Israel is **not** the “*Battle of Armageddon*,” for the following reasons:

1. The allies who fight with Russia are mentioned here, while in the Battle of Armageddon, all nations will fight against Israel.
2. This battle in Ezekiel refer to the “*northern nations*,” while the Battle of Armageddon will involve the “*whole world*.”
3. The purpose of this battle described in Ezekiel is “*to take a spoil*,” while the Battle of Armageddon will be to destroy Israel.
4. In the battle of Ezekiel 38, certain nations protest Russia’s actions, while in the Battle of Armageddon all the nations of the world will attack Israel.
5. The leader of the battle of Ezekiel is “*Gog of the North country*,” while the leader of the Battle of Armageddon will be the Antichrist.
6. Russia and her allies will be overthrown by the convulsions of nature, while the Battle of Armageddon the armies will be overthrown by “*a sharp sword out of the mouth of the Lord*.”
7. The battle of Ezekiel 38 will be “*arrayed in the mountains of Israel*,” while the Battle of Armageddon will take place in the valley of Meggido.
8. In the battle of Ezekiel 38, God uses “*nations*” to defeat Russia, while in the Battle of Armageddon, God alone, fights against the armies of the Antichrist.

SCRIPTURE ESTABLIES THAT “*ALL NATIONS*” WILL GATHER AGAINST ISRAEL

Joel 3:2, *“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land.”*

Jeremiah 25:29-35, *“For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.”*

Revelation 16:14, *“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”* (Verse 16) *“And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”*

Zechariah 12:3, *“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”*

Note, that God predicts that Jerusalem will be the focal point of this world-wide struggle. It seems that, after the collapse of the “northern confederacy,” the Revived Roman Empire will be able to extend its authority over all the nations of the world.

Remember that Daniel 9:27 prophesies, *“He (the Antichrist) will confirm a covenant with many (Jews) for one ‘seven’ (7 years). In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offerings. And on a wing of the Temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”*

The Antichrist, the World Dictator, makes a covenant of peace with Israel for seven years however, when Israel refuses to worship the image of the Antichrist he breaks the covenant with them after three and one-half years and begins his terrible persecution of the Jews.

In one last furious, demon-inspired, effort, the Antichrist hurls his armies against Jerusalem, where the armed might of all the nations of the world gather in the plains of Megiddo for the Battle of Armageddon.

Joel 3:9-14 describes it by saying, *“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.”*

Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.”

Zechariah 14:2 prophecies, *“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken.”*

God will do a final work in segregating a “*godly remnant*” from the last apostate elements of the nation of Israel. And, after the destruction of many of the Jews in Israel, the remainder will be brought through the fire as pure gold, purified and prepared for leadership in Christ’s glorious kingdom that is about to be established.

Zechariah 13:8-9 describes it, *“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”*

John says in Revelation 19:11-18, *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”*

Lesson Seven

The Truth of Israel’s History

In my studies on Israel I came across some interesting facts that I was not aware of before. In fact, in all my associations with others discussing Israel’s past history and what Bible prophecy has to say about her future, many of these facts were either unfamiliar, or just never mentioned. However, to give a handle on “*Israel and Bible Prophecy*” I would like to share some of my findings here.

But, first I would like to review some Biblical concepts.

We have, in earlier lessons, discussed the unconditional covenants that God made with Israel, that are foundational for understanding Israel’s importance in the prophetic future. These

covenants with Israel govern our understanding of the Jewish people and form the backbone of Bible prophecy.

To recall where it all began, Genesis 12:1-3, which we have already considered previously, records God's call of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees (Babylon) and the specific promises He made to him. These promises were confirmed and clarified in later passages – (Genesis 13:14-17; 15:1-7 and 17:1-21). Additionally, they were reconfirmed to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:3-4) and grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15), specifying which line of Abraham would receive God's promise.

God promised Abraham that he would give the nation of Israel the land of Canaan as their "everlasting possession" (17:8) with its boundaries extending from the river of Egypt in the West to the Euphrates River in the East, and to the land of the Hittites in the North (Genesis 15:18-21). This is interesting in light of all the contemporary questions about ownership of the land of Israel today. Regardless of the political disputes, God has granted this title deed of the land of Israel to the Jewish people. Furthermore, this land promise was never fulfilled in its entirety. Since God always keeps His promises, it is certain that one day, in the Messianic Kingdom, Israel will dwell in all the land that God promised.

The national promises also gave Israel a unique position as God's barometer of blessing – those nations that would bless Israel would be blessed and those that cursed Israel would be cursed (Genesis 12:3; 27:29). This principle applied in the life of Abraham (Genesis 12:10-20; 14:12-20 and 26:1-11) and throughout the history of the Jewish people (Deuteronomy 30:7 and Isaiah 44:1-2). Significantly, this will be the principle that guides God's judgment of the Gentile nations when Jesus returns. In Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, which represent the judgment of the Gentiles, the nations will be divided on the basis of their treatment of Jesus' physical brethren, the Jewish people (Matthew 25:31-46).

That God retained Israel as His Chosen People is not only an Old Testament concept, the New Testament agrees with it as well. Paul writes that, despite Israel's disbelief in Jesus, God did not reject His people whom He foreknew (Romans 11:1-2). Moreover, Paul adds that although most Jewish people have rejected the good news of Jesus, the people of Israel remain God's beloved Chosen People "on account of the patriarchs" (Romans 11:28) – a clear reference to the Abrahamic Covenant. Paul categorically states that God's gifts and call to Israel are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

Remaining God's Chosen People does not mean that Jewish people have forgiveness and a personal relationship with God apart from faith in their Messiah Jesus. Jewish people, as all people, must trust in Jesus. Regardless, the Lord's words in Deuteronomy 14:2 remains as true as ever. "*Out of all the people on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you (Israel) to be His treasured possession.*" God did this not because of any merit found in the Jewish people. Rather, He chose them, as Moses wrote earlier in Deuteronomy 7:8, "*because the LORD loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers.*" Since God is faithful to His promises and loyal in His love, the Jewish people are still His Chosen People.

GOD IS ACTIVE TODAY PRESERVING AND PROTECTING THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, assures us that it will be impossible ever to destroy the Jewish people. In fact, in order to put an end to the Jewish people, it would be

necessary to stop the sun, moon, and stars from shining and also to measure all the heavens and the foundations of the earth. God declares that only if these impossible acts could be accomplished will “*the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before Me*” or “*will I reject all the descendents of Israel*” (Jeremiah 31:35-37). Plainly, the Lord will preserve His people. This is why the prophet Zechariah says of the people of Israel that whoever touches them “*touches the apple of His (God’s) eye*” (Zechariah 2:8).

Throughout history, there have been those who have sought Israel’s destruction – from Haman to Hitler – Saddam Hussein – Yesser Arafat – and Osama Bin Laden – but they have never succeeded – and – never will!

The preservation of the Jewish people, despite a history of hatred and persecution, has led historian Paul Johnson to call the Jews “*the most tenacious people in history.*” However, it is better to say that a tenacious God of history, who is faithful to His promises and relentless in preserving His people, protects the Jewish people. For this reason, no weapon formed against Israel will ever prevail (Isaiah 54:17).

Since the Jewish people’s exile around the world in 70 A.D – nearly two millennia ago – they have daily prayed that they would be restored to the land of Israel. The Hebrew prophets foretold a day when God would draw His people back to their promised land.

We now come to some facts of history many studying Bible Prophecy seem to be unaware of.

The restoration of Jewish people to their own land did not begin in May 14, 1948 with the establishment of Israel as a Jewish Nation.

There have always been some Jewish people (though they were few) who have, down through the centuries, lived in what came to be known as “*Palestine.*”

“*Palestine*” was a name given to the land of Israel by the Romans in 135 A.D. after the last Jewish revolt. They gave it this name in honor of the Philistines – the ancient foes of Israel – as an insult to the Jewish people. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Roman Emperor Hadrian, ordered a new city, called Aleia Capitolina, to be built on its site. The few Jewish people remaining in the land were not permitted to enter the city.

In the later part of the nineteenth century, Jewish groups arose in Eastern Europe, known as the “*Lovers of Zion.*” They believed that the only hope for Jewish people to survive in a world filled with anti-Jewish hatred. Their heart-felt desire was a return of Jewish people to the land of Israel.

As early as 1881 the first Jewish people began to return and build “*Eretz Yisreal*” (the land of Israel). This first immigration wave, known in Hebrew as an “*aliyah*” (literally “*ascent*”), was most difficult, therefore, it was not a large number, just a “*trickle*” of Jewish people who made their way back to their “*promised land*” – however, the “*return of Jewish people to their own land*” had begun as early as the 1800’s.

This move started with the birth of the “*Zionist movement*” in the 1800’s.

I'm well aware of the propaganda against "Zionist," disturbed by anti-Jewish establishments – and individuals – who blames Jews for the world's problems. However, Zionist were simply those who believed the Jewish people have a right to return to rebuild the land of Israel.

In 1894, Theodor Herzl, the "*Father of the State of Israel*," was a journalist, living in Vienna, capital of Austria, an assimilated Jew. He was covering the treason trial of the French Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus. It was apparent that Dreyfus was innocent but falsely accused solely because he was Jewish. Crowds roamed the streets of Paris, crying, "*Death to the Jews*." That this could occur in liberal France, the seat of Jewish emancipation and freedom, devastated and transformed Herzl. He wrote "*The Jewish State*" that called for the return of the Jewish people to their historic homeland as the only solution to anti-Semitism. Herzl formed the World Zionist Organization and convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. There he wrote in his journal, "*In Basel, I founded the Jewish state*." He anticipated that within fifty years there would be a revived Jewish state in what was then known as Palestine. This sparked a second wave of Jewish immigration from eastern Europe, included David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first prime minister) and Yitzchak Ben-Zvi (Israel's second president) to "*Eretz Yisarel*" (the land of Israel).

In 1909, Tel Aviv, the first Jewish city was founded and the first Kibbutz, a cooperative farm was established. The returning Jews *bought* land from the Arabs. At this time, Palestine, and much of the Middle East, was controlled by Turkey for about 500 years. However, at the end of the First World War Turkey lost control of the Middle East because she had sided with Germany.

Chaim Weizmann, born in Russia in 1874, received his education in biochemistry in Switzerland and Germany. He became active in the Zionist movement. In 1905 he moved to England, and was elected to the General Zionist Council. His scientific assistance to the Allied forces in World War I brought him into close contact with British leaders, enabling him to play a key role in the issuing of "*The Balfour Declaration*" on November 2, 1917 in which Britain committed itself to the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine.

After World War I the Balfour Declaration was accepted by the League of Nations, granting the British the mandate for Jewish people to return to Palestine. Many students of Bible prophecy saw the regathering as the beginnings of prophecy being fulfilled, including Arthur Balfour, foreign secretary for Britain, who issued "*The Balfour Declaration*," calling for a Jewish state.

In 1920, the League of Nations gave Britain a "*Mandate*," a commission authorizing them to administer Palestine according to the Balfour Declaration, to establish a homeland for Jews.

In 1922, Britain gave **77% of Palestine** (the area east of the Jordan river) **to the Arabs**. They created the nation of Jordan with a stroke of a pen.

In 1930, Britain drastically reduced the amount of land the Jews could buy in Palestine.

In 1939, Britain issued the “*infamous*” White Paper that first put strict limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine, and then *closed Jewish immigration*.

In 1945, at the close of World War II, ten of thousands of Jews who had somehow survived the gas chambers, pleaded to be allowed to go to Palestine – *but Britain refused to allow them in*.

Despite shifts in British policy, particularly during World War II, vast numbers of Jewish people returned to the land. In 1947 the United Nations partitioned Palestine between the Arab and the Jewish populations – allowing the Jews about 12% of the land promised them in the Balfour Declaration.

On May 14, 1948, the Jewish state was declared, with the end of the British mandate. The fledgling state was immediately attacked by all six the surrounding Arab nations. (The Jewish population was about 650,000 – including the women, children and elderly – they faced millions of Arabs. Britain told Ben-Gurion, “*Every Jew will be dead in 48 hours!*” However, against all odds Israel survived.

In 1967, Israel fought, and won, the dramatic Six-Day War – that saw the reunification of Jerusalem.

The history of the Jewish people is a testimony of the miraculous power of God. Only God could have preserved them in their “*scattered*” state throughout the whole world – and now to bring them back into their own land is nothing short of supernatural intervention. It is, indeed, almost unbelievable that for 2000 years Israel, broken into fragments and scattered to the four winds of the earth, yet, has remained as homogenous as any ace of people, living within the boundaries of their own country.