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The Rebirth of a Nation

“Therefore behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when it will no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers”
(Jeremiah 16:14-15 NASB).

April 70 CE, about the time of the Passover, was when the Roman General Titus allowed pilgrims to enter the city for the Passover. This was a trap, as Titus refused to allow them to leave the besieged city. The Romans encircled the city, cutting off supplies and driving the Jews to starvation. By August 70 CE the walls were breached and most of the remaining population was massacred. The final stand of the Jews was at Masada, a mountain fort where the siege ended with the suicide of the remaining revolutionaries in 73 AD.

The Diaspora

This brought about the final *Diaspora* of Jews from their homeland. The *Diaspora* began long before AD 73. Firstly, the Assyrians conquered Israel scattering the Jews all over the Middle East, followed by Nebuchadnezzar deporting the Judaeans in 597 and 586 BC.

Imagine how many times the Jews must have read these verses in Jeremiah and wondered whether they would ever be fulfilled. They were driven from their homeland and spread throughout Africa, Asia, and Europe.

During the *Diaspora*, lasting 1875 years from 73 to 1948, the Jews have experienced over eighty expulsions from many countries in Europe. In many countries they were barred from owning property, so they invested in businesses, especially jewellery and finance, resulting in them being blamed for the economic woes of the different countries. Christians claimed the Jews killed Christ. Christians also despised them for their “chosen people” belief, claiming that Christians were now the chosen people. Their religious practices and way of life made them stand out as different.

The period after the Jews were driven from Israel was very difficult, as Jeremiah prophesied, “I will first doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable idols and with their abominations” (Jeremiah 16:18 NASB). They also rejected God’s son, failing to recognise him as the Messiah. Jesus stated, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings ... Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!” (Matthew 23:37-38 NASB).

Mark Twain’s Observations

In 1867 Samuel Clemens, better known by his pen name Mark Twain, wrote on arrival in the Holy Land, “Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies.” His description of Jerusalem reads, “Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest

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name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and [has] become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone."

The picture presented by Mark Twain certainly would not entice the Jews to return to Israel. Jeremiah's prophesy states, "Behold, I am going to send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will fish for them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain and every hill and from the clefts of the rocks" (Jeremiah 16:16 NASB).

The first Aliyah was between 1881 and 1903, mainly from East Europe and Yemen. The conditions were harsh with many of those returning suffering from hunger and disease. Their inspiration was mainly the traditional idea of the holiness of the land. In 1910 the first Kibbutzim was established by members of the Bilu movement, consisting mainly of Russian immigrants. This allowed them to do communal farming as well as to have schools and religious meetings.

Troubles in their Return

The Ottoman Empire made it difficult for the Jews to purchase land, restricting the number that could immigrate to Israel. World War 1 saw the British forces entering Palestine and defeating the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Megiddo, in September 1918. Palestine came under British administration from 1918 to 1948. This was ratified by the League of Nations with the purpose to give administrative advice until they were able to stand alone.

With the rise of Nazism in Germany, the persecution of the Jews began. From 1933 to 1938 hundreds of legal measures were taken to exclude Jews from public life. Businesses and synagogues were destroyed and many Jews that had the means tried to leave Germany. Many that could leave found that they were prevented from entering Israel by the British.

The antisemitic violence started by Germany spread to France, Hungary, England, and the United States. With the outbreak of World War 2 the German government put in the plan, "The Final Solution." It was the term for the Nazi plan for the extermination and genocide of the Jews during World War II. The Holocaust took the lives of 90% of the Polish-Jewish population, two-thirds of the Jewish European population. That was around six million Jews in total.

The Nazi holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the urgency of the re-establishment of the Jewish state. This would solve the problem of Jewish homelessness by opening the gates to all Jews and lifting the Jewish people to equality in the family of nations.



David Ben-Gurion, May 14, 1948 — Declaration of statehood

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution for the establishment of an independent Jewish State in Palestine. This certainly fitted the second part of Jeremiah's prophesy.

United Nations Recognition

The Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations read "HEREBY PROCLAIM the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called ISRAEL. WE HEREBY DECLARE that as from the termination of the Mandate at midnight, this night of the 14th and 15th May, 1948, and until the setting up of the duly elected bodies of the State in accordance with a Constitution, to be drawn up by a Constituent Assembly not later than the first day of October, 1948, the present National Council shall act as the provisional administration, shall constitute the Provisional Government of the State of Israel."

The British began to remove their troops towards the end of April 1948 from Palestine. On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, announced the formation of the new state of Israel.

This year celebrates the 75th anniversary of the rebirth of the Nation of Israel. This edition of the Peoples Paper looks at the prophecies that relate to the formation of the State of Israel.

Two historical articles are included. "Progress in Palestine" by Bro Albert Hudson in 1948 and the article "Sequencing Harvest Prophecies" by Bro Ernest Martin in 1967.

How we look forward to the promise for Israel "It will no longer be said to you, 'Forsaken,' Nor to your land will it any longer be said, 'Desolate'; But you will be called, 'My delight is in her,' And your land, 'Married'; For the LORD delights in you, And to Him your land will be married" (Isaiah 62:4 NASB).

Ezekiel 37, The Words of Prophecy

“Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD” (Ezekiel 37:4).

In the year 2023, Israel is over 3,800 years old but it is also 75 years young. God has brought the State of Israel up from the dead among the nations of the earth. God will soon reveal Israel as the leader of the nations.

God's **word** in the scriptures reveals His methods for the restoration of Israel. A process which will settle all of Israel's debts of disobedience while also fulfilling His merciful promise to father Abraham. All nations will soon be blessed through Abraham's children, the modern State of Israel.

We are living in the fearful and wonderful time when God's miracle of Israel, rising among the nations, can only be seen in the **word** of God by the eye of faith. The prophesied destruction of earthly governments, religions and society will be a dramatic and counter intuitive experience for all mankind, until they too receive faith in God's **word**. We are on the doorstep of entering into God's righteous Kingdom, in which all mankind will be blessed by God's righteous rule in wisdom, justice, power and love.

The **word** of prophecy to the bones is the first of seven events on the time line of Ezekiel's prophecy. It is the precise moment in time which begins the restoration of Israel, the most dramatic event of the closing of the Gospel Age.

The seven stages of the “valley of dry bones” **word** of prophecy are: (1) Prophecy to the bones, (2) Noise, (3) Shaking, (4) Bones coming together, (5) Sinews, flesh and skin but no breath, (6) Prophecy to the four winds and (7) Breath comes into them and they live (Ezekiel 37:7-10).

The **word** of the **LORD** to the bones signals the start of the ingathering of the scattered Jewish peoples from all over the world. It marks the beginning of God's restorative work regarding the Nation of Israel but also of His powerful creative work. It is a restorative work in that God is returning His people back to His land and into a covenant relationship with Him. It is a creative work in that God is preparing a new heart for his people, which will be given to them at the prophecy's end, just before us in the stream of time.

“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

The command to fulfill Ezekiel's **word** of the **LORD** to the bones was surely given to our Lord Jesus Christ shortly after his invisible return in 1874. As Jehovah's master workman, it is fitting that our

resurrected Lord Jesus Christ would again take the role of the Creator's master builder and execute this amazing restorative and creative work — at the same time Jehovah and our Lord Jesus Christ are finishing the New Creation.

The Oath-Bound Covenant

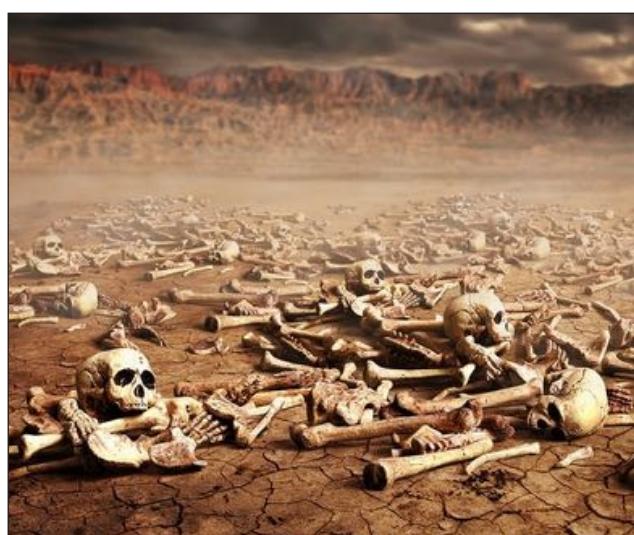
Isaiah records a powerful and unconditional oath made to Israel by Jehovah. This oath is important to the valley of dry bones prophecy because of its reference to world events which occur during our Lord's Second Presence; the Time of Trouble.

“For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as **I have sworn** that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so **have I sworn** that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:9-10, RVIC).

The two phrases “**I have sworn**” and “**have I sworn**” come from the Hebrew word *sheba*, the Hebrew word for the number seven. This is the only scripture which contains two instances of this Hebrew word.

With this word of prophecy, Jehovah is sealing an oath to His people of Israel with a double repetition — perhaps to emphasize its verity. This may be God's method of confirming that the **seven stages** of the valley of dry bones prophecy will lead to the establishment of His oath-bound covenant with Israel.

It is set to begin fulfillment from the return of Christ forward. The reference: “the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed,” associate the fulfillment



Valley of dry bones

of this oath-bound covenant with the complete restoration of Israel coincident with the destruction of the other nations.

Today, we see Jehovah's loving kindness toward Israel; and soon, after Israel's ascent among the nations, Israel will experience Jehovah's promised covenant of peace. This is the promise, this is the wonderful reward to Israel, by means of Jehovah's mercy.

Bones are The People

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and **speak comfortably unto her**. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Troubling for a **door of hope**" (Hosea 2:14-17, RVIC).

The timing and action of God speaking comfortably to Israel in this prophecy correlates to Ezekiel's prophetic "word of the LORD to the bones." Both prophecies commenced in 1878, the beginning of God's work of regathering the Jews to His land of Israel.

In 1878, the establishment of the city of Petah Tikva (Hebrew for Door of Hope in Hosea 2:15) was among the first visible signs of God's ingathering of the scattered Jewish peoples from all over the world. Today, with a population of 250,000 Israeli citizens, it is the third largest city in the Tel-Aviv metropolitan area and the fifth largest city in Israel.

There are three critical ingredients to the establishment of a nation: the people, their language, and their land. Between 1878 and 1948, Jews from over sixty countries came to the Promised Land. They would learn a new language and cultivate a land that was barren for almost two thousand years. As a nation, they formed a democracy, developed a leading social architecture, laid the foundation for a thriving economy, developed a strong military, and would become a leading technological player among the nations of the world, all in just seventy years from their national beginnings! But prophetically, this is just the beginning! David Ben Gurion said; "A State does not exist until its principles are internalized inside every person's heart." While the principles of modern-day Zionist Israel are alive and strong in the heart of most Jews in Israel today, as a nation, they are yet to receive a new heart from God, a new life, and a new national relationship with the God of their fathers.

The Two Fig Trees

Jesus cursed the fig tree in 33 AD and set in motion the demise of the Nation of Israel. In 1878, 1845 years later, Jesus set in motion the fulfillment of Jehovah's prophecy for the miracle of the restoration of the Nation of Israel. In 33 AD, Jesus observed that fruit was missing from the fig tree (a metaphor of Israel's missing spiritual fruitage). As an object lesson, Jesus then cursed that fig tree and its leaves shriveled up



The fig tree is a symbol of the nation of Israel.

and died in just 24 hours. This was the prophetic signal respecting the fall of Israel that would be complete just 35 years later in 68-70 AD.

1948 marks the new beginning that Jesus prophesied about in his Great Prophecy of Matthew 24:32-35 and Luke 21:29-30. 1948 AD is the appointed time for the reversal of his curse of the fig tree; its fulfillment begins with 'leaves' (national life) and ends with the "fruit" (of a new national heart of flesh) of Jeremiah 31:31-34. The events referred to in Jesus' Great Prophecy of Matthew 24 take place throughout the harvest of the Gospel Age, over the space of more than 150 years.

The Prophet Amos provides context to Jesus' parable of the fig tree; "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God" (Amos 9:15, RVIC). That planting of the fig tree in the land preceded the appearance of their leaves of national life in 1948.

Isaiah provides another prophetic "periscope" to what we see happening in Israel today.

"And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee. And though Jehovah give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be hidden any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:18-21, RVIC).

Nations Rejected the Jews

Between 1882 and 1914, 2.5 million Jews left eastern European countries and Russia. Most arrived in the USA and built thriving Jewish communities which in turn became rich in the arts, sciences and popular culture. A tiny fraction of those emigrating

Jews went to the Promised Land of Israel. Later, during the onslaught of WWII, many Jews who tried to follow those who left earlier had nowhere to go, because the USA and Canada had closed their borders.

In 1897, Theodore Herzl's opening statement at the first Zionist Congress included: "we are here to lay the foundation stone of the shelter of the Jews." In retrospect, Zionism created the "new Jew," not the Jew who was trampled on throughout Gentile history, but the Sabra: a rugged individual, confident in his/her ability to succeed. Today the Jewish people are pouring their heart and soul into their own culture instead of the culture of their gentile host countries. They are experiencing the cultural richness of living in their own land and of speaking their own language. They finally live in the cities of their ancestors with the ability to invest in their future and in the future of their children.

European Jews Were Divided

Some European Jews were philosophically against the creation of the State of Israel because they did not want to "force" God's hand. Many of the ultra-Orthodox Jews also refused to support the nation of Israel because it was founded by the secular Zionist movement. But Hitler changed that, and today, the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community (8% of all Jews in Israel) represents the fastest growing demographic in Israel.

The ultra-Orthodox are called Haredim (plural) after the Hebrew word *khared* which means "those who tremble before God." The prophet Isaiah recorded a wonderful prophecy to those who tremble

at God's word; "Hear the word of Jehovah, **ye that tremble at his word:** Your brethren that hate you, that cast you out for my name's sake, have said, Let Jehovah be glorified, that we may see your joy; but it is they that shall be put to shame" (Isaiah 66:5). The Prophet Zechariah seems to indicate that the Jews closest to the word of God during Jacob's trouble will be the first to opt-into the New Covenant relationship with the God of their Fathers. "And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God" (Zechariah 12:5).

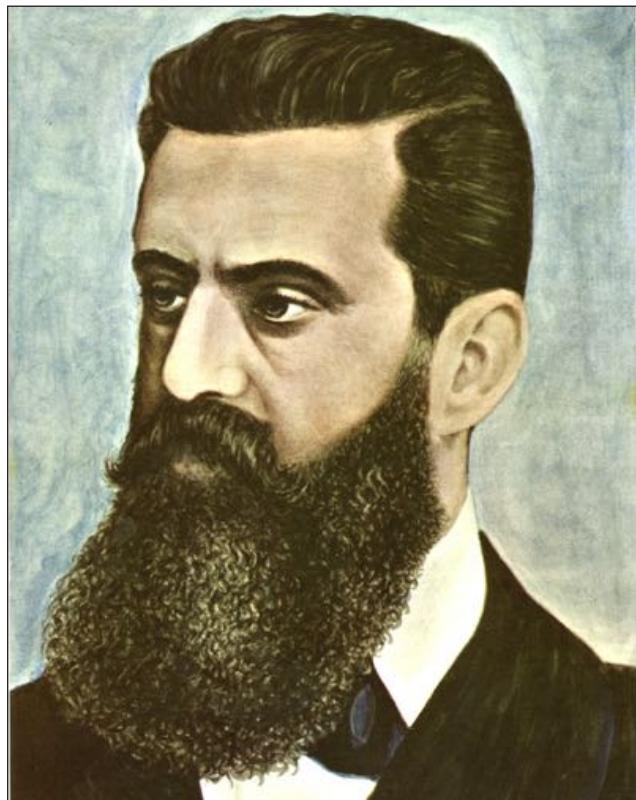
The word "Israel" means 'to struggle with God' and men. Herzl's work provided a psychological point of motivation in the Jewish consciousness. His Zionist idea grew into a movement which would attract all types of Jews from around the world to this tiny nation, sanctified by God, and given to His returning people. The land promised to Israel was God's land (Joel 3:2). It was a land without a people waiting for a people without a land. Herzl's work rattled throughout Jewish culture and ignited the soul of emigrating peoples. God was speaking comfortably to His chosen people!

The Jewish national anthem Hatikva (The Hope) was written in 1886 with only one verse; "As long as within our hearts The Jewish soul sings, as Long as forward to the East to Zion, looks the eye — Our hope is not yet lost, It is two thousand years old, To be a free people in our land, The land of Zion and Jerusalem." It is different from other national anthems because it does not discuss battle or conflict. Instead, it is contemplative, written in a minor key, and impossible to march to.

The Sabbath Legacy

Throughout the Jewish diaspora, the benefit of the Sabbath was almost without equal in both its purpose of family unity and in its ability to preserve Jewish memory. The Sabbath kept a dispersed people united in their diaspora and ready to receive the promised restoration.

No other ethnicity or nation in history prescribed a day of rest. The Jewish Sabbath implied a powerful social ethic in that it demonstrated that the laborers were equal to their employers and that both are equal before God. Throughout history, the Sabbath was a time for rest and spiritual reflection. While the Gentile nations defined nationalism by their power, the Sabbath helped define Jewish nationalism, even in their diaspora, as a desire to triumph over materialism. The contemplative Sabbath, as well as Jewish culture and tradition, developed an innate spirituality in many Jewish people which helped them focus on the importance and development of faith and family instead of merely worldly wealth. Still, the LORD gave the Jewish people the ability to gain wealth. "But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that



Theodore Herzl, of the First Zionist Congress



The Four Winds of trouble will breathe life into Israel.

he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

In addition, the Jewish repetition of "next year in Jerusalem" allowed them, throughout the diaspora, to picture themselves in Jerusalem in their mind's eye. By the time God's favor returned to the Jewish people, they could already envision themselves being in the land.

In ancient times, the seeds of the miracle of the restoration of Israel were planted within Jewish tradition. Jews who kept and preserved those traditions faithfully throughout the Jewish diaspora prepared the generations of Jews since 1878 to receive the return of God's favor and effectively act on it.

A powerful and timely influence over the worldwide Jewish diaspora occurred in 1891 (five years before Herzl wrote his pamphlet, "The Jewish State") by a Ukrainian Jew named Hayyim Nahman Bialik. Bialik wrote the poem "To The Bird" to an imaginary bird which recently returned to him from a trip to the land of Israel. Many Jews, both in Eastern Europe and around the world, saw Bialik's powerful poem as a reminder of the promises of their own return to their Jewish homeland found in the words of Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the Psalms. In the modern voice of his lovely poem, Bialik reminded the Jews that they had a home in the Promised Land. In some ways, he laid the groundwork for Herzl's Zionist idea in the worldwide Jewish consciousness.

Noise, and Shaking

The second and third steps of the prophecy occurred as a series of geopolitical struggles of power between the leading nations during the late 1800's and early 1900's. The fall of the mighty Ottoman Empire which once ruled the Holy Land and the rise of the British Empire with Benjamin Disraeli, a Jewish Prime Minister, was divinely orchestrated to allow Jews to purchase land in the Promised Land.

Bones Coming Together

The fourth step of the prophecy saw the gathering and ascendancy of Jews who were no longer shackled by European nations which prohibited their position in local or national government.

Sinews, Flesh and Skin

The fifth stage of Ezekiel's prophecy began to be realized in 1948 when Israel declared itself to be an independent State and rose from the ashes to become a secular nation among the world's nations. Our Lord Jesus Christ prophesied about the Fig Tree in Luke 21:29-32 that would bring forth the leaves of political life while the world waits for the coming spiritual fruitage of the final stages of Israel's ascendancy among the nations.

The Four Winds

The sixth stage of prophecy is just before us in the provinces of God's plan. Zechariah 14:2-3, Joel 3:2 and Revelation 7:1-2 confirm the events of the final battle of Armageddon.

Breath Comes and They Live!

Jacob's Trouble will feature the desperation of the Jews in the face of their enemies, the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies and the "no way out mentality" that will lead to the opening of their eyes to the salvation of Jehovah and the blessing of the New Covenant that God will make with the house of Israel.

Conclusion

The blessings and difficulties which followed the Jews throughout their diaspora kept many of them separate from the temptations of earthly power which seduced Christianity. In addition to the Jews keeping the Sabbath as a sacred time to enrich the soul, the Sabbath has also "kept" the Jews by providing a natural insulation from the corruption of their Gentile hosts and captors. Whether they knew it or not, the bones (the Jewish people) were activated by the word of the LORD when it was given in 1878.

Ezekiel's prophecy of the valley of dry bones contains the seven-step process of the restoration of the Jews to their land, the restoration of the land itself and, in the end, their restoration back to a covenant relationship with the LORD of Hosts, the God of their fathers. "And it shall come to pass that, like as I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down and to overthrow and to destroy and to afflict, so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith Jehovah" (Jeremiah 31:28, RVIC).

Have you seen the bones come together? Do you see the sinews flesh and skin powering a mighty nation right before your eyes? Watch and wait for the prophecy to the four winds and get ready to behold the majesty of our God!

Genesis chapter one tells us that Jehovah used his **words** to **create** the heavens and the earth. Similarly, in the Ezekiel prophecy quoted above, Jehovah used his words to signal the **creation** of the modern State of Israel. We would do well to let the word of God do its work of transformation in our spirit as he builds His New Creation.

— Todd Alexander

Progress in Palestine

"Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zechariah 14:3).

The establishment of the State of Israel is the answer to two thousand years of prayer and the beginning of a new epoch in Jewish history. The vision of Theodore Herzl and the sacrifice of generations of pioneers have brought about the fulfilment of the Zionist dream. The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland joins Jews everywhere in gratitude to Almighty God that this fateful event in Jewish history has been experienced by this generation of the Jewish people" (From a proclamation issued by the Zionist Federation after the announcement of the setting up of the State of Israel).

After four months of conflict, it is interesting to take stock of the position to date. Notwithstanding the fact that seven Arab states have joined forces in an attempt to push them into the Mediterranean, the Israelis have not only held the territory originally allotted them by UNO, but have also captured, and now hold, Arab Galilee and the towns of Nazareth, Jaffa and Acre, and the main part of Jerusalem. A great number of Arabs have left the country and their place has been taken by Jewish immigrants; it is unlikely that the Arabs will ever come back. The State of Israel, whatever its final form as agreed by UNO, has come to stay, and the Arab rulers will very soon be hard put to it in explaining this fact, and the failure of their military operations, to their own people.

The Western nations will make their peace with Israel and begin to bargain for trade agreements. Trans-Jordan, at least, among the Arab states, will follow suit. And although we who are students of the Word of God know that this is not the gathering "with supplication and weeping" that was foretold in ancient time and for which we look; although we must realise that there is evidently a further phase of development to be revealed before we can say "this is the end." yet the significance of this year's events is great and

the things we now see going on before our eyes must be playing some part in, making some preparation for, the real gathering of those true-hearted sons of Israel who will build "the land of unwalled villages."

Under the Constitution of the State of Israel, now being framed, the President of the State is responsible for appointing the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Israel, acting upon the advice of the Minister of Defence. In this, as in so many things, Israel has taken its stand with the "kingdoms of this world." Can it then avoid sharing their destiny. The "Holy Nation" of the Last Days will look to, and trust, God for their defence and it is then that He will "go forth and fight as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zechariah 14). How evident it is that a great change of heart must come to that people before we can expect prophecy to be fulfilled.

In the first six weeks following the establishment of the State of Israel on 15th May, 1948, sixteen new settlements were established in various parts of the country. In the same period, despite the troubled condition of affairs, thirty thousand immigrants entered the land. Mr. Moshe Shapiro, member of the Cabinet of Israel, stated at a recent Israeli State Council meeting that between 200,000 and a quarter million immigrants will come to Israel yearly. Immigration at this rate would double the present Jewish population of Palestine in three years.

There is now a constant stream of immigrants going into the Holy Land. By the end of 1948, it is estimated, the Jewish population will number 805,000, an increase of nearly 20 per cent since the withdrawal of British forces in May. During 1949, it is expected, another 150,000 will enter, and in a few years' time, it is thought, the nation may be three or four million strong. (The population in the time of Christ is estimated to have been about five million -- there is evidently space enough). It is evident that all the tortuous policies of the Western nations and all the opposition of the Arab peoples cannot prevail against this tide.

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A river of life will flow to the world (Zechariah 14:8).

— BSM, November 1948

Israel and the Holy Land in God's Plan

"The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"
(Micah 4:2).

We all realize that Israel and the Holy Land have been very prominently in the news of late, with the short and decisive war between Israel and the Arab nations in the Middle East early in June. People who read their Bibles must know that events happening in which Israel and the Holy Land have a part must have some connection with the Bible; indeed, must have an outstanding connection with Bible prophecy, inasmuch as the Bible, written throughout many centuries, relates events associated almost exclusively with the people who dwelt in or were closely related with the people of the Holy Land. The fact that God chose the region of the Holy Land for the creation on earth of our first parents, Adam and Eve, and placed them in the Garden of Eden in that locality, impresses us that it must be a most important region on this planet, Earth.

It is not surprising, then, to find after the Flood in Noah's day that when God selected certain men to serve Him, they were invited to inhabit the area which is now clearly defined as the Land of Israel or the Holy or Promised Land. God invited them to inhabit that land.

The name Israel first appears in the Bible in Genesis 32:27, 28. We have here a reference to the angel with whom Jacob is said to have wrestled. "And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Apparently, God could see in this man Jacob such an earnest, determined, prevailing spirit that he was now given this special name of Israel. Israel was the grandson of Abraham, whose name was also changed from Abram, who was called in Genesis 14:13 — "Abram the Hebrew" — because he was a descendant of Eber. So, we have the names Israel and Hebrews, which are often used interchangeably. The name Hebrew signifies "crossed over," or "the other side." Abraham and his family seem to have been called Hebrews, partly at least, to express a distinction between the ancient races east and west of the River Euphrates, Abraham having "crossed over" to the west on his journey to the land which

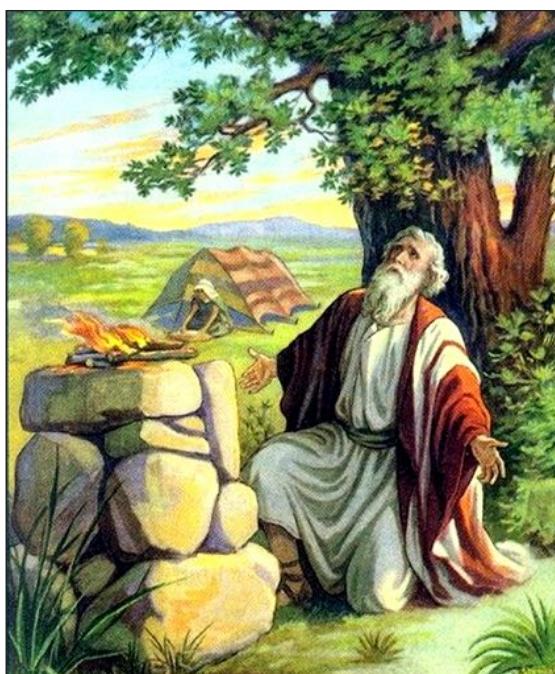
God had promised him.

Beginning with Abraham

God's special dealings with this people began with Abraham, as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3. "Now the Lord (Jehovah) 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." This message to Abraham was a wonderful promise indeed. If Abram obeyed God's voice, left his own country and travelled west, he could inhabit this land God promised to him. Then read Genesis 12:6, 7, and Genesis 13:14-17. These are very definite promises. From Genesis 15:18, we read — "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." We would like to stress that statement the Lord made — He is going to give the land to Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates. Israel is now just a little strip along the Mediterranean coast. Early in June they took the Sinai Peninsula, but this is only a small portion of what was promised to them. We know that today, as never before, this promise is on the way to fulfilment.

God's promise to Abraham was finally confirmed in Genesis 22:15-18. We remember this was the occasion when God tested Abraham in asking him to sacrifice his son of promise, Isaac. Because Abraham had taken God at His word, and was willing to sacrifice that son of promise, counting that God was able to raise him from the dead to fulfil the promise, he obtained this further manifestation of God's favour and blessing.

It is of great importance, then, to note that Isaac was the seed through whom the covenant blessings were to pass to his son Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and we have a further important promise in 1 Chronicles 16:13-18. So the covenant with Abraham was confirmed to Isaac, to Jacob and to the children of Israel.



Abraham offering to God at Shechem.

New Testament References

It is good also to find reference in the New Testament confirming, as we would expect, what is stated in the Old Testament. One citation along this line is found in Hebrews 11:8-11. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. .. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.” Abraham knew he was going to pass away in death. But our Lord said on one occasion, speaking of His kingdom time, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” Abraham saw it by faith. God’s plan to bless all the families of the earth was to be carried out in that wonderful day of Christ, the Millennial Age.

Another quotation is that given by Stephen when taken before the Sanhedrin and found in Acts 7:2-7. This is a review of the period of time from Abraham down to the time when Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt and brought back to the promised land. In this connection we have God’s instructions through Moses after the deliverance from Egypt in Exodus 19:3-6. This was a very wonderful promise to Israel in the wilderness, surely. After the giving of the Law and the entry of the Israelites into the Promised Land, we know they had varied experiences because of their disobedience to the Lord’s instructions; and God allowed them to be taken into captivity for punishment. They returned under the power of Rome and were in expectation of their promised Messiah when the first advent of Jesus was near. Jesus was sent by God especially to Israel, as stated by Paul in Galatians 4:4, 5.

Our Lord came to the people under the law of Moses. When Jesus began His ministry and selected the twelve apostles, He gave direct instructions as found in Matthew 10:5, 10; and the instructions were applicable for a period of 7 years, 3+ years before and after the Cross. “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This was God’s plan first of all, that our Lord and His disciples should take their ministry to Israel only. There were plenty of “lost sheep” in Israel at that time, but most of them did not respond to the invitation of their Messiah to be brought back into harmony with their Law Covenant.

Only a handful of Israelites indeed accepted Jesus, and the rest were blinded. Our Lord selected a handful from the multitude of Israel during His 3+ years’ ministry. Hence it was, that when Jesus presented Himself to Israel as He rode into Jerusalem on the ass, that His disciples rejoiced, in fulfilment of prophecy, but the Pharisees, as usual, were in opposition. This record is given to us in Luke 19:37-44. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this



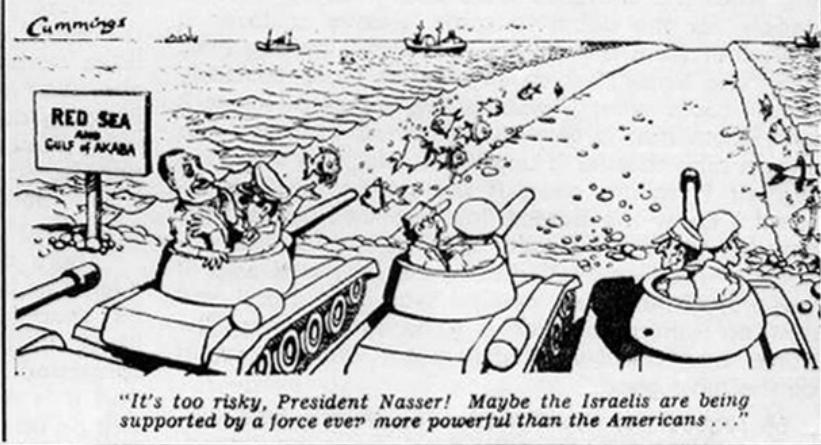
Jesus teaching his disciples

thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

Later, in the 21st chapter of Luke, Jesus gave a further account of the events to follow their full rejection and crucifixion of Himself as their King (Luke 21:20-24). “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh ... 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.” How truly has this prophecy been fulfilled! The Israelites have been scattered into all nations since the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah, from about AD 70, following Jesus’ words in Matthew 22:38, when He said, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” He knew that in a matter of hours He would be crucified.”

Most Bible students agree that the “Times of the Gentiles” was a period of about 2,500 years, ending about 1914/18. This period must not be confused with another Scriptural term, “the fulness of the Gentiles,” used by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:25. Let us note the difference between the two similar terms. Romans 11:25 says, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Here Paul is speaking of the blindness of Israel in respect of their Messiah and the heavenly calling. This blindness would continue until the full number of the Bride of Christ was taken from the Gentiles as a whole. Not that God restricted any Jews coming in during this period. Individual Jews could come in just as readily as any from the Gentiles. But the majority would be taken out from the Gentile nations. Blindness in part would remain with Israel as far as the selection of the Bride of Christ was concerned.

‘And the Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel’ 1 Samuel 13:5



Permission to reproduce the cartoon has been kindly granted by the London "Daily Express." This cartoon appeared in the Melbourne "Herald" on 3rd June, just two days before the outbreak of war between Israel and Arab countries. How apt is the artist's impressions, in line with Bible prophecy.

But Jerusalem being trodden down “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” would be completed about 50 years ago, in 1914-1918. The Church or Bride of Christ is not yet complete.

The question might be asked, what happened when the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled? A most outstanding event was the capture of Jerusalem from the Turks in December 1917, without bombs or gunfire. This has been described as a Divine miracle. With the capture of Jerusalem and all Palestine from the Turks, came the opening of this ancient Holy Land to immigration, and the establishment of a Jewish National Home. This was the “beginning of the end” of Gentile domination over the land of Israel, the Holy Land.

The story behind Jerusalem’s easy capture is of great interest and importance. It has been stated that as General Allenby approached with his army, he wondered how he could best take the city without too much damage. While he was trying to formulate plans for capturing, yet sparing the city, an enemy runner reached his Turkish commandant, and reported that a strong army was approaching, led by a powerful general named Allah-Bey (Allenby). The news quickly spread among the superstitious Moslem troops, and the Magic name Allenby was understood by all of them to be Allah-Bey — which meant, “The prophet of Allah.” Terrified by what to them was a sacred name, they refused to fight against a “prophet of Allah”, fearing Allah’s displeasure; and the commandant finally gave orders to hastily evacuate the holy city, ere “Allah-Bey” arrived.

Since World War I

Since the First World War it is common knowledge what progress has been made in the land of Israel. Against great odds, a Homeland has been established,

and during the Second World War much persecution of the Jews hastened their return to the Holy Land. Such Scriptures as Jeremiah 16:14-16 seem to have their definite fulfilment in the period from about the Second World War. “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. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.”

The “fishers” the Lord sent were inducements, to encourage the Jews to go to their land. Then, later, thousands were hunted from Europe and the northern countries. Many were lost in the process, but they will be resurrected and will have their inheritance. They will go back to the Holy Land in God’s due time.

Jeremiah 31 helps us to see the wonderful days in which we ourselves are living as we behold the events in the Middle East, and particularly in connection with God’s chosen people Israel. Read verses 1-12. We know that this prophecy speaks definitely of what has been going on, and will still go on, in the Holy Land. It does not mean that all their troubles are passed, but it does mean, as these prophecies show, that they are being established in the Holy Land to stay there forever. They are never more going to be plucked up from the Land of Promise, the land God promised to Abraham, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. This is to be fulfilled, perhaps even in the nearer future than we have realized.

Jeremiah 30

Then in Jeremiah 30:18-20 we read, “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places ... Their children also shall be as a foretime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.” That is a definite statement by the Lord Himself. Do we think such Scriptures apply to our times? Let us hear again the Lord’s message through Zechariah 12:2, 3 — “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about... And in that day I will 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.” This proves definitely that no-one is going

to prosper in any scheming and boasting in respect of Israel and the Promised Land. "Those that burden themselves with Israel shall be cut in pieces."

We know that from the establishment of Israel as a State in 1948 there were those who sought to hinder its progress. We think of those opposing Israel at the present time, boasting last May that they were going to drive Israel into the sea, and made the taunting remark that Britain and France would not be with them this time. In 1956 Britain and France were coupled with Israel for a short while. But four days was sufficient for this stunning victory. God no doubt was with Israel and gave them the ability. They probably thought they gained the victory themselves, but in the real "Jacob's trouble" they will know for sure that the Lord delivered them from greater menacing enemies.

From Jeremiah 30:4-7, we read, "All faces are turned into paleness! Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jacob (Israel) will be saved out of the trouble. Yes, but many difficult days lie ahead; see Ezekiel 38:8-23. These verses seem to indicate that Israel will be "dwelling safely" when the final trouble comes upon them. "Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ... And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood and I will rain upon him 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 the Lord (Jehovah)." See also Ezekiel 39:23-29.

Ezekiel 37

From Ezekiel 37:7-14, 24-28, we read of the restoration of Israel in most outstanding language. "Thus, saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel." The "graves" in which Israel has been buried during the centuries of the Dispersion are evidently the different countries or nations in which they have been domiciled. They have been hidden in a grave condition, so to speak. Some have been in one grave, some another; but all

have been "dead" as far as their national hopes were concerned. "My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen (all nations) shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." What a prophecy that is! We accept it fully, knowing that it is absolutely sure of fulfilment, for the Lord Jehovah has spoken it on behalf of Israel.

While our subject applies to natural Israel, it is well to remember that all the time God has scattered the Israelites throughout all the nations during the Gospel Age, He has been taking out a people for His name for His heavenly kingdom, mainly from the Gentile nations. As we have seen, "blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." With this selected company complete, and Armageddon and Jacob's trouble in the past, we read, "The law shall go forth of Zion (the heavenly phase of the kingdom) and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (see Micah 4:1-4).

Our subject would not be complete without reference to the wonderful resurrection hope for all mankind, including all Israel and Gentile nations who have ever lived. Our Lord Jesus "tasted death for everyman," and so the promise is that all in the death condition "shall hear His voice and come forth." Israel with their Ancient Worthies as leaders on earth will have an honoured place in interpreting the wonderful truths of God's Word to the nations at large, being guided from above by Christ and His Church in heavenly power and glory. All the nations of the earth shall see the salvation of our God through the blessings He will bestow on Israel first of all. We surely rejoice in such a plan of God to bring about the salvation of humanity, all on account of the sacrifice of Christ, Israel's Messiah, whom they rejected then, but will receive with open arms when delivered out of all their afflictions. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations" (Psalms 22:27, 28).

— *People Paper, August-September, 1967*



The Sea of Galilee in Israel

Sequencing Harvest Prophecies

“Repent ye therefore, and turn around, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old”
(Acts 3:19-21. Scriptures from Revised Version Improved and Corrected).

Peter's words assure us that prior to the establishment of God's earthly Kingdom, Jesus would return. His return will trigger a sequence of events that will remove "the present evil world" (Galatians 1:4) and establish a new world without evil. "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and hastening the presence of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:11-13).

While we pray anxiously for this Kingdom to come soon, God moves on a timetable unknown to us. We do know from scripture, however, that the transition to this new world of righteousness involves changes to every aspect of earth's organization — religious, social, political and financial — and includes every country on earth. Because of the enormity of this task, we can expect it to take a long time by our standards. However, by examining scriptures alluding to this transition, we may discern the progress in fulfilling Peter's statement that the present order of things will be "dissolved."

Three Levels of Activity in the Harvest

• "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; afterwards we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to a meeting with the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).



Jesus is present during the harvest.

• "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, even they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

These two scriptures lay out a path for us to determine the sequence of activities that begin with our Lord's return. This sequence can be divided into three simultaneous tracks: a spiritual track; an Israel track; and a world track. Events in one track can be prerequisites for events in another track, such as the marriage of the Lamb occurring just prior to Armageddon, or Israel coming under the New Covenant before the rest of the world of mankind. Let us examine each of these tracks.

A Spiritual Track

Before Jesus reveals himself to the world, his followers must be with him in glory. "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Colossians 3:4). This means that there is a somewhat silent beginning to this process, because Jesus is working behind the scenes, invisible to man. Paul says that before he reveals himself to the world, he raises those saints who have been sleeping in the grave since the day Stephen was stoned, since they must be with him when he is manifested in glory.

Yet, the work of calling, developing, and glorifying those who are living during this harvest period of the Gospel Age must go on. "and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: truly I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:36-38). "And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sitteth on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sitteth on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:15-16).

While this harvest of earth goes on, God is executing a progressive judgment upon Christendom: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven

angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1). "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Once the entire body of Christ is called, chosen, faithful and resurrected, the spiritual track is complete except for the final resolution of those composing the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9-16. These endure a tribulation for a time as the world track is completed.

An Israel Track

The regathering and restoration of Israel, with its ultimate deliverance during Jacob's Trouble, also begins with the Lord's return (Acts 1:6; 3:21). This involves a long process which we have witnessed over the past century. Consider the following timeline relating to just the regathering of the children of Israel. Each of these brought renewed focus to Jewish activity in the land of Israel, including restoration of land, the independence of the Jewish people, and the refocus on Jerusalem.

- 1878** — Establishment of Petah Tikvah — the first Jewish settlement
- 1897** — The first Zionist Conference to discuss a homeland for the Jewish people
- 1916** — The Tripartite Agreement which set the borders of the Modern Middle East
- 1918** — The British Mandate over Palestine began
- 1922** — Britain created Transjordan for the Arabs
- 1937** — The Peel Partition set a plan for the division of Palestine
- 1939** — British restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine
- 1947** — United Nations Partition Plan rejected by the Arabs
- 1948** — Declaration of Jewish Statehood followed by the Arab-Israeli war — there are approximately 600,000 Jews in Israel
- 1950** — Jewish Law of Return enacted, Jordan ceded the West Bank to Israel
- 1956** — The Sinai War with the Arabs
- 1967** — The Six-Day War with the Arabs
- 1973** — The Yom Kippur War with the Arabs
- 1979** — The Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement
- 1989** — A mass exodus of Jews from the former USSR
- 1996** — For the first time since 135 AD, there were more Jews in Israel than in any other country — over 5,600,000
- 2020** — Signing of the Abraham Accords brings peace to Israel from some of its neighbors



South African Jews

Since the 1990s, a steady stream of South African Jews, American Jews, and French Jews either have purchased property in, or moved to, Israel. Jeremiah prophesied of this day: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land" (Jeremiah 23:7, 8). The exodus from Egypt is estimated to have been about two million Israelites. In the past 100 years, almost four times that number have made *aliyah* to Israel (Zechariah 10:6).

Much lies ahead yet in order for the nation to be brought under the New Covenant. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it" (Zechariah 12:2, 3).

When the Jewish population of Israel is completed, Jehovah acts to bring the Israel track to completion: "And Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but Jehovah will be a refuge unto his people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am Jehovah your God, dwelling in Zion my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."

The event ending the Gospel Age and introducing the Millennial Kingdom will be the time called in scripture, "Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:6-8). Although associated in scripture with the deliverance of Israel, it is also a key element in the judgment upon Babylon. Couched in the language of Ezekiel's day (chapters 38 and 39), it describes a time when a league of nations will attempt to enter the land of Israel to spoil it. At that time, new leadership will

have risen in Israel — the Ancient Worthies — who have introduced a new order of government based upon trust in Jehovah's protection. As such, it will be a time when Israel appears to be vulnerable: "I will go up to the land of small unwalled towns; I will go to those who are quiet, living, all of them, without fear of danger, without walls or locks or doors" (Ezekiel 38:11 Bible in Basic English). The ensuing battle will see the complete destruction of this group going against God's chosen people. It will initiate the end of the present evil world. Ezekiel 38:8 indicates a long period of preparation leading up to this final battle: "He shall be prepared after many days and he shall come at the end of years" (Rotherham Translation). It is during this long preparation period that Jehovah is also dealing with the world track—the elements of Babylon, in preparation for its complete destruction.

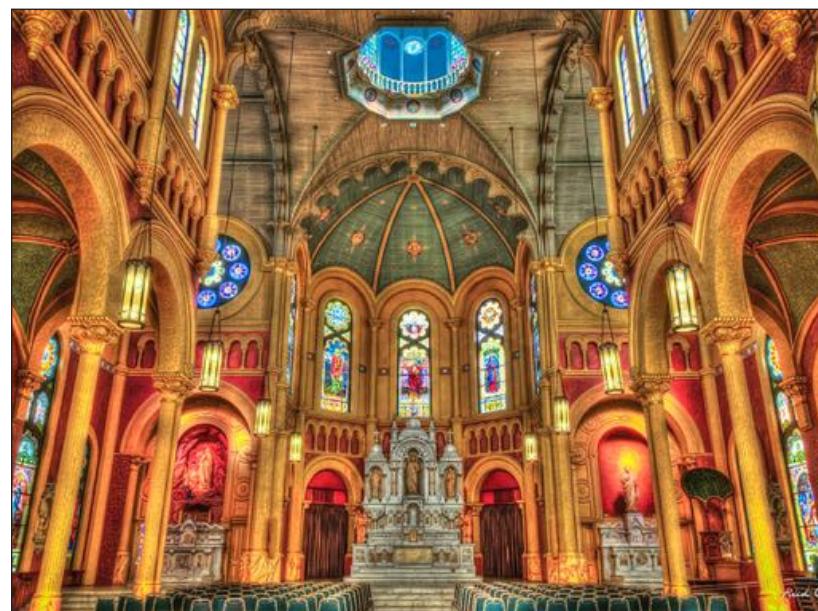
A World Track

The destruction of present-day Babylon is pictured by almost every prophet of the Jewish Testament. Let us note a few:

- "The waste city is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying in the streets because of the wine; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth among the peoples, as the shaking of an olive tree, as the gleanings when the vintage is done" (Isaiah 24: 10-14).

- "And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine (grape-clusters) of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God" (Revelation 14:19).

- "And the great city came to be divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (Revelation 16:19).



Great Babylon is under judgment.

- "And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived" (Revelation 18:21-23).

Revelation 18 says that Babylon, after the destruction of its Economic, Social, Political and Religious elements, will be found no more at all. This destruction is carried out during this same period of time as the establishment of Israel and the culmination of the call of the church. During the past 100-plus years, great changes in world systems through six stages have weakened the elements of Babylon:

- The Panic of 1873 triggered the first "Great Depression" in the United States and abroad. Lasting from September 1873 until 1878/9, the economic downturn then became known as the Long Depression after the Great War of 1914-1918 and the stock market crash of 1929. The collapse of the financiers sparked economic turmoil.

- The Great War of 1914-1918.

- World War II — As fighting came to an end in 1945, people the world over faced for the first time the unprecedented extent of destruction and loss of life caused by World War II. As the costs of victory came into devastating focus, the diplomatic responses, rising global tensions and social disruption followed. The aftermath of this conflict showed that World War II was truly "the war that changed the world." Sixty million people died in the Second World War

- more than in any other war before. The majority of those killed were civilians, and they lived on all continents. Nearly every human family felt scarred in some way.

- The East versus West struggle of 1945-1989 — Following the defeat of the Axis powers, an ideological and political rivalry between the United States and the USSR gave way to the start of the Cold War. The subsequent race for superior military power sparked an era of espionage, wars over the spread of communism, and a build-up of nuclear arms that threatened global annihilation. The Revolutions of 1989, also known as the Fall of Communism, was a revolutionary wave that resulted in the end of most communist states in the world. The collapse of communism in Europe from 1989 onwards led to profound changes not just in those Central and East



1989 fall of the Berlin Wall

European states that cast off communism, but right across the continent.

Trends of the recent past have resulted in reputable forecasters predicting another Great Depression, likely within the next decade. These trends include an ageing global population, overspending by most governments for social programs, high debt to productivity ratios causing inflation or even hyper-inflation. While economies in the past have recovered from depressions, the multitude of circumstances today make such a recovery unpredictable. Armed

conflict, the redrawing of international borders and a shrinking world population lacking the ability to support future benefits will only be resolved with a marked change in the management of the world. Fortunately, we know that the new management will usher in peace and the beginning of righteousness in the Kingdom of God.

Armageddon not the End, But the Beginning

As the final stage of our Lord's harvest work, the Bride class will be complete as Armageddon commences (Exodus 12:29). Devoted individuals in the Christian world will encourage Israel to look to Jesus (Song of Solomon 5:8-6:1). With the Ancient Worthies on the scene, Israel will come into harmony with God's arrangement, and gradually blessings will flow to others in a world weary of trouble. Let us rejoice in the knowledge that better times are ahead for all. While now we see in a mirror darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12), each of us must continue to watch world events with an eye of faith. The inauguration of the Kingdom will be the greatest event the world has ever seen! "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalms 46:10).

— Len Griebs

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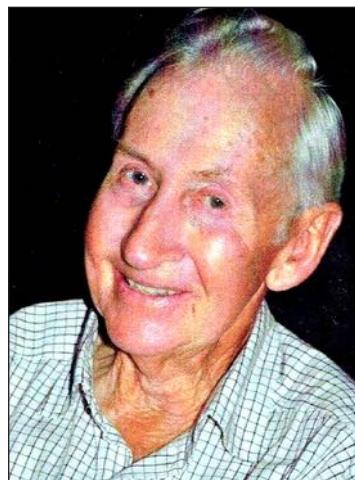
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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the discourses reported.

Australian Bible Students General Convention

Online — Friday-Sunday, 26-28 January
Details in October Peoples Paper



In Memory

Br. David Stone

28 June 1932 to
11 April 2023

Aged 90 years

Br. David was introduced to the truth 55 years ago. He was active with the Adelaide Class. As a farmer it was not always possible to attend

the meetings or conventions. His favorite time on the farm machinery was when he could listen to convention tapes. When He could, he travelled to Nambour and Melbourne to attend the conventions and helped with the Adelaide conventions. In his last years he joined the brethren for studies by phone. He was a dedicated and knowledgeable brother that will be missed by all that knew him.



Hail to the Brightness

Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning!
Joy to the lands that in darkness have lain!
Hushed be the accents of sorrow and mourning!
Zion in triumph begins her glad reign.

Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning!
Long by the prophets of Israel foretold!
Hail to the millions from bondage returning!
Gentiles and Jews the blest vision behold.

See, in the desert rich flowers are springing,
Streams ever copious are gliding along;
Loud from the mountaintops echoes are ringing,
Wastes rise in verdure, and mingle in song.

See, the dead risen from land and from ocean;
Praise to Jehovah ascending on high;
Fallen are the engines of war and commotion;
Shouts of salvation are rending the sky.

