

**THE
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MAGAZINE**



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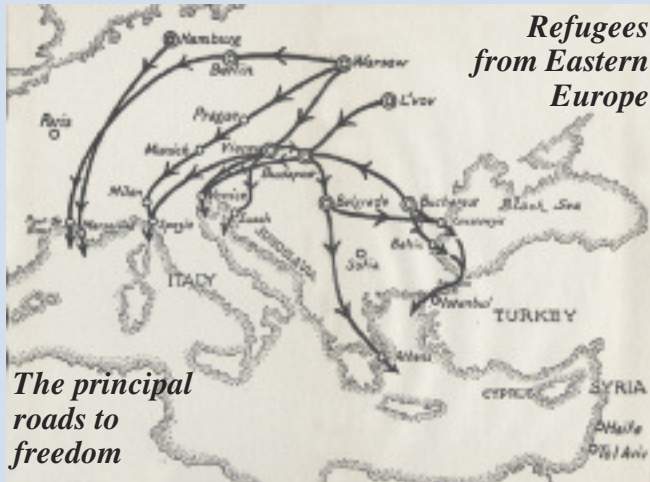


**THE
HOPE OF
ISRAEL**

“O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble” Jer. 14:8



MANY STRANDS OF BIBLE DOCTRINE & PROPHECY CONVERGE IN THE RETURN OF THE JEWS



Refugees from Eastern Europe

The principal roads to freedom

It was Promised in the Scriptures, it was predicted by the Prophets and it was taught by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. It was explained by Bible expositors over several centuries, and much of it is now recorded in the history books. From the several lands of their dispersion they flocked, as though by a migratory instinct, back to the Land of their forefathers. In this issue we consider various aspects of the restoration of the Jews and the forces at work fulfilling the purpose of the Almighty.



Don Pearce revisits the Promises made to Abraham, following them through both Old and New Testaments and considers their relevance for us today in the Gospel of salvation.

There is a great purpose unfolding in the restoration of the Jewish nation!

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Paul Billington takes us through the evidence that tells us what happened to the real historical Christ, showing that he is alive today.

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Brian Luke examines the period of the British Mandate over Palestine on page 27. This phase in the history of Palestine saw much turmoil but led to an independent Jewish State. It was a period that had been foreseen by Bible expositors some 70 years before the Balfour Declaration and Britain's entry into the Land.

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EDITORIAL

THE ONLY HOPE

For many people today there is no convincing reason to think that the earth and its population will not continue to stagger like a drunken man from crisis to crisis until it meets its inevitable doom and destruction. Environmental developments, political issues and social strains — not to mention the existence of terrible weapons of mass destruction—all raise a large question mark over the future survival of the world.

There are those who hope that science may be able to solve all the problems. That habitable environments may be discovered upon other reachable planets; that democracy and good will can settle political differences—that multiculturalism might banish racism and social inequalities. And perhaps, if all goes well, a madman will not rise to power somewhere who wants to terrify the world with weapons capable of obliterating mankind. There are, no doubt, those who seriously hope for these happy endings.

But what about reality?

We are faced with thousands of years of human history and what it has to tell us about the moral state of men and women. This moral disposition is reflected in the human institutions that exist today—both civil and religious. It is made manifest daily in the news media, in court cases and in the corruption that infests religious organisations. It must be admitted that the facts are not encouraging; they paint a depressing picture that the vast majority of people would rather not acknowledge.

Men are disposed towards believing what they want to believe; they will believe what pleases them—hence, multitudes embrace the concept of a paradise awaiting them when this present conscious existence comes to its end. All the world’s major religions offer this hope to their followers, on the condition of good behaviour—otherwise it could mean endless time writhing in a place called hell! Not too many like the hell idea, but still hope there may be something in the comforting thought about a heavenly paradise—but there seems to be little or no evidence for the ancient myth of the immortality of the human soul; consequently there are not very many people today who look forward to finding out for certain, and through personal experience!

What about the Bible?

Where can anyone go in order to find out the Truth about these things? There is plenty of mythology about, both ancient and modern—“But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?” There is no definite answer from books of philosophy, and science only tends to confirm the observation that you cannot make intelligent contact with dead meat. A Higher Being would surely communicate in some way to make known the essential truths about life, death and the purpose of things. So there is a need for revelation, and although the modern world rejects the Bible, no one yet has suggested a valid reason for not considering it. So what does this Book tell us?

There is a general opinion out there that all this immortal soul stuff is taught in the Bible—yet in that Book we actually read that “the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4), or as it reads in the Jewish Scriptures (the *Tanach*) “The soul that sins—it shall die.”

So is this saying that after death there is no conscious existence? Ecclesiastes 9:4-6 says exactly that:

“For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.”

And again in the Jewish *Tanach*:

“For he who is attached to all the living has hope, a live dog being better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all; there is no more reward for them, their memory is forgotten. Their love, their hate, their jealousy have already perished—nor will they ever again have a share in whatever is done beneath the sun.”

Both Jewish and Gentile commentators cannot accept this and blatantly contradict the clear teaching of Scripture. In fact, these commentators end up agreeing with the doctrine of the Genesis serpent whose lie was “... you will not surely die... you will be like gods!”

How is it that so many prefer to believe a lie rather than accept the truth?

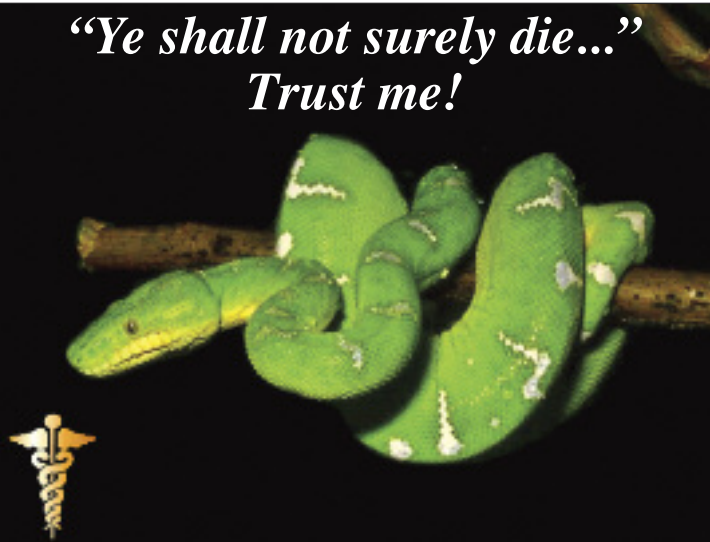
Rejectors of the Word

It was Jesus who told the religious leaders of his day: “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition,” and quoting Isaiah—“in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7 and 9).

It was really a question of authority—either that of the word of God, or that of men. It is no different today where the authority of men governs the various religious institutions of our time as though the Church was their own kingdom. The apostle Peter warned against this (1 Peter 5:3-4). For men to set up their own rules and then add sin to sin by teaching man-made doctrines in place of the revealed truth is nothing short of rebellion. The Bible teaches us that faithful believers will be raised physically. That sinning souls will die. Resurrection, not heaven-going is the doctrine of the Bible.

When William Tyndale translated the New Testament into English in the 16th century, it was the religious leaders that opposed him. The Church was teaching the people the old fable concerning the immortality of the human soul. As to contemporary teachers in the church he wrote:

“... no small number... utterly deny the resurrection of the flesh and body, affirming that the soul when she is departed, is the spiritual body of the resurrection, and other resurrection shall there none be. And I have talked with some of them myself, so doted in



that folly, that it were as good persuade a post, as to pluck that madness out of their brains.”

Church leaders were opposed to Tyndale’s doctrines just as much as they were to his translation work. The reason being that both were a challenge to their leadership, and consequently to their power and position. The Church is not the kingdom of God, it is an institution in which men rule and reign, exercising control and dominion over the “laity.” It is the same today as it was in Tyndale’s time. Positions are gained in religious organisations through a process of education, indoctrination and career development, bringing subsequent qualification and appointment.

There is no solution to the problems of the world in any man-made system. As the inspired prophet declared:

“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Isaiah 2:22).

So the democratic process is no solution either.

To the Law and the Prophets

In Isaiah 8:19-20 we note the following statement:

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

The truth is always in harmony with the Law and the testimony of the prophets—or as Jesus once expressed it: “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). Without the Law and the prophets it is impossible to correctly understand the New Testament, for as Jesus said again:

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. *But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*”—John 5:46-47.

There is no answer from the dead. If we want to know the truth, then we must seek the living God—and we can only do that through the inspired writings. As the apostle Paul told Timothy:

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

As we study Scripture we find that it offers a hope to mankind, and this hope is common to both Testaments—it is featured throughout the Bible, from Genesis to the Revelation. The apostle Paul explains his position in Acts 26:6-8 as follows:

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope

of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”

And again in verses 22 and 23 of the same chapter:

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

Links are clearly made between the promises made by God to the patriarchs in Genesis, the hope of the twelve tribes of Israel and the resurrection of the dead. The apostle’s hope was no different. All looked for the same thing.

There is but one hope (see Ephesians 4:4).



Israel’s Hope

So what did the twelve tribes of Israel hope for? What was the national hope?

It is quite clear from Acts 26:6-7 quoted above that the national hope rested upon the promises made of God to the fathers of the nation. These promises are examined by Don Pearce on page 6. They form the basis of the Gospel (Glad Tidings, or Good News) and have reference to the kingdom of God upon earth. This kingdom is the kingdom of Israel, both past and future, and so it involves a restoration of that kingdom which existed in the days of David and Solomon but with this difference: the rulers of the future kingdom of Israel will be righteous, having had their characters perfected during a lifetime of trial, affliction and correction, through the influence of the word of God upon them. These future rulers of Israel will be the subjects of a resurrection from the dead, as Daniel the prophet explained:

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and

some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:2-3).

This is the only hope for mankind; the Hope of Israel (Acts 28:20). This is “the gospel of the kingdom” taught by Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 5:23 etc), and which he told his disciples to teach: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

The message is clear: Believe this gospel (Good News of the kingdom) or be condemned!

But believing those things concerning the kingdom of God meant that there must be some understanding of that kingdom—of its character and moral quality. We can understand something of this from the Law of Moses (the Law for the nation).

A Righteous Nation

For example, look at the details given in Leviticus.

“And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

“Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD.

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD” (Lev. 19:9-18).

These are the principles that Jesus taught in his doctrine (see Matthew 22:36-40). The law of God given to Israel through Moses is a reflection or manifestation of His character. We can see this from Exodus chapters 33 and 34. For example, in 33:13 we read:

“Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I

may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.”

God’s ways are his Name or reputation (what He is known for), so Moses is told (verse 19):

“And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”

This is proclaimed in 34:5-7.

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

So Jesus says “I am come in my father’s name;” meaning that he upheld it, and lived in harmony with the ways and character of the Almighty. So it was then, that the apostles taught “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ.”

A Real Hope!

If we compare the present situation in the world and its many problems, with what the Bible offers, then we must see that what the Scriptures describe holds out a real and practical solution. A kingdom (not a democracy) that has been designed by God upon the principles of love and moral values as reflected in His Law. The kingdom of Israel will be conducted upon the highest principles ever known to man, and by a king and princes that will be beyond any possible corruption.

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment... And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Isaiah 32:1, 17).

This righteous king of Israel is to be the now glorified Jesus of Nazareth, whose foremost task was—and still is—the salvation of his people Israel (see Acts 5:31; 13:23). The princes who will govern with him are the faithful of all ages brought back from the sleep of death:

“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 8:11).

The Jewish nation having experienced 2,000 years of tremendous discipline and persecution will have received the necessary measured correction to prepare them as the people of the kingdom—the subjects of the first dominion in a future world-wide empire. So it has been decreed that all nations will be blessed in Abraham and his seed and thus the world’s salvation will be of the Jews (John 4:22).

This gospel of the kingdom is the only hope!



BRANTFORD PROPHECY DAY 2012

**Speakers, Date, Time & Place are in process of being arranged.
Please see Summer Bible Magazine for details.**

NORTHERN PROPHECY DAY THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD

Saturday October 27th, 2012. Doors open at 3:00 pm.

SPEAKER: Roger Long (Coventry Grosvenor Road)

First Address: *Christ & the Jews*

Second Address: *All Nations Against Jerusalem*

For More Information contact Philip Jones: Pipsafedriving@aol.com

SOUTH WALES PROPHECY DAY SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

Saturday November 3rd, 2012. Doors open at 12 Noon

Visions in the Prophecy of Daniel for Today

Andrew White (Rugby)

What Revelation Reveals about Europe Today

Mike Jenner (Watford)

Glimpses of the Kingdom Age

Paul Aston (Llanelli)

The Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot

For Further Information: brwoodall@tiscali.co.uk

ONTARIO WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL MIDLAND ONTARIO DECEMBER 22th - 28th 2012

SPEAKERS THIS YEAR:

Roger Long, COVENTRY U.K.

Mark O’Grady, TAWA N.Z.

David Billington, Brantford On



For Registration details applicable to the 2012 School visit:

www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com

Abraham's Hope:

Its relevance today

Photo: Elon Moreh near Shechem (Genesis 12:6)

By Don Pearce RUGBY, U.K.

Why should the hopes and aspirations of a man living 4,000 years ago be of any relevance to men and women living in this 21st Century? Yet the amazing thing is that the hope that Abraham had, is extremely relevant to those who wish to walk in ways pleasing to God!

As we shall see the Promises that God made to this great Bible character are one of the keys that unlock the wonderful Bible Hope of the Gospel. After all, the Apostle Paul clearly tells us that the gospel was preached to Abraham.

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed’” (Galatians 3:8 NKJV).

This is not what the churches believe or teach. Abraham is but somebody who lived a long time ago and was the father of the Jewish people; but as for him having any relevance to our understanding of the true gospel as taught by Jesus and the disciples, they can see little connection. Furthermore Paul also tells us:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to *confirm the promises made unto the fathers*” (Romans 15:8).

Now undoubtedly Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation and God did make promises to him, so if Christ's ministry had something to do with these promises, we owe it to ourselves to know more about them!

So what was Abraham's hope? Let's see what the Old Testament has to say

about this matter and his aspirations. First, let's have a look at his background. Abraham¹ was born about 300 years after the Flood. He lived in the city of Ur, situated in what we call Iraq. In his day the River Euphrates discharged itself into the Arabian Gulf some 160 miles (250 km) further inland than it does today. The city of Ur was then situated near the mouth of the Euphrates and was the regional centre of the Sumerian Empire. The city was dominated by a huge ziggurat dedicated to the worship of Nanna, a moon god. The archaeological excavations have shown that it was a very sophisticated city, with advanced culture and education. Clay tablets record business transactions, school lessons, hymns, treatises in history and mathematics. It was from this culturally advanced city that God called Abraham to leave behind the wealth and the sophistication of Ur and travel to a land which God would reveal to him.

In faith Abraham obeyed God's call and set out with his wife Sarah², his father Terah, his brother Nahor and his late brother Haran's son,

Lot. Their journey and the details of their adventures can be read in the early pages of Genesis. (*Genesis 11-25*). What we are interested in is the wonderful promises that God made to Abraham that formed the very basis of the Bible message of salvation and we shall find that these “*great and precious promises*” are still at the heart of the hope of Bible believers today.

Stephen tells of God's call to Abraham in these words:

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee” (Acts 7:3).

It is clear that Abraham had an understanding of God, at a time when his father was a worshipper of false gods. As Joshua recalled:

“Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods” (Joshua 24:2).

It must have been an act of great faith to abandon the comfortable living and security of Ur; but, trusting in God, Abraham made the first step of what was to be a long journey. As Abraham was unable to say where they were going to—for God had not revealed the promised destination—it would doubtless cause much head-shaking on the part of his neighbours and acquaintances. In that wonderful chapter on faith Paul records:

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, *not knowing whither he went*” (Hebrews 11:8).

A Call of Separation

The first leg of his journey involved



following the River Euphrates in a north-westerly direction for many hundreds of miles, almost to its source and then following a northerly tributary to Haran. Presumably they named the place after Abraham's brother of the same name, who had died before they left Ur. It was here that Abraham's father Terah died.

Following his father's death, once again the call came to Abraham from God.

"Now the LORD (*had* is omitted in RV) 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" (Genesis 12:1-3).

Note the call was one of separation. He had left his country, now he was to separate from his relations. With his father dead and his surviving brother, Nahor, choosing to remain in Haran, Abraham departs, taking his nephew Lot with him.

Note closely what God had promised to Abraham if he would obey God:

- He would become a great nation.
- Abraham's name would be held in high esteem.
- Abraham would be a source of blessing to others.



- God would judge other peoples in relation to their treatment of Abraham.
- In Abraham all the world would be blessed.

Pretty amazing things—but Abraham was a pretty amazing person! James, the brother of Jesus, makes this comment on Abraham's faith, concerning an incident a little later in his life:

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called *the Friend of God*" (James 2:23).

We are told that Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran and we are also told—and this is very pertinent—that his wife Sarah was *barren; she had no child* (Genesis 11:30). She was 9 years younger than Abraham. So a 66-year-old and a 75-year-old married, but childless couple, were promised incredible things! It is a

wonderful testament to their faith that they were prepared to continue travelling to an unknown destination in sure belief that God would do as He had promised.

Arrival at the Land

So having travelled some 750 miles (1200 km) from Ur to Haran, they embarked on a journey westward and then southward, which after about 400 miles (650 km) brought them to a place called Sichem, or Shechem, which today is Nablus on the so-called West Bank. Shechem nestles between two hills, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Here God revealed to Abraham that, at last, he had reached the land that God was leading him to.

"And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Genesis 12:7).

We note that this second promise was unconditional on the part of God. At Haran, God had indicated that the giving of these promises depended on Abraham's obedience. If he had remained in Haran, then they would not be fulfilled. But Abraham had shown his faith and had obeyed God's voice. Now was made this firm promise that God would give the land where he was to his *seed* or *offspring*.

To Abraham's offspring God would give the land which they had reached.

"Here was a country, lying between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, in which were Abram and all his house, with his flocks and herds, and which was in the actual possession of warlike tribes, living in cities walled up to heaven; concerning this country, the Lord, to whom heaven and earth belong, said to Abram, *I will give it to thy Seed*, when as yet he had no child" (John Thomas, *Elpis Israel*).

Having built an altar to Yahweh, they continued to travel southward and upon reaching a spot between *Bethel and Hai* (12:9) he built a second altar to Yahweh. Their stay was curtailed by a famine; by this time Abraham had a considerable collection of animals that needed water and food, so they travelled down to Egypt, and stayed there for a while. The Egyptian Pharaoh gave Abraham much cattle, goods, men and maid servants, amongst whom probably was Hagar who became Sarah's maid.

"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:1, 2).

They retraced their steps to where he had built the altar, close to Bethel. It was here that Abraham and his nephew Lot decided to part company because the size of their flocks and herds was too great for them to dwell together. Lot looked across to the fertile basin nestling between the eastern and western banks of the Jordan and chose to descend to be in the lush valley of Jordan, crossing the Jordan towards the cities of the plain, whose principle city was Sodom³.

The Land Promised for Ever

Abraham was now completely separated from his family. His father and one brother were



dead. Nahor was up in the north at Haran and his nephew Lot had departed eastwards. God now extended the wonderful promises He had made. Abraham was positioned on the spine of the land of Israel. Standing upon one of its high spots Abraham was told:

"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 13:14-17).

This third promise that God made to Abraham extends the earlier ones. By looking in all directions from his vantage point, Abraham can visualise what God was promising him. Remember that he was still childless, yet God was promising to give the land not only to him but also to his offspring—note well the phrase—*for ever!*

- The land he could now see was the land that God was promising him.
- And to his offspring.
- For ever!



An old photograph of Hebron

- His offspring will be exceedingly numerous!

A Covenant Given

Abraham travels southward to Hebron where again he builds an altar. In Genesis chapter 16 we have a fascinating account of a battle between the local kings in the Jordan Valley and distant kings from Mesopotamia, in which Lot and his family are taken captive and are dramatically rescued by Abraham assisted by local chieftains. We move on to Abraham now in his 80's and Sarah in her 70's. He puzzles how can his offspring become as numerous as *the dust of the earth* when they are childless? Knowing that this was troubling Abraham, God appeared to him one night and assured him that he would indeed have a son; moreover God told him to go out of his tent and look up into the starry sky and try and count the stars; for his offspring would be as many as the stars! With great faith, Abraham believed implicitly in what he was being told.

“Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and he (God) counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:5,6).

So this fourth promise was concerning Abraham's offspring. His offspring would be as numerous as the stars!

What must have been a puzzle to Abraham was that, though he accepted that God would give them children, surely by the time they had become as numerous as the stars he would be long dead. And so Abraham asked God for some sign concerning his personal participation in the promised inheritance.

“And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” (Genesis 15:8).

God gave Abraham a fourth promise that these things would happen, but they lay in the future and that he would die and be buried before these things were fulfilled. So there was only one way that Abraham could be a participator and although not stated in so many words here, it is clear from later events that Abraham understood that he would be raised from the dead.

He had to take a 3-year-old heifer, a 3-year-old female goat and a 3-year-old ram and a turtledove and a pigeon. He had to kill the animals and divide each into two and kill, but not divide, the birds. He had to lay them side by side in two rows. As Abraham watched to see what would happen next, birds of prey began to swoop and Abraham had to drive them away. At last, as the sun was setting, we read that Abraham felt exceedingly tired and a deep sleep engulfed him, not a pleasant sleep but a *horror of great darkness* (verse 12). In his sleep he heard (or he was awakened to hear) God outlining the future of his children. He was clearly told that he would die and be buried and that his descendants would be strangers in another land and there suffer, but

that God would bring them back to this land with great wealth.

“But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 15:16).

It is clear that his children would multiply away from the land, so when they were eventually brought there, they could conquer and possess the land promised to them.

With the sun having now set, Abraham sees a remarkable sight. A *burning furnace* and a *lamp (torch) of fire* (verse 17 margin) which passed between the pieces of the sacrifice. Abraham understood that God was making a covenant; normally solemn promises were sealed by the two parties slaying and cutting an animal into two and walking between the pieces. But this was one-sided. It was God, as represented by the burning fire, who passed between the pieces. He alone has the power to fulfil what He has promised. That this was a solemn covenant verse 18 confirms:

“In the same day the LORD made (Heb. cut) a

- Abraham is assured that even though he dies he will possess the land.

- As God had earlier said he would inherit it for ever, this implied his resurrection and a change in that day from mortality to immortality!

When Abraham was 86 years old he did have a child but not with Sarah, but by her Egyptian maid Hagar. His name was Ishmael and he grew up in Abraham's household.

Sarah shall have a Son

When Abraham was 99 years old, God again appeared to him and made his 6th Promise. The time had come for Sarah to have a child at the age of 90! What thrilling words God spoke to Abraham.

“As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. 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” (Genesis 17:4-8).

So God in this 6th Promise was confirming to Abraham that the things promised would be an *everlasting covenant* between Himself and Abraham's offspring. These are very important matters for Bible believers; our understanding of the Bible gospel must take cognisance of these words!

- Abraham would be a father to many nations and kings.

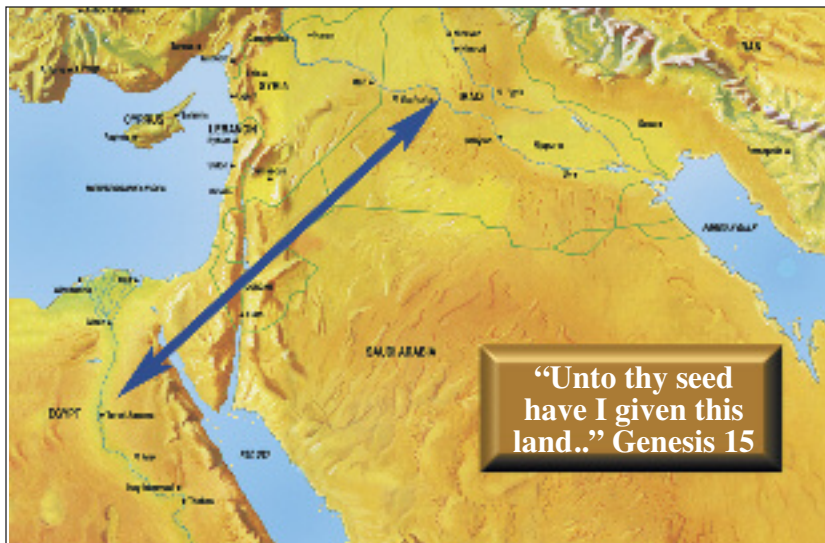
- It was an everlasting covenant that God would be a God to Abraham and his children for ever.

- The land of Canaan was to be given to Abraham and his offspring for an everlasting possession.

As a token or sign, Abraham was commanded to circumcise all the males in his household and any male child born to Abraham and his descendants was to be circumcised on the 8th day of its life.

Abraham was told that although his son Ishmael by Hagar would be blessed, these promises centred in a son that would be born to his wife Sarah. This was the occasion when her name was changed.

“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



covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites” (Genesis 15:18-21).

This fifth promise defined more concretely the extent of the Promised Land. It was the land that Abraham had journeyed through. He had crossed the Euphrates on his way from Haran, he had gone down to the River Nile in Egypt, he had walked in the lands of the Kenites through to the Jebusites.

The 4th and 5th Promises revealed:

- The extent of the land promised.
- That after Abraham's death his offspring would multiply in another country.
- Eventually they would come, as a nation, to possess this Promised Land.

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” (Genesis 17:19-21).

Thine Only Son Isaac

The seventh and final promise that God made with Abraham took place some 18 years or so later. Isaac had been born and was now a young man. Abraham’s faith in his God was put to the test when he was told:

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2).

With incredible faith Abraham did as God had told him. He did not prevaricate, but *rose early in the morning*, taking Isaac and two servants with him and set out on this 3-day journey to Mount Moriah. On arriving at the spot, he told the two servants to wait while they went and worshiped and *come again to you*. We know that Abraham believed that God would restore Isaac to life again.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that *God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Hebrews 11:17-19).

This incident is a study all of itself, a wonderful pointing to the coming Lamb of God and his death and resurrection on this very mountain 2,000 years later! Because of Abraham’s unswerving faith in his God, he received this final expansion to the Promises.

“By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:16-18).

He was told that:

- His offspring would possess the gate of his enemies—i.e. conquer all his enemies.
- In his offspring all nations would be blessed.

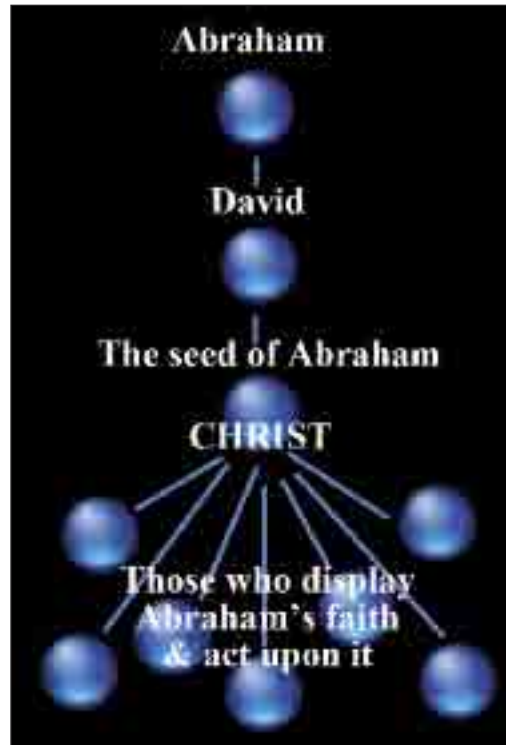
Thy Seed which is Christ

We can now bring together the greatness of these Promises. First we have to look at the word seed or offspring or descendants. The Hebrew word *zera* (Greek *sperma*) is used both of plant seed and animal seed. It can refer to one particular descendant or to a multitude. The apostle Paul picks this up:

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is *Christ*” (Galatians 3:16).

He was referring to the second Promise—

WHO THE PROMISES WERE MADE TO



Unto thy seed will I give this land—Genesis 12:7. So armed with Paul’s words, we can see that there was a specific descendant of Abraham that God was referring to—the Lord Jesus. Now for the majority of Christians they can see little connection between the Lord Jesus Christ and Abraham, except the accident of birth. For the Moslems it is now fashionable to deny the Jewish ancestry of Jesus; only today I was reading of a statement by the Palestinian Authority that “Jesus is the Palestinian prince of hope and peace and Bethlehem is his birthplace.” Yet the Jewishness of Jesus is a fundamental element of the gospel, which as we saw earlier was *preached to Abraham*. If the seed promised to Abraham is Christ, and we have that on the authority of Scripture, then this is a most important link.

Before developing this link, it will be helpful to just take a quick look at the Promises that God made to King David which are detailed in 2 Samuel 7 and in 1 Chronicles 17. To David it was revealed that the promised “seed” would be a descendant of David.

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Samuel 7:12-14).

So this added to the Abrahamic Promises, telling us that the seed spoken of would be a descendant of David and be heir to David’s throne and reign as a King *for ever*.

The opening words of the New Testament

beautifully bring the promises to Abraham and David together.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the *son of David, the son of Abraham*” (Matthew 1:1).

Matthew spends the majority of this first chapter showing that Jesus was descended from Abraham via King David. If we go to Luke’s opening chapter we read of the angel Gabriel’s words to Mary.

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and *the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end*” (Luke 1:30-33).

Now we can see the importance of this fact. Jesus Christ was the promised descendant of both Abraham and David. He is the heir to the things promised to Abraham and David. As Luke shows:

- Jesus was born to be King on David’s throne, which God would give him.
- His reign over the 12 tribes of Israel, “the house of Jacob;” would be *for ever*.
- His kingdom would be *for ever*.

As this did not happen during his mortal lifetime; these words are yet to happen. The mission of Christ at his first coming was as the Lamb of God, his life an offering for sin, crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem at the place where Abraham offered a ram instead of Isaac. And Isaac as good as dead was restored to Abraham. For the Lord Jesus it was an actual death, but three days later he emerged from the tomb where he had been laid, God raising him from the bonds of death. As we quoted at the start of this article, Jesus died to *confirm the promises made unto the fathers* (Romans 15:8). There could be no fulfilment of the Promises until after the resurrection of the promised seed. For to inherit the land *for ever* needed a change of nature from mortal to immortal. Christ is the first-fruits of many who will receive that incredible gift from God.

Restore again the Kingdom to Israel

Forty days later when he was taken up to heaven to be with his Father, angels promised that he would come back. Come back for what? It is very significant to see what Jesus and his disciples were talking about immediately prior to his ascension. Luke tells us in Acts 1 that they were discussing the work of the Lord Jesus which awaited fulfilment.

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou *at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:6, 7).

The words could hardly be clearer! Jesus didn’t reply that because the Jews had rejected him God had no more purpose with them, as

again many who would claim to be followers of Christ would allege. Far from this—and remember, Jesus had been appearing and talking to the disciples on several occasions since his resurrection, preparing them for their new role of apostles and no longer disciples. Jesus gave no indication that they had misunderstood him, only that in reply to “wilt thou *at this time* restore ...” they were told that they were *not to know the times or the seasons*.

Paul deals specifically with this matter (Romans 11:1). *Hath God cast away his people?* The reply is unequivocal. *Certainly not!* (NKJ). Read his wonderful words in the rest of Romans 11, where he explains that for the time being the call has gone to the Gentiles, but the time will come when that would change.

“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. And so *all Israel shall be saved*: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, *when I shall take away their sins*” (Romans 11:25-27).

This is what Jesus is returning to do—to save his nation. Long before Jesus had even been born, the prophet Zechariah records the amazing details (read chapter 12 to 13:1) of that day when Israel’s eyes will be opened to the fact that the Messiah they rejected (and still do to this day) really is their Messiah. Upon seeing the marks of crucifixion in the hands and feet of the one who has saved them out of the hand of their enemies, they will be convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that they have been wrong for 2,000 years. Their repentance will be real and life changing, as they too are baptised into Christ and recognise him as their saviour.

So the apostles went, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, preaching the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and the redemption in Christ Jesus.

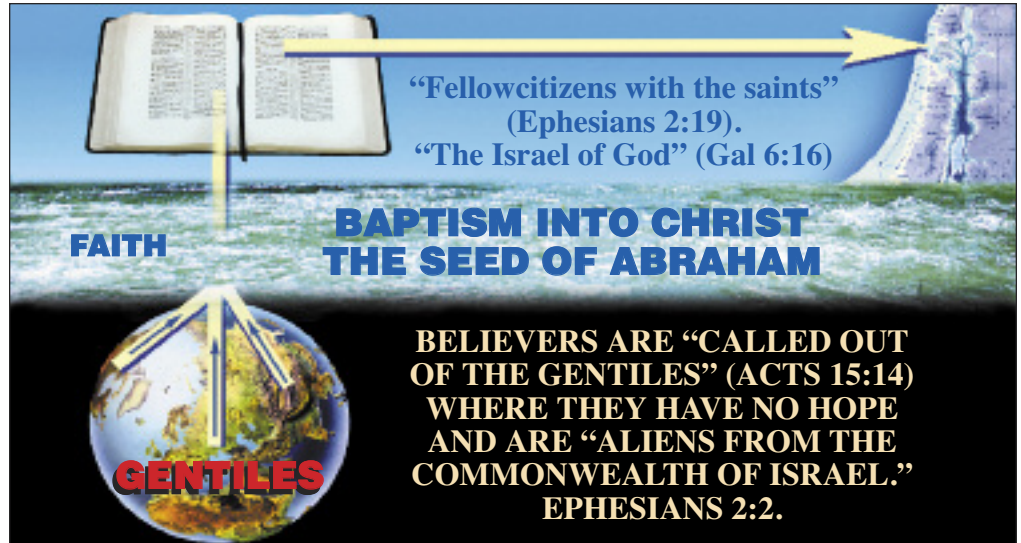
“But when they believed Philip preaching *the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ*, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

Not only was it a Kingdom to come on earth, it was to be the time when the Kingdom would be restored to Israel.

Surely the most well-known New Testament words are those of the “Lord’s Prayer,” which opens with these words:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, *so in earth*” (Luke 11:2).

So the time of the Kingdom is a time when God’s Will is to be done on earth; for in that day Jesus will be King not only of a humbled and repentant Israel, but of the whole world. Sadly the non-biblical teachings of so many of the churches that heaven is the destination of the faithful at death have made a mockery of this clear Bible teaching. The Lord Jesus is coming back to the earth to raise from the dead the faithful from all ages, Abraham, and David



among them. He will reign from Jerusalem over a world brought into obedience through the work of Christ and his raised and immortalised followers. The Kingdom will indeed be *restored to Israel*. The promises to Abraham will be fulfilled to the letter when the Lord Jesus is King over all the earth.

- Abraham will then be seen to have become a great nation, his name will be honoured and all nations of the world blessed, and the nations will have been judged in relation to their treatment of Abraham’s descendants.
- The Lord Jesus as the particular seed will indeed possess the gate of his enemies; he will be given possession not only of the Promised Land but the whole earth.
- He will share the Promised Land with his nation of Israel and with his immortalised followers.
- Abraham’s numerous offspring will indeed possess the Promised Land for ever.
- In the Lord Jesus’ wise reign, all nations of the earth will be blessed.

The Relevance for Us

Now our title is *Abraham’s Hope—its relevance today*. We have come a long way in our unravelling of the Promises to Abraham, but we now need to make clear the vital connection between ourselves, if we desire to be true followers of the Lord Jesus and these Promises which involve the father of the Jewish nation. It is clear that the vast majority of my readers are not Jews; we are what the Bible terms Gentiles, in other words not of Jewish lineage. Although these Promises were made to Abraham concerning himself and his offspring, by the graciousness of God, there is a way for Gentiles to share in these things. Although not born to Jewish parents we can be sharers in these good things and this is through adoption.

A Jew is born a Jew. But God has made provision for adoption. From New Testament times, the call of God was extended to Gentiles, because the Jews, in the main, refused to listen, in fact their leaders rejected their Messiah and handed him to the Roman authority to crucify him. Through the hands mainly of Paul, the Gentiles were called, though Cornelius was the

first Gentile convert at the hands of Peter. Now the sign of their acceptance of this call was that both Jew and Gentile were baptised *in the Name of Christ*.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

What do we understand by the phrase *in the name of Jesus Christ*? It is better rendered *into the name*, for the Greek indicates it was not done on behalf of the Lord Jesus, but was an act which changed their relationship with Christ. As Paul puts it in Galatians 3:27:

“For as many of you as have been baptized *into Christ have put on Christ.*”

Like a garment we are clothed upon by the righteousness of Christ, and we become part of God’s family in Christ.

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye *Abraham’s seed, and heirs* according to *the promise*” (Galatians 3:29).

Ah! The wonder of God’s plan! Gentiles can become adopted into the family of Christ through baptism, not birth and so become *heirs* of the things that Christ is heir to.

So the Promises, although made 4,000 years



ago are very relevant to us today. If we wish to be in Christ’s Kingdom, then we must first understand what the gospel message is all about and then obey the command of Christ to repent and be baptised, or immersed, for the forgiveness

of our sins. We then have to follow the Master as we await his return to bring that Kingdom of God on earth, centred at Jerusalem. When we look at a globe we can see why God chose this spot for this coming Kingdom, for it is accessible by land or by sea from every spot of the world.

When we pray for *thy kingdom to come* we are praying for a world revolution! We are praying for the political kingdoms of this world to be taken over and replaced by one central government from Jerusalem. When the earth will be under the control of the wisest man that has ever trodden this earth—the Lord Jesus. To assist him will be a multitude of redeemed ones who have in their lifetime sought to please God as Abraham did and to walk in the faith of Abraham, looking for a *city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* (Hebrews 11:10). The Kingdom is a very tangible thing, something we can really look forward to, for we face a world that under man's rule is spiralling ever deeper into chaos and godlessness. God's solution of sending His Son to take over is the best news we can have. Moreover the Promises carry that little phrase *for ever!* In contrast to our mortal life now, in Christ we have hope of life eternal. A life which has no ending.


We have a firm hope to look forward to.

Sadly what we hear so often today is a watered-down gospel that revolves around doing good works and those to be seen of men! What the true gospel calls upon us to do is to prepare for this coming day. To fill ourselves with a true understanding of God's Purpose with this earth and the coming work of the Lord Jesus, so that we might be valiant for the truth and seek to open the eyes of those we come in contact with to the physical reality of the gospel message. We close with Isaiah's pen picture of the Lord Jesus and life in the Kingdom of God.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:1-9).

Footnotes

1. He was called Abram for the first 99 years of his life. God then changed his name to Abraham as recorded in Gen 18:5. Abram means “lofty father;” Abraham means “a father of a multitude.” Abraham died at the age of 175. For convenience we will use the name Abraham throughout this article.
 2. She too had a name change! Born as Sarai—“my princess”—God changed her name when she was 90 to Sarah—“princess” (Gen 17:15). She lived to be 127. Again to avoid confusion we will call her Sarah.
 3. Recent archaeological findings now place the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to the north of the Dead Sea on the east bank of Jordan. (*Sodom—The discovery of a lost city*, Leen Ritmeyer).
- (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cJ-14z_Uw) 

The Hope of Israel & The New Covenant: A booklet that gives us a right understanding of two essential elements of the true gospel

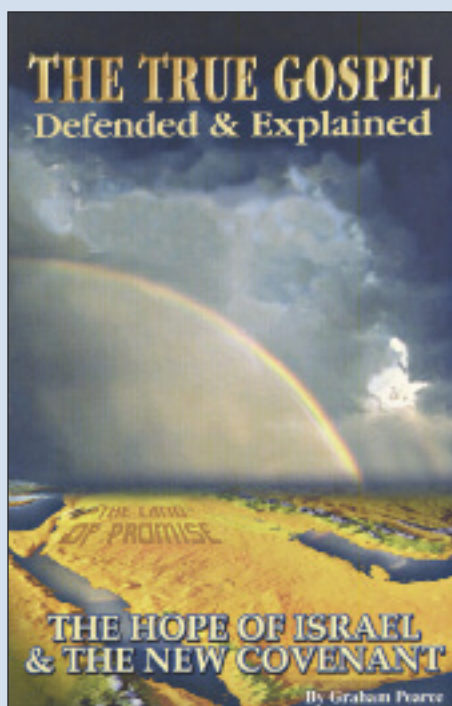
The Holy Spirit through Zacharias at the birth of John the Baptist declared:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:68-75).

John the Baptist was to go before the Lord, to give knowledge of salvation and prepare the people for remission of sins.

This is an inspired definition of the Hope of Israel—that God had raised up the promised Saviour to his nation Israel. A complementary statement on the Hope of Israel occurs earlier in this same opening chapter of Luke's gospel. The angel Gabriel says to Mary:

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy



A well reasoned booklet that helps our appreciation of the doctrinal basis of prophecy fulfilling in Israel today.

womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:31-33).

The Hope of Israel depends for its fulfilment on the blood of the New Covenant—the blood of Jesus—shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. At Jesus' return the nation of Israel enters into the New Covenant, receives the atonement of the blood of the Covenant, and is morally regenerated. Then will be fulfilled the words of Zacharias.

Our adoption into this national Hope of Israel by baptism (Gal. 3:29) separates us from normal national ties and interests. It powerfully exercises the mind in the contrast between the righteousness and holiness of the coming kingdom, and the wickedness and corruption so prevalent today. The Hope of Israel brings separation and witness.

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THE REAL

What Happen Is he the c Saviour of

By Paul Billington BRANTFORD, ON.

The majority of people who call themselves “Christians” pay scant attention to the teaching of the New Testament concerning the mission of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the nation of Israel. After his crucifixion his disciples are recorded as saying “we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). That these immediate disciples persisted in that view long afterwards must strike many as quite amazing.

In Acts 5:31 Peter refers to Jesus saying:

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

Again in Acts 13:23 Paul refers to king David and says:

“Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised *unto Israel* a Saviour, Jesus:”

So what really happened?

In 1 Corinthians 15 the apostle Paul puts his own reputation and integrity on the line saying:

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not” (Verses 14-15).

Trustworthy Writings?

It has to be said, because it is true, that as often as not people believe what they want to believe—and they frequently want to believe what is popular and acceptable among their friends and associates. We sometimes call this being “politically correct.” The small Christian sect led by the apostles can hardly be accused of twisting their opinions in order to catch the poplar breeze however, their preaching of the gospel of Christ brought them into serious trouble with both Jews and pagans. But can we believe the New Testament records? Are they authentic documents that give us reliable

Fragments of early New Testament manuscripts



The three fragments (left) of Matthew’s Gospel (The Magdalen) have been dated to 35 to 70 A.D. The John Ryland fragment (above) dates to about A.D. 100

information?

It will be difficult to lay aside our prejudices and examine the factual evidence for itself. Most readers of this article will have already made up their minds either for or against the veracity of the New Testament writings and about what they teach. But what all have to agree upon is the existence of these writings. The New Testament is a fact that has been before the world for many centuries. We cannot wish it out of history. We must also acknowledge that it claims that Jesus, called Christ (the Greek expression for ‘Messiah’) was crucified and that after three days in the tomb he was the subject of resurrection.

Now it must be admitted that there has been a great deal of exaggerated and desperate argument used by some “Christians” who seek to confirm the New Testament narrative. Over the years there has been far-fetched and spurious evidence produced (such as the Turin shroud) in order to prop up a decaying and decadent church. There are those people who will jump at

anything if they think it might support their case — but let us look at the documentary evidence — how old and how authentic is it?

The truth is that scientific analysts are just as susceptible to partiality as anyone else. We see it in archaeology, evolutionary theory (paleontology), and of course in textual criticism and many other disciplines. When dating an important manuscript that could impact upon cherished beliefs, there is always pressure from the various schools that are anxious to promote their views. Even here, and on this level, a certain “political correctness” operates. One only has to recall the involvement of the Vatican in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

One controversial scrap of the New Testament is the so-called Magdalen (p64) Papyrus which was dated in 1995 by the German papyrologist Carston Peter Thiede, to the period between the years 35 and 70 AD. It is a fragment of Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 26, and if this dating is correct, it was written only a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus. Others do not like

CHRIST

ed to him? oming Israel?

that conclusion and produce technical arguments to suggest that “although there is no absolutely definite evidence by which p64 can be dated with certainty, the available evidence points to a date around AD 200.” The importance of this argument is obvious: if Matthew’s gospel record was written and in circulation before AD 70, it means that the writer was probably an eye-witness of the death and resurrection. Luke (chapter 1:1-2) tells us that:

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word...”

Was Matthew one of the “many”?

John would have been another, for in chapter 21 he claims to have been a contemporary witness saying:

“This is the disciple which testified of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true” (verse 24).

The writer is either telling the truth, or he is a liar—a false witness. In this case though we have a fragment of John 18 that was discovered in 1934 and has been recognized as dating to AD 100 or before. This is known as the John Ryland fragment. The passage records part of the interview between Jesus and Pontius Pilate, and as the apostle John lived to at least AD 97 (he wrote the book of Revelation), the only reason to dismiss his claim to have written the gospel record is purely and simply blind prejudice. Why would we not believe the writer’s own claim

when we know that a fragment exists which was probably contemporary with him?

The Historical Reality

In a document that has survived since the days of pagan Rome, the trial and conviction of Jesus is actually mentioned. In *The Annals of Tacitus* it is recorded that:

“Christ, from whom the Christians derive their name, was condemned to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius.”

Here then is an historically recorded *fact* which harmonises precisely with what we read in the New Testament.

It also harmonises with more recent archaeological discoveries which provide us with tangible evidence of the circumstances surrounding the trial of Jesus. It is not a made-up story. The personalities are all real people from that time such as Pontius Pilate (there is the inscription bearing his name). Then in December 1990 there was the discovery of the first century ossuary (or bone box) inscribed with the words

of the high priest and have reconstructed the detail which precisely fits the information given in the gospel records. There just cannot be any doubt that the New Testament is telling us exactly what happened during that momentous trial.

For the most part the New Testament was completed by AD 70, that is within forty years of the crucifixion (the Revelation being an exception). We know this because the great Roman invasion of Judea under Titus took place at this time and it is clear that it had not occurred whilst most of the New Testament was being written. For example, Paul speaks of going to Jerusalem which in AD 70 was largely destroyed—Romans 15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:14. Thus, there cannot really be any argument for a New Testament being written later than that. The claim for Christ’s resurrection therefore dates to *at most* forty years after the events, and the men who penned the original manuscripts claimed to have been eye-witnesses to it.

Now at the time that these early claims were



The Pontius Pilate inscription found at Caesarea (Left) on display with the Ossuary (coffin, or bone-box) inscribed “Joseph son of Caiaphas” found in 1990.

“Yehoseph bar Qafa” (Joseph son of Caiaphas). The ossuary has since been on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Matthew, Luke and John each identify Caiaphas as the high priest that presided over the arrest and trial of Jesus. The historian Josephus also identifies “Joseph Caiaphas” as the Jewish high priest from 18 to 36 AD (*Jewish Antiquities* 18:35). Josephus also refers to him as “Joseph who was called Caiaphas of the high priesthood” (*Jewish Antiquities* 18:95).

Archaeologists have also excavated the palace

made, they had a terrific impact upon the Jewish population of the Roman world. Frequently in the New Testament one can read of riots that were caused by the apostolic teaching. This reached such proportions as to cause all Jews to be banished from the city of Rome by the Emperor Claudius himself (see Acts 18:2). This same incident is mentioned in the only surviving book written by the Roman author Suetonius. In *The Twelve Caesars* Suetonius says:

“Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of

Chrestus (ie Christ), he expelled them from the city.”

Why didn't Claudius settle the issue once and for all, not only as far as Rome was concerned, but for the whole empire *by producing the dead body of Jesus Christ*? There is only one reasonable answer; he could not produce it for the same reason that neither the Jews or Pilate could produce it; *The body of Jesus was missing!*

Neither those on the spot, nor even the highest authority in Rome could produce Christ's body. If they could, they unquestionably would have done so. What happened to Christ then?

Prophecy Fulfilled

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (John 11:49-52).

“This spake he not of himself” says John; “he *prophesied* that Jesus should die for that nation ...” And again in John 18:14, “Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

There is no reason to think that Caiaphas did not make this statement, but the point to notice is that Jesus was to die *for* the people. Not that he was to die *instead* of the people (he didn't; the nation was overrun by the Romans some years later). Jesus would die *representing* the nation and people. This is an important principle to understand. Jesus was not a substitute sacrifice (even if Caiaphas had intended it that way), he was a representative, a type; a personification.

Now consider this: We can understand how a king or monarch represents his people or government—the Queen of Britain is a figurehead. The Roman emperor also stood as a figure for the empire. So Jesus, as “king of the Jews” and “king of Israel” similarly represents his people and nation, even if at present they are estranged from him. This is why many prophecies can be applied to him *and* to his nation. For example, the prophecy of Hosea 11:1, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” Here is an obvious reference to the exodus and the nation, yet Matthew 2:15, applies it to the childhood of Jesus and to the time when his parents returned with him from Egypt. One can understand a Jewish reader of Matthew's account raising an eyebrow at that application of the prophecy, yet if one can see Jesus as a representative and figure for Israel then the application is reasonable and legitimate.

Again, most Christians cannot understand how it is possible not to see Jesus in the prophecy of Isaiah 53, especially verses 3 and 4 for example:

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of



The inscription visible on the end of the ossuary reads: “Joseph son of Caiaphas” Josephus refers to the high priest by that name.

sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; and he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”

Yet these same people will often miss seeing the Jewish nation in verses 5 and 6

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

The Christian is often blind to the Jewish perspective and the Jew is blind to the Christian perspective—yet in fact, both are reasonable



The Nazareth Inscription. A decree issued by Claudius forbidding the removal of bodies from graves.

applications.

The usage of the Jewish Scriptures by New Testament writers is a study in itself. How often for example Matthew has the phrase “that it might be fulfilled...”

It is clear that in using some prophecies more than one application could be made. For example, how many of us would apply Psalm 2:1-3 in the way that Acts 4:25-27 does?

“Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together...”

Psalm 2 clearly refers to the time when Zion's king will be installed, and when he extends his dominion to “the uttermost parts of the earth” (verse 8). This is still future, but the reference in Acts makes a provisional application of it to the first century—this primary fulfillment foreshadows the larger and complete one which is yet to come. However we may choose to understand the second Psalm we cannot escape the fact that it concerns “my king” in verse 6, and “my son” in verse 7. Zion's king is the son of the One who sits in the heavens!

Messiah the Prince

An article in *The Bible Magazine* (Vol. 22 # 4; October 2009) by Ron Kidd drew attention to the remarkable prophecy of Daniel chapter 9; the seventy weeks prophecy. After referring to the prophetic principle whereby a day represents a year he wrote:

“On this well established principle, the “seventy weeks” time span, comprising four hundred and ninety days, corresponds to 490 years of actual time. Some sceptics may consider this tampering with the record to make the circumstances fit. Be that as it may, a man called Jesus, claiming to be the long expected Messiah of the Jews appeared in Israel a little over 490 years after Daniel spoke the prophecy. Once again, consider the evidence.

The Division of the 70 Weeks

“The 70 weeks or 490 years, according to the prophet Daniel, were to begin with the commandment to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This overall period is divided into 3 periods of 49 years (7 weeks), 434 years (62 weeks) and 7 years (1 week) respectively (verses 25-27). It is not completely clear from verse 25 what separates the 49 years from the 434 years. However, verse 25 does say that “the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” This took place in the days of Ezra, at the conclusion of the 70 years captivity under the Babylonians. There are four decrees recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, these are listed below with the conventional historical dates.

1. Ezra 1:1-4—1st year of Cyrus; 536 BC
2. Ezra 6:8—2nd year of Darius; 520 BC
3. Ezra 7:11-15—7th year of Artaxerxes; 457 BC

PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS — Daniel 9:24-27

From 456 BC

1 DAY = 1 YEAR

To AD 34

The going forth of the commandment to build & restore Jerusalem Neh. 2:1-8
7 weeks
49 years

Restoration under Ezra & Nehemiah

62 weeks
434 years

Covenant introduced 483 years

3.5 yrs John bap
3.5 yrs Jesus
Cov't confirmed
Messiah cut off
1 week
7 yrs

4. Nehemiah 2:3;5-8—20th year of Artaxerxes; 444 BC

“It is important to realise that Israel returned to the land in two stages. The first wave of immigrants took place under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 2:2; 3:2). The second wave returned under Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 7:6-8; Nehemiah 2:7-11). The mission of Ezra and Nehemiah corresponded to the 3rd and 4th decree, the 4th being an extension of the work). In other words, the 490 years began in 457 BC and ended in AD 33 when Jesus was crucified by the Romans. Again, a coincidence?”

A Resurrection

Consider the fact that prophecy not only foretold the details of Christ’s death, but also stated that he would rise again from the dead. David wrote in Psalm 16:

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

Was Christ left in hell? *Was he left in the grave?* Well, the answer has to be *no!* He wasn’t left in the grave—his body *was missing!* How did David know well over three hundred years before that this body would vanish? How *could* he have known?

Let the apostle Peter throw some light on this strange prediction. Reading from the New English Bible, Acts 2:29-36 Peter says:

“Let me tell you plainly, my friends, that the Patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. It is clear therefore that he spoke as a prophet who knew that God had sworn to him that one of his own direct descendants should sit on his throne; and when he said he was not abandoned to hades, and his flesh never suffered corruption, *he spoke with foreknowledge of the resurrection of the Messiah.* The Jesus we speak of has been raised by God, as we can all bear witness.”

The words of Peter are as valid today as they were when he uttered them. He appealed to prophecies which we can still examine, to an empty tomb that we know *was* empty, and in the light of what we have already seen, all the evidence is in favour of Peter’s claim for a raised Jesus.

Another voice from the First Century



The Excavated “Broad Wall” in Jerusalem today

“... and the broad wall and the breach shall be built, even in the straitness of the times.”

See Nehemiah 3:8; & 12:38



This bust has been identified as that of Josephus the historian. Certainty of course is not possible.

testifies to the resurrection of Jesus—that of Josephus. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and excavations made at Masada, the reputation of this historian for accuracy has been greatly advanced. In his book *Antiquities of the Jews* we find this amazing passage:

“Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works,—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day” (Book XVIII, chap. 3 sect. 3).

So decisive is this witness to Christ’s resurrection that sceptics have put forward the notion that it is not genuine, and that it is a later interpolation. It is truly amazing the lengths people will go to, so that they may find a prop for their unbelief—but it is a weak prop indeed that they lean upon, for this passage by Josephus is referred to in other very ancient manuscripts. For example, Eusebius (writing about AD 324) makes direct reference to it. Others include Jerome, Rufinus, Isodore of Pelusium, Sozomen, Cassidorus—men who worked from very old manuscripts, probably dating back to the time of Josephus himself.

Saving his People

When the disciples of Jesus asked him “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), his answer was:

“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”

The “times” and the “seasons” which were then kept from them would, however, be revealed to them later.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be

witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Explaining the two words “times” and “seasons” *Vine’s Expository Dictionary* says:

“Broadly speaking, *chronos* expresses the duration of a period, *kairos* stresses it as marked by certain features; thus in Acts 1:7, “the Father has set within His own authority” both the times (*chronos*), the lengths of the periods, and the seasons (*kairos*), epochs characterized by certain events...”

These times and seasons form the framework of the visions of the Apocalypse. There we have time periods such as 1,260 symbolic days (e.g. Revelation 12:6) and we have periods that are characterized by events—seals, trumpets, vials.

So Jesus was saying in effect, that there were certain time periods and “seasons” involved in an unfolding series of events leading to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. According to the book of Revelation this series of events through history would be presided over and controlled by the risen Christ.

The Testimony of Jesus Christ

Now if you will open a Bible, and turn to the last book, the Revelation, you will see from chapter 1:1-2 that it is “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*” and that the apostle John is the one who recorded what he calls “the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

What we have therefore is a book which John says is from Christ. Certainly it was written several years after the death of Christ—yet it claims to be from him. That could only be the case if he were alive. This is made abundantly clear from several passages in the book itself; for example in chapter 1:18 we have the words:

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore...”

And again in chapter 22:16:

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

There can be no question that Jesus Christ himself is represented as speaking to the churches (Greek *ecclesias*) here. This presents

us with a clear choice. The book is either true and Jesus *is* the one speaking and therefore alive in AD 96 when the book was written; or the original writer—John or whoever—is guilty of deliberate counterfeit and falsehood. Notice especially the statement: “I am alive for evermore...” The consequences of that statement are stupendous!

Further, let us bear in mind that a work to be accomplished by the risen Christ is the restoration of the kingdom again to Israel. Christians are rarely interested in this aspect of Christ’s work, and are often ignorant of it, yet it was clearly foretold in the writings of the



prophets. For example, Isaiah chapter 49.

“And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (verses 5-6).

Jesus was miraculously “formed from the womb” of Mary, and as the old man Simeon told her: “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34). The death and resurrection of the king of the Jews is mirrored in the fall and rising again of the nation. The nation was as it were put to death by the Romans (as was Jesus himself), yet when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled the Jewish people are to return—and so is Jesus to return!

What is revealed to us in the Revelation is the process of judgement upon Rome. First through the seals which bring the decline of the empire—then the trumpets which lead us to its fall. The ten-horned beast of the Revelation is clearly the form of Daniel’s fourth beast—the Roman power. It is a Christian apostasy that develops into the Roman religious power of the harlot and is then seen riding the beast until it makes war with the Lamb and his associates. It is the risen Christ who develops this situation over many centuries, whilst

at the same time calling out of the Gentiles a people for his Name.

True believers *have* been subjected to attempted corruption; they have had to contend earnestly for their faith from early times. They have been subjected to terrible persecutions—first under pagan Rome and then later under a Rome that claimed to be Christian. The persecutions of so-called heretics, the Inquisition and the burnings are all well-documented history and can be readily equated with the symbology of this prophecy (c/p Revelation 12:17; 13:7; 13:15; 17:6; 18:24). And today we live in a world that is armed to the teeth with the most destructive weapons ever known to man—we face an “Armageddon” just as this prophecy predicted! It is God’s 2,000 year plan which will introduce his Son into the world as the King of Israel; the Messiah or Christ.

Despite the difficulties in understanding the book as a whole, a little thought will soon show that “These are the true sayings of God” (ch. 19:9) and that “These sayings are faithful and true” (ch. 22:6); that it is indeed “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (ch. 1:1-2).

As implied in the opening verses, the Revelation is a prophecy for the special benefit of Christ’s servants. They alone will have the true understanding of it. But the general idea is not difficult to grasp—in symbol the prophecy describes a struggle between the true believers (or saints) and those who would attempt by various means to either corrupt or kill them.

These things lead events to a final crisis. The Lord Jesus has been working (with the angels) to restore the people of Israel to their Land, and is doing so in the face of the world’s hostility. At the same time Rome is building up her “Babylon the Great,” using her influence to unite Europe and much of the Arab world, just as Jesus has told us. These powers:

“... have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:13-14).

And so, says Jesus:

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:15-16).

This is the “controversy of Zion” that we see developing today. The nations are gathered together into a place “called in the Hebrew tongue” (or language), Armageddon. So it obviously involves the Hebrew people, and the Hebrew nation of Israel. It is through these events that Jesus will restore again the kingdom to Israel. Here is the testimony of the living Jesus Christ who is risen from the dead and who is alive for evermore.



The prophecy of Seventy Weeks—Daniel 9

In the twenty-fourth verse Daniel learned that there were six particulars to become accomplished facts before an army should be given to the Romano-Greek Babylonian Little Horn against the evening and morning sacrifice for the suppression of it, and the destruction of the holy city and people, and the consequent abolition of the Mosaic law and constitution. These important particulars may be thus ordinarily presented:

1. The perfecting of Judah’s transgression;
2. The causing to cease from sin-offerings;
3. The covering of iniquity;
4. The bringing in a righteousness of ages;
5. The sealing the vision and prophet;
6. The anointing the Holy One of holy ones.

Exposition of Daniel, John Thomas



The birthplace of Political Zionism was in this hall in Basel, Switzerland where Theodore Herzl addressed the First Zionist Congress in August 1897.

THE BIRTH OF POLITICAL ZIONISM



First Zionist Congress 1897

The First Zionist Congress held in 1897 attracted considerable attention mainly because a man was raised up who would suggest a practical basis for the restoration of the Jews to their ancient homeland in the Middle East. Although not a religious movement, Zionism was of particular interest to Bible readers who were familiar with the prophecies of the Restoration. Among these Bible readers were the Christadelphians, who in those days took special interest in such a movement. Their founder, John Thomas, had anticipated just such a development—writing in his book *Elpis Israel* that “The pre-advantual colonisation of Palestine will be on purely political principles: and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him.”

It is not surprising to find then, that Christadelphians took particular note of the Basel Conference in 1897, coming as it did just 49 years after the publication of *Elpis Israel*. In *The Christadelphian* magazine for 1897 we find the following report on page 503:

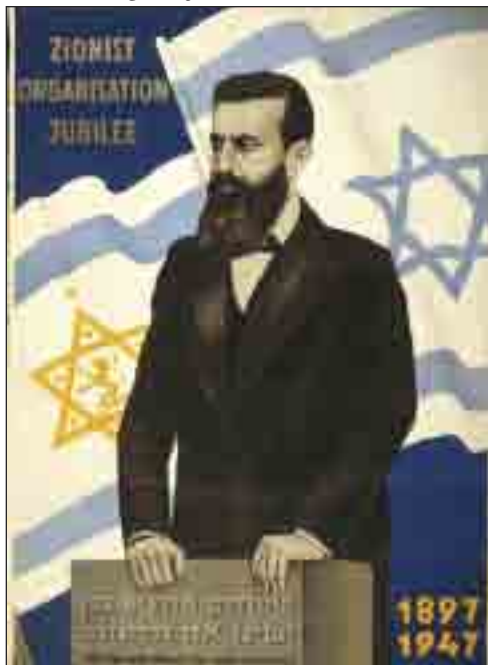
“THE JEWS PREPARING TO RETURN.

“There is a concurrent preparation among the Jews for such a change in the political status of Palestine. It is one of the most cheering of the signs of the times that this very year, 1897 (1,290 years from the legal establishment of the Roman abomination in its Papal maturity), there should be a congress of Jewish representatives from all parts of the world to consider the feasibility of restoring Jewish nationality in Palestine.”

The report goes on to quote from an article headed: “THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO PALESTINE” —It speaks of Religious and Political Zionists,

and says:

“...of much more interest is the action of the Political Zionists, who have started their movement as a kind of counterblast to anti-Semitism:—‘The work of the political Zionists has been up to this writing one of open propaganda for the establishment of a new Jewish State proper. Dr. Herzl, in a pamphlet published last year in several languages, boldly advances the idea that the Jews, the Doctor says, shall abandon the inhospitable fields of Europe, and repairing to Palestine, there re-establish their ancient State. Nor is the great journalist at a loss as to the



precise institutions, laws, constitution, &c., to be adopted by that new State.’ A Congress is to be held in this very month of August in the town of Basle, in Switzerland, for the purpose of discussing this scheme:— ‘Dr. Herzl’s proposal has met with great sympathy in nearly all large centres of Judaism; and the discussions and correspondence in reference to the new Jewish State have waxed to a prodigious mass. The Congress will be held and for the first time since the sixties of the seventeenth century, the question of a wholesale return of Jews to Palestine will be seriously discussed before Christian Europe.’”

Also, the editorial in *The Christadelphian* goes on to quote an Australian paper saying that:

“The idea of political resurrection has taken possession of that race which produced monotheism, which gave the Saviour to the world, and which during 2,000 years of oppression has furnished innumerable proofs of intellectual vigour and vitality... Political Zionism has been awakened and promoted chiefly by Dr. Herzl’s work ‘Der Judenstat’ (the Jewish State)... the main aims kept in view by all are (1) to assist in the colonisation of Palestine by Jews, (2) to revive ‘the national idea in Israel,’ and (3) to diffuse the knowledge of Hebrew as a living language.”

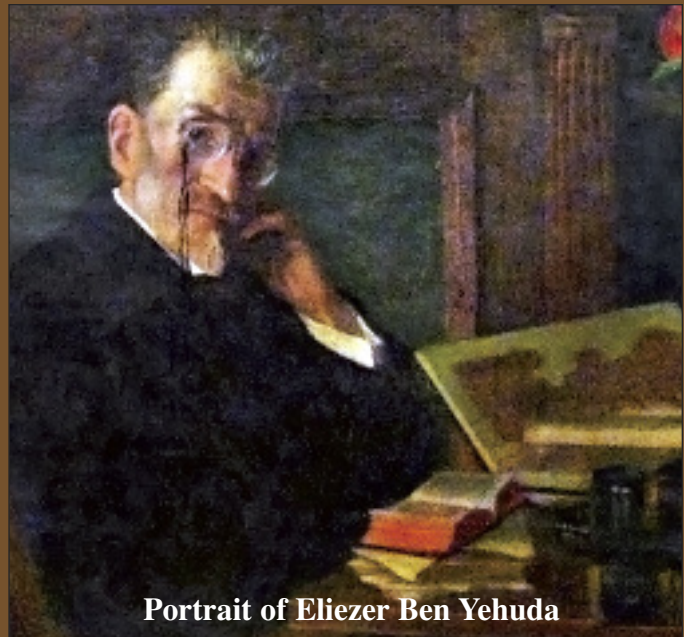
The following year (1898) the editor of *The Christadelphian* writes:

“The Euphratean flood, long shrunk in its channel, is about to disappear in final evaporation; the revival of Jewish nationality, though but in embryo, has begun.”



THE REVIVAL OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

By David Billington BRANTFORD, ON.



Portrait of Eliezer Ben Yehuda

Walking down Ben-Yehuda street in Jerusalem, one can hear Jews of every type conversing in the language of the prophets. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, for whom the street is named, was a man who dedicated his life to Zionism and principally the resurrection of the Hebrew language. His goal in life was, in his own words: "... The rebirth of the nation of Israel in its own land, speaking its own language." Providentially, Eliezer was a man trained and well acquainted with languages and literature, due to his difficult and unique upbringing in Russia during the late 1880's. Above all he had developed a great love for the Hebrew language, not just as a "holy language"; but one which could be used to describe everyday life. He perceived that a nation needed a common language in order to come to national life.

Having left Russia to further his education in Paris—the centre of political and diplomatic life in Europe—Eliezer's studies were cut short when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Feeling that he had "not much longer to live," he was forced to leave the damp city of Paris, to spend some time in a warmer climate. Upon his doctor's recommendation, Eliezer decided to go to Algiers. While he was there he naturally gravitated to the Jewish community. However, the only language they had in common was Hebrew, so for the first time in his life Eliezer had to communicate on everyday matters in Hebrew. Eliezer was also impressed by the pronunciation of Hebrew as spoken by these Sephardic Jews. It was closer to the original and as a result of Eliezer's decision, has become the pronunciation still used in Israel today. Eliezer's health improved and he returned to Paris. Despite the fact that he was ill with tuberculosis, he decided to live his dream and moved to Jerusalem in 1881, where he set to work. He started publishing a Hebrew language newspaper called "*The Deer*"; the first issue was published in October, 123 years ago.



Slightly distorted under a piece of glass, and with Eliezer's own scribbled notes, this photograph of his wife Hemda is on a desk among his belongings at the Academy of Hebrew language in Jerusalem.

When the Ben-Yehudas arrived in Jerusalem there was no common language among the less than 30,000 Jews who lived in the Holy Land. Had Ben-Yehuda street existed then, one would have heard many languages among the Jewish inhabitants. Here, as in the rest of the world, Hebrew was only used for prayer and study and not spoken. In a biography of Eliezer Ben-

Yehuda, by Robert St. John entitled "*Tongue of the Prophets*," he records that: "The Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews had no common language, and there was little social or intellectual intercourse between them... But there were even divisions among the Ashkenazim, for they had banded together in this time according to the countries from which they had come. There were bitter rivalries among German Jews, Russian Jews, and Jews from France and England. Many of these groups spoke, in addition to Yiddish, the languages of the countries of their origin, which made for further disunity." There was also almost universal poverty amongst the Jewish communities in the Holy Land. Speaking different languages, of various cultural backgrounds, poverty stricken and plagued by infighting, it would have been very hard to imagine that the Jewish people could ever come to national life. Even though in the land, they were under Turkish rule, and so it could be said, that these were some of the scattered class of the dry bones of the Jewish nation, which Ezekiel saw in chapter 37. No wonder when asked by the Almighty, "Son of man, can these bones live?" The prophet answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest."

After relocating to Jerusalem, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his wife Deborah had their first child who was named "Ben Zion Ben-Yehuda". He was brought up in a revolutionary environment which was strictly only Hebrew speaking, becoming the first native Hebrew speaker in about two millennia. This unique task was an extreme hardship for Eliezer and Deborah, many tried to dissuade them and they were even told their son would be mentally deficient. Yet, Eliezer fanatically stayed to the course. Until their son was speaking well, he did not hear a single word of another language. Shalom Spiegel commented, "...he remained firm, and by his extreme fanaticism achieved the miracle; he proved that Hebrew could become the language of life and the home, of wife and

children and all daily needs, an example which made the Hebrew Palestine possible." Later, Eliezer's first son and the first native Hebrew speaker in almost 2,000 years, became a well-know literary figure.

Rishon LeZion was the first Hebrew speaking settlement in what was then known as Palestine. It was founded by Eliezer's followers on the same day as his firstborn son was born. Eliezer in line with his amazing dedication to his life's cause, was present at the birth of his son and the founding of Rishon LeZion on the same day, even though many miles of difficult travel separated the events.

The Ben-Yehuda family fought an uphill battle. It seemed as if everything was against them; his tuberculosis, a struggle to make a living, those who thought reviving Hebrew was impossible and a waste of resources, the religious were vehemently opposed to the use of the "Holy Language" in the common vernacular—they even threw stones at him. Eliezer tried to win over the religious Jews of Jerusalem by following their customs, but it was no use. At one point Eliezer ended up in a Turkish prison, in a large part due to some of the religious Jewish leaders. Eliezer ended up losing his wife and three children to tuberculosis in a short period of time. Yet Eliezer kept steadfastly on with his mission. He then married Deborah's sister Pola, whose name was changed to Hemda; a Hebrew word meaning *pleasant, desirable, cherished* and used in the Bible to describe the land of Israel. Hemda bore six children, two of whom died in childhood.

Eliezer ran the newspaper, taught Hebrew, invented and discovered lost Hebrew words for the many modern things that did not exist 2,000 years ago and worked on his extensive Hebrew dictionary as if possessed. Above his stand-up desk there was a sign: "The day is so short, the work to be done so great." Eliezer lived to witness the British liberate Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Turks.

Eliezer's dedicated life and endurance of much hardship for the cause he believed in, is a great example. What his work achieved for the revival of the Hebrew nation, could be considered more than any other secular Zionist, especially when we realize how important language is to nationhood.

Subsequent to the great flood, the earth was of one speech and one language. After the posterity of Noah had increased substantially, they worked together to build a city and a massive tower, which has become known as the tower of Babel. The purpose of this great enterprise was for man to make himself a name and to prevent the dispersion of mankind upon the earth. In Genesis 11, it is recorded how the Almighty frustrated their purpose by confounding their language. This act forced mankind to disperse across the earth.

While language drove the Babel



The sign that Eliezer had above his desk. It reads: "The day is so short, the work to be done so great."

builders apart, at the same time it was the force which brought mankind together into various language groups, these groups then became nations. Therefore it was by means of language that God formed the nations. Acts 17:26-27 is part of the discourse of the Apostle Paul on Mars Hill. Paul says that God,

"...hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

The Apostle teaches that it was the purpose of God to create the nations and define the



Ben Yehuda's desk at which he worked standing up

territories which they should occupy upon the earth. Genesis 11 shows that God used language to accomplish this.

The many languages that exist in the earth were created by God, and were used by the Creator as a tool to form the nations. The formation of nations was to the end that they should seek the Lord says the Apostle and ultimately aiding in the Almighty's purpose of filling the earth with His glory (Numbers 14:21, Habakkuk 2:14).

The languages created at Babel and the original language created at the beginning, all became alive. New words were invented, phrases and expressions where coined, idioms came into being. Over time these languages were infused with national culture, nostalgia and deep feeling. Not only this but to many of the languages literature was added and the words of the language were set to music causing the words and phrases to contain even more depth of emotion. A phrase from a national anthem could bring tears to the eyes of one belonging to that national group, a word could be a trigger, recalling past national events, a particular person or place. This aspect of language can cause a person learning a language, to become connected to the culture of the nation and to lead them back to the roots of the nation, through literature, poetry and song. For instance, a person learning English may be led to Charles Dickens, Shakespeare or the King James Bible. However, whichever path they take through the language, before too long they will have been touched unwittingly or not, by the King James Bible. This is because the English language is permeated by phrases, sayings and thoughts from the English Bible.

So it is with the Hebrew Bible and nation. Once one tunes into the language, one will eventually be drawn to the Hebrew Bible. In the book "*Hebrew Reborn*" by Shalom Spiegel, this aspect of the Hebrew language is commented on.

"Hebrew was revived by the fathers of the enlightenment for the sake of a holy war against religion. And behold, this very language, in accordance with a hidden commandment of its nature, leads slowly but surely toward a revival of Jewish religious values. For, within the forms of this language there lies a religious content; its spirit and capacity for expression, its figures of speech and modes of thinking, are permeated with the religious contents of generations, ever since the Hebrew language became the vestment of the thought of our people. In the long history of this persistent nation there was no secular Hebrew; olden religious charms are invoked even in its most profane utterances, and break forth just where one thought to have avoided them. This inescapable enthrallment to the pious forces of the Jewish past, to the religious legacy of an ancient civilization, can be readily discerned in the lives and thought

of even the most incorrigible heretics in modern Hebrew letters.”

The revived Hebrew language living within the land of Israel, began to cause those breathing in its atmosphere to be drawn to the Hebrew Bible. Shalom Spiegel, whose book was published in 1930, compares the Hebrew Bible to the work of one of the greatest contemporary Jewish poets, Chayim Nachman Bialik; who by writing his works in Hebrew, made a large contribution to the revival of the language. “For the children of Palestine, no work is more intimate, more vivid or impressive than the Bible. It is for them a contemporary book, while Bialik is one of the elder writers who needs commentaries and tiresome explanations that chill the warmth of immediate impression.” For the children growing up in the land of Israel, speaking the ancient language, the words had so much more force and meaning in comparison to the young child in Russia who did not use the words in everyday life. To the boy speaking Hebrew in day to day life, the words of the Bible were alive. To the boy who only used the words in Synagogue and Yeshiva reading them from a page, the same power did not—indeed, could not, exist.

Not only did the revived Hebrew language draw those living in the land back to the ancient pages it had sprung from, but it allured her sons from the diaspora and aroused in them a desire to return home to their ancient roots. Shalom Spiegel writes that, “Hebrew revived old, forgotten yearnings for the motherland, and impelled the first pioneers to go up to Palestine to live the Hebrew life.” And again, “And so Hebrew became the vehicle of the whole Jewish rebirth...” It is not possible to have a living nation and a dead language. The two go together. Once more Shalom comments: “If anything be capable of proving the inward genuineness of the Jewish national renaissance, it is the rebirth of the Hebrew language of our day. This event alone has borne witness to the truth of life, to the truth of nature in our national revival.”

Like a magnet, the Hebrew language assisted drawing the Jewish people back to their land, to each other and to the roots of their nation in the Hebrew Bible. Today the living, vibrant language provides a genuine proof of the revival of the nation. Eliezer understood the importance of the language in regards to the revival of the nation, but he never grasped the full extent of the force, influence and results the revival of the Hebrew language would have on his people. The religious orthodoxy that so vehemently opposed his work, never understood what a positive force the revival of Hebrew would be for the spiritual aspect of the nation. Shalom Spiegel writes about the heretic, Ben-Yehuda and the rival religious orthodoxy:

“Just as they could hardly have surmised that this heretic, through his unwearying service to the Hebrew word, unconsciously aroused the

religious forces latent within it. For there is no such thing as creedless Hebrew. He who conjures up Hebrew at the same time involuntarily opens sluices for the obstructed springs of an ancient religious civilization. Though he may not welcome them, neither can he rid himself of the spirits he has called up.”

“So, too, against his own will and intention, will the life work of Ben Jehuda, who thought to command the destinies of the Hebrew language, succumb to the ineffaceable runes of religion within the language. Which will do his life work no harm, but rather give it deeper significance. Unwittingly, he has become more than the mere renewer of spoken Hebrew.”

The Holy words and thoughts that the Hebrew language communicated in its early life, through the pen of Moses the man of God, became part and parcel of the language, which cannot be removed from it. Via the expressions and memories assimilated into the language, the Hebrew prophets whisper to one, kindling in one an attraction to delve into their thundering discourses. In the land of Israel one stands on the



Part of Ben Yehuda's library temporarily in storage

very soil and walks upon the mountains, where the great events of Scripture took place. Both of these spiritually invigorating elements were restored to the Jewish nation not through the religious Jews—they opposed them with every sinew of their being!—but through the secular, non-religious Jews. In the purpose of God this could be for one simple reason. No one can ever say, with even a shred of validity, that those pioneers that returned to the land and those who dedicated themselves to the revival of the language were striving to fulfill Bible prophecy. They simply did not believe it. Even until now, these three elements together; land, language and people—are helping to empower a religious revival in the nation of Israel. Eliezer and the other secular Zionists may have also been the cause for a great religious revival in the nation of Israel.

While a language may have roots that direct us to the Bible, a language may also have vulgar weeds that have grown up that direct us away

from God or to wicked thoughts. Due to these two factors all languages are not equal. A culture that has been heavily influenced by the Bible over many years, will as has been brought out, contain certain elements that guide us to the Bible. At the time of Nehemiah there was a language problem amongst the returned Jews:

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.”


Due to assimilation with the world, the Jewish people were beginning to lose their language, which would lead to a loss of their unique Bible-based culture and ultimately to a departure from the truth of God. Zephaniah 3:9 prophesies of the future when the revival of Hebrew as a true Holy Language will be complete. Language and way of life are very much linked together. Here in Zephaniah it speaks of both: “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”

Scholars have told us that Aramaic was the language that Jesus spoke and the language that was used at that time. However, some are beginning to question this—but don't expect a big change of opinion! The movie “The Passion” was all in Aramaic, and with rising world-wide anti-Semitism and many attempts to remove historical ties of the Jewish people to Israel, I can hardly see it becoming popular to promote a Hebrew speaking Jesus. The Dead Sea Scrolls present a very different picture than the old Aramaic theory, with approximately 80% written in Hebrew; including day-to-day letters, general commentaries and literature from the era of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we discuss the revival of the Kingdom again to Israel, the elements of a kingdom are listed: a king, a royal family, a land, a capital city, laws to govern... yet a key element of a kingdom is a language. Over the last century the Hebrew language has come back to life. As far as I know the Hebrew language is unique, as the only ancient “dead language,” to come back to life. A revived Hebrew language is a great sign of the impending restoration of the Kingdom to Israel.

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” — Acts 1:6

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” — Acts 3:20-21.

The main sources for this article were: *Hebrew Reborn* by Shalom Spiegel; *Tongue of the Prophets* by Robert St. John; and, *Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, The Father of Modern Hebrew* by Malka Drucker. 



The Adolf Eichmann Trial

What we can learn from it today

We recently visited two exhibitions in Israel which powerfully reminded us of the events in 1961 when Adolf Eichmann—a chief architect of the Nazi Holocaust—was captured by Israeli agents in Argentina, and brought to Israel in a top secret operation for his trial.

At one of the exhibitions which was held in Tel Aviv we were fortunate enough to meet and talk with the Mossad agent who curated that display. He told us how Eichmann had been identified (largely by photographs and by his ears!).

The other exhibition was at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem where it was set against the background of the Nazi Holocaust itself. It was here, some years ago, that we had met and talked with the late Reuven Dafni who was the vice president of Yad Vashem at that time. He had been parachuted into Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia during the war together with the Israeli heroine Hannah Senez. She did not make it out alive, but Reuven Dafni did.

These interviews, as well as the exhibitions themselves, brought us just one step away from the horror of the Holocaust (sometimes also called the Shoah), as did a visit to the mass-graves in Belsen, Germany, which we were able to experience some years ago. This is not pleasant stuff—but it impresses you with the reality of what happened during those horrific times. We may not like to dwell upon these things, but we cannot shut our eyes to the facts; we cannot erase important history.

Such experiences also impress us with the truth of the Bible—especially passages like Deuteronomy 28:32-34 and verses 64-67; the Lamentations, and so forth. It is no wonder that



Reuven Dafni: Parachuted into Nazi occupied Yugoslavia in World War 2.

Jesus wept for his people when he foresaw their future.

As we can read in Ecclesiastes 7:2, “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to

his heart.”

And again, verse 4;

“The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.”

But another aspect of the whole story is brought to light by the information that was given at the Mossad exhibition on the capture of Adolf Eichmann. To give the background we quote the story of the capture as given in the exhibition information sheet, and then make an important observation. The sheet read as follows:

“Following the war, information regarding Nazi criminals was assembled by various agencies and individuals, including Nazi hunters who worked independently. In the early 1950’s, due to more urgent priorities, and lacking the capabilities required for a worldwide operation, both the General Security Services and the Mossad declined to dedicate the necessary resources required to track down Nazi criminals.

“Eichmann, who was captured by the Allied Powers after the war, had escaped and eventually reached Argentina under a false identity. His wife and son later joined him. Some time later, Eichmann’s son Nicholas befriended a beautiful German girl his age, Silvia Hermann.

“Nicholas was unaware that Sylvia’s father was a Jew and a survivor of the Holocaust; the young man had no reservations about expressing his opinion of Jews. Lothar Hermann, who was blind, suspected that there was a family connection between Nick and Adolf Eichmann. He immediately communicated his suspicion to Dr. Fritz

Bauer, a Jew who was serving as chief prosecutor of Hessen in Germany. The latter passed the information on to the Mossad. However, two people who were dispatched to verify the information reached the same conclusion: the supposed owner of the house where they were sent, Mr. Schmidt, was definitely not Eichmann. Furthermore, the dirty and squalid suburb in which the house was located was not a place where a senior Nazi officer would have chosen to reside. “The identity of the sub-tenant, Mr. Klement, whose name appeared on the electricity meter next to that of Mr. Schmidt, was never checked out.

“Two years later, in December of 1959, Bauer arrived in Israel for a meeting with the government’s legal advisor and the head of the Mossad, and delivered a new piece of information: Eichmann had escaped to Argentina with the aid of the Vatican and a passport in the name of ‘Ricardo Klement.’

“Using this new information, Zvi Aharoni was dispatched to Argentina. On his way there, he stopped off in Germany and, with the aid of a Jewish resident, prepared a copy of Eichmann’s SS file, left for him by Bauer in his Frankfurt office.

“Within days, Aharoni had found the new address for Klement: 14 Garibaldi Street. Aharoni returned to Israel with photographs of the house, Klement’s family, and Klement himself.

“The forensic Lab of the Israel Police Department studied photographs, comparing them to photos of Eichmann taken during the war, and reached the conclusion that Klement was most probably Adolf Eichmann.

“All of the intelligence material that had been verified was collected in a file entitled “Dybukk”—the code name given to Eichmann.”

The information sheet explains how Eichmann was discovered. But we must point out that Adolf Eichmann escaped to Argentina “with the aid of the Vatican and a false passport in the name of ‘Ricardo Klement.’”

Now several writers have made the connection between Nazi war criminals and the Vatican. For example, the book by Mark Aarons and John Loftus entitled *Unholy Trinity* tells of Vatican activity in this field code-named “Operation Ratline.” Another book entitled *Nazis on the Run* by Gerald Steinacher is also packed with information—information that was not made public at the time of the Eichmann trial. So, again, Bible truth is brought to light endorsing what Scripture tells us of the great Roman Catholic apostasy.

As the Second World War came to its close, the Vatican needed to continue the struggle against Communism. The Church was alarmed, and spread that alarm among the Allies warning them of the terrible consequences that would follow a Communist penetration of Western



The false passport obtained by Adolf Eichmann with the aid of the Vatican and Red Cross. It was issued in the false name Eichmann used: Ricardo Klement



Video screen grabs of Vatican historian and Ivo Omracanin: “We’ve got to keep a sort of reserve (of Nazis) on which we can draw in the future.”

Europe. It must also be remembered that Jews were seen as “Bolsheviks” (Communists), and it was thought by some that a Jewish state in the Middle East would be a foothold for the enemy in that important part of the world.



The witness box in which Eichmann sat during his trial on display in the Exhibition

The Vatican’s concern over advancing Communism has been expressed by their official historian “Father” Graham:

“Communism was a threat to the Church on two levels—namely, on the theological, theoretical, ideological level—namely, on the theory that God doesn’t exist and then that this modern society should be based on godlessness. And then the second, on the practical level of simple persecution. Stalin annihilated the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party abroad was obviously following suit. If they could ever get control of the political power they too would follow the same pattern. So, on this double level there was perfectly good reason for the Catholic Church—and above all under the leadership of the Pope—to take a very dim view indeed of the Soviet Union, especially under Stalin.”

It was against this background that the Vatican sought to shield certain Nazi war criminals and smuggle them out of Europe in co-operation with the Red Cross organization. One high-ranking Roman Catholic cleric, Dr. Krunoslav Draganovic, told Ivo Omracanin why it was important to save anti-Communist Nazis: it was because “We’ve got to keep a sort of reserve on which we can draw in the future” (Quoted on the video *Ratlines*).

Some Nazi war-criminals simply “disappeared” with the help of the Vatican: Klaus Barbie, the notorious ‘Butcher of Lyon,’ Walter Rouff, Josef Mengelle, Erich Priebke, and of course Adolf Eichmann,—just to mention a few. The U.K.’s *Catholic Herald* (April 18, 1997) carried a front page headline: “POST-WAR VATICAN IMPLICATED IN NAZI ESCAPES.” Shimon Samuels the European director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Paris is quoted as saying: “The Church has clearly been implicated in its war against Bolshevism, and as a result it gave support to war criminals.” The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* (Jan. 15, 2006) reported that—“Pope Paul VI (formerly Cardinal Montini, Vatican deputy Secretary of State under Pius XII) helped to hide and launder property stolen from Jews in Yugoslavia. He was also involved in smuggling Croatian and Nazi war criminals out of Europe...”

But the world is deaf to truth—it doesn’t want to know, and because that is the case, there are those forces at work today that will seek to continue where the Nazis left off.

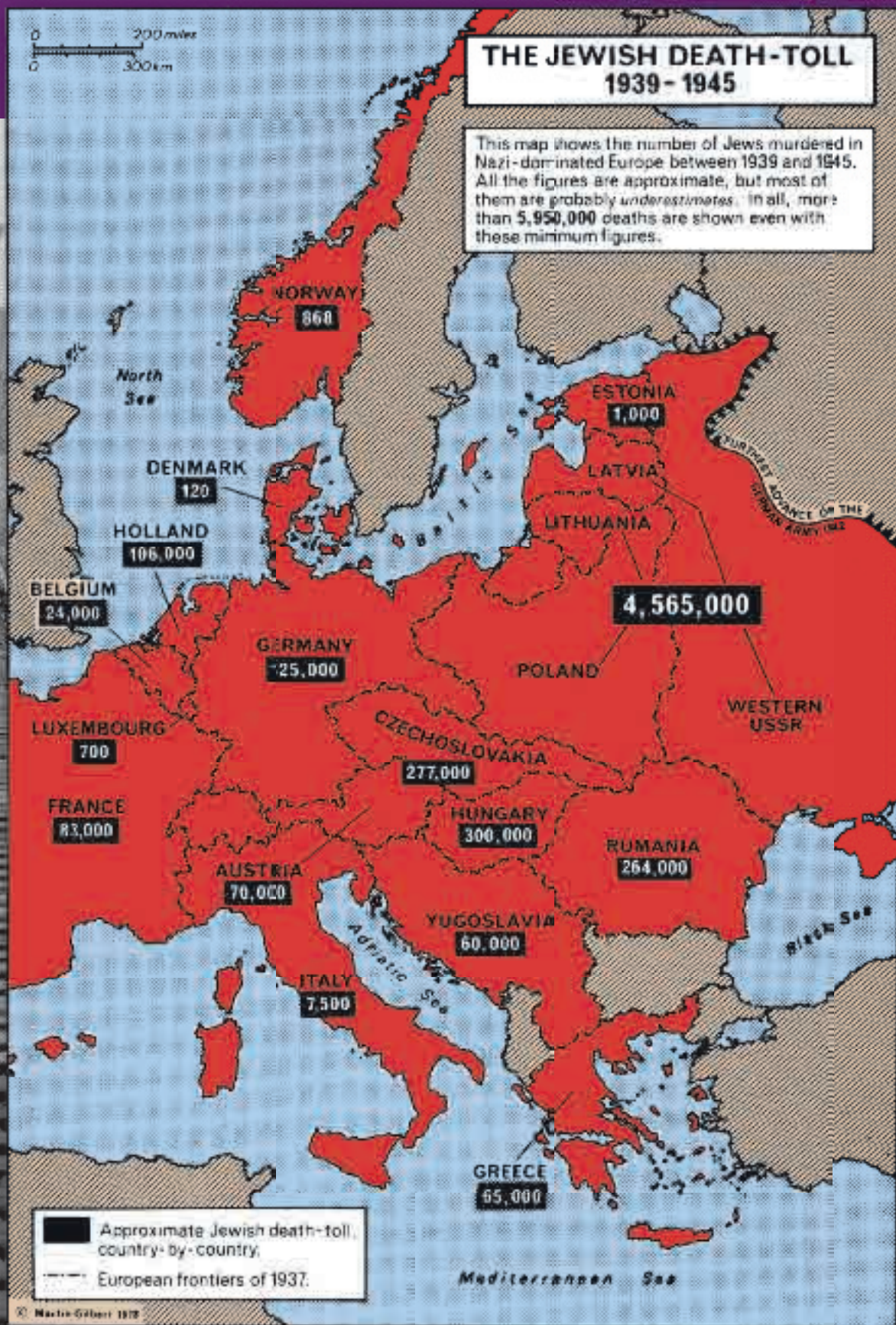
The Eichmann exhibitions have reminded us of these things, and they have reminded us once again of the warning held out in Scripture:

“...they repented not to give him glory... and repented not of their deeds... for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth...” (Revelation 16:9;11; 18:23,24).



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MAPS BY SIR MARTIN GILBERT



THE BIBLE MAGAZINE

MAPS REPRODUCED UNDER LICENSE

The Return of Jews

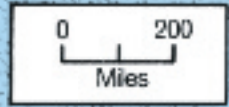
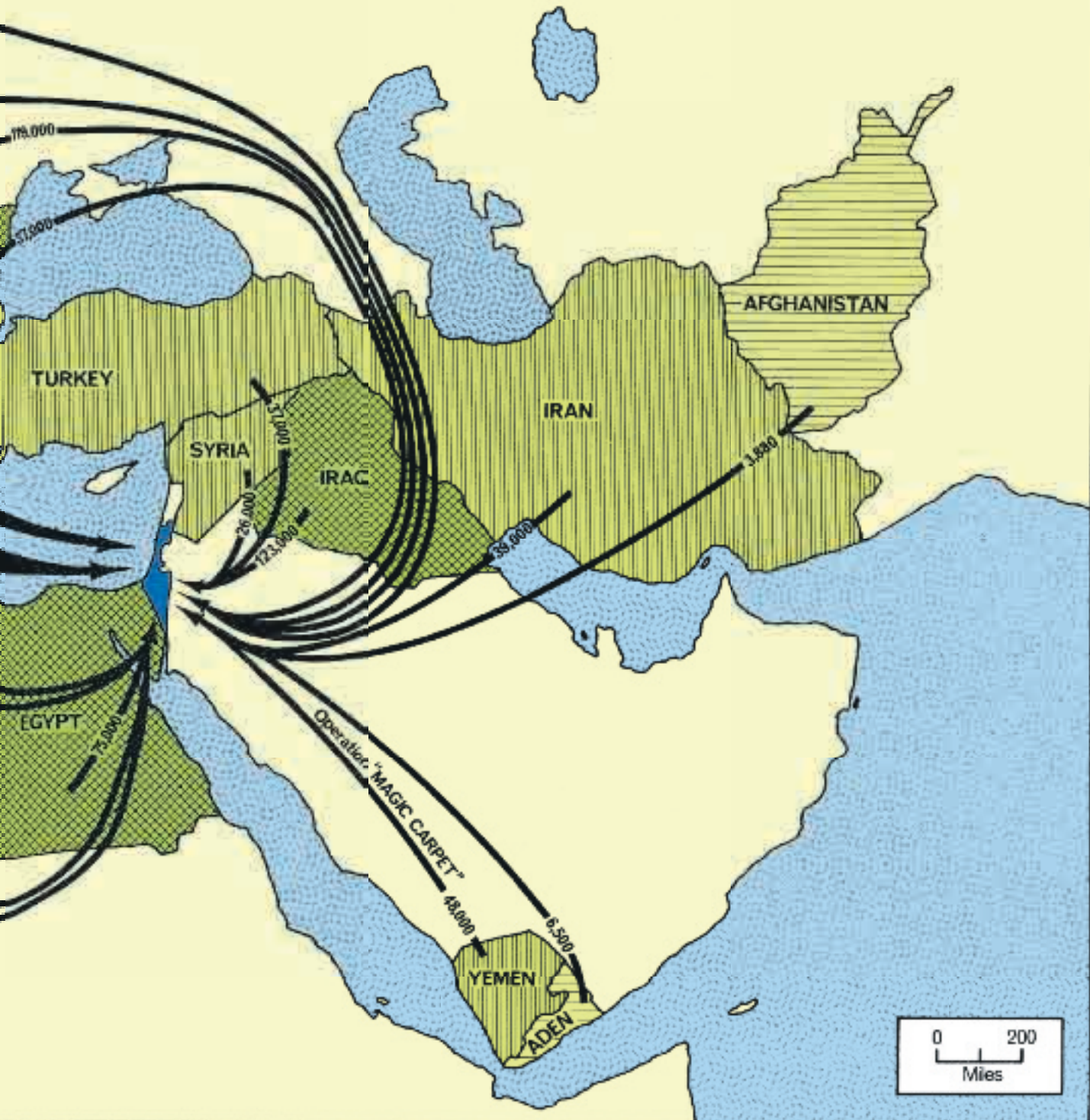


Jewish population of Israel	
1948	657,000
1950	1,203,000
1958	1,810,000
1962	2,069,000

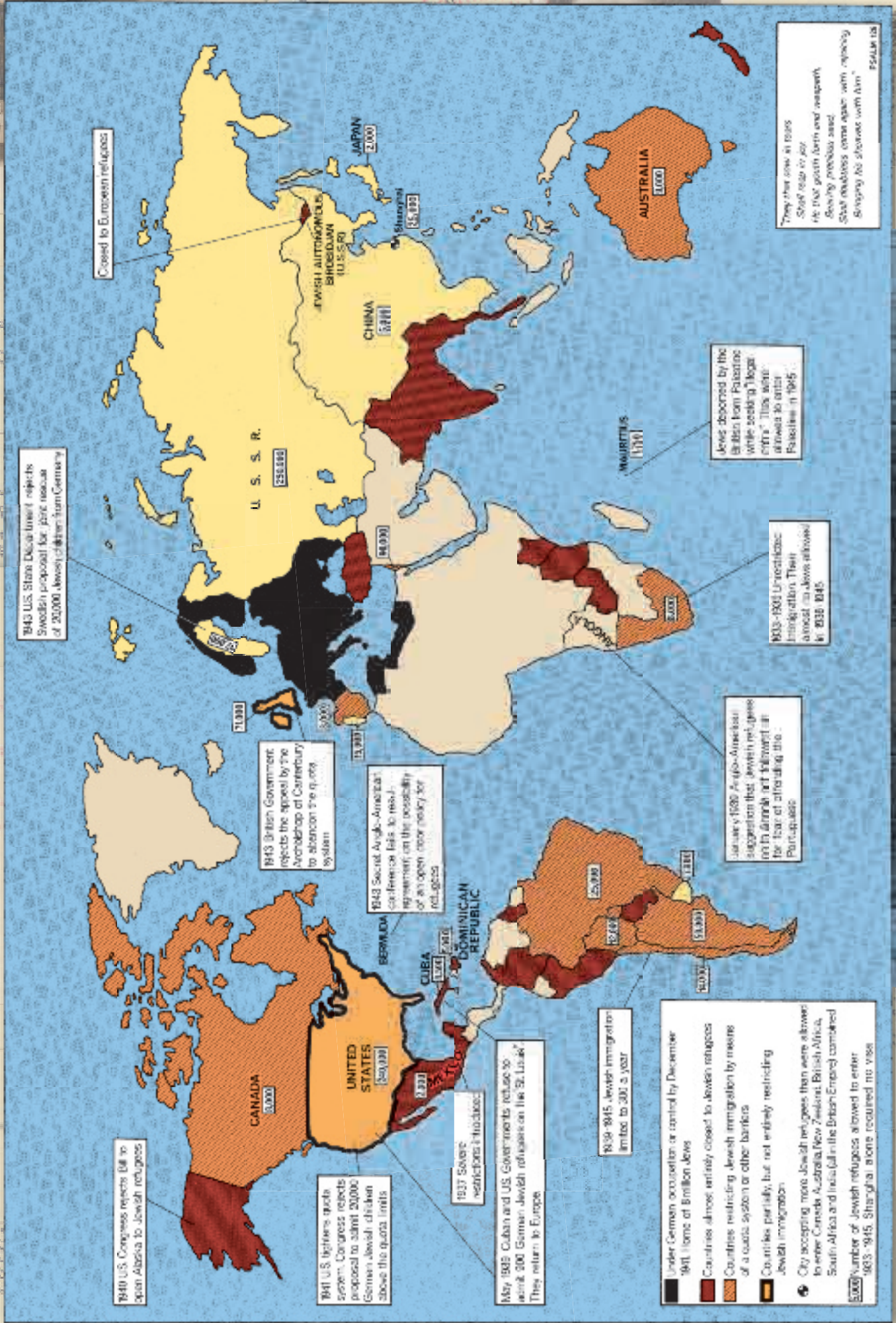
to Zion 1948-1964

- Over 50,000 Jews returning to Israel
- Over 10,000 Jews returning to Israel
- Over 1,000 Jews returning to Israel

"I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel"
EZEKIEL 11:17



THE SEARCH FOR SAFETY 1933-1945



1922



1948

THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER PALESTINE

By Brian Luke ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA.

The great war of 1914-1918 was later called the World War because it involved as never before a large number of countries from five continents. The theatre of operations was principally Europe but the whole region of the Middle East was engulfed in the violence of war. Britain's central involvement meant that for the first time in history young men from all parts of the British Empire, from Canada to Australia, from New Zealand to India, rallied to the call to arms. It was called at first the Great War, Winston Churchill described it in his memoirs as "Armageddon." More than 20 million lives were lost and the borders of many countries, new and old, were up for debate. The League of Nations met in many conferences, like San Remo in April 1920, and sought to redraw the borders of many countries and of peoples of the Middle East who hitherto had no fixed boundaries. Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and others were all part of this revision.

Britain in Egypt

The Turkish Empire had occupation of virtually all of the North African coast from the 8th century to the 19th century. In the 1870's the Sultan was finding it very difficult to monitor all these lands. In 1882 Britain helped out by landing forces in Egypt which was the more appropriate because the recent construction of the Suez Canal meant that Britain had a double interest in Egypt, having bought the majority of shares in the canal company.

Jewish Colonies in Palestine

The depressed state of the Turkish Empire also influenced the Sultan to authorise the new settlements of (Russian) Jews in Palestine. These were called Kibbutzim and began in 1865. So many factors were coming together that one cannot help but see the Hand of God in world

A Mandate: A Commission issued by the League of Nations (precursor of the United Nations) authorising a selected power to administer, control and develop a territory for a specified purpose.

In 1848 Dr. John Thomas wrote:

"I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and promoting its colonization, by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt. The present decisions of 'statesmen' are destitute of stability. A shooting star in the political firmament is sufficient to disturb all the forces of their system; and to stultify all the theories of their political astronomy. The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded, and which her counsellors will not only be willing, but eager, to adopt when the crisis comes upon them."

Elpis Israel

affairs. The return of the Jews to the Land of their fathers was the subject of many Bible prophecies.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:11-12).

"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 land whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

After 1,800 years of contempt and persecution among the Gentile nations Jews were beginning to return to the Land promised to their fathers, a matter of profound excitement to Bible students of the times. In a burst of typical anti-Semitism the Russian Czar dispelled all Jewish men from the Russian army. The Turkish finances were so strained that despite their Moslem beliefs they were willing to sell portions of the Holy Land to these Russian and Polish emigrants. In Britain the Palestine Exploration Fund completed in 1875 a map of the Holy Land with every detail desired for new occupants. For a land that had stood still in almost complete silence for 1800 years these were exciting happenings indeed. We can see the Hand of God in these events when we know what the Bible had stated so many years before.

All Eyes Suddenly upon Palestine

In the year 1898 Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany

made a visit to Turkey. Various European powers had chipped away at the borders of the Turkish Empire so when the Kaiser came with support and gifts the Sultan gave him a right royal welcome. And when it was finished in Istanbul 5,000 Turkish soldiers accompanied the Kaiser into Palestine. Also Germany—the new united Germany since 1870—had an interest in the Holy Land. He returned in 1911 and was again so warmly welcomed at the Sublime Porte. It was probably these two visits that account for Turkey switching her alliance and joining with the Axis powers for World War I. Alas, we remember that the Suez Canal was owned and occupied by the British. This meant that on the eastern bank of Suez Britain was in direct contact with Turkey and therefore with Germany, her enemy in the War.

Britain in Palestine

In 1915 British Empire forces experienced a crushing defeat on the heights of Gallipoli, on the range of mountains that line the northern shores of the Dardanelles. More than 30,000 men died in this ill-conceived invasion. So the British forces were licking their wounds after this humiliating defeat; yet many thousands of her soldiers, from the colonies of Australia, New Zealand, India had not gone home but were being kept in Egypt on the banks of the Nile in some kind of readiness. With the increased danger to the Suez Canal it was suddenly just too tempting for Britain to cross the Canal and occupy also the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. Britain was now in the Holy Land and her troops enjoyed one victory after another as she slowly but surely pushed the Turks (assisted by German officers) out of Palestine. It was tough fighting in the dry and stony desert of the Sinai. The commanding officer was General Allenby who, it is said, read his Bible every day and was in awe of the fact that in the land where Jesus Christ was born and lived and died and rose again, here he was lifting the thirteenth century hold of Muslims over the Holy Land. What evaded the Crusaders of the mediaeval years, Allenby with his young men from far flung areas of the Empire was now achieving.

Beersheba and the Balfour Declaration

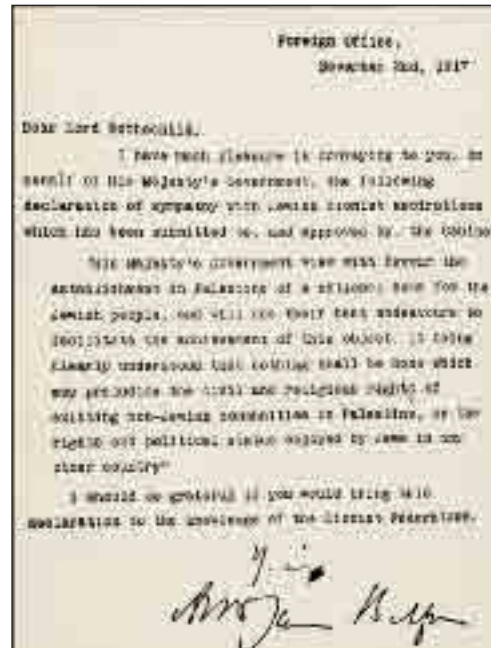
The pivotal battle in this campaign for the Holy Land was fought at Beersheba. The Turks had built a fortified line from Gaza to Beersheba and were expecting another attack on the city of Gaza. On the day before that battle Arthur James Balfour presented to the British war-time cabinet a small but significant statement, as follows:

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

It was only 66 words but after brief discussion it passed the Cabinet, dated 31st October 1917, with only minor dissent.



Stamps issued in Israel to mark 50 years (jubilee) from the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to 1967. The top Hebrew word reads “jubilee.”



Map of the Palestine British Mandate granted at San Remo in 1920.



Australian light cavalrymen and English infantrymen in the trenches near Gaza as Allied forces move from Egypt towards Palestine during the First World War

Amazingly the battle of Beersheba was fought the next day without any knowledge of the Declaration in London, made public on the 2nd December. It was an exciting development for Jews around the world but especially so for Chaim Weizmann, the skilful chemist of Manchester who had gained the backing of the powerful British Empire to provide a national home for Jewish people, who had been scattered among all nations for 1,850 years.

In keeping with the intention of the Declaration the battle of Beersheba was won late in the day when the Australian Light Horse Brigade swept over the trenches of the Turks (and Germans) and made straight for this ancient city with its wells of water to quench their perishing thirst. It was in this very city 3,500 years before that Abraham the father of the Jewish people was encamped when he received the confirmation by Covenant of the promises God had made to him (Genesis 22:15-19). Surely God was in both events though separated by 3,500 years.

Allenby pressed on with increasing success until Jerusalem was taken on December 11, 1917 but the dispossession of the Turks didn’t stop till Damascus, the capital of Syria, and all Syria and Lebanon fell into Allied hands.

The End of the War and the Mandate

At the beginning of this article there is a

quotation from Dr. John Thomas, based purely on Bible grounds, that it would be Britain who would provide protection for Jews to return to their ancient land and build a new state. His words are emphatic and unambiguous. He also stated, right back in 1848, that the British aristocracy will be pleased to see this when the time came, even though in normal times you could never persuade them to become involved in such a dangerous and unlikely venture. English gentry, leading ministers, were hardly given to public display of allegiance to Jews, who in fact were second-class citizens in most people's eyes because of their involvement in the crucifixion of Christ and their rejection of him as the promised Messiah. So why would English gentry and lords muddy themselves with Jewish emancipation?

But the word of God said that they would do this. And now the Balfour Declaration had put it into solemn words.

When the Great War was over in 1918 the British Empire occupied all Palestine, Syria, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. Some of these names were just unidentified regions, with very limited population who for the most part were Bedouin Arabs of nomadic way of life and almost no government as structured apart from that of their Muslim religion. Large numbers of their young men had responded to the brilliant diplomacy of the British General T.E. Lawrence, for whom they had great respect and loyalty. His message was that if they would rebel against Turkey then the British Empire would support their development of independence as separate kingdoms. They did rebel and fought against the Turkish control right through to Damascus and now expected the independent national standing they were promised.

This was all good but how would Britain balance these promises with what she had promised to the Jews, "a national home in Palestine?"

The League of Nations was the international body responsible for determining the terms of peace and the new borders of nations. Britain was in occupation of Palestine and so was the obvious power to receive the Mandate for the Holy Land. Would they want it? Would the powers that be want what Britain had in mind? Would the Jews wish for British jurisdiction? Would the Arab peoples be happy with their part of the deal?

The Debate on the Mandate

Despite the existing occupation of Britain in the whole region, the final decision was not made until July 22, 1922! All the great powers had



Benedict XV opposed the British Mandate and the concept of a national home for the Jewish people, but the Vatican was excluded from the San Remo Conference.

their say and, of course, the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine presented their case. The French, the Italians, the Russians, the Americans, the British all put forward their concerns and their desires. Yet the most protracted opposition to Britain receiving the Mandate was by the Vatican through the Pope. When the Balfour Declaration was first announced the Pope was jubilant and even more so when Britain displaced the Muslim Turks from the Holy Land. But with time the Vatican changed its tune and became bitterly opposed to the Declaration and thus to Britain as Mandator. The idea of unbelieving Jews making a 'home' in Palestine horrified the Vatican, especially that they would administer Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and other holy sites in Palestine, which the Vatican saw as the heart and centre of Christianity. Not even Protestant Britain had their confidence. So from 1918 to 1922 the debate went on and even when most other nations were satisfied with the arrangement the Pope kept up his campaign right to the end.

It is interesting to record that at this time in history the Vatican had lost its statehood (from 1870-1929) and therefore was unable to present their case directly to the League of Nations. Nor were Italy and other Catholic European nations prepared to strongly voice the Pope's views! So the Papacy had to present their case through the Latin American countries, with much less impression.

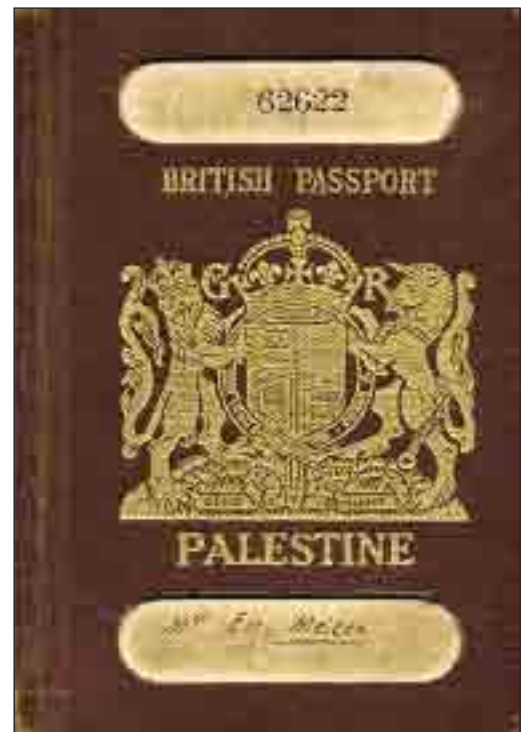
And The Lords of Britain...

It is an amazing truth that as July 22nd drew near a debate was held in the House of Lords to withdraw Britain from the Balfour Declaration. The reader may remember the opinion of Dr John Thomas that the rulers of Britain would have no taste for fostering the return of the Jews to the land of Israel to make their home. Well, he was absolutely right for on June 21, 1922 the House of Lords turned down the Mandate by a vote of 60 to 29! On July 4th, Winston Churchill spear-headed an historic debate in the House of Commons and with wise and sympathetic words he steered the decision, 292 for the British Mandate 35 against.

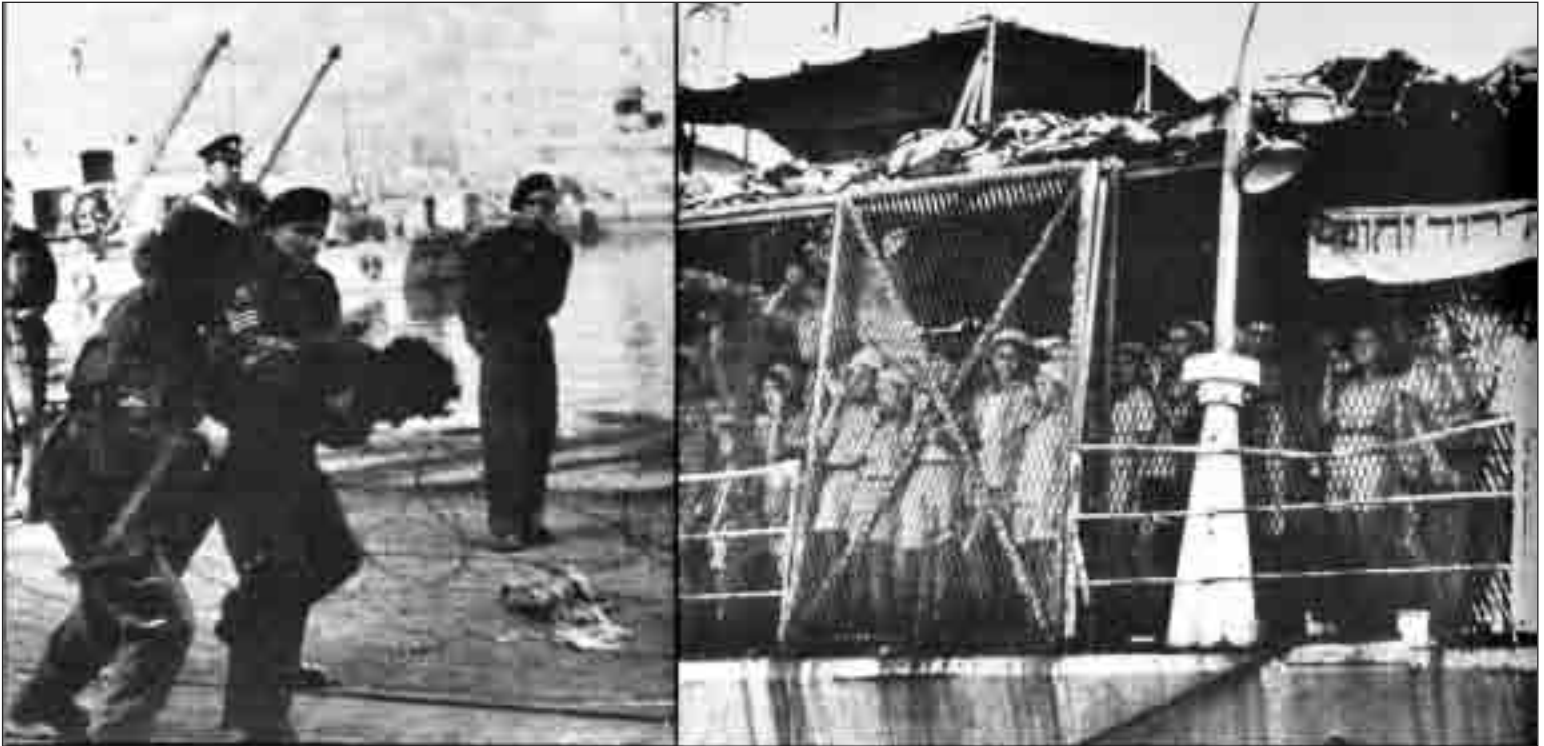
The finger of God had pointed to Britain to play a major role in this historic task and although not to their taste in later years, they rose to shoulder it notwithstanding. The time had come for Israel to come home and the God of Israel saw that this was facilitated.

1922-1948 The British Mandate Over Palestine

There were 80,000 Jews in Palestine at the opening of World War I and only 60,000 at its close. In 1919 only 1,800 immigrated into the land and 4,000 to 5,000 for each of the next four years. So it wasn't a great flood of Jewish arrivals. The doors of America were still wide open and many thousands of Jews emigrated there from east and



A British passport for Palestine from the Mandate period



As Britain tries to maintain control over Jewish immigration to Palestine, British soldiers manhandle Jewish refugees (who had recently experienced the Holocaust) and put them in cages on ships bound for detention camps in Cyprus.

west of Europe, for the economic buoyancy of the United States was a new phenomenon and employment was abundant.

In the year 1920 an explosion of Arab hatred of Jews broke out in Palestine. Britain had negotiated with King Hussein as to the outcome of the War and of the Balfour Declaration in particular. The Arabs were essentially leaderless and without national structure so Hussein was their point of contact. He was the Sheriff of Mecca and the closest person about to represent Arab opinion, although clearly he was a religious man and not from government or administration. Britain made his two sons, Abdullah and Feisal kings of Iraq and Trans-Jordan. Despite this measure of goodwill, Arab resentment arose over the Jews who had come into their land, as they saw it and now with their enthusiasm and industry threatened to become rulers in their Palestine. This Arab resentment never went away even though regionally the bitterness did subside from time to time. It is still alive today!

The Jewish perspective was entirely opposite. "Scattered and peeled" for 1,800 years among all lands the chance to establish life in the Land promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel was just such an amazing opportunity that they could hardly be restrained by a disorganised Arab population that appeared to have done so little for this land that they claimed as their own. Even if British occupational forces sought to monitor Jewish immigration to Palestine, as they decidedly did (10,000 per year with the Peel Commission) there was no way these international wanderers could respect their laws inhibiting this unique opportunity, this door that



had opened to live in Israel of their fathers and develop their own State.

It seemed impossible but that tension would rise. Britain increased the controls of its military government, the Arabs kept up their antagonism to the Jewish progress and the Jews became



End of the Mandate as Commissioner leaves.



more and more determined to build their national home. Violence broke out in many forms, even during World War II. Britain, driven to the wall by Nazi Germany, could see how useful Jewish soldiers in Palestine and Egypt would be to the general position of the Allies.

1948—Goodbye to The Mandate

There was something tragic in the bitterness that developed between the Jews and the British occupation. It began optimistically with the dispelling of the Turks and the Balfour Declaration. Never had any Gentile offered such a break to world Jewry. God had said they would come home to the Land promised to their fathers. The time had come!—and the British Mandate gave governmental structure to a long neglected land of Palestine, through which organised and civilised life could be constructed despite the clamouring opposition of the surrounding Arab countries.

We may safely say that Israel of today would have been impossible without the Mandate. By 1948 the Jewish population had grown to 650,000, a kind of critical mass able to withstand the onslaught of five neighbouring nations.

On the May 14, 1948 British High Commissioner Sir Alan Cunningham departed the shore of Haifa with a final salute.

That afternoon, at 4pm the State of Israel was proclaimed by its Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion.

The British Mandate had fulfilled God's purpose.



NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM: The Jewish Exile & the Hope of Return

By Ken Loveridge VERNON B.C.

Evidence of the destruction of the temple visible today in Jerusalem

It was the 9th of AV, in the year 70 of the Christian era, when the Roman troops of Titus Flavius, the son of the Emperor Vespasian, penetrated the last wall which protected the Temple of the Jews. The temple complex had taken almost a hundred years for the Herods to refurbish, but the invading army would take only a few months to remove all evidence of its existence from the top of the mount. Josephus, once a Jewish general, and now a favored captive, would record that more than a million of those in the city of Jerusalem would perish at the hands of the troops, and that many more would be severely dealt with in the months following.

Jewish society revolved around the Temple, and its destruction meant that the worship of Yahweh would never again be the same. The daily offerings ceased, and Jerusalem could no longer serve as the focal point for the feasts.

“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles” (Deuteronomy 16:16).

Titus Vespasian had been given control of the Jewish War when his father had returned to Rome to pursue the Imperial throne, following the death of Nero, and his three successors. His armies had proclaimed him Emperor in Egypt, and he had returned to Italy. Titus was given the task of putting down the insurrection in Judea.

Milman (*History of the Jews*, 2nd edition) tells us that 1,100,000 perished at Jerusalem, 1,700 at Machaerus, 3,000 at Jardes, 960 at Masada, and 3,000 at Cyrene before the War was concluded with the Fall of Masada. At the same time, 101,700 prisoners were held by the Romans at the Jordan, at Gischala in the Galilee, and at Jerusalem. In addition, we can well imagine the loss of life from massacre, famine



Romans carry their spoils from Jerusalem

and disease over the seven year war. Titus shared his triumph with his father in Rome, when the wealth of the Temple was put on display, along with the Zealot leaders and the best of the Jewish prisoners. Some say the looted Temple funds paid for the building of the Colosseum in Rome.

After the previous destruction of the city and Temple, in 588 BC, great numbers of the people had been taken away into exile, but a larger number had been left behind in the Babylonian province, to care for the land. Now, once the wave of revenge and plunder subsided, those who had not opposed the Romans, or been unfortunate enough to have been caught in the siege of Jerusalem, were also allowed to continue in the Land. Exile for these people still lay in the future. In AD 73, the Romans were finally able to take control of Masada, the last Zealot stronghold.

One of the special treasures, or taxes, set up under Vespasian was the *Fiscus Judaicus* which appropriated to the Capitoline Temple the two drachmas which every Jew used to pay annually to the Temple at Jerusalem, as well as an additional tax. The number of Jews in the empire at the time was about 5 million.

While the Assyrians and Persians had resettled the population of defeated nations in other conquered territories, hoping to ensure their loyalty by making them dependent on the government as foreigners in a strange land, the Romans had no such plan for this “stubborn and rebellious people.” In AD 70 Jews were citizens throughout the empire, and enjoyed its privileges. The Apostle Paul, for example, was a member of a family from Tarsus, which had ties to Jerusalem as Pharisees, but which also had Roman citizenship.

Titus succeeded Vespasian as emperor, and after his death, his brother Domitian commenced a reign of persecution. He was succeeded by Nerva, who then passed his mantle to Trajan, his adopted son. Less than 50 years later, under Trajan, Jews in many parts of the empire revolted once more. In some areas they were initially successful, but the weight of the empire soon tipped the balance. The war of retribution continued until the death of Trajan. He was succeeded by Hadrian in 117 AD. Hadrian initially set out to appease the Jews, and even declared that the Temple was to be rebuilt. Warned that a Temple in Jerusalem would only encourage the Jews to rebel, Hadrian sought to alter the plans, and to have the Temple built elsewhere, which the Jews saw as withdrawing permission. Soon after, the daughter of Hadrian was found murdered, and the Jews were accused of the crime. Hadrian's conciliatory policies came to an end. Plans were made for the city of Aelia Capitolina to be built as a Roman colony, inhabited by Gentiles, (from which Jews were to be excluded) and for a pagan temple of Jupiter to be constructed on the Temple Mount. Many laws were decreed against the Jews, including forbidding the rites of circumcision, observance of the Sabbath laws, and family purity. The violation of any decree was punishable by death. In addition, the emigration of Diaspora Jews to the Land was forbidden. In 130 AD, the name of Jerusalem disappeared, and the province became known as Syria Palaestina. The Jews ceased to have a homeland.

The revolt inspired by this news in 132 AD was led by Bar Kokhba, who Rabbi Akiva claimed was the Messiah. Thousands of Jews from the Diaspora flocked to follow him. At first there was great success, but the Romans with their usual thoroughness applied the weight of arms, and after seven years of fighting, the Jews were surrounded at Beitar. Betrayal from within the city brought about the death of the last of the religious leaders, as well as Bar Kokhba's assassination. Throughout Judea, the Jews were forced to go underground to preserve their lives. The loss of life for both the Romans and the Jews was very high, and those who wished to continue to live as observant Jews were forced to flee the Land.

About 250 AD, the Tenth Legion moved from Aelia Capitolina to the Red Sea, perhaps indicating the unimportance of the city at that time. Roman policy wouldn't entertain the thought of rebuilding the Jewish Temple until Julian the Apostate authorized it in 361 AD to spite his opponents, the Christians.

Love of Zion and the yearning for return to it have always constituted a major theme in Judaism. Throughout the ages, sporadic attempts were made by individuals and groups—often under terrible conditions—to “go up to the Land” and settle it. In the 19th and 20th centuries organized efforts were made to achieve that end. The Return to Zion started the day the Jews were driven from Zion. The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel came about as a result of many centuries of yearning by the

people.

The Book of Genesis records for us the promises to Abraham.

“Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18). These promises were reaffirmed to Isaac and



The Jewish people have mourned the loss of the temple for 2,000 years

Jacob, and Joseph, on his deathbed in Egypt, said “... I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (Genesis 50:24).

The promise that the people would be regathered after their dispersal is found in Deuteronomy.

“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” (Deuteronomy 30:3). Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel among others repeat this theme.

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:12). “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” (Jeremiah 16:15).

“Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel” (Ezekiel 11:17).

The rabbis reinforced the sense of exile, of

The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel came about as a result of many centuries of yearning by the people.

homelessness and alienation which the nation carried with it as the centuries passed. They yearned for the past. A popular history tells us:

“In the liturgy, the yearning for Erez Israel—and particularly for Jerusalem—finds powerful expression. It was towards Jerusalem that the Jew turned when he prayed, and thrice daily he beseeched: “Gather us from the four corners of the

earth"; "To Jerusalem Thy city, return in mercy ... rebuild it soon in our days"; "May our eyes behold Thy return in mercy to Zion." The two most impressive occasions of the year—the Passover Seder and the Day of Atonement—reach their climax in the proclamation: "Next year in Jerusalem!"

To ensure that the people would not forget the destruction, a number of ordinances were put in place. So long as the Jew was in exile from Erez Israel his joy could not be complete. "Three weeks of sorrow" culminating in Tishah be-Av—the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av (July/Aug.)—were designated in order to recollect the loss of the land and the Temple.

Down the ages there were always Jews who were not content merely to pray and hope for the restoration of Zion but who, as individuals or in groups, made the decision for aliyah—or "going up"—to leave the Diaspora in order to settle in the Land of Israel. We can read the stories of many individuals, as well as many groups, who made the journey. An early group, the Karaites began their aliyah in the 9th century. Throughout the centuries, there were groups of Jews devoted to mourning the destruction of Jerusalem and to




The ninth of Av; A sombre gathering of Jewish people

the hands of man himself" was introduced by Rabbi Judah Alkalai. He argued that the settlement of Erez Israel was the primary solution to the Jewish problem in Europe.

Although the Jews were stigmatized, oppressed and beaten down for centuries, another element arose in 1881, with the assassination of the Russian Czar Alexander II. Anti-Semitism was well established throughout Europe, but the pogroms of 1881 brought a belief among the Jews that the attacks were encouraged and even organized by the government. Many felt that social change was on the way, but that Jews would continue to be

attacked. Even a revolution would not bring their freedom. Anti-Semitism made Jewish assimilation very doubtful. These doubts led to the beginnings of modern Zionism, and the belief that the future of the Jews lay in the restoration of Jewish nationhood.

Following the first of the Zionist congresses held in Switzerland in 1897, events moved swiftly to put the British in power in Palestine. The Great War began in 1914, and brought the Turks in on the side of Germany and the Axis. Stalemate in the trenches of Europe brought the war into the Middle East, and General Allenby was able to take Jerusalem within a month of the issuance of the Balfour Declaration.

Although the Jews are now in possession of the Land, they are a democratic secular nation, and they do not yet control the area promised to Abraham. Although the exile is over, a large part of the world's Jewish population lives outside the Land. Israel is a secular society where the religious Ultra-Orthodox often clash with the political powers, and where the Temple Mount, dominated by the Dome of the Rock, is, for all intents and purposes, controlled by the Muslim population. There remains a yearning and a hope for the rebuilding of the Temple, and a restoration of the Kingdom of God, but only on the part of a small minority. Surviving as a nation for the past 2,000 years in exile, we know that God has a purpose with the Jews. Before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the people must be brought back to a knowledge of what that purpose is, and to recognize their Messiah. 



The ninth of Av; Jews fast and show great emotion as they mark the destruction of the temple

praying for the redemption of Zion. Known as the Avelei Zion—"Mourners of Zion," their customs can apparently be traced to the period immediately following the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. Groups were to be found throughout the Diaspora, as well as in Jerusalem. After the 7th century Arab conquest, a Jewish community resettled in Jerusalem, and a revival took place. Several groups also settled in Tiberias and Safed in the Galilee.

In spite of the efforts to resettle the Land, there remained the widespread belief that the redemption of the Jewish people would come in God's own time and that there was little that man could do actively to hasten the process. Some even thought it was impudent of man to try. Some religious authorities forbade any attempts to do so. It was only in the 1840's that "the daring concept that redemption is primarily in

"Learn of Me" - Matt 11:29

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THE RETURN

By Paul Billington BRANTFORD, ON.

T

he road to Zion is long; it is uphill, it passes through mountain ravines and narrow clefts littered with burnt-out vehicles which testify to past wars and the lost lives of those who fought to reach the city of God—but never made it. It speaks of anguish, of tears—and hope!

It was in the chaos that followed the Second World War that thousands upon thousands of homeless displaced persons flooded Europe. Mingled together in special DP (Displaced Persons) Camps there were Germans (some former SS officers), Jewish Holocaust survivors, Communists who were fleeing Stalin—or elsewhere being planted by him as a means of penetrating western allies; there was a whole mingled host of ex-Nazi collaborators, orphans, gypsies and other wanderers. Most had nowhere to go—whilst a few hoped to reach Zion.

Some 55 million people are said to have lost their lives during that horrific carnage—and about six million of them were Jews. Those readers who study the prophecies of Scripture may ask whether there is any reference to this—the greatest war in human history—in the Bible. We would answer yes, there is. It is included in the Apocalypse, and the section of it which deals with “the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Revelation 15, 16). It can also be seen in prophecies which predict the restoration of the Jewish people to their land—for example:

“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: 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” (Ezekiel 20:33-34).

It will be noticed that the phrase “with fury poured out” appears twice. This repetition gives us a hint that the fulfillment unfolds in two parts. We may also see a connection with the vials—the Jewish *Tanach* (Stones edition) reads: “with outpoured wrath.” That is the language of the vials.

“Outpoured Wrath”

The vials of wrath were poured out upon Europe because “they repented not of their deeds” (Revelation 16:11). But as with the plagues upon

Egypt, so again the Jews would suffer some of the effects before deliverance.

“At the end of 1945, about 7 million DPs roamed Western Europe, 7 million more were in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and there were 10 million freed German war prisoners. After the nightmare of the Holocaust, the ever-rising tide of Jewish refugees, with no homes to which they could or would return, faced yet another horror. The only Allied policy at that juncture—and for the next few years—was to keep the DPs alive. There were no long-range plans.”

According to Joseph Schwartz of the Joint Distribution Committee and an Advisor on Jewish



Locals in War torn Belgium



TO ZION

Burnt out wrecks on the road to Zion: Grim reminders of the tragic casualties suffered in the 1948 war of Independence

affairs to US commanders in Europe, out of the 7.5 million Jews inhabiting Europe before the war, 6.25 million had been killed or had died. In a confidential report (since published) he had said: “We have a situation in Europe today which gives us very little reason for optimism. We have a continent on which five-sixths of the Jewish population has been exterminated. We have a continent on which there are some 1,250,000 Jews left—Jews who are living under the most distressing conditions. It may be said, using a Biblical phrase, that there is not a Jewish home in Europe today in which there is not one dead. And there are many Jewish homes

in which there is not one living. Everybody is mourning for a father or a mother who has been deported and of whom no news has been heard, in mourning for children who have vanished, in mourning for some dear one and near one who will never be heard from again. There are children—thousands of them—who are without father and mother, and without anybody to look after them.”

Then, describing the arrival of these survivors at the camps, he said:

“They are literally without anything. They are without clothing, they are without shoes, they have no place to spend the night. They haven’t

a sou in their pockets. They have nothing to look forward to... I must tell you that many of them are swollen with hunger. Many of them cannot walk a step. Many of them need immediate medical attention and medical care. They cannot be put on their own. They cannot be told to shift for themselves. People are coming back who had been given up for dead. They come in walking like ghosts, like shadows...”

These survivors told the most horrific accounts of their experiences. Just to give one example; one young Jewess told of her daughters being taken away from her by the Nazis:

“I went home to Warsaw to my husband and my



Jewish Refugees stream out of Europe with nowhere to go... except Palestine, which was forbidden territory

two little girls just before Hitler came, on September first, 1939. See my gray hair. I know I look like an old woman. I'm thirty-eight. My hair turned gray overnight." She continued:

"One day Nazi trucks came down the street, rounding up all the children. I saw them grab my two little girls and throw them into a truck. I ran after them, screaming, 'Give me back my children.' The Nazi officer stopped the truck. " 'Which are your children?' he asked me. I pointed to them."

"The Nazi officer took my two precious children to the back of the truck, where I was standing. " 'Choose one,' he said.

"I stood there screaming. How could I choose? 'Give me back my children.' I kept pleading. "He laughed and drove away" (*Raquela: A Woman of Israel*, Ruth Gruber).

These Jewish refugees had but one burning desire, and that was to go to Zion; to Palestine, as it then was. The opportunities that had existed during the earlier days of the British Mandate had been spurned. In 1920 Britain had secured the Mandate to govern Palestine and was putting into effect the terms of the Balfour Declaration. Sir Herbert Samuel, a Jew and a Zionist had been appointed as high Commissioner. There were no restrictions on Jewish immigration—and yet in July 1920 Dr. Chaim Weizmann had to utter a heart-felt appeal: "JEWISH PEOPLE, WHERE ARE YOU?"

Not for the first time the children of Israel had despised the Land of Promise—See Numbers 14:31-32; Psalm 106:24.

It is no wonder that the gates to Palestine were closed. British policy under the post-war Labour Government had Ernest Bevin—an anti-Semite—as Foreign Secretary in control (he died suddenly in 1951). He was severely restricting Jewish entry to Palestine.

The Jews of Europe may have spurned the appeal of Chaim Weizmann in 1920, but in the 1940's another voice—a silent voice—was urging this stricken people to return to the land of their forefathers. It was as though a call from heaven had been made to the survivors in Catholic Europe:

"Come out of her, my people..."

But that actual call is yet to come. The road to Zion is not an easy one to climb!

The illegals

As Jewish refugees poured out of Eastern Europe by thousands hoping to make their way to Palestine, they had many obstacles to overcome—including Ernest Bevin's attempts to prevent them from doing so in what Winston Churchill described as a "squalid war" against the Jews. It was a most humiliating chapter in British history and contributed to that nation's decline and fall as a world power.

The details of the period were largely hidden from the British public. As it was recounted by Maureen Orth in reference to the journalist Ruth Gruber's story about the famous ship *The Exodus*:

"After a three-hour battle in which 150 were wounded and three died... Gruber caught up with the ship at the dock. The British... were



Ernest Bevin: Britain's anti-Semitic Foreign Minister after WW2



"Palestine Road (closed)"

sending the DPs away on three closely guarded 'hospital ships,' which actually functioned as 'prison ships.'... After a three-week stay in scorching heat in southern France ... the British sent them back to English prison camps in northern Germany ... Back to hell. Gruber's photograph of the refugees' unfurled Union Jack with a swastika painted on it became *Life* magazine's Picture of the Week... Ironically, Gruber's original reporting, titled, "Destination Palestine: The Story of the Haganah Ship *Exodus 1947*," was written for the *New Yorker* and edited by William Shawn... One day, over lunch at the Algonquin Hotel, Shawn had some bad news for Gruber: Raoul Fleishman, the magazine's Jewish owner, had read her piece and rejected it (as) 'too Jewish.' Then Shawn (told her), 'I called my friend Bruce Bliven at *The New Republic* and ... he said he would publish it.' To this day, none of Gruber's books that mention the British role in the creation of Israel (nor the *Life* magazine Picture of the Week) have been published in England."—

Maureen Orth, *Vanity Fair*, February 2001" (Note: since published in 2007).

But *The Exodus* is only part of this sorry story. There were many other "illegal" refugee ships. There was also the Detention Camp at Atlit where Jewish Holocaust survivors were imprisoned. There were the Detention Camps in Cyprus. As Yehuda Bauer points out in his book *Flight and Rescue: Brichah*:

"Britain became active in that crucial summer of 1946. An attempt was made in the British press to present the refugees as hoodlums influenced by the Jewish "terrorists" who were fighting Britain in Palestine. They were depicted as being young and tough, and it was charged that "their racial arrogance and their ambitions are similar to those of the Nazi youth and for the same reasons." Articles such as this were part of a general atmosphere in Britain, where most of the population supported Foreign Minister Bevin's anti-Zionist policies. In early August, British diplomacy became very active. Russian diplomats in Rumania were approached in an effort to stop illegal emigration from that country. Similar approaches were made to Czechoslovakia, Italy and, of course, Poland..."

It seems almost unbelievable that Britain, having issued the Balfour Declaration and protected Palestine from Nazi Germany, would then be found attacking Holocaust Survivors with clubs and dragging them, bodily, back to the concentration camps of Germany. Yet that is what happened.

And so it was that the north would not give up; and the south kept back (c/p Isaiah 43:6); yet her sons came from far, and her daughters from the ends of the earth.

But that was not the end of the story!

An Independent State

Britain's failure to keep the promise made in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and to use her "best endeavours to facilitate the achievement" and object of "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine was due to several factors. It was due to:

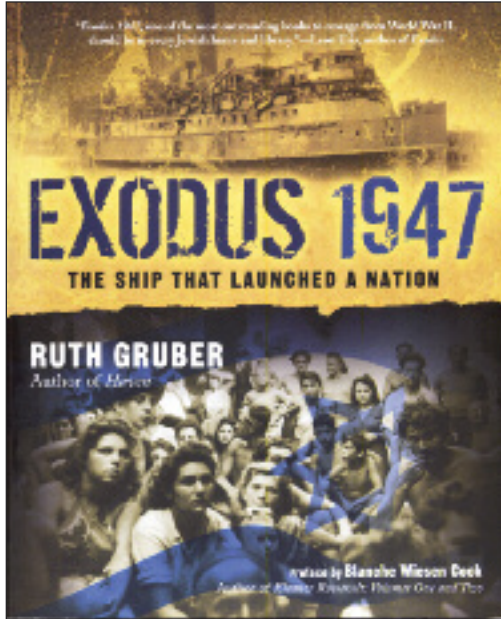
- Arab hostility created by the Vatican.
- Jewish opposition to the concept from within Britain.
- A pro-Arab Foreign Office.
- Bad political judgment.
- Other circumstances that were the result of Providence.

However we choose to analyse this, the bottom line for the Bible believer is, simply, that it was the will of God. An *independent* Jewish State had to come into being. Britain was unable to fulfil her commitment at that time, because another powerful influence was guiding affairs.

"Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way,

“Let My People Go!”

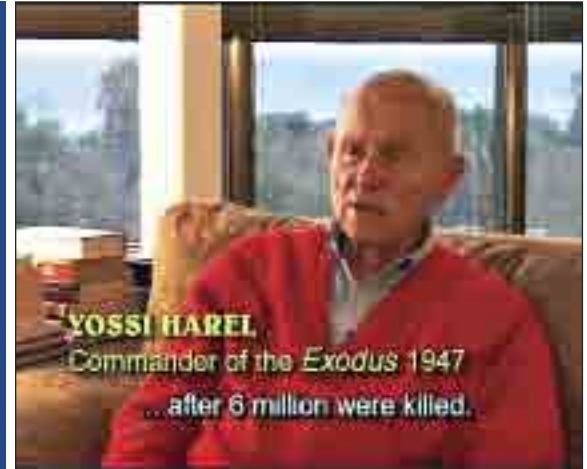
How Holocaust Survivors were prevented from returning to Zion by British Government Policy



It was the most disasterous chapter in British history. Yossi Harel commented:

“I realised what I am carrying. I am carrying the last ‘children of Israel’ who were alive in Europe. Whatever was left of my nation after 6 million were killed and the responsibility was enormous. I realised what I am carrying. On the *Exodus* it was like a small town, 4,500 people. We had elderly, children, sick; everything that you would have in a small town... the cruelty of a warship attacking a very old ship... it was beyond my understanding. They could have sunk the *Exodus*...”

Most were sent to detention camps...



wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock” (Jeremiah 31:8-10).

Who cannot see that such a prophecy has already begun to unfold? It is not completed—but a beginning is clearly seen in the partial and primary restoration of Jews in the Land today. But when David Ben Gurion declared the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, it immediately unleashed a ferocious war upon a nation of Holocaust survivors. As a result of that war many lives were lost. Many would never see an independent state. The Old City of Jerusalem was also lost in 1948—but the State of Israel was born.

Looking at the situation at that time the British General Montgomery believed that the Jews didn’t stand a chance, but the God of Heaven had decreed otherwise. Out of the ashes of the Holocaust and at the cost of much blood the Jewish State came into being.

As the prophet Amos had decreed:

“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” (Amos 9:14-15).

“Purely Political Principles”



It was the 19th Century expositor John Thomas, author of the book *Elpis Israel* who wrote:

“The pre-advantual colonization of Palestine will be on *purely political principles*; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agriculturists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth...”

There are two stages involved in the restoration of Israel. The first stage is the natural and the political, but this is to be followed by a spiritual development. On the natural level we can already see a remarkable fulfillment of Bible prophecy—consider 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.”

But this people have not been brought back to their Land so that they might establish a secular nation of atheists. They have been brought back for correction and instruction in Divine things. They are to be developed into the kingdom of God.

For over sixty years the State of Israel has had to survive in an aggressive and hostile world



The room in Tel Aviv today where David Ben Gurion declared the State of Israel in 1948.

determined to “wipe it off the map.” The people have had to suffer many forms of terrorism as well as wars instigated by Arab neighbours. We may ask WHY? Why has the emergence of Israel been so traumatic? The answer to this is that the nation has been brought under the rod of discipline in order to prepare it for the coming kingdom.

“And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant” (Ezekiel 20:37).

This “rod” (Hebrew: *shebet*) says Gesenius is “used for beating or striking, and chastening (Proverbs 10:13; 13:24), hence the rod with which God corrects...” John Thomas (*Eureka* Vol. 3, 1921 edition) calls it “the rod of discipline in the wilderness of the peoples.” So the purpose is to bring them into the bond of the covenant.

“Upon the Mountains of Israel”

“And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 34:13-15).

There is a development outlined in these words from Ezekiel 34. First we are told of an exodus—bringing them out—and gathering them to their *own Land*. The Jews did not have their “own land” until 1948. We are then informed that they are to be fed “upon the mountains of Israel.” Before 1967 the Jews had little or no presence on the mountains

of Israel, for these mountains are in the midst of the land—the so-called ‘West Bank.’ It is in this location then that they are to be fed “with knowledge and understanding” (See Jeremiah 3:15).

Joel chapter 3 mentions another territory: that of Judah.

“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem...” (Verse 1).

Judah and Jerusalem are linked in this prophecy, and they were both involved in the war of June 1967, along with “the mountains of Israel.” But the area was not immediately populated by Jews moving into these territories—population growth was gradual. In 1977 about 7,000 Jews lived in the so-called “West Bank”—Judea and Samaria. In 1988 the figure had risen to 63,000. By 1993 it reached 100,000. In 2006 Jews in the territories numbered 230,000. But on a recent visit to the area we learnt that the official number today is much higher—reaching 342,000. This does not include Jews living in East Jerusalem which was under Jordanian control prior to 1967; so we must add another 300,000, giving us a figure that is now approaching 650,000—that is about one tenth of Israel’s total Jewish population. That is the physical picture before us today.

Our figures were obtained from the secretary of a Knesset (Parliament) member who has access to official statistics. But an independent source living in Beit El claimed that in actual fact there are now 400,000 Jews in the territories (excluding Jerusalem), but he says that the government does not want to acknowledge this because of probable



reactions from the rest of the world.

Many settlers in the territories of Judea and Samaria live there for “ideological reasons” (i.e. religious), though some are there for convenience i.e. financial, commuting distance and so forth. It is interesting to note however that Israelis are generally becoming more religious; a headline in the *Jerusalem Post* (January 26, 2012) read: “Israeli Jews becoming more religious, poll finds.” The report compared the period 1991-1999 with that of 1999 to 2009.

Israelis generally are interested in political trends, but there is considerable disillusion with the leadership. As it appears to this writer, Israel is learning through its experience of the past sixty-four years that democracy and human government do not produce the conditions and kind of society hoped for. The socialism of earlier years did not, and current political administrations are doing little better.

Scripture tells us that following a partial restoration to Zion (and that is what we see today): “... I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).

Pastors are shepherds—so God is to provide these teachers in order to feed the people with knowledge and understanding. We learn from Ezekiel 34 that this instruction is to take place upon the high mountains of Israel—and as we have pointed out, that directs our attention to the so-called West Bank (Judea and Samaria).

From whence might this instruction come? The answer is surely given to us in Malachi 4:4-6, “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Fulfillment in Stages

The fulfillment of prophecy is not always as straight forward as we may like. Themes are often repeated and must be applied to more than one situation. Many will recognize this in those prophecies which refer to the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians on the 9th of Av; the circumstances are virtually duplicated when Jerusalem fell to the Romans in AD 70. This does not mean that a prophecy is fulfilled twice, but that there can be different phases attached to it. It is a matter of identifying a break in the prophecy, showing that it is fulfilled up to a point.

John Thomas, in his book *Elpis Israel*, uses this principle in reference to Daniel chapter 11 where he says:

“The eleventh chapter of Daniel is therefore fulfilled as far as the first colon of the fortieth verse. The things which remain to be accomplished in the time of the end are briefly outlined in the remaining part of the chapter.”

We can see the same principle being applied by Christ himself when in Luke 4:17-21 he quotes Isaiah 61:1-2, but stops half way through verse 2, where it continues to speak of the day of vengeance of our God, and comforting those who mourn in Zion. The time for that second part had not arrived.

So it is that many prophecies which refer to the restoration of God’s people to the Land are divided

into two parts, one before the manifestation of Christ and the other after it—and that means one part coming to pass before the resurrection and the other part afterwards. Today we see that there has already been a massive return to Zion with some six and a half million Jews in the land. How many more are to come before the instruction of Elijah commences? We must be very close indeed to the time of the resurrection (Daniel 12:2-3; 1 Thess. 4:15-17). We must be very close indeed to the time when the State of Israel will be transformed into the kingdom of Israel.

Now the territory of Judah was taken by Israel in 1967, together with that area known as Samaria (or “the mountains of Israel”). This, we believe, will be the territory upon which the coming kingdom will first be established, though in its beginning as a very small dominion. It may not have been possible (or even reasonable to expect) that a 19th Century expositor and writer could have foreseen the detail of the situation before us today, but it cannot be ignored or denied that much of what John Thomas anticipated in *Elpis Israel* is becoming the focus of world attention today. Naturally some aspects of the unfolding story were not visible to him, but we must recognise that he did draw an amazing outline of events that were still to happen. For example, writing of the re-grafting of Judah through the New Covenant (compare Jeremiah 31:31) he stated:

“The New Covenant being made with the house of Judah, the kingdom is established. Not, however, to its full extent. It is but the kingdom in its small beginning, as when David reigned in Hebron over Judah only. The Lord Jesus, as King of Judah, will have to bring the ten tribes and the nations generally to acknowledge him as King of Israel and Lord of the whole earth... when the Lord appears in his little kingdom of Judea, he will undertake to deliver every Israelite in bondage, establish David’s kingdom

to its full extent, overturn all kingdoms and dominions among the Gentiles, abolish all their superstitions, enlighten them in the truth, and bring them to submit to him joyfully as their lawgiver, high priest, and king. He will begin this mighty enterprise with Judah; for “he hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, *because the Lord is with them*, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.” “And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. In that day,” saith the Lord, “I will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left.” “Such is the illustration of their prowess. The nations will be as wood, or as sheaves, subjected to the action of fire. They may resist, but they are certain to be subdued without further power of resistance... Their conquests will begin with the countries contiguous to Judea.”

Something of this development is to be expected in the near future—not all at once, but it will unfold over some years. Events in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria—but especially Judah) will antagonize the world far more forcefully than at present. This will lead to the great crisis foretold by the prophets, for the hearts of the leaders of the nations will be hardened against Israel so that they will come against them with all their military might. This will be of the Lord so that he might subdue the nations after the pattern seen in vision by Daniel, and Judah as the Little Stone will smite the nations and break them in pieces. Thus the road to Zion will have been forged and her king shall reign in righteousness bringing blessing to the whole world.



It was here in this courtyard that the Jewish inhabitants surrendered to Jordanian arabs in 1948. They could not return until 1967

THE NATION OF ISRAEL



ITS PART IN THE GOSPEL PROMISES

By Frank Abel HAMILTON, ON.

The content of the Gospel ought to be of the utmost importance to every Christian for the offer of eternal life is dependent upon a belief in it. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

Understanding the nature of the Kingdom of God which Jesus and his disciples spent so much time preaching is also bound up with recognizing the significance of the Gospel and all of its parts. “Lord, wilt thou at this time *restore again the kingdom to Israel?* And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:6-7). The restoration of the kingdom to Israel is one of the parts of the Gospel.

It is a characteristic of the Gospel that those who have searched it out and identified its parts are strengthened by the knowledge of its contents and are considered blessed by God. “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before the gospel unto Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,” (Gal. 3:8-9). However, of the millions, possibly billions who are presently living and think they believe the Gospel, there would be very, very few, who could explain the connection between the present nation of Israel and the Gospel of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ.

It is sobering to note that the generation of mankind presently inhabiting this planet has experienced a tremendous increase in knowledge in almost every endeavour which mankind has become engaged, with the exception of what is of the greatest importance. In fact, general knowledge and understanding of the one and only Book of Life, the Bible, appears to be dwindling! Men in other ages, much less endowed with the study aids available to people today were able to see from their study of the Scriptures that it clearly taught the nation of Israel would have to be re-established in its former homeland near the time when the Lord

Jesus Christ would once again have a visible presence on the earth.

The following quote from Dr. Stephen Snobelen with regard to the beliefs of Sir Isaac Newton illustrates the point. Newton lived from 1642 to 1727 and although he had access to the writings of a number of other people, he was an avid Bible scholar in his own right.

“The first thing we can say about Newton’s private prophetic studies is that they place him as a prime advocate of the premillenarian exegetical tradition. Newton was an exponent of literal prophetic hermeneutics par excellence. Second, he was an equally ardent Restorationist. Third, it is clear that Newton worked on his interpretation of the return of the Jews throughout his entire active period of prophetic

Very few could explain the connection between the present nation of Israel and the Gospel of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ.

study. The earliest examples come from his first apocalyptic treatise of the 1670’s and continue thereafter to the end of his life.

Fourth, Newton devotes no single treatise exclusively to the return of the Jews, but rather writes expositions on this theme throughout his manuscripts, ranging from small and often-repeated comments to detailed expositions of several folios’ length, a dynamic that has made an extensive survey of his writings essential. Finally, Newton believed that prophecies relating to the return of the Jews abound in Scripture, particularly in the Hebrew Prophets. Accordingly, in several places in his manuscripts, he writes out long lists of biblical references to prophecies concerning the return of the Jews. He asserts in a manuscript from the late seventeenth century that both the conversion and the return of the Jews are described in

“almost all ye Prophets,” and states even more confidently in a later writing that such predictions occurred in “all the old Prophets...” For Newton, the greater the number of prophecies concerning the return of the Jews, the stronger the case for Providence.” <http://www.isaac-newton.org>

“God hath not cast away His People”

Far too many people do not understand God’s present work with the nation of Israel. There are a number of reasons for this with the foremost being that they do not see any special relationship between God and the present nation of Israel. It may also stem from their belief that God has rejected the nation of Israel, or that the promises now apply to ‘spiritual Israel.’ In the light of the following clear statement of the Apostle Paul none of these reasons are valid. “Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew*” (Rom.11:1-2).

What makes a subject of the Bible of fundamental importance? Is it a part of the Gospel taught in the Scripture? If for instance a subject can be identified as a clear part of what the Apostle Paul considered “my gospel” then it is fundamental and necessary to be understood before one can claim to believe the Gospel and thereby be in the way of salvation. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ *according to my gospel*” (Rom. 2:16). The teaching of Paul was not a patchwork matter, it was structured and ordered by the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ and consisted of what was necessary to save the believer.

The Apostle Paul was insistent that the Gospel he preached was the only Gospel and he would not allow for any variations. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-8).

The objective of this article is to show the unwavering details of the relationship between the present nation of Israel and the Gospel that Jesus and the Apostles preached and the reasons why it is essential to believe it.

The Apostle Paul stated that the *Gospel was preached to Abraham* the progenitor of the Jewish people. “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal 3:8). This is a very significant statement for it illustrates Abraham knew the Gospel message 2,000 years before the birth of Jesus. It also serves to illustrate the need for those seeking to understand the Gospel to fully recognize this link between promises that God made to Abraham and their fulfillment relative to the work of Jesus Christ. This connection is strengthened by remarks made in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Galatians, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). It is essential for those people seeking to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to first know and understand the promises that God made to Abraham.

The same promises were reiterated to Isaac and Jacob, but not to Ishmael, all of which were Abraham’s descendants. The following words were uttered in reference to Jacob, “I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 28:13-14). These promises relating to the land upon which Jacob was resting involved not only the land which today incorporates the nation of Israel, but also a very large portion of the land of their immediate neighbours right up to the Euphrates River. God has stated that all nations of the earth would be blessed through the blessing resting on Abraham and his seed.

The promises as stated to Abraham, in particular, mentioned some other important things. “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” (Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham was to be the father of a great nation with the peculiar characteristic that whoever blessed that nation would also be blessed. That this peculiar aspect of the promise to Abraham was passed to the nation was made clear in the words of Balaam, who living several centuries later stated, “He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? *Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee*” (Num. 24:9).

One of the most significant aspects of the blessings to the forefathers of Israel was

communicated in the following words, “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,” (Gen. 17:7-8). The land upon which Abraham walked was promised to him for an everlasting possession. However, the Bible records the death of Abraham, so how could this come to pass? It is important to see that the Bible further declares that Abraham never inherited this land. “These all died in faith, *not having received the promises*, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb.. 11:13).

God does not lie. Abraham must yet receive this land that he and his descendants were promised. This is where the reader of the Bible is able to see that the meaning of the word ‘gospel’ is ‘good news.’ It is good news for everyone to fully understand what God has in mind for the future of the earth. Since Abraham is dead, the promises made to him necessitate his resurrection and that of many others who

“The land upon which Abraham walked was promised to him for an everlasting possession... God does not lie!”

embraced the same faith in the promises of God.

However, if you happen to cling to the false idea of Christendom that people go to their reward at death, you will never understand or appreciate this simple truth of the Gospel. No one will receive this reward until the return of Christ as the Scripture states, “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, *received not the promise*: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb.. 11:39-40).

A National Promise

It is very important to note the distinction between a *national* promise and an *individual* promise when it comes to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God told Jacob that he would be the father of a great nation. “And God spake unto Israel... and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation” (Gen. 46:2-3). Within a span of approximately 400 years the descendants of Israel multiplied to become a nation and due to the wonders which their God worked on their behalf against the armies of Egypt, they left with the reputation of a ‘great nation.’

Had they obeyed the commandments of their God they could have maintained the status of a great nation in the eyes of all that beheld them, however, they preferred ignorance over knowledge and disobedience over humility and brought the wrath of their God upon themselves. Eventually they ceased to be a nation and the Jews were dispersed among the peoples of the world.

Could it be that through the disobedience of a few generations of the Jews that the will of God could be frustrated concerning his intentions with them? Certainly not, on a number of occasions God has illustrated that if some will not obey Him he will work with others that will. Thus, Noah, Abraham, David and most importantly, the Lord Jesus Christ were specially chosen that the work of God with mankind continued despite the stubbornness and rebellion of so many others. The word of God clearly promised to Abraham that one day he would be the father of a great nation, and so thus it must be even though its complete fulfillment has yet to occur.

Prophecies of Restoration

The prophecies concerning the restoration of the nation of Israel are detailed and explicit. Where parts have already been fulfilled they provide such accuracy and conform to such detail as to provide the utmost confidence in the reader that all other prophecies concerning the nation of Israel will yet be fulfilled. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah*: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and *will be their God, and they shall be my people*” (Jer. 31:31-33). This prophecy is specific, it is dealing with the same nation that came out of Egypt, that did not keep covenant with their God, but will yet be God’s people and keep His law.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; *so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant*, saith the LORD” (Jer. 31:27-28). The prophets foretold of a day when, despite the fact that other generations were destroyed, God would cause His blessing to come on a later generation. God’s promises cannot fail—God does not lie.

There can be no doubt about God’s favouring of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as He is insistent about it. “Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his

name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever” (Jer. 31:35-36). The nation of Israel reappeared from obscurity in 1948 not merely by the will of men, but by the deliberate intervention of God that His promises should come to pass.

In bringing them back to their land, God did not favour the present people of Israel for any redeeming feature they had as a race, neither was He demonstrating any unfairness in His treatment of them. “Thus saith the LORD God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went” (Ezek. 36:22).

The Lord Jesus Christ also recognized the rebellious nature of the people of Israel when he stated, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD*” (Luke 13:34-35). It is important to note that the Lord said no more than the prophets before him—for that generation and many more to come Jerusalem would be laid waste, but in due time, a generation would arise and say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD.”

The Apostle Paul also spoke in concert with the prophets of old when he stated, “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?” (Rom. 11:11-12). The Jewish nation was to be replenished, and when it was complete the world would be a better place. It is this restoration of the children of Israel to nationhood which, in God’s plan, brings great blessings to the world.

The gospel of the Lord Jesus referred to this time when he stated that the time for Gentile domination of Jerusalem would be limited. “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 21:24). This prophecy has stood, without fulfillment for about 2000 years. However, since 1967, Jerusalem is once again almost totally in Jewish hands. What Bible student believing in the things taught by the Lord Jesus Christ would not be excited by the knowledge that we have been witnesses of such a significant milestone in Bible prophecy? The questions naturally flowing from this fulfillment include, “What is to happen next?”

The gospel of the Lord cautions all those that witness this evidence to take it seriously, for when the milestone of the reestablishment of the nation of Israel appears in the earth so must a

number of other related and specific prophecies be fulfilled. “For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of *Judah and Jerusalem*, 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” (Joel 3:1-2). Since we are well into the time of witnessing the return of the Jews to their homeland, we must also be about to witness the gathering together of the nations to Jerusalem. It is a critical time for the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to be awake and wary. “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares... Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:34-36).

God’s Future Purpose with Israel

God’s future purpose with the nation of Israel goes well beyond our present time into the work that God has selected for them in securing the Kingdom that He will establish when the Lord Jesus Christ appears as the King of kings! “Now

“**But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel**”

also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. *Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth*” (Mic. 4:11-13). This scripture teaches that the LORD has it in mind to use the nation of Israel to “thresh” the nations into subjection much like He did in the time of Joshua.

Furthermore, the nations of the world will be astonished at the might and ability of the nation of Israel for it will be provided and sustained by their God. Consider what the prophet says, “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be *confounded at all their might*: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee” (Mic. 7:15-17). Note that although the nations about Israel will be

“confounded at all their might” yet they will be afraid of the LORD their God. It will be obvious to the nations that God of Israel is with them. When the hailstones fell on the nations that Joshua was pursuing and the day was extended so their rout was complete, the nations would have known what it was to like to fall into the hands of the living God.

What a reversal of providence! Nations that have for centuries cursed the Jews, will then bless and bow down to those whom they formerly despised. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, *We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you*” (Zech. 8:23). Or again in the words recorded by the prophet Zephaniah, “Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and *I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame*. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for *I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth*, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD” (Zeph. 3:19-20).

It is very important to understand that the glory associated with the fulfillment of the promises regarding the nation of Israel is of a ‘national’ character only. Now the New Testament tells us that this work of the angels will be given over to a new group of immortals in the future. “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. 2:5). Who then is this group of beings who will perform the work of the angels at this time?

The commander-in-chief is easy to determine for the Bible singles out the Lord Jesus Christ as being the commander of the armies of the LORD at this time, “*Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people*” (Isa. 55:3-4). No one fits this description like the Lord Jesus Christ and in similar prophecies concerning him in the New Testament he assumes this role and invites the members of his militia to bring the armies of the world into submission. “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. 2:26-27).

So there is a distinction to be made between the promises of the LORD that relate to the nation of Israel and those that relate to individuals. *The nation of Israel is to perform a major role in the bringing the nations of the world into submission* as the word states, “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (Isa. 60:12).



MILESTONES UPDATE



A sign of growing anti-Semitism as Jews were murdered in France

Rising anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in a wicked world will lead to its collapse, and to Zion's triumph

By Don Pearce RUGBY, U.K.

In the two months since our last update, much has been happening on the world scene to interest the watchmen on Zion's walls, who are looking for the signs of their Messiah's coming. Not this time as the Lamb of God, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to save his people in their hour of need. When brought to their knees by the combined might of the nations, Israel will be in dire distress. When they acknowledge their desperate position and cry out to their God for help, God has promised He will hear and with dramatic power they will be saved. Before ever they went into the Promised Land, God set out His position.

"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: 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" (Leviticus 26:40-42).

Yes, there is a condition attached—IF they shall confess their iniquity. Yet it is quite clear from the verses before and those that follow, that repentance will indeed be the case. Hundreds of years of suffering will have so shaped that nation, that there will be a remnant that recognise that there is but one power who can save them and that is their God. God's foreknowledge is such that He knows these things in every minute detail. For He continues:

"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 thy 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" (Lev. 26:44, 45).

The fact that God promised to care for them whilst scattered from their land, is surely an indication that God knows that there is a

wonderful future for them when the covenant that He made with Abraham will become a reality.

So one of the great signs for our generation is the growing anti-Semitism around the world, but especially in Europe, Russia and the Middle East. Just this week a Jewish father and two of his children and another child were murdered outside their school in France. Killed because they were Jewish. There is great fear among the Jewish community in France as they see their way of life under serious threat. We were struck on our last visit to Tel Aviv a few years ago that the signs in the Hotel were in Hebrew, English and French. We were told that is because it was in an area where many French Jews were purchasing property so that they have somewhere to go if life becomes too difficult at home.

Anti-Semitism is still Flourishing throughout Germany, study Shows

The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* (27-Jan-12) detailed some of the items from a report just published by a committee set up by the German government in 2008 to investigate anti-Semitism. (My emphasis).

"About 20 percent of Germans have a "latent" hatred for Jews.

The study found that hatred of Jews is common throughout large swathes of German society: Far from being the exclusive province of the far right or radical Islamists, it is deeply rooted in the German mainstream.

"At a very young age, German schoolchildren are already using the word 'Jew' as an insult, the report found, and 'Jew' is commonly heard as a curse word in the playground. In local soccer leagues throughout Germany, anti-Semitic jeers aimed at Jewish teams are common, including 'Jews to the gas,' 'Bring back Auschwitz' and 'Burn the synagogues.' " "Anti-Semitism in our society is based on widespread prejudices, clichés with deep roots and pure ignorance about everything to do with Jews and Judaism," wrote one of the report's authors, Dr. Peter Longerich.

"The study criticized the way Germany deals with anti-Semitism. 'There is no comprehensive strategy for fighting anti-Semitism in Germany,' said another of the

authors, Dr. Juliane Wetzel."

Although this article was specific to Germany, *Haaretz's* closing item was rather chilling.

"Despite the grim situation in Germany, the report noted that anti-Semitism is much worse in many other European countries, including Poland, Hungary and Portugal."

The Israeli government also put out a report at the same time, ahead of the *International Holocaust Remembrance Day* (Jan 27th). It was investigating the effects of the "Arab Spring" on anti-Jewish incidents. The headline of the *Jerusalem Post* (23-Jan-12) review of the report said it all.

Arab Spring sees Rise in anti-Semitism

"There has been an increase in anti-Semitism in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring.

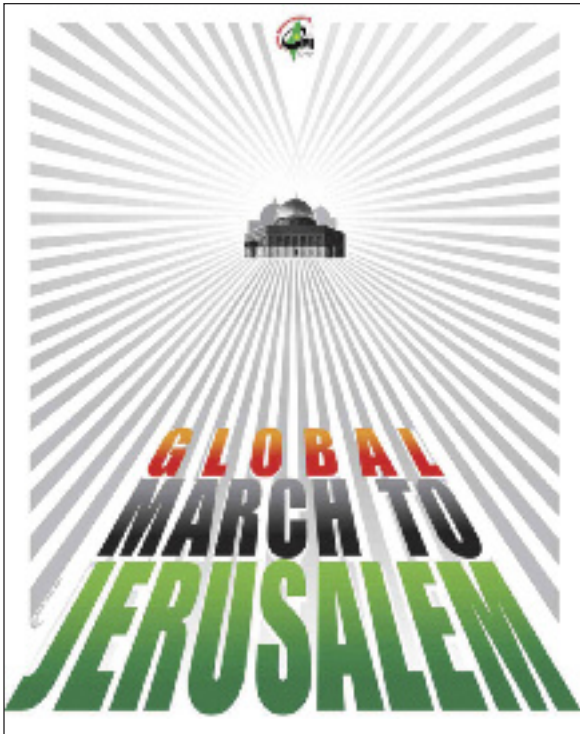
"(While) the popular uprisings in the Arab world do not represent a general change in attitude towards Israel, Zionism and the Jews it seems the anti-Semitic discourse and incitement have become more extreme and violent," the report, which was written by



scholars at the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University, says.

"Charges of an international Jewish conspiracy have been a central motif in the anti-Semitic propaganda that has accompanied the Arab Spring uprisings. This motif has been emphasized in each of the countries especially by way of pointing a blaming finger towards Israel, Zionism and Jews conspiring against Arabs and Muslims."

"This year anti-Semitism has been expressed in unbridled attacks and violence towards Jews in the Diaspora and Israel. The accessibility of cyberspace and the freedom it



The “Global March to Jerusalem” is the slogan being used for a provocative event against Israel at the end of March

2012. It reveals a mindset that is in harmony with what Scripture foretold: “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (Zechariah 14:2). See also Joel 3:2.

about a week Israeli school children close to Gaza could not go to school, whereas the children in Gaza never missed a day. Why? Because they knew the great care Israel takes to be pinpoint in her accuracy and will abort a mission rather than cause civilian deaths. In contrast the rockets fired from Gaza are mainly crudely constructed and may land anywhere.

Global march to Jerusalem

As part of a mainly Arab drive to delegitimise Israel’s claim that they have returned here because this was their ancient homeland, preparations are being made to have a mass entry of Arabs and their supporters into Israel through the land crossing points and by air. The plan is to overwhelm the border guards and to flood into Israel and march to Jerusalem. The date for this is March 30th. The last attempt fizzled out as neighbouring Arab countries lacked interest in such a plan. The Israeli government is hoping that this one will likewise fail. Scenes of Israeli police and military forcibly preventing the protesters from entering the country will be used as propaganda against Israel. Yet what country would tolerate such action, certainly none in the Middle East! They are targeting Jerusalem because of their claim that Israel is Judaizing her presence here. The *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs report 588*, Mar. 2012, detailed some of the preparation work.

A Focus on Jerusalem

“Over the past few years there has been a Palestinian campaign which focuses on the so-called ‘Judaization’ of Jerusalem. A number of related topics have been raised recently in what appears to be an orchestrated campaign initiated by leading figures in the PA, Hamas, and Muslim Brotherhood.

“On February 24, 2012, Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh delivered a sermon in Cairo at the prominent Al-Azhar Mosque, in which he reportedly stated: ‘We paid a lot in blood in order to keep Jerusalem an Arabic and Islamic city. The Arab Spring brought the Islamic nation to the threshold of the city of Jerusalem.’

“On the same weekend, a large conference on the defense of Jerusalem was held in Qatar

under the patronage of the Arab League featuring what has been called ‘an unprecedented coalition against Israel.’ This is the second Arab League conference on the topic; the first took place in Sirte, Libya, in March 2010, hosted by the country’s late president Gaddafi. The current conference reportedly featured the Qatari emir, politicians, and diplomats from other Middle East countries, secretaries-general of both the Arab League and Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Sheikh Qaradawi and various other figures from the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, Arab-Israeli MKs, senior Fatah and PA figures including President Abbas, and several rabbis from the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta group. In addition, eight UN officials from various departments attended, as well as Western politicians and academics, representatives of far-left political groups, and at least one Western individual, Prof. Hans Köchler, president of the Vienna-based International Progress Organization (IPO), tied to both the European far-right and far-left.”

Once again we see the focus on Jerusalem and we know that it will be the desire to liberate Jerusalem from Jewish control that will bring the nations down (Zechariah chapter 12).

There is another strong power that also desires to see Jerusalem “liberated” from Jewish influence, and that is the Vatican.

Vatican’s twisted Priorities

Under this headline *Ynet* (16-Mar-12) reported on an interview with Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Vatican’s spokesperson in Israel. He said:

“Israel’s existence as such has nothing to do with the Bible.’ He then compared Christians’ condition in today’s Jerusalem with Jesus’ Passion: ‘We Christians never forget that even our Lord himself suffered and was mocked in Jerusalem.’

“Twal’s position on Israel and the Bible has been embraced at the highest levels in the Catholic Church. The Vatican synod in 2010 declared that Israel cannot use the Biblical concept of a promised land or a chosen people. ‘We Christians cannot speak about the Promised Land for the Jewish people’, the synod’s document said. ‘There is no longer a chosen people. The concept of the promised land cannot be used as a base for the justification of the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of Palestinians.’”

This preposterous claim effectively aligns the Vatican with the Palestinian efforts to deny Israel has any links to this land!

The Vatican have been meeting with the Palestinian Authorities in Ramallah seeking to work with them against Israel. The Vatican supported the Palestinian bid for Statehood via the UN last year. Yet why should the Vatican want to work with the Palestinians, even to the extent of supporting their bid to control Jerusalem? The Vatican’s long history has been *against* the Muslim power in the Land. It only

grants to those who would use it to propagate the unprecedented dissemination of anti-Semitism is worrying.’

“The report covered anti-Semitic events across the globe from Latin America to Australia.”

There are many who seek to paint a false picture of Israel’s defence of her people. Following a recent targeting of Hamas officials in Gaza, after a string of rockets had been fired indiscriminately into Israel, a graphic picture of a young girl covered in blood, dying in her father’s arms was tweeted around the world. It was captioned

Israeli Zionism in action—Another Massacre in Gaza

“Please share and break the silence. Show how Israel murders our children and has been doing so for 64 years. Let people know what Obama and Netanyahu do to a population under siege.

End Israeli apartheid, end the occupation, end ethnic cleansing. Boycott, divest and enforce sanctions on this criminal entity.

“This girl deserved a future.”

The sender was Khulood Badawi who happens to work for the OCHA—the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs where, according to a UN Contact List, she works as an Information and Media Coordinator!

It turned out that the photo was taken in 2006, and the girl had suffered an accident; it had nothing to do with Israel. What was worse, it had already been used in 2006 by Reuters as showing the effects of Israel bombing, and Reuters had to send out a retraction.

There were many media headlines condemning Israel’s attempts to defend herself against these rocket attacks, by targeting those responsible. What was quite telling was that for

makes sense as a short term gain; the Vatican would rather have the Arabs in control of Jerusalem than the Jews. But the longer term desire must be for her own control, or the very least, UN control, of Jerusalem.

Yet it is also clear that Christians are facing persecution in the Arab controlled areas of Israel. The only place where Christians are growing in numbers is in Israel. Again this is an indication that the Vatican is prepared to work with her persecutors if it advances her longer term aim of stopping Jewish influence over Jerusalem.

I learnt only this week of an interesting illustration of how “christianity” has turned its back on the Jews as God’s people. In the UK, the Jewish communities collect new and second-hand clothing for impoverished Jews in Eastern Europe, many of whom are in desperate circumstances. These items are sent to a depot in London and trucked to depots run by the Jews in countries like Serbia, Romania and Ukraine, where there are no social benefits in operation, other than what is organised privately. The only Gentile group that helps them by collecting items are the Christadelphians and Jewish organisers are amazed and very thankful for their support.

The Israelis and their Bibles

There have been several articles recently indicating a growing trend in Israel to promote Bible study. We recall that in 2010 one of the Israeli Prime Minister’s sons came top in his category in the annual National Quiz for Youth. The Prime Minister, Mr Netanyahu is quoted as saying “I work six days, my Sabbath joy is to study the Bible” (*Int. Christian Emb. Jer.* 20-Jan-12).

The Adult Bible Quiz was held every 3 years from 1958 to 1981 when it stopped. Mr Netanyahu recalled that first occasion with nostalgia:

“I was a boy at the time, and the streets of Jerusalem were empty so that everyone could listen to it on the radio. The afternoon newspapers came out with a second edition with excited reports. The entire country

embraced the winner, Amos Chacham, and the newspapers competed over the right to interview him. I sometimes miss those days...” (*A7 News* 9-Dec-10).

In recent years there was a move to reinstate it, and former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed in principle but did not carry it out. When Netanyahu took office, he took it upon himself to implement the idea, via the Education Ministry and Minister Gideon Saar. It restarted in December 2010 and was held again last December.

Fully 80% of Israeli Jews believe that God Exists

That’s rather a sad headline, (*Haaretz* 27-Jan-12) it would be wonderful if 100% of the Jews in Israel believed in the existence of their God! However this fits with our Biblical understanding that they would return to their land not necessarily because of their Biblical roots, but as a place where they can be safe from the persecutions they experienced around the world. The even sadder picture is that so many of today’s Jews in Israel will perish in the coming conflict when they fall before their enemies. The prophet Zechariah speaks of a coming time of dreadful destruction.

“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).

This seems to indicate that only a third have sufficient faith in their God during this time of persecution and so are, in the mercy of God, preserved during that refining process.

The headline to this section was as the result of the publishing of an opinion poll.

“Fully 80% of Israeli Jews believe that God exists—the highest figure found by the Guttman-Avi Chai survey since this review of

Israeli-Jewish beliefs began two decades ago. “The latest survey of the ‘Beliefs, Observance and Values among Israeli Jews’ was conducted in 2009 but the results were released only on Thursday, after a detailed analysis had been completed. The two previous surveys were in 1999 and 1991.

“The study also found that 70% of respondents believe the Jews are the ‘Chosen People,’ 65% believe the Torah and mitzvot (religious commandments) are God-given, and 56% believe in life after death.

“It found that only 46% of Israeli Jews now define themselves as secular, down from 52% in 1999, while 22% define themselves as either Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox, up from 16% in 1999. The remaining 32% term themselves traditional, virtually unchanged from 1999” (*Haaretz* 27-Jan-12).

“The numbers coincide with other recent findings and observations suggesting that Israelis are increasingly hungry for a deeper spiritual life. It also highlights the growing rift in the nation, as one portion of Israelis moves closer to God and the Bible, while the other clings ever more tightly to Western liberal humanism” (*Israel Today* 27-Jan-12).

Kinneret rises two Meters

God promised that He would use the world of nature to help or hinder their lives. For the first time in 7 years the Sea of Galilee has risen by 2 meters during the winter rains. In recent years it has been rising by 0.5 to 1 meter. This still puts it 3 meters below being full, but is a welcome relief. Israel is relying more and more on desalinating her water supplies.

“The Water Authority estimates that, by May, 450 million cubic meter of water will flow into the Kinneret. ‘This winter has given us a gift of water equal to another desalination plant,’ said Givati. ‘I estimate that the water level will rise by another half meter by May.’ “The Water Authority attributes the dramatic improvement in the water economy to the expansion of seawater desalination. Today, half of Israel’s drinking water comes from the three main desalination plants at Ashkelon, Palmachim, and Hadera. The Palmachim facility has been expanded to increase its production capacity.

“Israel currently desalinates 300 million cubic meters of water a year, and will add another 300 million cubic meters a year in two years, when the Ashdod and Soreq facilities come on line. Givati says that the availability of desalinated water allows the Water Authority to improve water storage at source - in the Kinneret and aquifers.

“Pumping from the Kinneret is minimal, and pumping will likely only be increased in May. Mekorot National Water Company estimates that, by the end of 2013, 75% of water supplied to the public will be desalinated seawater” (*Globes* 22-Mar-12).

“Israel’s gas reserves worth \$130bn”

Israel’s remarkable gas and oil finds continue to hit headlines. At a time when the gas pipeline from Egypt to Israel has been blown up now 13



A Statement of faith inscribed near the Western Wall in Jerusalem today.

times since the Arab Spring in Egypt a year ago, the drilling rigs off the coast of Israel are busy. To the slide of gas finds we published in the last update we have to add *Tanin* (crocodile). Incidentally the consumption of gas in Israel has increased 4 fold in the past few years so that annual consumption is now running at 3.2bn M³/year. *Tanin* is expected to hold 34-37bn M³ of gas.

“Israel’s natural gas reserves are worth \$100-130 billion, in non-capitalized values, a senior Israeli official said in a press conference. This valuation is the basis for the sovereign fund for oil and gas royalties that will be set up. He added that the gas discoveries in Israeli waters could be double the known discoveries to date. “Israelis still don’t realize the significance of the change the natural gas will cause. Obviously, we are inclined towards exports. We have enough gas for our domestic needs, and even assuming GDP growth, we’ll have very large surpluses. Gas is our strategic interest. It is also an economic tool for developing Israel, and a diplomatic tool for creating new partnerships, first in our region, as well as with the great powers of India and China.”

“Natural gas’s advantages include that it is a cleaner fuel than oil, and that it will replace imports. Israel could save \$8 billion a year on the difference in price between natural gas and oil” (*Globes* 19-Feb-12).

Another American company is expecting to start drilling this spring. IPC have raised additional money for this project on the Tel Aviv stock exchange.

“The drilling itself will be an ambitious project—the gas is more than three miles under the ocean’s surface. But Cooper said just getting ready to start has taken more than two years, and will cost about \$100 million per well by the time any gas is delivered” (*VailDaily* 20-Mar-12).

They are hoping the two wells will yield some 170bn M³ of gas.

The onshore drilling for oil in an area about 20km NE of Tel Aviv at Rosh Ha’ayin is now in the final stages prior to commercial production. The oil is mainly supplied to the refinery at Ashkelon. As a by-product, natural gas is also extracted, which at the moment is burnt off, but the well owners, Givot Olam Oil Exploration have just signed a deal to sell this to the Natural Gas for Israel company. The Meged 5 well is expected to eventually meet 10% of Israel’s oil needs (*Globes* 19-Mar-12).

The Israeli government is setting up a sovereign wealth fund to handle the revenue that Israel’s new-found energy abundance will generate. Officials estimated that gas receipts will bring in between \$2 billion to \$3 billion per year (*AP* 24-Jan-12).

Boycott, what Boycott? UK-Israel Trade Booming

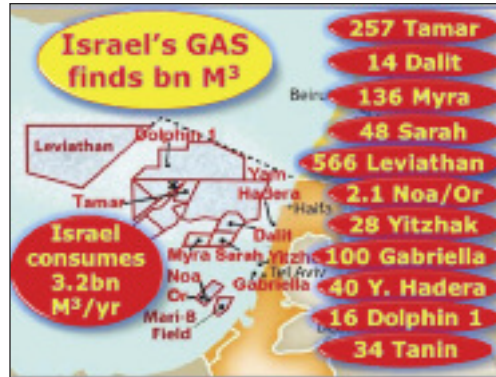
“Britain’s ambassador to Israel,

Matthew Gould, was in buoyant mood this week as bilateral UK-Israel trade figures reached £3.75 billion, up 34 per cent in a year, putting firmly in its place the campaign for a boycott of Israeli goods.

“Mr Gould said: ‘There is a lot of noise around boycotts but these figures show that it is just noise, and the trade relationship speaks for itself.’

“Israel is now the UK’s largest individual partner in the Near East and North Africa, and its 29th largest export market world-wide. There were £1.57 billion worth of UK exports and £2.18 billion of Israeli exports in 2011, primarily in pharmaceuticals, machinery, diamonds and technology.

“Daniel Seal, chief executive of UK Israel



Business, said: ‘There is a massive amount being done that isn’t documented, whether it’s Israelis on the board of UK companies or British ownership of Israeli start-ups.’

“Mr Seal believes that the recent offshore Tamar and Leviathan Israel gas finds could become a ‘game-changer’, enabling Israel to become a major exporter, which could ‘double trade between the two countries’” (*Jewish Chronicle* 15-Mar-12).

Under David Cameron and the British Ambassador to Israel, the UK-Israel Tech Council was proposed last year, and held its first meeting in March 2012.

“The UK and Israel today agreed a plan to strengthen cooperation in numerous tech sectors, at the first UK Israel Tech Council. The Council, meeting in London, brought

together top business leaders and officials from both countries to develop an ambitious strategy for creating the UK/Israel tech partnership.

“The Council agreed some key sectors for the two countries to focus on, where the UK and Israeli economies match each other particularly well. These include digital, water tech, life sciences, creative industries and financial services. The Council also identified possible barriers to closer working and considered ways of overcoming them including regular Ministerial visits, sector-focussed trade delegations in both directions, and a joint effort by both governments to stimulate collaboration.

“The Council is comprised of 35 high-ranking business leaders and senior officials, including British Ambassador to Israel Matthew Gould and non-executive chairman of the UK-Israel Technologies Hub Haim Shani, Israel’s leading entrepreneur Yossi Vardi, Chairman of Given Imaging and Netafim Ltd Israel Makov, Editor of Wired magazine David Rowan as well as senior executives from Virgin Media, Google, Alcatel Lucent, Amadeus Capital, NICE Systems, Pitango Venture Capital and other leading corporations and investment funds.

“Minister Willetts said after the meeting: ‘Israel has an impressive record of research and development and this should in turn be an important driver of UK economic growth. Today’s launch of the UK-Israel Tech Council was another key step in forging our partnership and bringing together our leading companies. Our ambition is to encourage Israeli entrepreneurs to go beyond the default option of partnering with the United States and also persuade British businesses to look seriously at what Israel has to offer.’

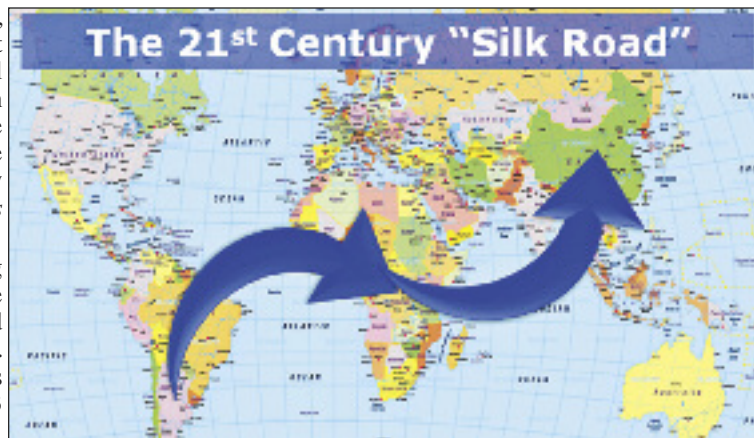
“‘Israel is a Silicon Valley for the rest of the world. There is an amazing opportunity to build bridges between Israel’s technology ecosystem and the capital, customers and talent in the UK. It’s fantastic to see the support Ambassador Gould’s ground breaking initiative is getting at the highest levels of both the UK & Israeli governments. It’s good news for everyone.’” (*British Embassy Israel* 15-Mar-12).

Under the drive by David Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague, Britain is continuing her efforts to rebuild Commonwealth ties. We briefly looked at several developments in our last update and here is another. (My emphasis)

Forget Europe, it’s time for the Commonwealth

“Sir Alan is the new director general of the Commonwealth Business Council, a federation of business and government leaders that promotes trade between the members of the Commonwealth.

“The council was inaugurated at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh



The developing trade flow from Latin America, and through Africa to China and the Far East. The “Silk Road” of the future.

in 1997. At that stage the value of trade between Commonwealth countries totalled \$2 trillion (£1.26trn) according to a study from the London School of Economics. Now it is \$4 trillion.

“As this country watches the slow motion car-crash that is the eurozone economic crisis, Britain has on its doorstep a ready made relationship with emerging market economies such as India, South Africa, Nigeria and Malaysia.

“This country’s greatest challenge for 2012 and beyond is *carving out Britain’s role as a global player in a new world order.* This is a world where trade flows are developing most rapidly along a golden corridor stretching from Latin America, through Africa to China and the rest of the Far East. As HSBC has described it, this 21st century Silk Road will define world economic and business relationships for our children and grandchildren.

“In twenty years’ time it will be Britain’s ability to be a part of that trade flow, acting often as financial mediator to facilitate transactions, which will determine our position in the economic league tables. Get this right and the trials and tribulations of reorganising the Greek retirement age will be of rather less import.

“Britain’s access will be determined in part by how *we use our historic ties to Commonwealth partners.* Serious questions should be asked about why trading groups where the UK has an *in-built advantage and is culturally comfortable—the Commonwealth — are not promoted over those relationships which will be forever associated with rather more scratchy characteristics—Europe.*

“This not a debate about one route or another—Europe is of vital importance to us as a trading block and Germany, for example, is our second largest export destination behind the US. This is a debate about priorities. *Historically, India, Australia, Singapore and Canada were leading UK trading partners* but since the European single market Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium have assumed far greater importance. Only five Commonwealth countries make it into the UK’s top 25 export destinations.

“There are huge positives to be gained from the Commonwealth. It is estimated that shared language, legal and accounting systems can reduce trading costs by up to 20pc for British businesses. Exports to India from the UK are increasing by 9pc a year, to Canada 18pc and to Australia 31pc.

“This summer, London will host the next Commonwealth Economic Forum. What better opportunity to raise our horizons beyond our nearest neighbours in Europe and strike out as *a leading member of a new trading block* fit for the challenges of a fundamentally changing global economy” (*Daily Telegraph* 12-Feb-12).

UK budget figures released in the budget this month show that Britain’s contributions to the EU coffers is expected to be some £1.8bn more

than expected in the current year; although her contributions remain about the same she is now expected to receive much less in aid from the EU so her net contributions increase by this far from trivial sum. At a time when the Chancellor is making painful cuts, this is an unwelcome blow.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Queen’s accession to the throne, and is being celebrated by a series of tours by the Queen and members of her family to places in the UK and the Commonwealth. Now 85, the Queen is an amazing woman who has dedicated herself to serving her people. In a speech to Parliament to mark this remarkable anniversary, given in the historic, 900 year-old, Westminster Hall, she spoke of her determination to carry on doing her duty.

The Queen: I will serve the country for years to come

“I have been privileged to witness some of that history and, with the support of my family, rededicate myself to the service of our great country and its people now and in the years to come.’ Her words were widely interpreted as a signal of the 85 year-old’s determination to remain on the throne for the rest of her life.

“As the Queen pointed out, she is only the second monarch to celebrate a Diamond Jubilee. Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years, the longest-serving monarch.

“Smiling, she added: ‘Since my accession, I have been a regular visitor to the Palace of Westminster and, at the last count, have had the pleasurable duty of treating with 12 prime ministers.’

“Laughter spread through the hall as her audience realised that her choice of the word ‘pleasurable’ may not have been altogether serious” (*Daily Telegraph* 21-Mar-12).

Let us close with a contemplation of those wonderful words in Habakkuk 2:14

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

What a contrast to today’s world, where the knowledge of God is hard to be seen in the countless masses of mankind, busy about their own affairs. How privileged we are to know and to understand God’s wonderful plan of an earth reflecting praise to Him when all the earth will be subject to the reign of His Son, the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem. When Jesus’ immortalised brothers and sisters, raised from the dead at his return, guide the nations in God’s Ways; bringing man into harmony with nature and receiving the blessing promised in Abraham and his Promised descendant, the Lord Jesus.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (Luke 11:2).



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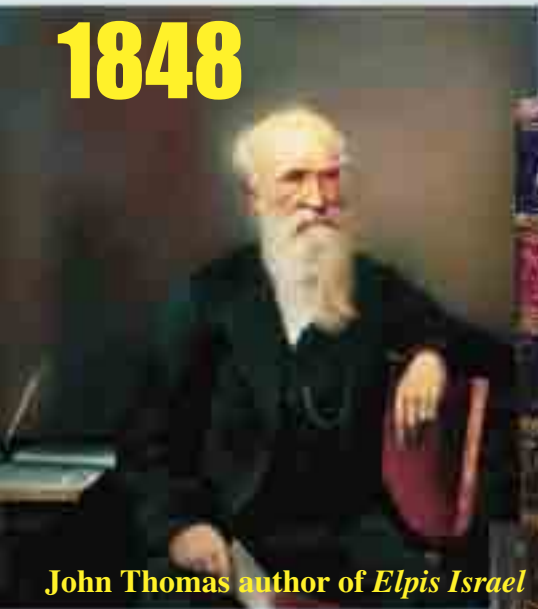
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“Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it



shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.”

1848



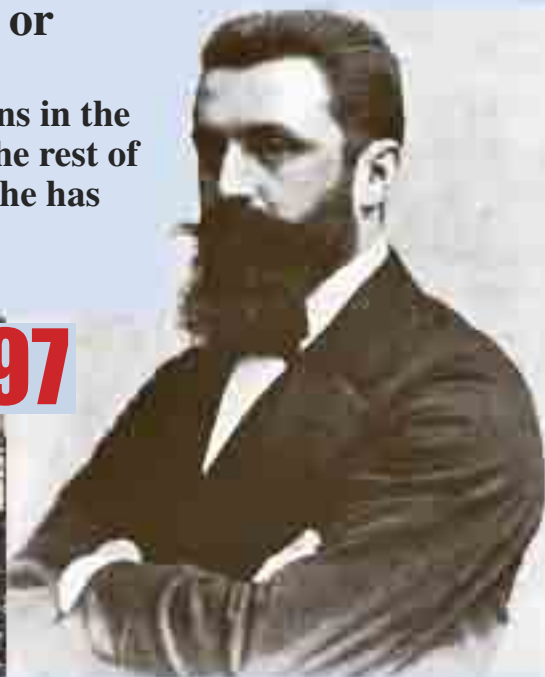
John Thomas author of *Elpis Israel*

John Thomas 1848
“...The pre-advantual colonisation of Palestine, will be on **purely political principles**, and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him.”

In 1848 John Thomas wrote:

“There is, then, a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom.”

1897



FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS IN BASEL SWITZERLAND

“At Basel I founded the Jewish State” — Theodore Herzl

“The Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people... And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Isaiah 11:11-12

Quoted by Weizmann at the U.N.

1947



1947

“We... do hereby proclaim the establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel — ISRAEL.

David Ben Gurion on May 14th, 1948.

“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them” **Jeremiah 31:9**



THE RESURRECTION OF ISRAEL