1. AN ENTHRALLING PROPHECY!

www.thebiblejesus.com/articles

And so all Israel will be saved as it is written ... (Romans 11: 26).

Two men were having breakfast together in a dining room in a large motel in Jerusalem. One was a Christian, the other an agnostic. "Why do you believe in God?" asked the agnostic. "Because of Israel" the believer replied.

The modern State of Israel, brought into being in 1948 against overwhelming improbabilities --- yet exactly as God said it would happen --- is nothing short of miraculous. Her existence is irrefutable testimony to the nations that the God of the Bible is Who He claims to be.

All that Israel's prophets said has come to pass, and all that the prophets indicate still lies in the future for the Jewish people --- and through them for the world --- will as surely happen. Much has happened, but much yet remains. As our text predicts, it is written, a day is coming when all Israel will be saved. (1)

As of this day, the Jewish people, although united by blood and history, remain a disparate and divided people. After WW2 many became atheists. After all, how could the "chosen people" be so abandoned by the Almighty to the Nazi machine? Many Jews remain secularists and are Jewish only by family connection. They are "liberal" in outlook with no living personal relationship with the God who was the friend of God, Abraham.

On the other hand, orthodox Jews dedicate themselves to fulfilling Torah (the Law) and look to the God of the Tanakh [OT Scriptures] to fulfill his covenant promises. And then, there are an increasing number, though still relatively tiny, who believe the Gospel-word that the Messiah has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Many in the Christian church, if they are aware of this prophecy that a day is coming when all Israel will be saved, have no idea as to the specific events that will precede this miraculous prediction of a national Jewish conversion back to their God, and they have no idea as to the implications for us Christians and for the world as well.

In this article, and the following, I want to examine how events already are shaping towards the imminent fulfillment of this major Bible prophecy. I want to explore how this should be shaping our own lives and attitudes. By the end, I pray you will sense the excitement and the imminence of the promise that fills my own heart with the prospect that all Israel will be "born again" in the day when they receive the Messiah in the Name of Yehovah!

¹ All Israel does not mean every single Jew alive at the time. More of this in the following articles, but for the moment compare 1 Kings 12: 1f and 2 Chrono. 12:1 where "all Israel" means Israel as a whole.

Well might we add to that question in the dining room, "We believe in God because of Israel's miraculous existence (in spite of the numerous pogroms, in spite of the multiple deportations and millennia in exile, in spite of the international attempts to raze her land into the dust, in spite of the attempts to divide her God-given land), *but you ain't seen nothin' yet!*

ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY

You would think that after the dreadful events of their deportation to Babylon, that the Jews who returned to rebuild their Land, Jerusalem and the Temple, would have been eager to have learned their hard lessons brought on by idolatry and departure from their God.

Sadly, it did not take long for them to lapse into their old sinful ways. But the LORD God raised up His spokesmen, the prophets again. God would continue to call, continue to be faithful to His covenant-oath. One such post-exilic prophet was Zechariah.

Zechariah was murdered between the altar and the Sanctuary of the Temple as Jesus mentions in his indictment of the scribes and pharisees in Matthew 23: 35. But before his martyrdom Zechariah left us his remarkable predictions concerning Israel's future, and in particular, Israel's coming Deliverer, the Messiah, and the future Kingdom of God on earth through his reign.

The first nine chapters of the Book of Zechariah have a number of remarkably accurate predictions concerning the first coming of Messiah which were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Chapters 12 through 14 give a breath-taking view of prophecies that relate to what has become popularly called the Second Coming of Christ.

In particular, Zechariah chapter 12 unpacks for us some amazing indications as to **how** the LORD God is going to intervene in our world's history to bring to pass His promise of national salvation for Israel. Let's unpack some of Zechariah's details.

JERUSALEM WILL SOON BECOME THE CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be ruptured, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it (vs. 3-4).

The nations that surround Jerusalem <u>in that day</u> are going to fix their attention on her destruction. They will gather together (as though they are in a state of intoxicated rage) to lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. But when is the prophecy to happen? Has it already happened? Let's note the time-frame;

```
"And it shall happen in that day ... (v. 3).
"In that day", says the LORD ... (v. 4)
"In that day ... (v. 6)
```

"In that day the LORD will defend ... in that day " (twice in v. 8). "It shall be in that day ... (v. 9). "In that day ... (v. 11).

In Scripture <u>that Day</u> is Biblical shorthand for the period which closes this present Age. Jewish folk often refer to <u>that Day</u> as The Day of Messiah. It's the day when Yehovah Himself directly intervenes in history to judge the nations and to inaugurate a wonderful New Age in which universal righteousness and peace will ensue. In particular, it is the Day when Israel's glorious destiny will be fulfilled under Messiah's rule.

Zechariah emphasises <u>that Day</u> no less than *seven times* in this twelfth chapter. And if we count it's occurrences in chapters 12 through 14 it appears 17 times! This repetitious time frame gives continuity and connection to all the end-time events he predicts.

This enthralling prophecy pronounced about 2,600 years ago, prophesies that, as this present age comes to its climactic finale, just before God sends the Messiah to rescue Israel, that Jerusalem is going to become the centre stage for international machinations.

If I may change the metaphor, Jerusalem will be like a magnet to which the steely hostile Gentile nations will be irresistibly dragged together with one insane purpose --- the destruction of the State of Israel.

Can you imagine how utterly impossible this prediction seemed even 100 years ago? Yet, we see the signs of its accomplishment gathering pace today, for Israel's vicious and hostile enemies are already encamped around her borders (and within!)

In effect, the war has already begun. It's in its incipient phases. It will end in an attempted massive invasion of Israel by an enormous horde.

'WE'LL WIPE ISRAEL OFF THE MAP, WE'LL DRIVE EVERY LAST JEW INTO THE SEA!"

It is no coincidence that all the nations immediately surrounding tiny Israel today are Moslem nations. The Koran [Qur'an] predicts that when Islam's messiah (or Mahdi) arrives, that even the rocks and trees will cry out, "A Jew hides here!" And thus, it will be every Moslem's duty to seek and to kill every last remaining Jew. Israel is to be wiped off the map, driven into the sea to rise no more.

This is why President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made his vitriolic statement to the full council of the United Nations in New York in 2008, he pronounced death to Israel (and to America). There was little protest from the member nations.

This is why Ayatollah Khomeini has repeatedly stated that the primary reason for the Iranian Republic's existence is to take back the land of Palestine for Allah. Israel is to be exterminated.

This is why Osama bin Laden echoed the same spirited sentiments, "Fight the pagans altogether as they fight you all together" and, "fight them until there is no more tumult or

oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah." (²) Bin Laden added that holy war, or Jihad, also be enjoined against the USA for her support and protection of Israel.

This anti-Israel movement brings Zechariah's predictions into sharp focus. For, although it may appear that such hostility seems to be initiated by Islamic hatred, the prophet says this battle initiative comes from the LORD Himself. He is the One Who "will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (vs. 9).

PSALM 83 AND THE LEAGUE OF TEN ARAB NATIONS

Psalm 83 supplies us with more details as to exactly which nations will be confederate in a desperate and massive war upon Israel with the express intention of annihilating her from all existence. This psalm is a cry to God for deliverance from those who so conspire;

Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, And do not be still, O God!

For behold, your enemies make a tumult; And those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your precious ones.

They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the Name of Israel may be remembered no more' (Ps. 83: 1-4).

If you have been paying attention, you will not fail to see how the threats of the leaders of the Republic of Iran --- Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khomeini --- and their proxies in Gaza and Lebanon in the terrorist groups of Hamas and Hezbollah --- <u>are an exact echo</u> of the threats of Israel's enemies in this Psalm! This insane hatred of Israel by her Arab neighbours has been as unrelenting in the modern era as it was in Biblical times.

Psalm 83 lists a confederacy of ten Arab nations, which at this very day are all Moslem ----Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarites, Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre, and Assyria has joined with Lot (vs. 5-8).

Whilst some of these peoples in the past have launched attacks upon Israel, and whilst some of them have even joined their hands together in war, on no occasion in the past have all ten peoples been in such a united alliance to attack Israel with one aim. (³)

This Arab Alliance presently consists of 22 member states. Only recently and for the first time in their long history have all the Arab nations agreed on a single issue --- the complete destruction of the Jewish State of Israel. The nations where the ten ancient people groups and tribes mentioned in Psalm 83 live today are: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinian territories within Israel. (⁴)

³ E.G. The Yom Kippur War (Moslems know it as The Ramadan War) was a surprise attack from the South by Egypt and from the north by Syria in 1973; the 1967 Six-Day Arab-Israeli war was an attack by Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

² Frontline: Hunting bin Laden; http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/edicts.html;

⁴ Gerald Rowlands, *The Messiah Comes to Israel: Will a Major Bible Prophecy Soon Be Fulfilled in Israel?* Destiny Image Europe, p83

Every war and every terrorist attack since 1948 on the State of Israel has been but an expression of the ultimate war they will wage on Israel at the end of this present age.

Here is the stated reason as to why God is drawing these enemies of Israel into a lathered frenzy. Their hatred of Israel, is really a rebellion against the one true God of Israel, YHWH.

WHY ARE ISRAEL AND JERUSALEM FUNDAMENTALLY IMPORTANT TO GOD'S PLAN? (⁵)

- 1. Israel is the Holy Land which God promised to Abraham and his descendants.
- 2. Israel is the land of the holy Bible and where God's prophets spoke.
- 3. Israel is the one special place on earth that God says is "Mine".
- 4. Israel is where God's Son was born and where he ministered.
- 5. Israel is where Satan was defeated by the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah.
- 6. Israel is where the international New Testament church, the "New Man" was born.
- 7. Israel is the place where Messiah will plant his feet to claim the final victory of God.
- 8. Israel's capital city, Jerusalem, is where the seat of Messiah's government over the future regenerated world will emanate from.
- 9. Yehovah's very Name is inscribed in Jerusalem.
- 10. Israel is thus the epicentre of all the Almighty's promised plans for the redemption of this entire globe.

Thus, Israel, and it's capital Jerusalem, is the geo-political centre of the Biblical worldview. God's kingdom-plan for the new world has been and will be headquartered in the Promised Land. Satan knows it! The demons of the pit know it! One of the main instruments this kingdom of darkness will employ as we approach that Day will be the religion of Islam!

If their wicked confederacy succeeds in destroying Israel in the Day when they assemble with their vast armies against Israel, then the integrity of God's word is destroyed. His promises fail. The Bible is a hoax. If the nations arrayed against the LORD and against His cherished ones (Ps. 83: 3) triumph in this conflagration, then all God's prophetic plans for our salvation and glorification in Christ come to nought. So ...

We must understand the Bible's perspective.

We must understand something about His promises that relate to the kingdom of God and its perpetuity through the throne of David and David's greatest descendant, Jesus the Jewish Messiah.

We must understand that if successful in their threats, then the enemies of God, of His Christ, ofIsrael, and of the whole host of the redeemed, will prove that their god Allah is the God!

We must understand that the LORD has promised that His Son, the Messiah, is destined to rule the entire world from the city of Jerusalem. Nothing less than the future of the world hangs in the balance! But ...

⁵ *Ibid.* The following list is my adaption of Gerald Rowlands' Ten Points on p 43 as to why Israel & Jerusalem evoke such hostility.

This is exactly what Satan is determined to frustrate in this present gathering confederacy we see unfolding.

This is exactly why extremist Islamic forces are determined to wipe Israel off the map. They reject and hate the God of Israel. They deny that He has a Son, our Lord Jesus Messiah. The Quran categorically says, "Allah has no Son!"

This is exactly why the LORD God has guaranteed that All Israel will be saved. For, In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem ... It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zech. 12: 8-9).

WHAT GOD IS SAYING THROUGH ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY

Instead of eliminating Israel and her capital in Jerusalem, God promises to miraculously deliver the nation by one almighty supernatural intervention no less spectacular than any of His previous deliverances from Egypt, Assyria, or the other nations that have amassed against her in her chequered history. (⁶) Through Zechariah we learn that;

First, the LORD God promises to intervene on Israel's behalf and to rescue her from an overwhelming invasion from her immediate nations that surround her.

Second, God's authority will be upon the "house of David" and the "feeblest" Jew will rise up with the warrior-strength of King David.

Third, God will destroy this massive enemy army by backing up the Israeli Defence Force by supernatural means. The Angel of the LORD will lead the armies of heaven (probably Michael the archangel) under the command of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourth, Jerusalem will not be wiped off the map but will be spared for prosperous human habitation.

Fifth, the Messiah will publicly reveal himself to Israel through mighty supernatural means which will result in a national outpouring of repentance and sorrow and intercessory prayer to the Almighty Who has kept His covenant faithfulness; On that day the LORD will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. (Zech. 12: 9-10).

In our next article we will discuss in more detail this enthralling prophecy as to **how** God is going to bring Israel to a mighty new birth through the Coming of Messiah. The present gathering of Israel's enemies waiting on her borders is a sure sign we are on track for these momentous events.

That Day fast approaches!

⁶ Psalm 83 asks the LORD to remember His supernatural deliverance of Israel from the armies of Midian under Sisera and Jabin (see Judges chapters 4 and five).