

THE MIRACLE OF ISRAEL

GOD'S UNBREAKABLE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Four thousand and one hundred years ago, yes 41 centuries ago God made a promise called a covenant with a man we know named Abraham. God did not only speak this promise, it was dramatically displayed by a ceremony called "cutting a covenant". In the style we know was known to Abraham from his culture God took the slaying, dividing and laying out of sacrificial animals on the ground as a setting for His Promise made to Himself and for Abraham that could never be broken. We call this Promise the Abrahamic Covenant.

In Genesis 12: 1–3 God declares that His primary focus will be on His promises to Abraham. Genesis is written in the first 11 chapters with all the world in focus, but starting in Genesis 12 God turns His attention toward one small nation, Israel, through whom He promised to progressively accomplish His redemptive plan. God planned for Israel's mission to be "a light to the Gentiles" (Is. 42:6). In Genesis 12 God promised three elements:

a land, multiplied descendants (seed), and His Special Blessing.

This 3-fold promise became, in turn, the basis of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15: 1–20). All the rest of Scripture bears out the fulfillment of these promises.

15:7 to give you this land to inherit it. That a specifically identifiable land (see vv. 18–21) was intimately linked with Abram's having many descendants in God's purpose and in the Abrahamic Covenant was clearly revealed and, in a formal ceremony (vv. 9–21), would be placed irrevocably beyond dispute.

GOD CUTS A COVENANT WITH HIMSELF FOR ABRAHAM

In Genesis 15 we find one of the greatest events in the history of salvation, The Lord Himself commemorated it with a special sign. He ordered

Abram to make a “cutting of the covenant” by sacrifices divided into two piles. Then, when the sun had set, God appeared in the night as “a smoking firepot with a blazing torch... and passed between the pieces” (v. 17) in the traditional figure-eight pattern of covenant, signifying that his promise was unconditional and that he (God) would be torn asunder like the pieces if he failed to keep his promise. To be sure, Abram’s unwavering faith displayed at this great moment (cf. Romans 4: 10ff.) did suffer some future lapses, but his faith also grew to towering proportions through the hard times that were to come.¹

WHAT IS THE BLOOD PATH?

The central act of worship for the Israelites was the shedding of blood. Primitive as that may seem, God established and continually strengthened His relationship with His people through the ritual of animal sacrifice. Without a doubt, the writers of the New Testament believed that all the sacrifices pointed to, and were fulfilled by, Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 9: 11-14, this belief is made clear.

Genesis 15, gives insight into God’s instruction to His people through the sacrifice system. Understanding this passage in its cultural setting reveals the details of the sacrificial system and the meaning of Jesus’ atoning death.

Verse 10: What did Abram do after he got the animals? How does this show you that he knew what was happening? NOTE: This ceremony was practiced by the culture and so was known to Abram. The animals were arranged so that the blood ran to the middle of the altar, forming a pool or path of blood between the two parties. Both parties, beginning with the greater one, would then walk through the “blood path” as a symbol of what would happen if they did not keep their word. This type of ceremony is called a self-maledictory oath: “May this be done to me if I break my word.”

Verse 17: What symbols passed between the pieces? How do you know that God was symbolized? What was God saying? From Abram’s perspective, could God have broken the covenant? How do you know a covenant was made? (See verse 18.) Notice the symbols that passed between the pieces: a smoking firepot and a blazing torch.

When was fire a symbol of God (Exodus 2: 2 and Acts 2: 3)?

When was smoke a symbol of God (Exodus 19: 18 and Isaiah 6: 4)?

With these two symbols, God made a covenant with Abram, which meant that Abram also was expected to put his life on the line for his obedience. That may explain the “thick and dreadful darkness” that came over Abram earlier that night (verse 12). If so, the image of this passage is God’s willingness to pay the price for His own breaking of the covenant (which could not happen to a perfect God). The story also shows God’s willingness to pay the price for Abram’s (and his descendants’) failure to keep the covenant.

105-106: A COVENANT IS “CUT,” NOT MADE. Though our biblical translations refer to people “making” a covenant, the Hebrews described the establishment of this type of relationship as “cutting” a covenant. The cutting, symbolized by the slaughter of animals (Exodus 24: 5, 8), indicated that each person in the covenant promised to give his or her

¹Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993.

own life to keep its terms. To break a covenant was to invite one's own death as a penalty. There are no more serious relationships than those that are a commitment of life itself. Thus God's use of covenants to describe His relationship with His people (Genesis 15; Hebrews 13:20-21) is striking for several reasons. It shows that God wanted to bond eternally with a people who persistently rejected Him. It shows that God was willing to prove His devotion to the relationship by offering His own life. Finally, and probably most stunning of all, it shows that God not only was willing to offer His own life to keep the covenant, but He also was willing to pay the price for any covenant failure on the part of the human beings with whom He was in relationship. This promise certainly exceeded the limits of human covenant-making practices.

So with an unbreakable promise God gave to Abraham a people, a blessing, and a land!

Listen to this incredible summary of all specifics God has revealed about His Chosen People of Destiny, the Jews. Just listen and soak these in, we will actually look at them one-by-one in the Scriptures as we go tonight! I'm going fast with these, but remember what I teach today is usually online by Monday night at the Discover the Book Ministries website.

1. **GOD PICKED HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY AS THE JEWS, DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM, CALLED ISRAEL.** God picked one man in Ur of the Chaldees and asked him to walk hundreds of miles through the desert to a land filled with powerful kingdom states. And there in a series of revelations, the Almighty God of the Universe solemnly swore to this man a nation would descend from him that would be the Chosen People of Destiny (Genesis 15). Those People are the Jewish People, the Israelites, God's People (Deuteronomy 7:6-7).
 - ✓ Genesis 12:1-3 When the nation was first founded, God promised through Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation . . . 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 12:2,3).
 - ✓ Genesis 15 There is more². This climactic word is the earliest missionary mandate. The promise of God to Abraham was specifically given *in order that* he and his seed might be, through the gracious provisions of God, the avenue of carrying the same good news to every one of the 70 families on the earth listed in chapter 10.
 - ✓ Not only did Israel become a great nation under David and Solomon, but it is destined for even greater days in the future. The nations that have befriended the Jews (notably the United States and, to a lesser degree, England, France and others) have indeed been blessed. Those that have persecuted the Jews (Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Rome, Spain, Nazi Germany and others -- Russia's time is coming!) have eventually gone down to defeat and humiliation.
2. **GOD PRESENTED A LAND TO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY THE JEWS WITH CLEARLY DEFINED BOUNDARIES** (Genesis 12:1; 13:15; 15:7, 18-21) to Abraham. He renewed that promise to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:3-5), to his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13), and to their descendants after them forever (Leviticus 25:46; Joshua 14:9; etc.).
 - ✓ *Genesis 12:1* The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

² Walt Kaiser, Jr.

- ✓ *Genesis 13:15* All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.
- ✓ *Genesis 15:7* He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."
- ✓ *Genesis 15:18-21* On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."
- ✓ *Genesis 26:3-5* Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."
- ✓ *Genesis 28:13* There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.
- ✓ *Leviticus 25:46* You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.
- ✓ *Joshua 14:9* So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'

3. **GOD PROCEEDED TO BRING HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY TO THE PROMISED LAND.** It is a historical fact that God brought these "chosen people" into the "Promised Land," an amazing story of miracles in itself.

- ✓ *Exodus 6:7-8* I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD."
- ✓ *Deuteronomy 7:6-9* For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. 7 The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.
- ✓ *Deuteronomy 14:2* for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.

4. **GOD PRONOUNCED A CURSE UPON HIS UNFAITHFUL BUT CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY AS THEY WANDERED THE WORLD WITHOUT THEIR PROMISED LAND**

- ✓ *Deuteronomy 9:4* After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, "The LORD has brought me here to take possession of

this land because of my righteousness." No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you.

- ✓ Deuteronomy 28:64,66 God promised the children of Israel great blessing in the land of promise if they would remain faithful to Him. He also predicted great suffering, persecution and worldwide dispersion when they forsook Him. These prophecies came to pass. Some of these warnings were as follows: "The LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; . . . And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life".
- ✓ Deut. 28:37 God warned that wherever they wandered the Jews would be "an astonishment, a proverb, a byword...a curse and a reproach" (Deut. 28:37). Amazingly, this has been true of the Jews all down through history, as even the present generation knows full well. Furthermore, the prophets declared that these scattered peoples would not only be slandered, denigrated, and discriminated against, but they would be persecuted and killed as no other peoples on the face of the earth. History stands as eloquent witness to the fact that this is precisely what has happened to the Jews century after century wherever they were found. God warned his chosen people of destiny if they forgot him in the promised land When the Jewish people entered the Promised Land, God warned them that if they practiced the idolatry and immorality of the land's previous inhabitants, whom He had destroyed for their evil, He would cast them out as well. That this happened is, again, an indisputable fact of history. God described how he would scatter his unfaithful but chosen people of destiny from the promised land God declared that His people would be scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other". And so it happened. "The wandering Jew" is found everywhere.
- ✓ 1 Kings 9:7 then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.
- ✓ 2 Chronicles 7:20 then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. So far the story is hardly remarkable. Other peoples have believed that a certain geographic area was their "Promised Land" and after entering it have later been driven out by enemies. The next six prophecies, however, and their fulfillment, are absolutely unique to the Jews. The occurrence of these events precisely as prophesied could not possibly have happened by chance.
- ✓ Nehemiah 1:8 "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,
- ✓ Jeremiah 24:9 "And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them".
- ✓ Jeremiah 29:18 I will pursue them with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth and an object of cursing and horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them.
- ✓ Jeremiah 30:11 But with all this, they would not be like so many other nations of antiquity (indeed like all other nations who were driven from their homeland). "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee".
- ✓ Jeremiah 44:8 Why provoke me to anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will

destroy yourselves and make yourselves an object of cursing and reproach among all the nations on earth.

- ✓ Hosea 9:17 "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations"
- ✓ Amos 9:9 "For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground.
- ✓ Zechariah 7:14 'I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land was left so desolate behind them that no one could come or go. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.'"
- ✓ Amazingly, this has been true of the Jews all down through history. Furthermore, the prophets declared that these scattered peoples would not only be slandered, denigrated, and discriminated against, but they would be persecuted and killed as no other peoples on the face of the earth. History stands as eloquent witness to the fact that this is precisely what has happened to the Jews century after century wherever they were found. The historical record of no other ethnic or national group of people contains anything that even approaches the nightmare of terror, humiliation, and destruction which the Jews have endured down through history at the hands of the peoples among whom they have found themselves, as even the present generation knows full well. The maligning, the slurs and jokes, the naked hatred known as anti-Semitism, not only among Muslims but even among those who call themselves Christians, is a unique and persistent fact of history peculiar to the Jewish people. Even today, in spite of the haunting memory of Hitler's holocaust which once shocked and shamed the world, and in defiance of logic and conscience, anti-Semitism is still alive and is once again increasing world-wide.

5. **GOD PRESERVED HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY FROM ANNIHILATION.** God declared that in spite of such persecution and the periodic wholesale slaughter of Jews, He would not let His chosen people be destroyed, but would preserve them as an identifiable ethnic, national group. The Jews had every reason to intermarry, to change their names and hide their identity by any possible means in order to escape persecution. Probably the most important of these end-time prophecies, namely, the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in its ancient homeland. It is almost impossible that a nation could survive as a distinct nationality, regain its homeland and be recognized as a viable nation once more after being completely destroyed as an organized entity by an invading army (as Israel was by the Romans, in A.D. 70). Its people were either slaughtered or scattered from one end of the world to the other; its land occupied and ruled by aliens for over 1900 years. Israel's survival is amazing, but even more so is the fact its survival was predicted many centuries earlier. When Israel, including Judah, first went into captivity, in 588 B.C., the period known as "the times of the Gentiles" began. Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome were successive world empires and their domain included the land of Israel. After Rome destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70 (as predicted by Christ Himself in Luke 19:41-44), the people of Israel were scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth unto the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64). Absorption by those among whom they found themselves would have seemed inevitable, so that little trace of the Jews as a distinct people should have remained today. After all, these despised exiles have been scattered to every corner of the world for 2500 years since the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

- Could "tradition" be that strong without real faith in God? Against all odds, the Jews remained an identifiable people after all those centuries. That fact is an astonishing phenomenon without parallel in history and absolutely unique to the Jews. We have already noted³ what is probably the most important of these end-time prophecies, namely, the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in its ancient homeland. It is almost impossible that a nation could survive as a distinct nationality, regain its homeland and be recognized as a viable nation once more after being completely destroyed as an organized entity by an invading army (as Israel was by the Romans, in A.D. 70). Its people were either slaughtered or scattered from one end of the world to the other; its land occupied and ruled by aliens for over 1900 years. Israel's survival is amazing, but even more so is the fact its survival was predicted many centuries earlier. When Israel, including Judah, first went into captivity, in 586 B.C., the period known as "the times of the Gentiles" began. Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome were successive world empires and their domain included the land of Israel. After Rome destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70 (as predicted by Christ Himself in
- ✓ Luke 19:41-44 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."), the people of Israel were scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth unto the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64).
 - ✓ Jeremiah 30:11 I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'
 - ✓ Jeremiah 31:35-37 This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the Sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD Almighty is his name: 36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." 37 This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD

6. **GOD PROMISED TO REGATHER HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY BACK TO THE PROMISED LAND AS A SOURCE OF FEAR FOR THE WHOLE WORLD** The Bible declares that God determined to keep His chosen people separated to Himself because He would bring them back into their land in the last days prior to the Messiah's second coming. That prophecy and promise, so long awaited, was fulfilled in the rebirth of Israel in her Promised Land. It happened at last in 1948, nearly 1900 years after the final Diaspora at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Roman armies of Titus. This restoration of a nation after 25 centuries is utterly astonishing, a phenomenon without parallel in the history of any other peoples and inexplicable by any natural means, much less by chance. God declared that in the last days before

³ Drawn from Henry Morris, Creation Trilogy, Appedices, electronic edition, n.p.

- the Messiah's second coming, Jerusalem would become "a cup of trembling...a burdensome stone for all people". At the time Zechariah uttered this prophecy 2500 years ago, Jerusalem lay in ruins and was surrounded by wilderness. And so it remained century after century. Zechariah's prophecy seemed to be utter madness even after Israel's rebirth in 1948. Yet today, exactly as foretold, a world of nearly 6 billion people has its eyes upon Jerusalem, fearful that the next world war, if it breaks out, will be fought over that tiny city. What an incredible fulfillment of prophecy! Even more impossible than the fact that a people could retain its identity without a homeland for two thousand years is the fact that they should then return and establish their ancient nation once again. Yet this is exactly what the Bible had predicted.
- ✓ Isaiah 11: 11, 12 "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time [note, the second time -- the first was when He brought them back from the Babylonian captivity] to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, . . . and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"
 - ✓ *Jeremiah 30: 10* "'So do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel,' declares the LORD. 'I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid.
 - ✓ *Jeremiah 31: 8-12* See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return. 9 They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is my firstborn son. 10 "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.' 11 For the LORD will ransom Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they. 12 They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD— the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more.
 - ✓ *Ezekiel 36: 24, 35-38* "'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.' 37 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, 38 as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD."
 - ✓ Ezekiel 37:21 "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land"
 - ✓ Hosea 3: 4, 5 The "wandering Jews" were without a national home for "many days" and it seemed impossible that such prophecies as these could ever be fulfilled. Even many Bible-believing Christians thought for centuries that God was through with Israel and that all the Old Testament promises to Israel should be spiritualized and applied to the church. But now, with the return of the Jews and the re-establishment of their nation, it is evident in a unique way that God's Word means exactly what it says.

7. **GOD PROPHESED HE WOULD MAKE HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY A SOURCE OF FEAR FOR THE WHOLE WORLD WHEN THEY GET BACK TO THE PROMISED LAND IN UNBELIEF** God declared that in the last

days before the Messiah's second coming, Jerusalem would become "a cup of trembling...a burdensome stone for all people" At the time Zechariah uttered this prophecy 2500 years ago, Jerusalem lay in ruins and was surrounded by wilderness. And so it remained century after century. Zechariah's prophecy seemed to be utter madness even after Israel's rebirth in 1948. Yet today, exactly as foretold, a world of nearly 6 billion people has its eyes upon Jerusalem, fearful that the next world war, if it breaks out, will be fought over that tiny city. What an incredible fulfillment of prophecy!

- ✓ Zechariah 12:2-3 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.
- ✓ god is at work today in The saga of the jews: The Jews began to return to Palestine in small numbers in the early part of the twentieth century, and then in much larger numbers after World War I and the Balfour Declaration. Jerusalem was still under British rule, however. After World War II, the Israeli nation declared its independence in 1948 and was soon recognized by most of the nations and by the United Nations. The new city of Jerusalem indeed did go back to the Jews at this time. However, the old city, including the all-important temple site on Mount Moriah, remained in the hands of the Jordanian Arabs. In the "six-day war" of 1967, Israel finally recaptured the old city of Jerusalem, and the Israelis insist they will never let it go again. As of Christmas 2000 they have retained possession of all of Jerusalem for thirty-three long years, and there is no indication at all that the Arabs are going to recapture it.
- ✓ could god be waiting for something to happen? Yet, the Lord has not come! The times of the Gentiles are still in full sway, even though Jerusalem has apparently gone back to the Jews. However, there is one exception. This exception makes all the difference and indicates with what fine lines the Holy Spirit inscripturates His Word. Jerusalem is not, in God's judgment, a collection of houses and streets, like other cities. It is a temple where God dwells, where His people approach Him through sacrifice, and where He meets with them.
- god prophesied israel his nation would have a Future agenda in god's plan: In this context, we come to a remarkable prophecy made by Jesus Christ: "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). Since the word "fulfilled" is the same word in the Greek as "finished," this prophecy clearly means that the times of Gentile world-rule will be ended when Jerusalem is no longer under Gentile control. But this can only be accomplished when Christ returns to banish the Gentile nations from Jerusalem and to establish His own world-kingdom capital there. Thus, the restoration of Jerusalem to the chosen people is necessarily accompanied by the coming of their Messiah to reign there. This is also clearly indicated in Zechariah 12-14 as well as other Scriptures. What does God say specifically? This may be one of the most

important studies we have ever undertaken, so feel free to trace these points and verses in your Bibles as we go along!

- God has focused on 40 acres of land: As Solomon built the temple (1200x800 foot Temple Mount), God said: "I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there" (2 Chronicles 6:6). But long before this, God had first spoken through Moses: "There shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD" (Deuteronomy 12:11).
- Where is ground zero: This place was not just any place in Jerusalem; it was an exact spot, chosen by God.
- ✓ It was on Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1) Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
- ✓ the spot which God told David to purchase from Ornan the Jebusite and to set up the altar there (1 Chronicles 21:18) Therefore, the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
- ✓ This was the same spot where Abraham had, almost a thousand years before, prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:2) Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."
- ✓ These 40 acres are only a short distance from Calvary itself. This spot, to the Jews and to God, is Jerusalem! And, amazingly, this one spot is the only spot in Jerusalem still controlled by Gentiles. It is on Mount Moriah that the Arabs have built their famous Dome-of-the-Rock, the second most holy place in the Muslim world. The Jews, for political or other reasons, have not yet dared to expel the Arabs from this site, raze it, and proceed to rebuild their temple, as they surely desire to do. It is apparently by this exceedingly slender thread, therefore, that the "times of the Gentiles" are still suspended.
- ✓ As the Lord Jesus said, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).
- ✓ god declared israel his nation would have a Future agenda in god's plan: In this context, we come to a remarkable prophecy made by Jesus Christ:
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- ✓ Since the word "fulfilled" is the same word in the Greek as "finished," this prophecy clearly means that the times of Gentile world-rule will be ended when Jerusalem is no longer under Gentile control. But this can only be accomplished when Christ returns to banish the Gentile nations from Jerusalem and to establish His own world-kingdom capital there. Thus, the restoration of Jerusalem to the chosen people is necessarily accompanied by the coming of their Messiah to reign there.
- ✓ This is also clearly indicated in Zechariah 12-14 as well as other Scriptures.

As over two millennia of OT history since Abraham concluded, none of the glorious promises of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants had been fulfilled in their ultimate sense. Although there had been a few high points in Israel's history, e.g., Joshua, David, and Josiah, the Jews had seemingly lost all opportunity to receive God's favor since less than 100 years after returning from captivity, they had already sunk to a depth of sin that exceeded the former iniquities which brought on the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations. Beyond this, the long anticipated Messiah had not arrived and did not seem to be in sight. When Malachi wrote the capstone prophecy of the Old Testament, he delivered God's message of judgment on Israel for their continuing sin and God's promise that one day in the future, when the Jews would repent, Messiah would be revealed and God's covenant promises would be fulfilled.

Listen to this incredible summary of all specifics God has revealed about His Chosen People of Destiny, the Jews. Just listen and soak these in, we will actually look at them one-by-one in the Scriptures as we go tonight! I'm going fast with these, but remember what I teach today is usually online by Monday night at the Discover the Book Ministries website.

7. **GOD PICKED HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY AS THE JEWS, DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM, CALLED ISRAEL.** God picked one man in Ur of the Chaldees and asked him to walk hundreds of miles through the desert to a land filled with powerful kingdom states. And there in a series of revelations, the Almighty God of the Universe solemnly swore to this man a nation would descend from him that would be the Chosen People of Destiny. Those People are the Jewish People, the Israelites, and God's People.
8. **GOD PRESENTED A LAND TO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY THE JEWS WITH CLEARLY DEFINED BOUNDARIES** to Abraham. He renewed that promise to Abraham's son Isaac, to his grandson Jacob, and to their descendants after them forever
9. **GOD PROCEEDED TO BRING HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY TO THE PROMISED LAND.** It is a historical fact that God brought these "chosen people" into the "Promised Land," an amazing story of miracles in itself.
10. **GOD PRONOUNCED A CURSE UPON HIS UNFAITHFUL BUT CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY AS THEY WANDERED THE WORLD WITHOUT THEIR PROMISED LAND** God warned that wherever they wandered the Jews would be "an astonishment, a proverb, a byword...a curse and a reproach" (Deut. 38:37). Amazingly, this has been true of the Jews all down through history, as even the present generation knows full well. Furthermore, the prophets declared that these scattered peoples would not only be slandered, denigrated, and discriminated against, but they would be persecuted and killed as no other peoples on the face of the earth. History stands as eloquent witness to the fact that this is precisely what has happened to the Jews century after century wherever they were found. God warned his chosen people of destiny if they forgot him in the promised land When the Jewish people entered the Promised

Land, God warned them that if they practiced the idolatry and immorality of the land's previous inhabitants, whom He had destroyed for their evil, He would cast them out as well. That this happened is, again, an indisputable fact of history. God described how he would scatter his unfaithful but chosen people of destiny from the promised land God declared that His people would be scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other". And so it happened. "The wandering Jew" is found everywhere. **GOD DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD BE SCATTERED:** God promised the children of Israel great blessing in the land of promise if they would remain faithful to Him. He also predicted great suffering, persecution and worldwide dispersion when they forsook Him. These prophecies came to pass. Some of these warnings were as follows: "The LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; . . . And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (Deuteronomy 28:64,66). "And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them" (Jeremiah 24:9). But with all this, they would not be like so many other nations of antiquity (indeed like all other nations who were driven from their homeland). "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee" (Jeremiah 30:11). "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations" (Hosea 9:17).

11. **GOD PRESERVED HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY FROM ANNIHILATION.** God declared that in spite of such persecution and the periodic wholesale slaughter of Jews, He would not let His chosen people be destroyed, but would preserve them as an identifiable ethnic, national group. The Jews had every reason to intermarry, to change their names and hide their identity by any possible means in order to escape persecution. **GOD DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD SURVIVE:** We have already noted what is probably the most important of these end-time prophecies, namely, the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in its ancient homeland. It is almost impossible that a nation could survive as a distinct nationality, regain its homeland and be recognized as a viable nation once more after being completely destroyed as an organized entity by an invading army (as Israel was by the Romans, in A.D. 70). Its people were either slaughtered or scattered from one end of the world to the other; its land occupied and ruled by aliens for over 1900 years. Israel's survival is amazing, but even more so is the fact its survival was predicted many centuries earlier. When Israel, including Judah, first went into captivity, in 588 B.C., the

period known as "the times of the Gentiles" began. Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome were successive world empires and their domain included the land of Israel. After Rome destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70 (as predicted by Christ Himself in Luke 19: 41-44), the people of Israel were scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth unto the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64).

12. **GOD PROMISED TO REGATHER HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY BACK TO THE PROMISED LAND AS A SOURCE OF FEAR FOR THE WHOLE WORLD** The Bible declares that God determined to keep His chosen people separated to Himself because He would bring them back into their land in the last days prior to the Messiah's second coming. That prophecy and promise, so long awaited, was fulfilled in the rebirth of Israel in her Promised Land. It happened at last in 1948, nearly 1900 years after the final Diaspora at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Roman armies of Titus. This restoration of a nation after 25 centuries is utterly astonishing, a phenomenon without parallel in the history of any other peoples and inexplicable by any natural means, much less by chance. God declared that in the last days before the Messiah's second coming, Jerusalem would become "a cup of trembling...a burdensome stone for all people". At the time Zechariah uttered this prophecy 2500 years ago, Jerusalem lay in ruins and was surrounded by wilderness. And so it remained century after century. Zechariah's prophecy seemed to be utter madness even after Israel's rebirth in 1948. Yet today, exactly as foretold, a world of nearly 6 billion people has its eyes upon Jerusalem, fearful that the next world war, if it breaks out, will be fought over that tiny city. What an incredible fulfillment of prophecy! **GOD DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD BE REGATHERED:** Even more impossible than the fact that a people could retain its identity without a homeland for two thousand years is the fact that they should then return and establish their ancient nation once again. Yet this is exactly what the Bible had predicted. "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land" (Ezekiel 37:21). "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time [note, the second time -- the first was when He brought them back from the Babylonian captivity] to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, . . . 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). The "wandering Jews" were without a national home for "many days" (Hosea 3:4, 5) and it seemed impossible that such prophecies as these could ever be fulfilled. Even many Bible-believing Christians thought for centuries that God was through with Israel and that all the Old Testament promises to Israel should be spiritualized and applied to the church. But now, with the return of the Jews and the re-establishment of their nation, it is evident in a unique way that God's Word means exactly what it says.

13. **GOD DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD HAVE A FUTURE AGENDA IN GOD'S PLAN:** In this context, we come to a remarkable prophecy made by Jesus Christ: "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). Since the word "fulfilled" is the same word in the Greek as "finished," this prophecy clearly means that the times of Gentile world-rule will be ended when Jerusalem is no longer under Gentile control. But this can only be accomplished when Christ returns to banish the Gentile nations from Jerusalem and to establish His own world-kingdom capital there. Thus, the restoration of Jerusalem to the chosen people is necessarily accompanied by the coming of their Messiah to reign there. This is also clearly indicated in Zechariah 12-14 as well as other Scriptures.

What does God say specifically? This may be one of the most important studies we have ever undertaken, so feel free to trace these points and verses in your Bibles as we go along!

8. **GOD IDENTIFIED HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY AS THE JEWS, THE DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM, AND HE NAMED THEM ISRAEL.** God picked one man in Ur of the Chaldees and asked him to walk hundreds of miles through the desert to a land filled with powerful kingdom states (Genesis 11-12). And there in a series of revelations, the Almighty God of the Universe solemnly swore to this man a nation would descend from him that would be the Chosen People of Destiny (Genesis 15). Those People are the Jewish People, the Israelites, God's People (Deuteronomy 7:6-7).
- ✓ When the nation was first founded, God promised through Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation . . . 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 12:2,3).
 - ✓ There is more⁴. This climactic word is the earliest missionary mandate. The promise of God to Abraham was specifically given *in order that* he and his seed might be, through the gracious provisions of God, the avenue of carrying the same good news to every one of the 70 families on the earth listed in chapter 10.
 - ✓ Not only did Israel become a great nation under David and Solomon, but it is destined for even greater days in the future. The nations that have befriended the Jews (notably the United States and, to a lesser degree, England, France and others) have indeed been blessed. Those that have persecuted the Jews (Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Rome, Spain, Nazi Germany and others -- Russia's time is coming!) have eventually gone down to defeat and humiliation.
9. **GOD PROMISED TO GIVE A LAND TO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY THE JEWS WITH CLEARLY DEFINED BOUNDARIES** (Genesis 12:1; 13:15;

⁴ Walt Kaiser, Jr.

- 15: 7, 18-21) to Abraham. He renewed that promise to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26: 3-5), to his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28: 13), and to their descendants after them forever (Leviticus 25: 46; Joshua 14: 9; etc.).
- ✓ *Genesis 12: 1* The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.
 - ✓ *Genesis 13: 15* All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.
 - ✓ *Genesis 15: 7* He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."
 - ✓ *Genesis 15: 18-21* On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."
 - ✓ *Genesis 26: 3-5* Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."
 - ✓ *Genesis 28: 13* There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.
 - ✓ *Leviticus 25: 46* You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.
 - ✓ *Joshua 14: 9* So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'

10. GOD PROMISED TO BRING HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY TO THE PROMISED LAND. It is a historical fact that God brought these "chosen people" into the "Promised Land," an amazing story of miracles in itself.

- ✓ *Exodus 6: 7-8* I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD."
- ✓ *Deuteronomy 7: 6-9* For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. 7 The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.
- ✓ *Deuteronomy 14: 2* for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.

11. **GOD PROMISED TO JUDGE HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY IF THEY FORGOT HIM IN THE PROMISED LAND** When the Jewish people entered the Promised Land, God warned them that if they practiced the idolatry and immorality of the land's previous inhabitants, whom He had destroyed for their evil (Deuteronomy 9:4), He would cast them out as well (Deuteronomy 28:63; 1 Kings 9:7; 2 Chronicles 7:20; etc.). That this happened is, again, an indisputable fact of history.
- ✓ *Deuteronomy 9:4* After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, "The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness." No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you.
 - ✓ "The LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; . . . And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (Deuteronomy 28:64,66).
 - ✓ *1 Kings 9:7* then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.
 - ✓ *2 Chronicles 7:20* then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.

So far the story is hardly remarkable. Other peoples have believed that a certain geographic area was their "Promised Land" and after entering it have later been driven out by enemies. The next six prophecies, however, and their fulfillment, are absolutely unique to the Jews. The occurrence of these events precisely as prophesied could not possibly have happened by chance.

12. **GOD PROMISED TO SCATTER HIS UNFAITHFUL BUT CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY FROM THE PROMISED LAND** God declared that His people would be scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64; Nehemiah 1:8; Amos 9:9, Zechariah 7:14). And so it happened. "The wandering Jew" is found everywhere. The precision with which prophecies fit the Jews alone becomes increasingly remarkable as fulfillment follows fulfillment, until the case for God's existence through His dealings with his chosen people is irrefutable.
- ✓ *Deuteronomy 28:64* Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

- ✓ *Nehemiah 1:8* "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,
- ✓ *Amos 9:9* "For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground.
- ✓ *Zechariah 7:14* 'I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land was left so desolate behind them that no one could come or go. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.'"

13. **GOD PROMISED A CURSE UPON HIS UNFAITHFUL BUT CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY AS THEY WANDERED THE WORLD WITHOUT THEIR PROMISED LAND** God warned that wherever they wandered the Jews would be "an astonishment, a proverb, a byword...a curse and a reproach" (Deuteronomy 28:37; 2 Chronicles 7:20; Jeremiah 29:18; 44:8). Amazingly, this has been true of the Jews all down through history, as even the present generation knows full well. The maligning, the slurs and jokes, the naked hatred known as anti-Semitism, not only among Muslims but even among those who call themselves Christians, is a unique and persistent fact of history peculiar to the Jewish people. Even today, in spite of the haunting memory of Hitler's holocaust which once shocked and shamed the world, and in defiance of logic and conscience, anti-Semitism is still alive and is once again increasing world-wide.

- ✓ *Deuteronomy 28:37* You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you.
- ✓ *2 Chronicles 7:20* then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.
- ✓ *Jeremiah 29:18* I will pursue them with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth and an object of cursing and horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them.
- ✓ *Jeremiah 44:8* Why provoke me to anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will destroy yourselves and make yourselves an object of cursing and reproach among all the nations on earth.

14. **GOD PROMISED TO CHASTEN HIS UNFAITHFUL BUT CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY.** Furthermore, the prophets declared that these scattered peoples would not only be slandered, denigrated, and discriminated against, but they would be persecuted and killed as no other peoples on the face of the earth. (II Chronicles 7:20-22) History stands as eloquent witness to the fact that this is

precisely what has happened to the Jews century after century wherever they were found. The historical record of no other ethnic or national group of people contains anything that even approaches the nightmare of terror, humiliation, and destruction which the Jews have endured down through history at the hands of the peoples among whom they have found themselves.

- ✓ *2 Chronicles 7:20-22* then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. 21 And though this temple is now so imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and say, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?' 22 People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why he brought all this disaster on them.'
- ✓ "And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them" (Jeremiah 24:9).
- ✓ "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations" (Hosea 9:17).

15. GOD PROMISED TO PRESERVE HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY FROM ANNIHILATION. God declared that in spite of such persecution and the periodic wholesale slaughter of Jews, He would not let His chosen people be destroyed, but would preserve them as an identifiable ethnic, national group (Jeremiah 30:11; 31:35-37). The Jews had every reason to intermarry, to change their names and hide their identity by any possible means in order to escape persecution. Why preserve their bloodline when they had no land of their own, when most of them didn't take the Bible literally, and when racial identification imposed only the cruelest disadvantages? Shamefully, many who claimed to be Christians and thus followers of Christ, who was Himself a Jew, were in the forefront of Jewish persecution and slaughter. After the emperor, Constantine, supposedly became a Christian, it was those who called themselves Christians who were far more cruel to the Jews than pagans had ever been. The Roman Catholic popes were the first to develop anti-Semitism to a science. Hitler, who remained a Catholic to the end, would claim that he was only following the example of both Catholics and Lutherans in finishing what the Church had begun. Anti-Semitism was a part of his Catholicism from which Martin Luther was never freed. Absorption by those among whom they found themselves would have seemed inevitable, so that little trace of the Jews as a distinct people should have remained today. After all, these despised exiles have been scattered to every corner of the world for 2500 years since the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Could "tradition" be that strong without real faith in God? Against all odds, the Jews remained an identifiable people after all those centuries. That fact is an astonishing phenomenon without parallel in history and absolutely unique to the Jews.

GOD⁵ DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD SURVIVE: We have already noted what is probably the most important of these end-time prophecies, namely, the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in its ancient homeland. It is almost impossible that a nation could survive as a distinct nationality, regain its homeland and be recognized as a viable nation once more after being completely destroyed as an organized entity by an invading army (as Israel was by the Romans, in A.D. 70). Its people were either slaughtered or scattered from one end of the world to the other; its land occupied and ruled by aliens for over 1900 years. Israel's survival is amazing, but even more so is the fact its survival was predicted many centuries earlier. When Israel, including Judah, first went into captivity, in 588 B.C., the period known as "the times of the Gentiles" began. Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome were successive world empires and their domain included the land of Israel.

After Rome destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70 (as predicted by Christ Himself in Luke 19:41-44 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."), the people of Israel were scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth unto the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64).

- ✓ *Jeremiah 30:11* I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'
- ✓ *Jeremiah 31:35-37* This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the Sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD Almighty is his name: 36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." 37 This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.

16. **GOD PROMISED TO REGATHER HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY BACK TO THE PROMISED LAND** The Bible declares that God determined to keep His chosen people separated to Himself (Exodus 33:16; Leviticus 20:26) because He would bring them back into their land in the last days (Jeremiah 30:10, 31:8-12; Ezekiel 36:24, 35-38) prior to the Messiah's second coming. That prophecy and promise, so long awaited, was fulfilled in the rebirth of Israel in her Promised Land. It happened at last in 1948, nearly 1900 years after the final Diaspora at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Roman armies of Titus. This restoration of a nation after 25 centuries is utterly astonishing, a phenomenon without parallel in the history of any other peoples and inexplicable by any natural means, much less by chance. **GOD DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD BE REGATHERED:** Even more impossible than the fact that a people

⁵ Drawn from Henry Morris, Creation Trilogy, Appedices, electronic edition, n.p.

- could retain its identity without a homeland for two thousand years is the fact that they should then return and establish their ancient nation once again. Yet this is exactly what the Bible had predicted.
- ✓ *Exodus 33: 16* How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"
 - ✓ *Leviticus 20: 26* You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.
 - ✓ *Isaiah 11: 11, 12* "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time [note, the second time -- the first was when He brought them back from the Babylonian captivity] to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, . . . and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"
 - ✓ *Jeremiah 30: 10* "'So do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel,' declares the LORD. 'I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid.
 - ✓ *Jeremiah 31: 8-12* See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return. 9 They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is my firstborn son. 10 "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.' 11 For the LORD will ransom Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they. 12 They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD— the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more.
 - ✓ *Ezekiel 36: 24, 35-38* "'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.' 37 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, 38 as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD."
 - ✓ "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land" (Ezekiel 37: 21).
 - ✓ The "wandering Jews" were without a national home for "many days" (Hosea 3: 4, 5) and it seemed impossible that such prophecies as these could ever be fulfilled. Even many Bible-believing Christians thought for centuries that God was through with Israel and that all the Old Testament promises to Israel should be spiritualized and applied to the church. But now, with the return of the Jews and the re-establishment of their nation, it is evident in a unique way that God's Word means exactly what it says.

17. GOD PROMISED TO MAKE HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE OF DESTINY A SOURCE OF FEAR FOR THE WHOLE WORLD WHEN THEY GET BACK TO THE

PROMISED LAND IN UNBELIEF God declared that in the last days before the Messiah's second coming, Jerusalem would become "a cup of trembling...a burdensome stone for all people" (Zechariah 12:2,3). At the time Zechariah uttered this prophecy 2500 years ago, Jerusalem lay in ruins and was surrounded by wilderness. And so it remained century after century. Zechariah's prophecy seemed to be utter madness even after Israel's rebirth in 1948. Yet today, exactly as foretold, a world of nearly 6 billion people has its eyes upon Jerusalem, fearful that the next world war, if it breaks out, will be fought over that tiny city. What an incredible fulfillment of prophecy!

- ✓ *Zechariah 12:2-3* "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.
- ✓ **GOD IS AT WORK TODAY IN THE SAGA OF THE JEWS:** The Jews began to return to Palestine in small numbers in the early part of the twentieth century, and then in much larger numbers after World War I and the Balfour Declaration. Jerusalem was still under British rule, however. After World War II, the Israeli nation declared its independence in 1948 and was soon recognized by most of the nations and by the United Nations. The new city of Jerusalem indeed did go back to the Jews at this time. However, the old city, including the all-important temple site on Mount Moriah, remained in the hands of the Jordanian Arabs. In the "six-day war" of 1967, Israel finally recaptured the old city of Jerusalem, and the Israelis insist they will never let it go again. As of Christmas 2000 they have retained possession of all of Jerusalem for thirty-three long years, and there is no indication at all that the Arabs are going to recapture it.
- ✓ **COULD GOD BE WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN?** Yet, the Lord has not come! The times of the Gentiles are still in full sway, even though Jerusalem has apparently gone back to the Jews. However, there is one exception. This exception makes all the difference and indicates with what fine lines the Holy Spirit inscripturates His Word. Jerusalem is not, in God's judgment, a collection of houses and streets, like other cities. It is a temple where God dwells, where His people approach Him through sacrifice, and where He meets with them.

GOD HAS FOCUSED ON 40 ACRES OF LAND: As Solomon built the temple (1200x800 foot Temple Mount), God said: "I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there" (2 Chronicles 6:6). But long before this, God had first spoken through Moses: "There shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to

dwelt there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD" (Deuteronomy 12:11).

WHERE IS GROUND ZERO: This place was not just any place in Jerusalem; it was an exact spot, chosen by God.

- ✓ It was on Mount Moriah (*2 Chronicles 3:1*) Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
- ✓ the spot which God told David to purchase from Ornan the Jebusite and to set up the altar there (*1 Chronicles 21:18*) Therefore, the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
- ✓ This was the same spot where Abraham had, almost a thousand years before, prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac (*Genesis 22:2*) Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."
- ✓ These 40 acres are only a short distance from Calvary itself. This spot, to the Jews and to God, is Jerusalem! And, amazingly, this one spot is the only spot in Jerusalem still controlled by Gentiles. It is on Mount Moriah that the Arabs have built their famous Dome-of-the-Rock, the second most holy place in the Muslim world. The Jews, for political or other reasons, have not yet dared to expel the Arabs from this site, raze it, and proceed to rebuild their temple, as they surely desire to do. It is apparently by this exceedingly slender thread, therefore, that the "times of the Gentiles" are still suspended.
- ✓ As the Lord Jesus said, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (*Matthew 5:18*).

18. GOD DECLARED ISRAEL HIS NATION WOULD HAVE A FUTURE AGENDA IN GOD'S PLAN: In this context, we come to a remarkable prophecy made by Jesus Christ:

- ✓ "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*).
- ✓ Since the word "fulfilled" is the same word in the Greek as "finished," this prophecy clearly means that the times of Gentile world-rule will be ended when Jerusalem is no longer under Gentile control. But this can only be accomplished when Christ returns to banish the Gentile nations from Jerusalem and to establish His own world-kingdom capital there. Thus, the

restoration of Jerusalem to the chosen people is necessarily accompanied by the coming of their Messiah to reign there.

- ✓ This is also clearly indicated in Zechariah 12-14 as well as other Scriptures.