

Pentwater Bible Church

Zechariah Message 24

*The Lord Will bring Israel Back to the Land
October 20, 2013*



Joshua's Victory over the Amorites by Nicolas Poussin cir. 1624-26

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Pentwater Bible Church

**The Book of Zechariah
Message Twenty-Four
The Lord Will Bring Israel Into the Land**

October 20, 2013

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Painting by Sharlene Lindskog-Osorio

THE LORD WILL BRING ISRAEL BACK TO THE LAND & THEY WILL PREVAIL OVER ENEMIES

Zechariah 10:5-7

⁵And they shall be as mighty men, treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because Jehovah is with them; and the riders on horses shall be confounded. ⁶And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them back; for I have mercy upon them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them. ⁷And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine; yea, their children shall see it, and rejoice; their heart shall be glad in Jehovah (ASV 1901).

The text of the previous section isolated the Greeks out of Israel's enemies for divine retribution for their persecution of the nation Israel. In a similar fashion the text continues on in the "latter times" on to discuss the Jews prevailing over their enemies because *Jehovah is with them*. He also tells them that the invaders on horses will be confounded as

the Israelites prevail over them in battle. God says, *“And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them back;”* meaning to their own land Israel. He will be merciful to them in such a way that it will be as if He *had not cast them off*. He will listen to them and throughout the entire lengthy period of the “latter days” they will be increasingly blessed by Jehovah and will rejoice over their blessing. The children of those who first realize the blessing will rejoice and see the work of God’s hand in the restoration of the nation Israel. Bringing the Jews back has been a gradual process which started in the 19th century with the successful Zionist movement and will end when all Israel will be saved and enter the Millennial Kingdom under King Jesus.

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

Jews started immigrating back to the Land under the Zionist movement of the nineteenth century. Theodor Herzl was a Jewish Austro-Hungarian journalist and the father of modern political Zionism, and in effect, the modern State of Israel. In 1896 he wrote a book titled *The Jewish State*, which outlined the need for the Jewish people all over the world to have a homeland. The book and his ideals spread quickly around the world and attracted international attention. By the time that Herzl’s writings came out there had already been a number of books and pamphlets calling for a return to Zion.

In Great Britain another prominent pro-Zionist force, the English Zionist Federation (EZF), was founded on July 22, 1897. Its task was not so much to negotiate with the British government but to fulfill Herzl’s other injunction, “to capture the communities”, that is to mobilize the institutions of organized Jewry in the cause of achieving the Jewish national home.

Chaim Weizmann, the future first President of the State of Israel, was at this time based in Manchester, England. In 1913 he organized a local group of young intellectuals that included Israel Sieff, Simon Marks, and Harry Sacher, a lawyer and journalist associated with the *Manchester Guardian*, and Leonard Stein, a barrister.

Herzl’s Zionism had proscribed as a “creeping in by the back door” program that operated through step-by-step colonization. It was only in 1908 that the “Practical Zionists”, such as Weizmann, managed to get some colonization started in Palestine under the auspices of the Zionist Organization. Even so, such colonization was small until 1911. But after 1911, when the “Practical Zionists” took over the running of the movement, colonization finally expanded.

What changed the situation and brought Zionism into the sphere of practical politics was the entry of Turkey into the First World War against the Allies. The Ottoman Turks were last Islamic Caliphate that controlled Palestine. On November 9, 1914, Asquith, the British Prime Minister, in his speech at the Lord Mayor’s banquet, announced: “The Turkish Empire has committed suicide.” Palestine, like the rest of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, now became a target for dividing their territory among the Allies after their expected WW I victory. In January 1915, Herbert Samuel, a member of the British Cabinet, circulated a memorandum to his colleagues on the future of Palestine. In the course of writing it, he modified his advocacy of a Jewish state to admit that the time was not yet ripe for it, but he looked forward to an independent Palestine.

In 1914 Weizmann was having regular meetings with members of the government such as

Samuel (MP), Balfour (foreign secretary) and Lloyd George (prime minister), and that Samuel had circulated his memorandum on Zionism in January 1915

On June 19, 1917, Lord Rothschild and Weizmann saw Balfour; and Rothschild told Balfour that the majority of British Jews were in favor of a national home. Rothschild was asked by Balfour for a draft declaration which was sent a month later on the 18th of July. This is why the declaration, written by Lord Balfour when ultimately approved by the War Cabinet, was solely addressed to Lord Rothschild.

Winston Churchill, a friend of the Jews, said that once British General Allenby marched into Jerusalem in 1914 liberating it from the Turks the British officially had control of Palestine and could exert substantial influence in the way it would be occupied and administered. So the First World War had a tremendous influence in bringing the Jews back to their Land as the culminating event of the Zionist movement.

SPECIFIC BIBLICAL PROPHECIES REGARDING ISRAEL'S RETURN

The prophet Ezekiel received prophecies regarding the future for Israel in the last days. Some of these focused on the period after the Great Tribulation such as the thirty-seventh chapter when they would be restored to the Land because then they will have believed in the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. This is commonly referred to as the "valley of dry bones" prophecy. Other prophecies he received made it quite clear that they would be in the Land as a nation before they experienced a national repentance and restoration. Two of these will be examined as well as one from the book of Zechariah.

Ezekiel 20: 33-38

³³As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, will I be king over you: ³⁴and I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; ³⁵and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. ³⁶Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. ³⁷And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV 1901).

The Lord is giving this prophecy to Israel and using the Exodus as an illustration to compare what He is going to do in the future to what He did in the past. God led them out from under this persecution and restored them into Canaan from where they originally came. They were rebellious in the desert as they left Egypt and, as a result, wandered for forty years. They were so rebellious that only two men who came out of Egypt made it into the destined promise land. All the rest died out in the desert. This was a judgment God placed upon them. Much in the same way God led them out of the persecutions by the Egyptians and moved them into the Promised Land He declared He would do it again.

Looking back in time and remembering that this prophecy was given in the sixth century before Christ, it is clear that He has already done that prior to this day (2013).

This time, though, God interestingly says that He will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries (plural) wherein they have been. Since 586 B.C. they have been scattered throughout the countries of the world. The Ezekiel text says they will be gathered out of wrath and for wrath. They were persecuted in many of the nations in which they lived and wanted a safe homeland. The judgment described must be significant in order to make it into the biblical text. The most serious judgment He brought on them was the Nazi holocaust when six million Jews were destroyed in the Nazi's genocide of the Jews. This set the stage for world sympathy, which led to them becoming a nation. The regathering, though, was in unbelief. We can see in the passage cited above that this regathering *is with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out*. This is God saying to the nation Israel, and repeating it twice that He gathers them out of wrath and for wrath. The term outstretched arm means that God is exercising His wrath. He brought them into the Land as a sovereign nation while still in unbelief. They will live as a nation for a while in unbelief until the Great Tribulation where the Antichrist will declare himself god and initiate the worst persecution the Jews will have ever seen. After that final wrath they will turn to Him and accept Christ as their Messiah. But from the Nazi Holocaust to the Great Tribulation there will be a period where they will have residence in the Land but not be regenerated as a nation. In other words, God will not be their God; and Christ will not be their Messiah. Nevertheless, God loves them. Because He loves them and made promises to their ancestors the Patriarch's, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He will give them the Land they have been guaranteed. God's promises are always kept; there are no exceptions. So the Second World War was also instrumental to providing the means whereby the Jews would be back in the land in a more secure manner, sovereignty.

ISRAEL PREVAILS IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

In 1948, after the United Nations voted to give Israel statehood, five Arab armies (from Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq) immediately invaded Israel. The stated purpose of this invasion was to "push the Jews into the sea", in other words, genocide. Assam Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League, declared their intentions: "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades. "What Hitler didn't finish three years earlier, the Arabs will finish once and for all." A Nazi collaborator, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, led the Arabs of the former British Mandate of Palestine. He was charged at the Nuremberg trials before escaping in 1946. Al-Husseini actively supported Hitler's policy to exterminate the Jews in World War II.

Despite the disadvantages in numbers, organization, and weapons, the Jews began to take the initiative in the weeks from April 1 until the declaration of independence on May 14. The Haganah captured several major towns, including Tiberius and Haifa, and temporarily opened the road to Jerusalem. Czechoslovakia was the only country willing to provide the Jews with weapons. They gave the Jews used World War I weapons. Because God wanted them to survive He allowed them to capture territory from which the Arab aggressors attacked. Jordan captured what is now referred to as the "West Bank" (their true Jewish names are Judea and Samaria) including the Jewish eastern half of Jerusalem (now known as "Arab East Jerusalem"). Egypt captured what is now known as the "Gaza Strip." This

was in ancient times known as the land of the Philistines. Both countries murdered or expelled every Jew who was living there at the time. During the nineteen years that Jordan and Egypt occupied those territories (now known collectively as the "Occupied Territories"), neither country was willing to create independent states for the remaining Arabs (now known collectively as the "Palestinians") residing in those territories. Instead, those regions were plundered and allowed to rot. Jewish graves were desecrated, gravestones were used to pave roads and build latrines, and Jewish homes were given to Arabs. Most of these Jewish refugees went to Israel, and in just a few years doubled Israel's population. The Ashkenazi Jews of Israel absorbed Arabic-speaking brethren into society. By comparison, displaced Arabs were forced into refugee camps by their Arab brethren and most remained there throughout the nineteen years of Arab occupation. There was not an Israeli policy of expulsion of Arabs from Israel.

In 1949 Israel signed armistice agreements with Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan, (which in April 1949 changed its name to Jordan). They won the war against all odds. At this time Jordan annexed Judea and Samaria. Only Britain and Pakistan recognized this annexation as legitimate. This region became a source of many terrorists' attacks against Israel's citizens. In 1945 there were about 870,000 Jews living in the surrounding Arab countries. The Muslims call them the Dhimmi. During 1947 and 1948 the Arabs persecuted these Jews. Their personal and real property were confiscated. Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Iraq had anti-Jewish riots. Zionism was declared to be a capital crime in Iraq. Approximately 600,000 Jewish refugees left the Arab states and were welcomed into Israel by the Ashkenazi Jews living there at that time. The Jews became full citizens of Israel. Due to the wishes of their Arab leaders, the Arabs in Israel did not become citizens but remained in internment camps and remained "refugees."

THE SIX-DAY WAR

On May 15, 1967, Egyptian President Nasser ordered a blockade of the Strait of Tiran. This blockade cut off Israel's southern access to the Red Sea and beyond. By May 31, 1967, Egypt had moved 100,000 troops, one thousand tanks, and five hundred heavy guns into the Sinai. By June 4, Arab forces outnumbered Israel three to one as they poised on Israel's borders. This was Israel's Six Day War; and it was fought on three fronts, against three countries, in three overlapping stages. In the south, Israel engaged and defeated the Egyptians. In the central region, Israel engaged and defeated the Jordanians. In the north, Israel engaged and defeated the Syrians. In each of these theaters Israel gained significant territory that would serve as its own buffers in future years.

On the morning of June 5, 1967, the Israeli Air Force destroyed almost the entire Egyptian Air Force (more than three hundred planes) in less than three hours. Israel's armored divisions, under the leadership of General Ariel Sharon, also launched a lightning attack on the same day. More than eight hundred Egyptian tanks had been destroyed, and thousands of soldiers were taken as prisoners of war. Nasser later acknowledged that eighty percent of Egypt's Russian-supplied military equipment had been lost in the Sinai debacle. Finally, at 8:00 p.m. on June 8, Nasser accepted a cease-fire. The Jews won again against all odds.

From 1948 to 1967, Jerusalem was a divided city. The Arab Legion of Jordan had occupied East Jerusalem, including the Old City, since the War of Independence. The Jordanian troops had decimated the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, blowing up its

synagogues and destroying every vestige of Jewish life there. During the initial battles with Egypt, Israel actually notified King Hussein that it had no intention of attacking his country. Hussein, however, believed Nassar's lies and joined the Arabs. When the Arab Legion began to shell Western Jerusalem, the Israelis swiftly counterattacked, with success. Paratroopers landed and attacked from the Mount of Olives, entering the Lion Gate from the east. Israel was careful to minimize the use of artillery, which could have made their attack much easier with less loss of life. This was done out of respect for the numerous holy sites within the ancient walls. By June 8, Israeli troops were gazing at Herod's stones of the Western Wall. Although Jerusalem was the central prize, Israel also captured in those four fierce days the areas of biblical Judea and Samaria, now called the West Bank. These are not only the sites of biblical Jerusalem, but also the ancient towns of Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Bethlehem, and Hebron.

Egypt's ally in the north was Syria. From their heavily fortified bunkers and miles of trenches along the Golan Heights, Syrian gunners had harassed the Jewish farmers and fishermen of the Huleh Valley and Sea of Galilee for nineteen years. The problem for the Israelis was that the Syrians literally held the high ground, and their Russian sponsors had helped them to fortify it well. With Syria also threatening Israel's destruction, the army saw an opportunity to end this threat to its northern citizens once and for all. The battle for the Golan was difficult. This was not a desert, like the Sinai, where tanks could maneuver easily. Furthermore, the Syrians had planted numerous mines to deter any Israeli response to its constant shelling. The Air Force prepared the way by landing paratroopers behind the Syrian lines. Finally, Israeli bulldozers were able to clear the way so the armored units could batter the Syrian troops and drive them deep into the Golan. Syria accepted a cease-fire on June 10, 1967. Again the Israelis won against all odds.

Although it was an amazing military victory, the Six Day War left more than seven hundred Israelis dead and more than twenty-five hundred wounded. Although figures were never officially released, Arab casualties were conservatively estimated at fifteen thousand. The Six Day War established Israel as a major military power, but it unexpectedly cast it in the role of "occupier", a burden that has proven hard to bear. Israel eventually returned the Sinai to Egypt in 1973, when Egyptian President Sadat acknowledged their *legitimate* existence. Israel remains in control of the Golan Heights, unwilling to see it return to a nest of bunkers and artillery positions. On the other hand, Israel is under great pressure to return most of the West Bank, those areas of biblical Judea and Samaria. Israel does not trust the Palestine Liberation Organization to oversee such a "Palestinian State" in light of its murderous record of terrorism.

THE 1973 YOM KIPPUR WAR

In an effort to force Israel to surrender captured lands, Egypt and Syria jointly attacked Israel on October 6, 1973, on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. Other Muslim states contributed troops and financial support. Caught by surprise, Israel suffered severe losses in human life and equipment. Following an Egyptian refusal to accept a cease-fire and a Soviet airlift to the Muslim states, the United States sent an airlift to Israel enabling a recovery from earlier setbacks. One confirmed miraculous story demonstrating the providential nature of the Jewish victory merits inclusion.

During the Yom Kippur War a troop of Israeli soldiers found themselves in the middle of an area riddled with hundreds of Syrian-placed land mines. When they discovered this,

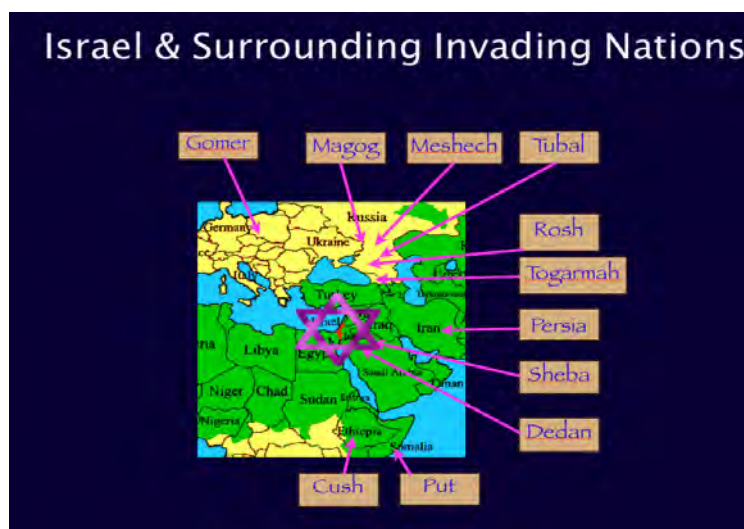
they quickly got on the ground and started slowly pushing their bayonets into the ground in order to identify the location of the mines. They then began the arduously slow and dangerous task of uncovering and unarming the mines. They had no idea how many there were or even exactly where they were. Suddenly a strong desert wind came up out of nowhere and the clouds in the sky cleared exposing a bright shining moon. The wind stopped just as suddenly as it started and, when it was over, the soldiers discovered that all the land mines were exposed and brightly illuminated so they were able to walk around them and safely leave the minefield to successfully complete their mission. Israel won this war too. It was, as the others, against all odds.

After the Jewish victory Saudi Arabia in retaliation then led the Arab world in an oil embargo imposed on the United States and other western nations. This method of waging war would be an additional strategy for Israel's enemies to attack them in the future.

In the years following the 1973 war, Israel's enemies realized that they could not defeat Israel on the battlefield. Churchill realized this many years earlier as he wrote of the Jews military superiority when he was Britain's Prime Minister in a memo to General Ismay on January 25, 1944. Therefore, they turned to diplomatic warfare and sought to weaken Israel's international diplomatic position. Due to pressure from the Muslim world, most African and third world countries broke diplomatic relations with Israel. In 1975, the Soviet-Muslim-Third World bloc at the United Nations succeeded in passing the infamous "Zionism equals racism" General Assembly resolution. This was an attempt to delegitimize the right of the Jewish people to return to their ancestral homeland. The resolution was not revoked until December 1991.

FUTURE ALLIED INVASION OF ISRAEL

The Bible describes a war the Israeli's will engage in that is yet future to the writing of this document (2013). The thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of the book of Ezekiel describe a coming war led by a man from Russia whose title is Gog. He will have with him nations located around Israel. They are Germany, Iran, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Armenia.



The text of Ezekiel thirty-eight parallels Zechariah 10:5 ⁵ *And they shall be as mighty men, treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because Jehovah is with them; and the riders on horses shall be confounded.*

Ezekiel 38:4b says *I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them handling swords.* So the cavalry will be riding horses as they invade Israel from the mountains. In the mountains horses are still a recognized means of military transportation. Zechariah says the riders will be confounded. Ezekiel confirms this in the twenty-first verse of his thirty-eighth chapter when he relays God message ²¹ *And I will call for a sword against him unto all my mountains, saith the Lord Jehovah: every man's sword shall be against his brother.* In other words there will be confusion as Zechariah says leading to a civil war and mutiny of the invading army. Israel will again be victorious. They will have no casualties while the invaders will be completely decimated. In fact God will have the birds of prey and wild animals devour the dead (Ezekiel 39:4).

Therefore, God tells us in Ezekiel what He said He would do in Zechariah.

Ezekiel 39:23-29

²³ *And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they trespassed against me, and I hid my face from them: so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they fell all of them by the sword. ²⁴According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions did I unto them; and I hid my face from them. ²⁵Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Now will I bring back the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. ²⁶And they shall bear their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they shall dwell securely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; ²⁷when I have brought them back from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. ²⁸And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to go into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land; and I will leave none of them any more there; ²⁹neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV 1901).*

NEXT WEEK: THE FULL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments
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