

# *Israel – present and future.*

**Israel and the church not in competition.**

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## Introduction

Israel is the world's hottest hot potato. Whichever way you care to look at it, Israel takes much more of the world's constant attention than any other nation.

Christians have widely differing views about Israel. Some of those views are held through a deep love for Israel on the one hand, to complete ignorance, to total indifference, and then even to strong anti-Semitism on the other.

Somewhere amongst these views lies the truth.

In this short booklet we aim to bring the kind of light that can only come from an overall understanding and overview of what is recorded in scripture. For it is in God's written word that we will find out His thoughts toward Israel and His plans for Israel.

When we know the Lord's mind on an issue we do well to align ourselves with His position.

Gamiel, a teacher of the law, gave very wise advice to the Jewish council shortly after the resurrection of Jesus, as they were about to plot to kill the disciples. In a nutshell he warned the council not to take a position against the disciples ..... because, 'if they are of God you will find yourselves opposing Him,' and if they were not of God ... then nothing would come of the disciples activities anyway. We could take the same attitude towards Israel.

This booklet is about aligning ourselves with the Lord's thoughts about, and plans for, Israel as revealed through scripture.

Jeremiah 29:8-14

8 *For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed.*

9 *For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.*

10 *For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.*

11 ***For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.***

12 *Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.*

13 *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

14 *I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.*

## **Chapter 1**

### **I came for you ..... but you were not willing**

Jesus came for the lost sheep of Israel.

Matthew 15:24

*'But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

Jesus came for the Jews. He was a Jew and He came as King of the Jews. When He sent out His disciples on mission, He sent them to the Jews.

Matthew 10:5-8

5 *'These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.*

6 *"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

7 *"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*

8 *"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'*

It is very clear that the initial thrust of Jesus ministry was to the people of Israel. He came as their King and they did not accept Him.

### **The national rejection of Jesus**

In Matthew 12 we find the account of Jesus casting out a dumb spirit. This very action caused the Jewish leaders a problem. For according to their tradition only the Messiah could cast out a dumb demon.

Previously Jesus had healed a leper (Matthew 8: 1-4) – that posed the same problem for the Jewish religious rulers. Now they were being asked to undertake the ritual for the cleansing of the leper in accordance with Leviticus 14. The problem was that this ritual had never been performed, and so it became the understanding of the Jewish religious leaders that leprosy could only be cured by the Messiah.

In Matthew 12, just after Jesus had cast out the dumb demon we find the crowd asking this question, 'Could this be the Son of David.' (verse 23). Or in other words, 'Is this the Messiah.' The Pharisees were in a corner – they were the religious leaders of the nation – the people were looking for an answer from their religious leadership concerning this issue.....

..... and so they gave their judgement:

Matthew 12:24

*'Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

The Son of God, the King of Kings, the long awaited Messiah is judged to be in league with the ruler of demons. The religious rulers had not come to a hasty decision

– if we look back to Matthew 9:32-34 we find a previous occasion when Jesus cast out a mute spirit. There we find the Pharisees had already come to this same conclusion. The Pharisees had been watching all along. They had seen, and not accepted for themselves, the baptism of John (Matthew 21:32), they had seen many miracles done at the hand of Jesus. They had heard the messages Jesus preached. The trouble was that this Jesus was a threat to them, their theology, their position and status.

The result was rejection of the very one sent by God for Israel.

### **The unpardonable sin**

The rejection of Jesus by the religious rulers, on behalf of the nation, was the unpardonable sin and blasphemy against the actions of the Holy Spirit through Jesus, led inevitably to judgement. That judgement had its fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in AD70, and the following dispersal of the Jews throughout the world. This is now world history and every nation can attest to the truth of it.

### **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem**

Luke 13:34-35

34 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!*

35 *"See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"*

You can see the heart of Jesus in this passage – He did not want His people to reject Him – but they did. His judgement against them was given as prophecy *'your house is left to you desolate'* (Judgement is now inevitable for blaspheming the Spirit by rejecting Him). Yet, even so there is hope – for the time will come when you say, *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'*

### **A change of Kingdom**

Jesus came to set up a Kingdom, and set up a Kingdom He did. But the Kingdom took on a different nature. This was now not going to be a physical Kingdom with Him as King of the Jews – that must wait for the future. The Kingdom was now going to be set up as a mystery Kingdom spanning the period between this rejection and His future acceptance as King.

Jesus goes on to preach in parables about the nature of this mystery kingdom which must now come into being. We live in that part of it called the church age, though that quickly draws to its climax. According to Paul there are two great elements to the mystery:

Firstly that Gentiles should be included (Ephesians 3:1-7) and

Secondly, Christ in you the hope of glory ([Colossians 1:26-27] – which should be shown by the church demonstrating God's manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers [Ephesians 3:8-13])

## Chapter 2

### The Lord's immutable word

(Definition: Immutable – unchangeable, not subject to variation in different cases.)

Mark 13:31

*"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."*

The inspired word of God is good for doctrine – so Paul told Timothy, and good for correction.

So we need to bow our knees to the word of God, and seek to understand what it means, by considering it in all its fullness and in its context.

Here lies a challenge – the challenge is to study the scripture with an open mind – rather than coming to it with either preconceived ideas or with the desire to prove a point.

### Jesus shows us the right attitude

In John 10:35 we find the statement .. *'and the scripture cannot be broken.'* In Jesus actions we find that He fulfilled the scriptures. So we should approach the subject of Israel with this viewpoint – the scripture cannot be broken.

Jeremiah 31:31-37

*31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--*

*32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.*

*33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

*34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

*35 Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name):*

***36 "If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever."***

*37 Thus says the LORD: "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.*

The statements of covenant between God and Israel are very powerful – only if (or when) the sun and moon are no longer required will Israel cease from being a nation

before the Lord. It is clear that God still views Israel as a nation whilst they are a dispersed people.

(Eventually, when the new heaven and the new earth replace the existing one, then the sun and the moon and the stars are removed. This is the time we refer to as eternity, so the sun and the moon have to be removed because they were designed to measure time as we know it now [Genesis 1:14]. In eternity it seems that while the glory and the honour of the nations will be brought into the New Jerusalem, the emphasis will be upon perfect unity. It also seems likely that there will be some other way of measuring time – as the Tree of Life bears its fruit each month.)

So here is our first acknowledgement. Israel is a nation before the Lord and the subject of His promises – even as recorded in verse 31 above for God has chosen Israel. Please note that the promise of God is to Israel as a nation – we will come back to that point later.

### Chapter 3 Stubborn, stiff necked and yet regathered

Acts 7:51-52

51 **"You stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.**

52 *"Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,*

Here we see Stephen giving a description of his fellow Jews. Stephen is repeating the Lord's own description of His people:

Exodus 32:7-10

7 *And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.*

8 *"They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a moulded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"*

9 *And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, **and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!***

10 *"Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."*

Even though the people had quickly fallen away by making this golden calf, and even though Moses was promised a tremendous future, nevertheless Moses pleaded their cause and God relented. Moses pleaded their cause, not because they were wonderful people, but on the basis that the name of the Lord would come into disrepute with the Egyptians if He now rejected those He had so dramatically rescued from Egypt.

Exodus 32:11-14

11 *Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"*

12 ***"Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.***

13 *"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"*

14 *So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.*

### The name of the Lord

It is here that we can start to see the reason why Israel will be regathered – the name of the Lord is at stake.

Ezekiel 36:16-28

16 *'Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:*

17 *"Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity.*

18 *"Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it.*

19 *"So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds.*

20 *"When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name-- when they said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.'*

21 ***"But I had concern for My holy name,** which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.*

22 *"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: **"I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.***

23 ***"And I will sanctify My great name,** which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.*

24 *"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.*

25 *"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.*

26 *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

27 *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them.*

28 *"Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.'*

So here we have it - the regathering of Israel is not for their sake – it is for the sake of God's holy

name. Even though Israel has profaned the Lord's name, nevertheless for the sake of His name they will be regathered, they will dwell again in their own land and they will walk in His statutes.

### **Regathered in unbelief**

When we look at Israel today we can be tempted to say – 'but look, they are unrighteous just like any other nation.' From that line of thinking we can easily draw the conclusion that the current State of Israel has not been regathered by God.

However that thinking would not agree with scripture:

Ezekiel 20:33-42

33 *"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you.*

- 34 **"I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out.**
- 35 "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face.
- 36 **"Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD.**
- 37 "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;
- 38 **"I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.**
- 39 "As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD: "Go, serve every one of you his idols-- and hereafter-- if you will not obey me; but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols.
- 40 "For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things.
- 41 "I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles.
- 42 "Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I lifted My hand in an oath to give to your fathers.'

When we read the above passage it is obvious that Israel is regathered in unbelief – and the Lord has to deal with them Himself.

Israel will certainly be regathered – for the Lord has spoken!.

## Chapter 4

### **No competition – the calling of Israel and the calling of the church.**

It is worth spending a few moments considering the future of Israel compared to the future of the church. This is an area where there are many viewpoints and an area where some elements of the church have sought to adopt promises made to Israel as their own to the exclusion of the people and the land of Israel.

However, as we seek a more complete biblical perspective we will see that there is no competition between Israel and the church at all – for God's plans for both are glorious.

### **God's promise to Israel deal with them as a nation**

In chapter two we saw that the Lord has made promises to Israel **as a nation**. We see this from the very beginning of the history of the Jews:

Genesis 12:1-3

*1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.*

*2 **I will make you a great nation**; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.*

*3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

The Lord seems to deal with Israel predominantly **as a nation** – though it remained necessary for each individual to believe at a personal level for personal salvation.

Whilst dealing with Israel **as a nation** we have seen that God promises to deal with them, regather them and put a new Spirit in them.

In the Old Testament we read of God's promises to the Jews **as a nation** rather than as individuals:

In Deuteronomy chapter 7 for example,

*6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

*7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;*

Here the Jews are described as God's special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth – clearly a statement of choice as a people and **a nation**.

The same chapter goes on in verse 14, 'you shall be blessed above all peoples,'

Verse 16: 'also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the Lord your God delivers over to you.'

Verse 17: 'If you should say on your heart, these nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them.'

In Ezekiel 20 in the last chapter we saw that the Lord God was talking to Israel as a nation - with the promise of regathering and cleansing.

### **Israel to become the chief nation**

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

16 *"This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgements; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.*

17 *"Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgements, and that you will obey His voice.*

18 *"Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He has promised you, that you should keep all His commandments,*

19 ***"and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made,** in praise, in name, and in honour, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."*

This is part of the destiny of Israel - to become **the chief of the nations**. Indeed, we know, that when Jesus returns to earth, He will Himself rule from Jerusalem as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords – Israel will be the chief nation.

Zechariah 14:16-17

16 *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*

17 *And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.*

Here we have it recorded in Zechariah – the nations will come to Jerusalem to worship Jesus. **Israel will be the chief nation** with Jesus her King on the throne.

With this glorious expectation it is perhaps not surprising that some parts of the church have sought to see the church replace Israel and take over these promises. But look.....

### **On the other hand the church is the bride of Christ**

How do we know that the church is the bride of Christ?

First, there is the passage in Ephesians 5: 22-33 where the relationship of Jesus with His church is likened to the relationship between a man and his wife.

Second, there is the passage where Paul speaks to the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 11:2

*'For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.'*

Clearly Paul, to whom so much of the doctrine for the church was revealed, saw the church as the bride of Christ.

Thirdly, there is the statement of John the Baptist:

John 3:28-29

28 *"You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'*

29        *"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*

Here John the Baptist is clearly depicting Jesus as the bridegroom, and he also clearly sees himself as a friend and not as the bride herself.

Fourthly, there is the clear statement of Revelation 19, where the bride prepares herself and then returns to earth, with Christ, from heaven.

Revelation 20 tells us clearly that the nations are still around at this time.....

Revelation 20:2-3

*2 'He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;*

*3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.'*

(The church must have been taken to heaven sometime earlier – for the bride is seen returning to earth from heaven in her glorified state (Revelation 19) to an earth where there are still nations around, and therefore Israel, as the chief nation)

### **The church looks for the glorious appearing of Jesus.**

In comparison to the expectation of regathering and refining through wrath and judgement, the church looks to meet Jesus in the air, to be taken to a place prepared for her, and to be with Him for ever.

Scriptures: John 14:1-6, Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18. Titus 2:13.

### **So if we now put this together:**

We know that Jesus is going to come and rule from Jerusalem and that the nations are expected to go to Jerusalem to worship Him.

We know that Israel will be the chief of the nations.

We know that the bride of Christ returns from heaven with Jesus when He sets up His kingdom.

Now it should be increasingly clear that, the calling of God to Israel, to be chief of the nations with He, Himself, as their King, and, the calling of the church to be the bride of Christ are different and not in competition.

Thus our consideration of all that the scripture teaches shows that the expectation of the non Messianic Jew and the expectation of the church are very different.

To be a member of the bride of Christ is the better part.

### **Three types of people.**

It is worth remembering that there are three types of people on earth today:

Type 1.

There are people who are Jewish

Type 2

There are people who are not Jewish – i.e. gentiles.

Type 3

There are people who have become born again and are now new creatures in Christ. (Racially they could be Jews or gentiles.) This is the church.

When a Jew becomes born again he becomes a Messianic believer and he inherits all the promises that belong to the bride of Yeshua. (Jesus) He does not stop being racially a Jew – but he now has the better part, he has become part of the bride. It is better because...

(I am using the term 'Messianic' to mean one who put their trust in Yeshua (Jesus Christ) as the Messiah. There are other Jews who call themselves 'Messianic' only in the sense that they expect 'Messiah' to come – that is, they do not recognise Jesus as Messiah.)

### **Gathered in unbelief Israel is refined through wrath.**

Ezekiel 22:17-22

17 *'The word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

18 *"Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver.*

19 *"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.*

20 *'As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt it; so I will gather you in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you.*

21 *'Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst.*

22 *'As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you.'"*

(It would be wrong to try to apply this scripture to the church – the church is washed in the blood of the Lamb, fully cleansed, fully redeemed, fully forgiven – only her works will be judged.)

Malachi 3:2-5

2 *"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap.*

3 *He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; he will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.*

4 *"Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years.*

5 *And I will come near you for judgement; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage*

*earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien-- because they do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts.*

Again a passage which is clearly for Israel – Levi, Judah and Jerusalem all mentioned. Consistently we have seen that the Lord is regathering Israel, even in unbelief, and promises to bring purification. However we also know that not all of Israel will respond:

Zechariah 13:8-9

*8 'And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one third shall be left in it:*

*9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"*

So now we have established that the promises of God to Israel as a nation are different and not in competition with God's promises to the church.

Just as Jesus described the least in the church as greater than John the Baptist (Luke 7:28) so it is far better for anyone, Jew or gentile, to become a believer in Jesus now, than to wait the final summing up of the age which will result in Israel becoming the chief nation after the wrath of God has been poured out.

***Footnote.***

In various passages Israel is described as the wife of Jehovah. This is not the same as the bride of Christ.

In his book, 'The Footsteps of the Messiah,' Arnold Fructenbaum shows how God entered into a marriage contract with Israel. How He warned them against breaking that contract, and how after much adultery by Israel, separation and finally divorce took place. (See Jeremiah 3:6-10)

The result was then punishment for Israel. (Ezekiel 16:35-43, Hosea 2:6-13).

At the same time God calls for repentance and promises a new covenant in which He will put a new spirit within Israel. Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 16:60-63, Isaiah 54:1-8 and 62:4-5, Hosea 2:14-23.

So Israel will be remarried with God. (Not with Jesus)

For further study refer to 'The footsteps of the Messiah.'

## **Chapter 5**

### **The state of Israel now.**

In this chapter we will take a brief look at Israel's history and then seek to consider some future expectations.

#### ***Foundations.***

The foundation of biblical Israel goes back to Genesis 12 where Abram is told by God to leave Haran and to go 'to a land that I will show you.' (Har(r)an still exists today and is in Turkey, just north of the border with Syria.)

God makes a promise to Abram, 'I will make you a great nation.'

In Genesis 12:5-9 we find God promising that Abram and his descendants will inherit the land of Canaan.

God's promise to Abram is repeated to Isaac and then to Jacob.

This covenant with Abram (Abraham) is known as the Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 17 contains much information about the covenant (which had been sealed in chapter 15) and how it is to be fulfilled in Isaac and not in Ishmael.

A predominant feature of the covenant is the land – 17:8 – which was given as an everlasting possession.

In order for the covenant to be fulfilled there had to be the intervening hand of God – for Abraham's wife, Sarah, was barren.

Jacob, who 'bought' the birthright from Esau his older brother (Genesis 25:29-34), and who 'stole' the first son's blessing by subterfuge (Genesis 27), became the father of 12 sons.

The twelve sons become the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. (Genesis 49 contains Jacob's last prophetic words over his 12 sons.)

So, for the purpose of our study here, we see Israel taking embryonic form. We have already seen that God gave Israel the land as an everlasting possession.

#### ***Development.***

We are all familiar with the development of Israel – first of all in Egypt and then in the wilderness and then taking possession of part of the land God had given them. (It is worth noting that they never inhabited the whole of the land.)

In more modern times we know that Israel was defeated by the Romans – Jerusalem falling in AD 70 and the last of the zealots finally committing suicide at Masada as the Romans laid siege to their stronghold.

The Jews were then dispersed throughout the world – this was part of God's judgement upon them as a nation. (Moses had warned Israel that when they failed to keep the covenant, by worshipping other god's, they would be uprooted from the land and dispersed. He also promised them that God would hear their cry when they returned to Him, and that He would gather them from the nations – even from the farthest places of the earth.) (Refer to Genesis 29 and 30.)

### *The journey into nationhood.*

So we can now pick up the story in more modern times.

#### *The beginnings of the Zionist movement*

The journey into nationhood really took a positive move with Theodore Hertzl, though by the time he came on the scene in the late 1800's there were already 25,000 Jews living in Jerusalem. Many of these had come with a view to establishing a Jewish presence, even maybe a Jewish state.

Hertzl was girded into action by the anti-Semitism he saw as a journalist, particularly the Dreyfus trial in France. (A Jewish officer found guilty of treason on false evidence.) In 1896 Hertzl published a book, 'The Jewish State,' laying claim to the land often referred to as Palestine.

On August 29<sup>th</sup> 1897 Hertzl opened the 'First Zionist Conference' in Basle, Switzerland. In his diary Hertzl wrote, 'were I to sum up the Basle conference in a word – which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly – it would be this; at Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years and certainly in fifty, everyone will know it.'

('Zionism' is greatly misrepresented in the media, where it carries concepts of domination over the Arabs, and maybe even the world. The longing in the heart of Jews to be in their own land – 'How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you O Jerusalem may my right hand forget her skill.' [Psalm 137: 4-5] – this is the true nature of Zionism, that heart's desire to be in the homeland of Israel.)

#### *The Balfour Declaration*

Another milestone on the way to the emergence of a Jewish State was the Balfour Declaration. This declaration was made on behalf of the British government on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1917. It took the form of a letter from Balfour (British Foreign Secretary) to Lord Rothschild.

'His majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object.'

#### *General Allenby takes Jerusalem*

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 1917 Allenby leads British forces into Jerusalem. As a mark of respect Allenby won't ride his horse into the city – he dismounts.

At this time Ben Gurion has emerged as a leading Jewish figure – later he is to become the first Prime Minister of the new nation.

The Paris peace conference of February 1919 granted to Britain a mandate over Palestine – to bring about the Balfour Declaration. Although Britain had played a positive role up to now the position starts to worsen. Eventually Britain is found to be positively obstructing the emergence of Israel as a nation. By 1947 the British government under Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary, wanted to please the Arab nations – due to the existence and importance of oil in the Middle East. There were continual outbreaks of fighting between Jewish settlers and British forces in Israel.

#### *The world economic conference – 12<sup>th</sup> June 1933.*

Chronologically, the termination of the period of time when the gentile nations were grafted into the Olive tree of blessing (referred to by Paul in Romans 11), was marked

by the World Economic Conference in London. The world was in economic disorder and every nation was represented. The conference broke up after 6 weeks with no conclusion other than ‘man has the wit to get the world out of its problems.’

A wonderful opportunity for the whole world to call upon the Lord for deliverance was missed.

Now the process of grafting Israel back into her own olive tree is started, just as stated by Paul in Romans 11:23-32.

Please see the footnote at the end of the chapter.

### *The United Nations*

On November 29<sup>th</sup> 1947 the United Nations voted for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine – the proposals called for a partitioning of the land between Arab and Jew – but nevertheless gave international backing to a Jewish State.

Much in fighting took place in the land with Britain striving to block the immigration of thousands of Jews – even sending them back to Germany. Surely a very low point for Britain as a nation. Eventually Britain withdraws her forces.

### *The State declared*

On 14<sup>th</sup> May 1948 in Tel Aviv a ceremony takes place and Israel is declared a State. Ben Gurion becomes Prime Minister.

### *All the surrounding Arab states declare war.*

Tremendous fighting breaks out on all fronts. Although Israel faces the armies of her neighbours with no trained army and very few supplies, nevertheless she survives. (However, some land was lost to Jordan and has now become known as the West Bank although it extends over Judea and Samaria and includes Hebron, Bethany, Ai, Bethel, Shilo and Shechem.)

Israel has a history of conflict with her neighbours – still continuing today, both within the land in the north with Syria through Lebanon, and elsewhere.

The most significant of these conflicts being:

The war for Suez in 1956 – in this conflict Israel was used by Britain in her attempt to defeat Nasser over the Suez issue. (Nasser, as leader of the Egyptians, had summarily seized the Suez Canal which was at that time under the control of Britain and France.)

The six day war in 1967. With her Arab neighbours poised to attack her Israel made a pre-emptive strike and 400 planes of the airforces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were destroyed on the ground. (Monday June 5<sup>th</sup>). Israel has a stunning victory and recaptures the ‘Old City’ of Jerusalem.

The Yom Kippur war – 6<sup>th</sup> October 1973. The Day of Atonement. Egypt and Syria attack Israel, which is caught out unprepared. Israel receives a huge amount of American aid and recovers to win a mighty victory.

### *Israel firmly established*

We now see Israel firmly established as a nation, although she remains the subject of considerable Arab hatred. The current ‘peace process’ has not altered the PLO charter which calls for the annihilation of Israel. An uneasy and unreal peace remains with her neighbours.

### ***What of the future***

When we come to look at the future prospects for Israel we touch an area of widespread difference of understanding within the church. Regrettably, even the basic overview we have given above is not entirely accepted.

In the next chapters we will look more closely at our expectations.

### ***Footnote:***

Grattan Guinness studied and wrote about biblical chronology last century. He wrote a number of books on the subject. In his studies he saw that one day could be representative of one year. When he considered Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he noted that he was 'put out to grass' for 7 Babylonian years – that is a period of 2520 days.

Nebuchadnezzar seemed to be representative of Gentile domination, so Grattan Guinness proposed that there would be a link between the dates of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Israel and, 2520 years later, the process of Israel's restoration.

The dates he proposed were:

(Each date being 2520 years after a significant stage of the conquest of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar)

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1914 | Now we know that this was the outbreak of the 1st World war. At this time Britain decides that the Jews should have their own land   |
| 1917 | The date of the Balfour declaration reported above.  |
| 1923 | The League of Nations gives to Britain the mandate over Palestine.   |
| 1933 | The World economic Conference in London which marked the cutting off of the Gentiles from the 'tree of blessing' of Romans 11. This process was very clearly marked at the time. (Refer to 'The World in Liquidation' by A.E. Ware.) |

## Chapter 6

### Peace – at any price.

Today there is growing worldwide desire to see peace in every situation. The United Nations and some of the nations are increasingly ready to send in the troops to impose peace on warring factions. The emphasis is ‘we must have peace.’

Israel is in the process of negotiating peace at the expense of giving up land. This process is supported by the whole world – as if the world has the right to dictate to Israel what to do (See Ezekiel 36:5). The process is supposed to be a two way process – the Arabs gain land whilst Israel gains peace. So far land has changed hands but there is no sign of the promised peace. Indeed the PLO now openly state that they are using this process to gain land and, when that has been used to its greatest potential, then they will take the rest by force, eliminating Israel altogether with Jerusalem as the main prize. (Zechariah 2:8)

### *Unfulfilled prophecy*

Meanwhile when we look at scripture there are prophetic scriptures still to be fulfilled. For example:

Isaiah 17:1

*‘The burden against Damascus. "Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap.’*

The prophetic word is both clear, and clearly unfulfilled, for Damascus is a city today. Under what circumstances might Damascus become a ruinous heap? When will this come about? When we look to see fulfilment we are into speculating possible scenarios – after the event we have the benefit of hindsight! Even with hindsight it can sometimes be difficult to see whether an event is the fulfilment of prophecy.

Another example of unfulfilled prophecy is found in Ezekiel 38 and 39. In summary, certain countries come together to attack Israel. Ezekiel 38:2 names them as, Magog, Rosh, Meshech and Tubal – not names we would recognise today. Later verses 5 and 6 tell us that Persia, Ethiopia and Libya, Gomer and the house of Togarmah all come against Israel.

Scholars have identified some of these nations as Russia, Iran, Somalia, Armenia and parts of Germany. It is not my purpose to discuss whether or not this identification is correct – just to highlight that the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39 are clearly still in the future, and that therefore the future is not one of peace, but war.

It is worth taking note that Israel’s traditional enemies Syria, Jordan and Egypt are not mentioned among the nations who attack Israel in the Ezekiel passage. That raises the question – why not?

Surely if there is going to be a battle against Israel those nations would be the first to be involved.

*Looking forward there are many possibilities (see note at end of chapter)*

Some people with spiritual insight have expected there to be a war with Syria for some time now. These voices are very surprised that war with Syria has not happened yet, and are certain that war will break out soon.

Certainly, Israel has a very uneasy relationship with Syria and Israel must keep on the alert. If, or is it when, Syria attacks, how will Israel react? Syria certainly has the capacity to strike quickly and in devastating measure. Will Israel respond with nuclear weapons? A nuclear strike on Damascus would fulfil Isaiah 17.

Syria, devastated in this way, would not then be in a position to join in any alliance such as the one recorded in Ezekiel 38 and 39. This is one possible scenario.

Looking forward we do not know when and how the prophetic word will be fulfilled – but we can be certain that it will be fulfilled – for the Word cannot be broken.

What we want to establish is that there will be no lasting peace, for Israel or for the world, until that time when Jesus, the Prince of Peace, sets up His own Kingdom, and reigns as King, from Jerusalem.

*Peace has become ‘The Objective.’*

We have seen that biblically there can be no expectation of peace until Jesus, Himself reigns. However that fact has not stopped the world and Israel making peace THE objective for the moment. Even Israel, which has been promised its land by God Himself, is prepared to give up some of that land in its drive for peace – is it now ‘peace at any price?’

The current ‘peace process’ cannot succeed. The reason for this is obvious, if only from the following:

The objective of Israel is to live in peace and safety within defined and defensible borders.

The objective of the PLO is to wipe Israel off the map.

These two objectives are not compatible.

### **Persecution**

We have already seen that the Lord is regathering the Jews to Israel. What will shift the Jews from the comfort of their sojourn in places like America? Maybe economic decline or collapse, but certainly outright extensive persecution would shift them.

We have just mentioned the possibility of a nuclear retaliatory strike against Damascus. (Maybe in retaliation for a chemical or biological strike on Tel Aviv, for example.) Just imagine the outcry right around the world at what ‘wicked’ Israel had done! Persecution on a world wide scale could quickly follow.

Is the 'gog and magog' war of Ezekiel 38 and 39 part of this reaction? Certainly one would expect Syria to be mentioned among the nations attacking Israel – but it is not – is that because Syria has already been eliminated?

The 'gog and magog' invasion is devastating indeed, requiring that God intervenes on Israel's behalf.

If this scenario is representative of the sort of thing that could be spoken of by the prophets – then one could see widespread persecution, devastation in the middle East and a world ready to receive a mighty new leader.

Perhaps this sets the scene for the next stage....

Added in June 2016

Now we can see that events in Syria have taken a different turn. The country seems set on destroying itself – the end of the matter is yet to unfold.

## Chapter 7

### The church faces test and opportunity

The church faces a test in the coming upheaval. Will we, as born again believers, recognise that the Lord still has a place for Israel and plans to give Israel a future and a hope?

Will we still hold to that profession even if the sort of scenario, we have speculated as a possibility, comes to pass?

Will we be concerned for, and look for opportunity to witness to, Jews thus giving them the chance to believe and be born again before all these things happen?

Or will we say, God no longer cares about Israel, the Jews have had their opportunity and lost it? The church has replaced Israel.

### Danger

The church faces the danger of taking the wrong position. Paul warns us clearly:

Romans 11:17-21

*17 'And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,*

*18 **do not boast against the branches.** But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*

*19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."*

*20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. **Do not be haughty, but fear.***

*21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.'*

Paul is warning us not to be high minded in our relationship, and thinking toward, the Jews. Later in the same chapter he says, '*And so all Israel will be saved.*' (verse 26)

History is full of examples of the church, or individual believers, taking an anti-Semitic position. Even Luther, father of the Reformation, was strongly anti -Semitic. It is not surprising that the Jews are wary of Christians, after all the atrocities committed 'in the name of Christ.' (I do not believe that everything done 'in the name of Christ' is done by Christians – but nevertheless there are enough examples for us to understand the Jews wariness.)

### Opportunity

On the other hand, the church is faced with a wonderful opportunity to support Israel and to bless the Jews. For example, in 1992, the 'International Christian Chamber of Commerce' held a trade fair in Jerusalem, with the specific intention of generating trade for Israel, as a specific reaction to, and contribution to, the need for the provision of jobs for returning Jews.

'Christian Friends of Israel' plays an important role in bringing Israel to the notice of the church, with information and prayer strategy. Their regular reports from Jerusalem are available by subscription and are very valuable for the interested believer. 'Prayer for Israel' seeks to stimulate Christians to prayer for Israel and for specific situations.

There are other groups also doing various things which directly and indirectly support Israel – God's ancient people.

These things are good. However, each one of us must settle in our heart, and in our understanding, our own position. Am I going to support Israel? Am I going to drop any anti-Semitic feeling that might have accumulated over the years? Am I going to take any active interest? Am I going to support those organisations that support Israel?

If, (or is it when?) world events isolate Israel even further, will I still stand in support? Will I see the hand of God in the events that unfold? Will I realise that God is dealing with His ancient people – to bring them to Himself – even through tribulation?

If persecution is so intense that Jews are literally fleeing for their lives, as they did in World War 2, will I be ready to give practical assistance?

Jesus had this to say about the attitude of believers to the Jews during the Tribulation:

Matthew 25:34-46

34 *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*  
35 *'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;*  
36 *'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*  
37 *"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?*  
38 *'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?*  
39 *'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'*  
40 *"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*  
41 *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*  
42 *'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;*  
43 *'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'*  
44 *"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'*  
45 *"Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'*

46 *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*  
(NKJ)

I believe that the church faces both great test and great opportunity. In the days ahead we will face the opportunity to be of practical support to Israel and to Jews until she is removed from the scene before the Tribulation – will we pass the test?

If we pass the test it will enable one of God's long standing promises to be fulfilled in us in greater measure:

Genesis 12:1-3

- 1 *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.*
- 2 *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.*
- 3 ***I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."***

Dear reader, will you inherit blessing from God because you are blessing the descendants of Abraham?

It is worth noting the underlying meaning of the Hebrew word 'curse.'

I will curse him.... Here 'curse' is translated from the Hebrew 'arar,' which means the pronouncement of God's judgement against.

.....who curses you. Here 'curses' is translated from the Hebrew 'qalal,' which means to sleight, to fail to bless.

A colloquial translation could be God saying 'I will come down like a ton of bricks on the one who speaks against you.'

## Chapter 8

### A deal with a gentile impostor

The pressure for peace and the desire for peace remain very strong whilst the bible forecasts war. Certainly war will be the outcome. Nevertheless Israel will be looking and yearning for peace. In all its existence since 1948 Israel has lived on the knife edge of war. The nation is becoming more and more weary of this type of existence – understandably.

At some future date, Israel is going to enter into a peace treaty with the ‘prince of the people’ who destroyed Jerusalem and the sanctuary after the Messiah was cut off. (Extracted from Daniel 9: 24-27)

Daniel 9:20-27

- 20 *‘Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,*
- 21 *yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.*
- 22 *And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.*
- 23 *"At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:*
- 24 *"Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.*
- 25 *"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.*
- 26 *"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.*
- 27 ***Then he (the prince of the people in v 26) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."***

With the benefit of hindsight, we know that Jesus was the Messiah, that He was cut off, and that the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary in AD 70.

In the future there will be a peace treaty between Israel and the prince of these ‘people’ who destroyed Jerusalem. This prince is often referred to as Antichrist. John, in his first letter, states clearly that, the Antichrist is coming, and that there are already many of that antichrist spirit around. (1 John 2:18)

As to the interpretation of who this prince might be – well he will come out of the people who destroyed Jerusalem. He will therefore, in some way, come out of Rome. The European Union could also be said to have come out of Rome – for that is where its founding treaty was signed. Therefore it seems likely that the expected world leader will arise in Europe.

### ***Another rejection by Israel***

It is with deep sadness that we have to say, ‘again Israel rejects her Messiah,’ - this time by entering into a peace treaty with the one who has come in Messiah’s stead. ( i.e The Antichrist, anti means, ‘instead of.’) We know that this is not the end of the affair – for eventually Israel will recognise the One they have pierced, and will say, ‘blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.’

Zechariah 12:10

*"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."*

But for the moment Israel will again make the wrong choice. They will so long for peace that they will enter into an agreement with this man instead of looking to their Messiah.

## Chapter 9 Treachery – the ultimate offence

### *The treacherous partner*

However, Israel will discover that the partner in their ‘peace’ treaty is treacherous. Half way through the treaty, the prince (Antichrist), sets up the ‘abomination of desolation’ in the Temple. Now it is time for Israel to flee – ‘*pray that your flight is not on the Sabbath,*’ says Jesus, recorded in Matthew 24: 20.

Matthew 24:1-16

- 1 *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.*
- 2 *And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*
- 3 *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*
- 4 *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.*
- 5 *"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.*
- 6 *"And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*
- 7 *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*
- 8 *"All these are the beginning of sorrows.*
- 9 *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.*
- 10 *"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.*
- 11 *"Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.*
- 12 *"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*
- 13 *"But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*
- 14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*
- 15 **"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**

Israel’s ‘peace’ partner does something which is heinous to the Jews. Commentators vary somewhat on the specific interpretation of the ‘abomination of desolation,’ and it is not necessary to exactly identify what it is involved.

However the scripture leads us to the following possibilities:

Antichrist breaks the covenant by entering the land of Israel.

Daniel 11:36-42

36 "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

37 "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

38 "But in their place he shall honour a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

39 "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

40 "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

41 "**He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown;** but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

42 "He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.'

Antichrist causes the regular sacrifices to cease.

Daniel 9:27

*'Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; **but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.** And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.'*

For the regular sacrifice and offering to cease means that it must have restarted some time before. This gives us the expectation that the Temple will be rebuilt.

Antichrist sets up something untenable in the Holy Place.

Matthew 24:15

**"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),**

A false altar, an idol, something of this ilk could be the very thing that the Jews just will not accept. Maybe it is a likeness of Antichrist himself. The false prophet is recorded as giving power to the 'image of the beast,' in Revelation 13:15.

Our purpose is not a verse by verse exegesis of future expectations – but rather enough to give us an outline of the future possibilities without losing too many readers on the way!

The scene is now set for the outworking of the last events, leading up to the return of Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 10

### Persecution beyond measure

Continuing in Matthew 24, Jesus warns and gives practical advice:

- 16 **"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**  
17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.  
18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.  
19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!  
20 **"And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.**  
21 **"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.**  
22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.  
23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.  
24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.  
25 "See, I have told you beforehand.  
26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.  
27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.  
28 "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.  
29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.  
31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Jesus has outlined that a time of ***tribulation of extreme proportions*** will take place (verse 21)

before He returns (Verse 30). Many commentators (myself included) would consider that a lot of the contents of the book of Revelation apply to this period of extreme tribulation.

Certainly this will be a time of God's judgement on a fallen, sick and evil world. He purposes that nevertheless, out of this tribulation He will secure for Himself those who believe. We have already seen in previous chapters that one third of the Jews will come through this tribulation, refined. (Whilst not specifically mentioned, we can also assume that a considerable number of gentiles will come through this period in like manner.)

It is worth noting that the warning Jesus has given has special application to Israel – pray that your flight will not be on the Sabbath – verse 20.

This is particularly pertinent because whilst Israel has special rules about the Sabbath and journeys thereon, the church is told not to allow anyone to be judged (i.e. condemned) regarding sabbaths. (Colossians 2:16) i.e. sabbaths hold no imperatives for the church.

**This leads us to the question – what about the church?**

This is another area where the people who make up the church have differing views – will the church be present on earth during the Tribulation, or for some of it, or all of it? This question goes beyond the scope of this booklet – however my own understanding may be found in a booklet titled ‘Will the church be caught away?’

## Chapter 11

### 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'

And so we come to realise that it is through this melting pot of tribulation that the Lord finally gets the eyes and ears of His ancient people.

Jeremiah 30:1-10

- 1 *'The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,*
- 2 *"Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.*
- 3 *'For behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'"*
- 4 *Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah.*
- 5 *"For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.*
- 6 *Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labour with child? **So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labour, and all faces turned pale?***
- 7 ***Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.***
- 8 *'For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them.*
- 9 *But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.*
- 10 *'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the LORD, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no one shall make him afraid.'*

See the sequence:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Verse 3  | regathering   |
| Verse 6  | trouble so great that every man is like a woman in labour |
| Verse 7  | this is (particularly) the time of Jacob's trouble.       |
| Verse 8  | the yoke of the gentile is broken                         |
| Verse 9- | The Jew shall serve the Lord in quietness and rest.       |

### What does this mean in terms of events on earth?

We find Antichrist in the 'glorious land.' (Daniel 11:41)

We find the armies of the world gathered against him there. (Isaiah 13:1-5, Joel 3:9-11, Revelation

16:14-16)

With the armies of the world gathered in Israel they now unite and turn against Jerusalem. (Zechariah

14:1-12, 12:4-9, Micah 4:11 - 5:1 etc)

Yet the Lord will again choose Israel and save that one third remnant – that is the Jews who will look upon Him whom they pierced.

Isaiah 10:20-23

*20 And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.*

*21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God.*

*22 For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them will return; the destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

*23 For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a determined end in the midst of all the land.*

Paul reports it like this:

Romans 11:26-29

*26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

*27 For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."*

*28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.*

*29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

The gift and calling of God is irrevocable – the gift and calling to Israel is that of becoming the chief of the nations with the Messiah sitting on His throne in Jerusalem – and it is irrevocable.

All Israel will be saved – yes all that have come through the process of refining, and even melting (Ezekiel 22:17-22), and have at last recognised their Messiah.

### **‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’**

At last, at last, from the depths of extreme tribulation, His own people are welcoming Him as Messiah – by calling for Him with a welcome, the Jews signal the return of the Messiah – this will mean that the religious rulers of Israel (the ones who are coming through the refining). will call for Him.

### **The inheritance of the church is quite different**

Here, it is worth while reminding ourselves, that a Jew who believes in the Messiah now, becomes born again. He/she describes themselves as ‘Messianic’ - that is believing in the Messiah. That makes them a member of the bride, a member of the church and an inheritor of the promises to the bride – they are no longer a Jew in the sense that, in Christ, (when we put on the new man, as Paul describes it to the Colossians in chapter 3:10-11), there is neither Jew nor Greek, no male nor female.

The church will be fully ‘in Christ’ when the mortal is replaced with the immortal – when we meet with Jesus in the clouds we receive our glorified body – then there is no distinction between male and female, Jew and Greek, as we have read in Colossians 3:10-11. We have the foretaste of that now – the full reality awaits us.

– the Jew expects to become the chief nation on earth, chief nation among many, made up of people living a normal human life with Jesus as King – the church expects to receive glorified bodies and reign with Christ. These promises and callings are different and not in competition.

In every way it is better for a Jew to become Messianic now rather than face the coming Great Tribulation not knowing the Messiah.

For the church we can comfort ourselves with the promise that we are not destined for wrath, rather Jesus snatches us to Himself from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

## **Chapter 12**

### **The King of Kings takes His throne**

Now His glory will be seen throughout the earth. Those who have lived through the outpouring of wrath and survived the Tribulation – these are of course those who have come to believe in the Messiah in this period – come into a ‘golden age.’ Jesus reigns in Jerusalem.

The survivors include the one third of the Jews who accept Jesus as Messiah and are thus refined  
by the process rather than condemned.

Now is the time that the church has looked forward to - now it is time to reign and rule with Jesus as His bride.

The glory of His coming is seen in Revelation 19

*6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"*

At last the full truth – The Lord God reigns!

Revelation 19:7-9

*7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

*8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

*9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

The marriage of the Lamb has come – Jesus has taken His bride and now He is taking her to His kingdom, which is being set up on earth. The expectation that the marriage feast takes place on earth is found in the parable of the 10 virgins. Here Matthew sets this parable after the events of the Tribulation in chapter 24. Matthew sees the bridegroom going to her Father’s house, collecting His bride and taking her to the feast in His own kingdom. (Chapter 25).

Called to the feast as guests are those who have become believers in the Tribulation – how blessed they are to be repopulating the earth with Jesus as their King.

Revelation 19:11-16

*11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

*12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.*

*13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*

*14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.*

*15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

*16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

Here we see Jesus returning to earth with His bride – now clothed in our glorified bodies, we are returning to earth from heaven. (We arrived in heaven earlier – either before, at the beginning of, or at some point through, the Tribulation, but not right at the end. If the rapture were right at the end of the Tribulation, then the unbelievers go to eternal loss whilst the believers would receive their glorified bodies. This would make every believer part of the bride. This interpretation cannot be right as it leaves no people to make up nations to be ruled over by Jesus and His bride. See ‘Will the church be caught away’ for full discussion.)

Revelation 19:17-21

*17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,*

*18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."*

*19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

*20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

*21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

**The last events in the Tribulation on earth, with Jesus returning to put an end to the final battles.**

Revelation 20:4-6

*4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

*5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

*6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

Believers (those who came to believe during the Tribulation and were martyred) who died during the Tribulation are brought back to life – these also live again and reign with Christ for the duration of His Kingdom before the eternal state comes into being.

The King is reigning and His people are reigning with Him. Now we will see the dawning of that ‘golden age’ when the wolf will lie with the lamb and the young child play with the viper (Isaiah 11).

## Chapter 13

### Chief of the nations

Now the tribulation is over. Jesus has returned to earth with His bride. He has defeated the armies of the world at Armageddon. In accordance with Matthew 24 and 25 there will be a separation between 'sheep and goats.' The righteous (those who have come to believe in Jesus during the tribulation) live in His kingdom (25:34). The unrighteous (those who still remain unbelievers) go into everlasting punishment (25:46).

So at the beginning of this period, which is referred to as 'the millennium,' everyone living is a believer. There will be more unbelievers as more people are born in the process of repopulating the earth – but for the moment all are believers. Now the prophecy of Joel reaches its complete fulfilment:

Joel 2:15-32

*15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;*

*16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room.*

*17 Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, "**Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'**"*

*18 **Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people.***

*19 The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.*

*20 "But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea; his stench will come up, and his foul odour will rise, because he has done monstrous things."*

*21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvellous things!*

*22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength.*

*23 Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you-- the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

*24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.*

*25 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you.*

*26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame.*

*27 **Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.***

- 28 *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*
- 29 *And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.*
- 30 *"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke.*
- 31 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*
- 32 *And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.*

Now the Spirit can be poured out on all flesh because all are believers at this point. What a wonderful Kingdom. Israel, for the first time, in her proper place as Chief of the Nations, never to be put to shame again. The church in her role as the bride of Christ, having returned with Him from heaven. The Spirit of God poured out on all flesh – surely the beginning of a ‘golden age.’ Paul hints at this time in Romans 11:12. He tells us that the fall of the Jews caused tremendous blessing for the gentiles, and says, *‘How much more (blessing will come with) their fullness.’*

This seems to be the time for the fulfilment of Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones coming back to fullness of life (Chapter 37) as the Lord fulfils the sign given in the resurrection of Lazarus. (Lazarus was in the tomb 4 days. Taking one day as a type of 1,000 years it represents exactly the period from God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15 to May 1948 – the resurrection of the nation of Israel.)

### **Conclusions:**

There is no competition between the destiny of the church and the destiny of Israel. The church should be aware of the destiny of Israel. The church should support Israel as a nation - because God supports Israel. (That does not mean condoning every action of the Israel government.)

Now that we understand the destiny of Israel, and that the destiny of Israel is given by God, we should align our thinking with the truth. The Lord is dealing with Israel, because He chose Israel. It will be painful, but we, the church, are uniquely placed through understanding, to play a role of support (until such time as we are removed,) to Jews and to Israel.

After the tribulation, the nations that survive on earth will be judged by their attitude to Israel – how much more should we be aware of our responsibility and opportunity.

Responsibility – to support Israel when everyone else will deny her and persecute her.  
Opportunity – to show the love of Christ and to save some before it is too late

## **Chapter 14**

### **The Jewish roots of the faith – getting it right.**

#### **Essential overview.**

Earth was formless, void and in darkness when the book of Genesis opens. God set about recreating the earth. It seems very likely that the earth had reached its state of darkness because it was the realm of Lucifer (Light bearer) who fell and became known as satan. Certainly Ezekiel 28:14-15 sees him walking to and fro amidst fiery stones, leading us to see earth as a mineral garden at that time. In Job 1:7 we see satan going to and fro on the earth – this is idiomatic for declaring ownership. No wonder the earth had become formless, void and in darkness as Lucifer lost his light.

So, in recreating the earth, God had also a plan to redeem it from satan's hands. That plan involved man and it involved man establishing dominion over every living thing on the earth. Man fell into sin in the same way that Lucifer had done so. (See Isaiah 14 for the 5 'I wills' of satan. Then see Genesis 3:5 where Eve is told she will be like God).

God knows the end from the beginning, so His plan was not to be foiled. For the next period of time man was expected to operate by conscience. This led to disaster, eventually only Noah was found righteous. As history moves on God chooses a nation for Himself. He will deal with this nation in a special way, 'they will be His people and He will be their God.' This involves setting in place law – specifically to demonstrate the nature of sin and highlight the need for a Messiah. (Galatians 3: 19-25)

This too was not successful. God's chosen nation fell into a very legalistic application of law – but not God's law. The religious rulers added many onerous requirements of their own, so much so that their tradition became a mighty burden. (Luke 11:46) They totally failed to recognise Messiah when He came.

So God's plan of redemption moves into another phase – the Kingdom is established as a 'mystery' kingdom, as already described. In this kingdom the church is expected to demonstrate to principalities and powers the manifest wisdom of God (Ephesians 3: 10), by ruling over their works. That is to say that, the dominion over the earth, expected of Adam, starts to be established. This dominion starts by denying satan and his minions their influence – this is called spiritual warfare and is (should be) engaged in continually by the church.

When time moves into the next stages, then Jesus will establish His physical Kingdom and the dominion of man over the earth will be completed.

So, with this overview we can see that the principal objective of God is in the restoration of dominion over the earth. Israel was chosen for a particular role in that process.

## **Christianity is founded upon Jesus - a Jew.**

There shouldn't be the slightest doubt but that Christianity owes everything to Jesus Christ, who in His earthly manifestation was and is a Jew. For God chose the Jews to be His special people – to show the world what it was to belong to God.

Regrettably the Jews have failed to demonstrate the goodness of God to the rest of the world, have rejected the Messiah, and have ended up in their current position. None of this nullifies the promises of God for:

Romans 11:26-29

26 *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

27 *For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."*

28 *Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.*

29 ***For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.***

The one third who come through the Tribulation will be saved – because the gift and calling of God are irrevocable.

In the same chapter of Romans, Paul explicitly says that the Jews will once again be grafted into their Olive Tree of blessing. (Romans 11:1, 11, 23-4, 26-9)

## **The gentiles were wild**

Paul warns the gentiles - you were a wild olive tree, grafted into the cultivated olive (Romans 11:17-18). Do not boast over the natural branches. In this the church has manifestly failed over the centuries.

Now there is an increasing awareness of the importance of Israel, and of the Jewish origins of Christianity, and this is a very good development. When we understand that our heritage is through Judaism, then with application of that knowledge, we can appreciate so much more deeply the scriptures.

## **Our understanding helped from Judaism**

For example:

Here is a parable which is almost always misunderstood:

Matthew 13:33

*'Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*

Traditional church teaching says that the Kingdom is like leaven, in that it permeates the whole, making it acceptable.

However, once you realise that Jesus was speaking to Jews, then you can see that the comma after leaven is in the wrong place – the passage would be better translated: *The Kingdom of heaven is like this; a woman took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal till it was all leavened..*

Leaven is always a biblical 'type' for sin. (That means it stands for, or, represents sin.) A woman (Eve) introduced it, and it affected the whole lump. (Every single human needs salvation through the shed blood of Jesus – for all have sinned.)

So we can see that understanding the Jewish perspective can help us greatly.

Examples of Old Testament references to leaven:

Exodus 12 – the Passover. Leaven to be removed from their houses. (verse 15)

Leviticus 2:11 – no grain offering to be made with leaven.

## **Care with The Torah**

The Torah is comprised of the first five books of the bible. The Torah includes the receiving of the Law by Moses.

Jesus believed the Torah and said that not one jot or tittle was to pass away. The Jews were given The Torah for them to keep – or so it seemed. Actually, once you go deeper, it becomes obvious that no one can keep the Law, and indeed the purpose was not that they should keep it. No, the purpose was that The Law was a tutor leading to Christ. The Law was introduced to identify sin, to show the need for salvation, and to point to a redeeming Messiah. (This is made clear by Paul in his letter to the Galatians 3:19-24)

If we are not careful we can fall into the trap of trying to obey the Law. It was never God's expectation that we would fulfil the Law. Indeed He makes a promise of a new Spirit within us which will enable us to keep the ethos of the Law, which is now fulfilled simply:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself, and you will fulfil the Law. (Romans 13:10, Galatians 5:14)

### **The Law can be likened to a map**

When you want to get to my home, I send you a map. The map will show you the way. You follow the map and you will arrive. The Law is like that – it is a map. The whole point of the map is not in the wonders of the journey – its purpose is in getting you to the destination. When you have arrived in my house the map has completely fulfilled its function and it now has no further function, so far as you are concerned. The map has not passed away, and the map has not changed one jot or tittle. But it no longer has any function so far as you are concerned. (This is expressed by Paul in Galatians 3:25 – he has been referring to the law as a tutor and says, *'but after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.'*)

In fact, I would be quite upset if, after your arrival, you spent all your time with the map, instead of spending it with me. Jesus feels the same. He wants our intimate fellowship.

Paul said to the Galatians, circumcision is nothing – it matters not whether you are circumcised or you are not circumcised. The map has no further function! It matters not whether you eat pork or you don't eat pork. (Jesus proclaimed all foods clean

[Mark 7:19] – and pork was a food before the Law came in through Moses, for God said to Noah in Genesis 9:3 – ‘*every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you.*’ Clearly, Abraham, being a man of faith, was certainly free to, and in all probability ate, pork.) We are dead to the Law (Galatians 2:19). The Law has no relevance to the dead. Now Christ lives in me, and the life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me (from Galatians 2:20), and that is worked out as I live by the Spirit.

What matters is a close and intimate relationship with Jesus, which is only possible as we walk through this life by the Spirit. Paul likens any efforts at Law keeping as, ‘trying to be perfected through the flesh’ (Galatians 3:3) and, ‘as setting aside the crucifixion of Christ and the grace therein.’ (Galatians 2:21)

## **Care**

We need to be careful and discerning. In the current wave of looking at our Jewish roots, I suggest that we need to keep three things at the forefront of our minds:

- 1) The plans and promises of God for the Jews as a nation are different, and not in competition with, His plans and promises to the church.
- 2) The Law was a map – we are not called to keep focussing on the map. We are called to focus on the person of Jesus to whom the map leads us. We need to be very alert that we don’t fall into any form of reliance on law keeping.
- 3) Not everything Jewish is automatically good! The reality of Jewish history confirms that even though they had so much wisdom and example of God with them, nevertheless it did not bring forth a fruitful result. We won’t get closer to the Lord by becoming in any way Jewish – indeed it is more likely to lead us away from Him. On the other hand, we can gain much in depth of understanding by seeing the Jewish perspective on scripture and by understanding Jewish custom.

We are called to a living relationship, worked out through His Spirit, who indwells us.

With this care, we can then enhance our understanding of the faith we have, as we understand more of our Jewish roots.

## **The two lighthouses – my lesson in the Spirit**

As I reached the end of writing this booklet I felt the Lord leading me to go to a place called Beachy Head – He would speak to me there.

Beachy Head is on the coast here in England. There are high white chalk cliffs and it was a beautiful sunny day. The setting was glorious. As I sat on the grass drinking my coffee, I could see a sign to a lighthouse ahead of me. I felt the Lord say go to the lighthouse – I will speak to you there. However when I arrived opposite the lighthouse (for actually you could not get to it - it was at the bottom of the cliff, built in the sea, a few yards off shore), another lighthouse came into view. This one, clearly much older, was built on the top of the cliff about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile away.

Now I did not know which lighthouse I was supposed to be at. So I started to walk to the older lighthouse. About half way I stopped for a rest and I felt the Lord say ‘there is no light in the old lighthouse.’ When I got there it was true. In fact the light had been removed and the building was no longer a light house.

Time for lunch, so I sat by the old lighthouse and could see the new lighthouse in my view. Even though it was a bright clear sunny day the new lighthouse was functioning – its light flashing – flash, three seconds, flash 15 seconds, flash three seconds, flash 15 seconds and so on.

Then I felt the Lord teach me about the old and the new:

The old was built high on the cliff – in a way high up and out of reach. But it was found that it did not save the seamen from sailing into the cliffs. So a new lighthouse was built in a much better position – actually in the sea. The new lighthouse was painted in bands of white and red – white for holiness and red for the shed blood of the Lamb. The new lighthouse was in the sea – the sea is used in scripture to depict the peoples of the world. It was like a light in the world, functioning and saving those who saw the light, whereas the old was high up, unreachable and unable to fulfil its perceived function.

The old lighthouse had a keeper, like the priest, but the new lighthouse did not need a keeper, it functioned by itself. From the old lighthouse I got a wonderful view of the new lighthouse. So the Old Testament looks forward and gives a view of the New. But the light is in the New. In the same way when we look at the Old Testament through the eyes of the New, we have light to reveal the deep truths that are contained therein – and those truths give us a wonderful view of the New. But it is the New that has the power to save.

In summary the New testament throws glorious light upon the Old Testament – when that light shines it reveals the ‘hidden and deep’ truths of the Old Testament, which of course point clearly to Jesus.

Without the added light (revelation), the Old testament just shuts men up under sin, and keeps men in custody under law. (Galatians 3:22-3) In doing this the law is a tutor showing us the need of a saviour, so that we can put our faith in Him. The light is in the New and the Old can assist us in getting a good view of the New.

**So it is important that we approach this subject from this perspective:**

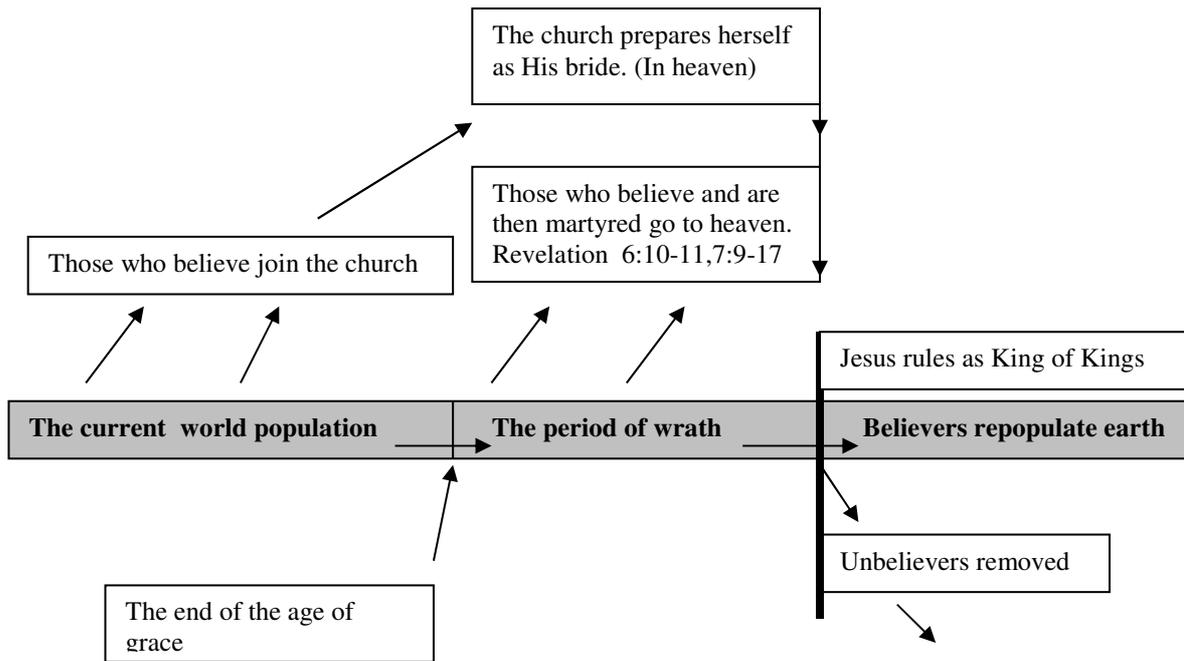
**The Old Testament and all that is of Judaism points to Jesus. He is the fulfilment, He is the High Priest of the better priesthood, He is the King of Kings, He is God in bodily form – it is all about Jesus.**

**It is not about everything pointing to the Jews or to Judaism – though from that background we will enhance our understanding, as the light we have in Him reveals all.**

## Appendix

### The passage of time for the future:

The following diagram illustrates how the passage of time is likely to affect the people of the world who are currently alive:



### The passage of time:

This current age

The time of Jacob's trouble

The millennial kingdom

There are different views about the timing of the promises of God to the church. It is promised that:

Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us – that He will collect us and take us to that place.

This promise is found in John 14: 1-3.

We will rise and meet Him in the air and at that time we will become like Him, receiving 'glorified' bodies. 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

The millennium will be the period when Israel is chief of the nations and when Jesus, His bride, the martyred saints of the Tribulation, and the saints of the Old Testament, rule and reign from Jerusalem.

This is a period when the earth is repopulated with ordinary humans (that is, not in eternal bodies).

As the church is seen returning from heaven with Jesus, it requires that she has been taken into heaven some time earlier. Here views differ – some see the ‘rapture’ of the church before the Tribulation (that is my personal view), some see it mid way through the Tribulation, others at the end and others say what Tribulation? what Millennium?

(The view that the ‘rapture’ of the church is at the very end of the Tribulation seems to be unsupportable – because we know that there is a separation of believers and unbelievers at this point, and that the believers populate the earth and unbelievers are removed. The problem for this concept is that at the ‘rapture’ those raptured receive glorified or eternal bodies. If the rapture were at the end of the Tribulation, this would leave no unglorified humans to populate earth and be ruled over.)