

# Sign of the Fig Tree

Israel, the Tribulation and the Church

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All scriptures are taken from the King James Version, adapted  
into modern English when appropriate by the author.



*“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”  
John 8:32*

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**This book is dedicated to  
Noah, Daniel and Job**



## Introduction

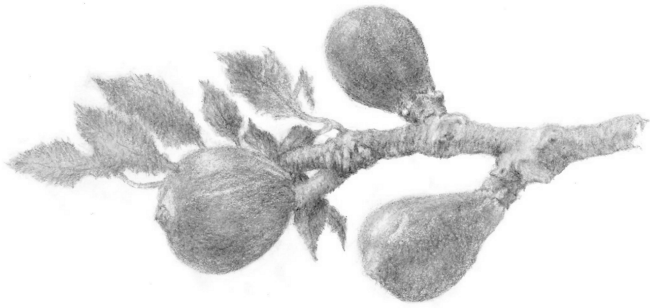
I want you to image yourself entering a beautiful art museum. To your right is a magnificent mural depicting the history of the Jews and their relationship to the Promised Land.

However, you don't notice the big picture. Instead, your eye is drawn to one of the details. You walk over to it and remain fixed upon this detail and never step back to see its relationship to the events illustrated in the entire mural.

So it is with many who open the pages of God's word. They fall into the error of focusing on a few verses and develop interpretations without examining the entire context to see if what they have perceived is accurate. Thus many Christians who repeat, "God gave the land of Israel to the Jews," focus on this detail without realizing that the correlating texts show that God's promise to them is conditional.

When we understand what those conditions are, we will gain a better understanding of Israel's role in the world today and how their obedience and disobedience can affect everyone.

So my friends, I invite you to step back with me, and together we will examine the entire picture; a mural that depicts God's love for His people throughout the ages, their role in the salvation of the entire world and how their behavior past and present relates to the Christian church of today.





# 1

## The Sons of Adam

In the beginning, God formed the first man out of the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life and named this living being made in the image of God, "Adam."

Birthered into a perfect environment, God intended Adam and his birthered- from- his-side wife, Eve, to live in this state of perfection indefinitely. Yet their existence in this realm of beauty was conditional. They would remain in this land of perfection only if they obeyed their loving Creator.

God had given them just one commandment and if they kept that their future in Eden was assured.

However, as the book of Genesis records, that commandment to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was violated.

As a result of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were expelled from their land and were not permitted to return.

At the same time that they were given their eviction notice, they were also forgiven through the first sacrifice and clothed by the skins of the animal that was slain to provide for them (Genesis 3:21). While they still had to live with the consequences of their sin, they were also assured that they would eventually produce through their lineage, a deliverer who would crush their enemy, the evil angel masquerading as a serpent who had deceived them (Genesis 3:15).

From that point on, the long journey began toward their

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restoration.

We derive from their example that we all too must live with the consequences of our sin and disobedience to our Creator.

Many years passed, and Adam and his wife had long since returned to the dust, never seeing the fulfillment of God's promised restoration.

Then in another generation that was born from Adam's seed, a man named Abraham arose; a special jewel that shone with God's favor.

Abraham's obedience was rewarded and God promised his seed a homeland; a return to Eden, a land flowing with 'milk and honey;' a land with brooks flowing, and vines blooming; a land of plenty.

### The Miracle in the Womb

But Abraham was old, and the promise that his seed would multiply as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, seemed an impossibility; but nothing is too hard for the Lord, who made the entire world and a universe to contain it like a wondrous setting for an exquisite jewel.

Soon Abraham's equally aged wife, Sarah, produced a miracle child, named Isaac. His seed would produce Jacob whose name was changed by God through an angel no less to Israel. And through him the twelve tribes were born to inherit the land that God had promised to bless Abraham's seed.

After a four hundred year delay in Egypt, God rose up a deliverer named Moses, who through a series of miraculous demonstrations of God's power, brought God's people out of Egypt's bondage. Thus began the last leg of a multiple centuries' long journey toward that Promised Land.

On the way, God prepared them to receive that land. He gave them laws. He gave them the provision for the

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forgiveness of their sins through the sacrifices in the tabernacle services. -

*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul (Leviticus 17:11).*

We can imagine God saying the same words to Adam and Eve as He clothed them with the soft warm, forgiving skins of that first sacrifice.

The way to the future was prepared, they just had to obey, march forward and take it. But when they found out that the land God had promised them was filled with giants and tall walled cities, their faith crumbled into the sand at their feet.

Even though they had witnessed so many miraculous provisions in their journey; an ocean had parted at their feet among other wonders, that was not enough. Their lack of trust in God and His word, condemned that generation to a life in the wilderness.

The youth who had the faith to believe that God would fight for them, were released from the grip of their father's unbelief when those "Men of War" died (Deuteronomy 2:14,16). Then the children of faith rose up to take the land.

Many people wonder why God would command His people to march in and destroy the people of the land He had given them, brutally in fact. They were instructed to slaughter even the women and little children. The cruelty of it all seems beyond comprehension, but not to the archeologists who excavated the ruins of many of those ancient races. As the remnants of their evil atrocities were uncovered, the question was not why did God want them eliminated, but why did He wait so long?

God told His people, -

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*You do not speak in your heart, after that the LORD your God has cast them out from before you saying, 'For my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess the land': but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD does drive them out before you.*

*Not for your righteousness, or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God does drive them out from before you, and that He may perform the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

*Therefore understand, that the LORD your God does not give you this good land to possess it for your righteousness; for you are a stiff-necked people (Deuteronomy 9:4-6).*

God had to remind His people of their own tendency to displease Him. Yet they were still His people who carried His word with them into the land they were to inherit.

They also bore the promise for a Redeemer, an Anointed One, a Messiah that would not only be their salvation, but who would also bring the same salvation to the Gentile nations and make the two one fold under one Shepherd.

### The Promised Land

The gates were opened and the people were permitted to enter the Promised Land and partook of its fruits and its plenty. They built houses and cities. They planted gardens and grazed their cattle on lush expanses of land that they could call their own.

After four hundred years of hard labor in Egypt, and forty years of wandering in barren deserts, God wanted them to appreciate the gift and the abundance and rewards of following the God of Abraham.

They only had to obey God in order to remain in that

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paradise. Only now they had Ten Commandments to keep and a host of ordinances. But they had the tabernacle where their sins could be forgiven when they repented and sacrificed according to God's requirements.

It was extremely important to maintain their obedience to Him. He had told them that if they did not, they would be expelled from the land and scattered among the nations (Deuteronomy 4:27, 28:64).

The LORD spoke through the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah. – *Cursed be the man that obeys not the words of this covenant (Jeremiah 11:3)*. The LORD is referring to the covenant He made with His people that He gave to them through Moses. – *Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt... (Jeremiah 11:4)*.

Yet, the people did not obey God's law. –

*They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear My words; and they went after other gods to serve them: The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers (Jeremiah 11:10)*.

They didn't listen and began to emulate the practices of the heathen that remained around them, among other sins.

The prophet Jeremiah shows us that the people were worshipping Baal (Jeremiah 19:5). The idolatry that Jezebel had introduced to Israel had never been completely abandoned. In response to Israel's sins God says,

*...Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape: and though they shall cry to Me, I will not listen to them (Jeremiah 11:11)*.

God sent His prophets to warn them to repent or they

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would be removed from the land. Then the prophet Jeremiah, was given even more specific warnings. He said that if they did not repent they would not only be removed from the land, they would also endure a seventy year captivity in Babylon.

Still the people did not believe him, thinking they had God's favor in spite of the sins they were committing. They were encouraged by false prophets (Jeremiah 14:13,14), who promised them peace, even as the dark clouds of God's judgments were forming above their heads.

## 2

# The Babylonian Captivity

The prophet Jeremiah wandered through the streets of Jerusalem that had been transformed into pathways of despair strewn with rubble and death. He must have been weeping as he described the devastation he witnessed that he recorded in his book called Lamentations. His grief was compounded by the fact that all the horrors that had befallen his people could have been avoided if they had only listened to and believed the words of God that the Lord had spoken through the prophet's mouth.

Jeremiah had accurately prophesied that unless Israel repented and changed her ways, the city would be destroyed and the Jews would endure a seventy year captivity in Babylon (Jeremiah 25:9-11). He could visualize the long expanse of time that stretched out before his people like a hardship strewn highway; and he must have contemplated the behaviors and rebellion against God that brought them to this position of despair.

The prophets who had come before him had also been commissioned by God to bring warnings and correction to His people. They operated on a conveyor belt of time that was leading up to this moment that had cumulated into tragedy. What had begun this descent into ashes? God lamented like a grief stricken parent through the words of His prophet Isaiah that, *I have nourished and brought up children, and they*

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*have rebelled against Me (Isaiah 1:2).*

Their first crime was idolatry. Other things had become more important to them than really knowing the God who had brought them to the Promised Land. They had become a people steeped in religious formality; going through the motions of religious service, yet their hearts and minds that were always open for God to read, were not aligned with Him or His purposes for their lives.

Thus their atrocities against the God they professed to worship with their mouths, yet blocked from their hearts (Jeremiah 12:2), caused them to be swallowed by the King of Babylon and purged out into the land of their enemies.

They writhed under the chains of their captivity fulfilling their seventy year sentence; but that punishment also was accompanied by a promise. –

*And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land (Jeremiah 12:15).*

The verses proclaiming God's will to return them to their homeland are many. Each one of them that have been proclaimed by Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the other prophets of that time, are set within the context of Israel's return after the Babylonian captivity or their gathering by God after their second captivity (Zechariah 14:1,2). Too often these verses are taken out of context to apply to Israel's becoming a nation in 1948. This is misleading as we shall see as we continue examining the mural as it unveils the future.

The captivity ended as promised precisely at the appointed time, and the Jews were permitted to return to their homeland.



## The Babylonian Captivity

The prophet Isaiah had foretold that the Persian king Cyrus would grant them permission to rebuild the temple, 150 years before the prophecy was fulfilled (Isaiah 44:28). Then the king Arterexes gave the Jews permission to rebuild the city in 457 B.C..

As Jerusalem rose out of the ashes, other prophecies swirled around her rising. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). This prophecy was given many years before the captivity, so for those who had knowledge of this word who sat among the captives, the glimmer of hope still shined in the darkness; they would be back in their homeland when this prophecy was fulfilled.

The temple would be rebuilt and this would be the temple that Messiah would enter, proclaimed the prophets Malachi and Haggai.

*Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:1).*

*And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory (Haggai 2:7).*

Those prophecies were fulfilled. The Messiah did enter the temple; and the prophecies that He would be rejected by His own people were also fulfilled (Isaiah 53, Daniel 9:26).

One of the main reasons why Jesus was rejected as the Messiah was because He did not fulfill the prophecies of a warless world. The people had failed to recognize from Daniel's prophecy, that after the Anointed One is killed in 9: 26, there is no other messiah appearing in his history of events that unfold until the last judgment. Therefore Jesus had to be

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the messiah who was killed before the destruction of the city in 70AD. If Jesus had instigated that prophesied time of peace, then it would have proven that He was not the Messiah.

Jesus instigates the time of peace when He returns the second time as revealed in Zechariah 14.

Another significant clue that was ignored by the Jews was David's messianic prophecy that God heals the blind. The prophet David said in Psalm 146:8 that "*The LORD opens the eyes of the blind.*" However, there are no instances of God healing anyone who is blind in the Old Testament. David was prophesying of a time when God would heal the blind through the Messiah.

In the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 42:7, we are told that a characteristic of the Messiah would be that he would "open the blind eyes." This prophecy Jesus applied to himself and inserted into the text when He was reading from Isaiah 61:1 in Luke 4:18.

Psalm 146:8 and the coordinating verses in Isaiah, are like arrows pointing through time to verify that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah, the only person in history to open the eyes of a man that was born blind (John 9:32).

The Jews also rejected Jesus because of His claims of unity with the Father. "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

"*Before Abraham was I Am*" (John 8:58, Exodus 3:14). His divinity was rejected because to the Jews no man can be God. They overlooked the fact that the man Abraham conversed with in Genesis 18, is addressed as God, YHWH (Yahweh), by His holy name ten times in this chapter in the original language (verses 1,13,14,17,19twice,20,22,26,33). In some Bibles, when this word is used it is substituted by the word LORD in capitals. Abraham also addresses God as lord, Adoni, in verses 3,27,30,31,32. This is the first time the word Adoni appears in the scriptures. Jesus was always God's

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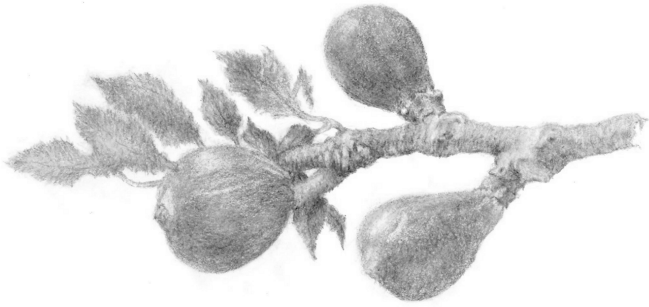
representative or theophany throughout scripture. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19).*

Like Jeremiah before Him, Jesus stood weeping over a city that once again would be reduced to ashes and rubble because, "They did not know the time of their visitation" (Luke 19:44). They did not recognize that their messiah had come.

The Jews had been told that when they have been returned to the land after the Babylonian captivity if they did not obey; *I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, says the LORD (Jeremiah 12:17).*

The people would again be expelled from the land forty years after Jesus was killed when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus' army in 70AD.

The Israelites had once again refused to listen to Jeremiah's voice echoing through the centuries that proclaimed that God was going to give them a New Everlasting Covenant; the new deed to the promised land of eternal life.



### 3

## The New Everlasting Covenant

**G**od promised Abraham that He would - ...*establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you (Genesis 17:7).*

This is not the covenant that God gave promising them the land. That was a separate covenant given to Abraham in Genesis 16:18.

The “everlasting covenant” would be established through Abraham’s miracle child of his old age, Isaac. –

*...and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him (Genesis 17:19).*

This covenant would be the covenant that would enable Abraham to be the ...*father of many nations (Genesis 17:5) ...and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:3).*

Thus God is promising Abraham that the covenant that He is establishing through his seed will also be a blessing to the Gentiles.

This covenant is the continuation of the promises made to Adam and Eve, that it would be through their seed, that the devil would be defeated. A deliverer would come that would “bruise the serpent’s head” (Genesis 3:15).

This covenant that God made with Abraham that would

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enable Him to be the father of many nations would be fulfilled through the Messiah Jesus who instigated the New Covenant. It was through Jesus that the prophecies regarding the Gentiles coming to God were fulfilled, thus making Abraham the father of all the families of the earth. Therefore Abraham's seed is saved by this same covenant and that is why the Jews are not exempt from salvation through the gospel.

There are some today who incorrectly teach that the Jews do not need to be saved through faith in Jesus' atonement because they are saved by a covenant. As we have seen, that covenant is the new everlasting covenant given through the Messiah Jesus who said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except by Me*" (John 14:6). That includes the Jews.

When the Apostle Peter preached the Gospel to the Jews in Acts 2, they were told to believe the gospel, repent and be baptized; because the new covenant that had been prophesied by Jeremiah had been fulfilled.

*Behold, the days come, says the LORD that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, says the LORD:*

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no*

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*more (Jeremiah 31: 31-34).*

Then in verses 38 through 40 the LORD promises them that the city will be rebuilt. –

*Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner (Jeremiah 31:38).*

The people will have been returned to the land. Thus according to the context, the New Covenant would be given when the city has been rebuilt and the people had been returned to the land.

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

*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.*

*And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them.*

*And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and you shall be My people, and I will be your God (Ezekiel 36:24-28).*

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was prophesied in Joel 2:28 and fulfilled in the second chapter of Acts.

The Jews' rejection of Jesus as their Messiah did not sever God's love for His people, but the New Covenant He was giving them was the spiritual deed to the land and without it the legal right for the Jews to inhabit Israel cannot be accepted by God. The physical evidence of this principle was illustrated

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by the Jews expulsion from the land after its destruction in 70AD, forty years after the gospel had been shared with them in their own land.

Now, centuries later, that new deed has not been claimed by most of Abraham's descendants, and the conditions of her legal right to the land of Israel are still being neglected.

God chose the Hebrew lineage to be the means through which God would bless the entire world through the Messiah. For this reason alone, the Jewish people should be honored. They have been set apart by God, "chosen" for the purpose of bringing in the Messiah Jesus. Because of their special purpose, God has promised, *I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curses you (Genesis 12:3)*.

God is not finished with His people. As we study the mural before us, we see toward the end that Israel will yet undergo a second captivity as prophesied by Zechariah prior to Jesus' second coming (Zechariah 14:1,2). Just as the Babylonian captivity was essential in bringing the people back to God, so their second captivity will be necessary to bring them to the realization that Jesus is the Messiah. Thus we see the Biblical explanation for Israel's second captivity.

The Messiah Jesus said that there would be a time of great tribulation that would come upon the whole world (Matthew 24:21). He knew the prophecies that were spoken by the prophets before Him also proclaimed of such a time in the earth's history of rebellion against God. Today, the nation of Israel sits perched on a pinnacle in world history. It is a pivotal position that will eventually result in her second captivity that was prophesied by Zechariah (Zechariah 14:1,2). Like ancient Israel, today her people are apparently oblivious to the impending disaster looming before her in the not so distant future.



## 4

# The Bethlehem Prophecy

The prophet Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, therefore Micah's prophecy predated the Babylonian captivity. His prophecy that the Messiah was to be born in the town of Bethlehem, held the promise that the Jews would someday be returned to their homeland after that captivity.

The Jews were returned to the land which was made possible through the Gentile ruler, Cyrus, who granted the Jews permission to return and build their temple. But as the Bethlehem prophecy indicates, the Jews would experience yet another devastation in the wake of the Messiah's arrival. The Bethlehem prophecy is found in Micah chapter five, verse two.

*But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth to Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

Not only will the Messiah be born as a man, but we are also told that He preexisted "from everlasting," an indication of His divinity.

The Messiah is born, then the prophecy skips forward to the Messiah's adulthood, where we are shown that He "gives them up."

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*Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she which travails has brought forth: ...*

As history attests, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and He was subsequently rejected by His own people. He gives them up; allows them to continue without Him. During the forty years prior to Jerusalem's destruction in 70AD, the Jews had the opportunity to hear the Gospel preached on their own soil. Then Jerusalem was destroyed as the prophet Daniel predicted after the Anointed One (Messiah) is killed (Daniel 9:26).

Jesus declared that the city was destroyed because they "did not know the time of their visitation" (Luke 19:44). They did not recognize that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. This time is the travailing in Micah's prophecy which encompasses her expulsion from the land from 70AD to her return again many centuries later to what is now modern day Israel.

The restoration of the Jews to the Promised Land was through human effort; Zionism, and God's permissive will for His purposes. Modern Israel was ordained to be the sign, the "Budding of the fig tree," (Matthew 24:32), that was given to tell us that we have entered into the last generation, a distinct period of time leading up to the great tribulation and Jesus' second coming. The fig tree was always seen as representing Israel in early Christian writings.

It's interesting to note that when God returned His people to the land after the Babylonian captivity, He established a religious nation. Then again when He restores the Jews to their land after the second captivity prophesied in Zechariah 14, He again establishes a religious nation. This is in contrast to modern Israel which is a secular nation, a nation birthed through human effort.

## The Bethlehem Prophecy

After Israel was established as a nation in 1948, -

*...then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel (Micah 5:3).*

Here we are being shown a remarkable picture of the Messiah's brethren returning to the land of Israel. The Messiah's brethren would be those who have been birthed into the family of God through faith in the Messiah Jesus, which would include Gentiles as well as believing Jews.

The following verse of Micah's prophecy shows us the purpose of Jesus' return to the land by His Spirit in His brethren; ("I will come to you," John 14:18, Rev. 3:20) to "feed" those to whom He had previously "given up" to their own ways.

*And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD (God the Father), in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; and they shall abide: for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth (verse 4).*

This indicates that there is a time of evangelism in Israel and the world that will continue until the final tribulation and Israel's second captivity prophesied in Zechariah 14, verses one and two, which precedes Jesus' second coming.

During the time of Israel's second captivity, which occurs during the tribulation, and most likely instigates it, we are shown in verse 5 that; -

*...this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our palaces, then we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principle men.*

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Those who have received the Messiah Jesus have the peace that passes all understanding. Fear of death is removed through faith in Jesus' atonement, and these ones are living in the promise of God's gift to them of eternal life.

The seven shepherds and eight principle men, are the symbolic numbers of a remnant that has received Jesus and are ministering during the tribulation. This period of time correlates with Daniel 12:1, when the remnant that remains in the land is resisting the invaders by sharing the gospel, and correlates with Zechariah 14:1,2. This would occur toward the end of the captivity where the Jews will be reaping what they had sown upon the Palestinians, among other sins (Revelation 11:8).

While God had promised the Holy Land to Abraham's seed, it came with the Lord's commandment to love the strangers in the land as themselves (Leviticus 19:33,34). This commandment was never heeded, and because Israel was established by man as a secular nation, God's moral laws were ignored, resulting in the nation's acceptance of sin that God has labeled as abomination (Leviticus 18:22), and has been flaunted in the streets of Jerusalem with a yearly parade.

The pattern has always been in God's word, that when His people sinned, the Lord would allow them to be chastened by their enemies. Then the Lord punishes their enemies. We see this same pattern repeating here in the remaining portion of Micah's prophecy. Israel is given the final victory over her invaders after she has received God's correction and she repents. So according to God's word, the budding of the fig tree indicates that at some point the nation of Israel will endure a second captivity after which she is rescued and restored when Jesus returns. This is when He gathers her the second time, (Isaiah 11:11 - the first was after the Babylonian captivity), and the prophesied era of peace under Jesus'

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authority will commence. This time is prophesied to last one thousand years (Rev. 20:6).

It is at this time when God's will to have one fold, and one shepherd consisting of Jews and Gentiles as one people under one shepherd, the Messiah Jesus, will be gloriously fulfilled.



## 5

# Sign of the Fig Tree

In 1948 the nation of Israel was established for the purpose of providing a homeland for the Jewish people. Since then Jews have been flocking to Israel, and in some cases many of them receive help from organizations that have been established for that purpose.

While on the surface this may all seem wonderful, when we carefully examine the scriptures, an ominous scenario begins to emerge.

In Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24, He foretells of an attack on Jerusalem that will occur before His second coming. His prophecy is correlated with Zechariah 14:1-3, where we are told that the Jews will go through another captivity.

*Behold, the day of the LORD comes, and your spoil shall be divided in the midst of you.*

*For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*

*Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle.*

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This prophecy in turn correlates with Ezekiel 38.

Jesus warns that those who are living in Judea at that time should flee.

*When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand:)*

*Then let them which are in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:*

*Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

*And woe to them that are with child, and to them that nurse in those days!*

*But you pray that your flight is not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.*

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (Matthew 24:15-22).*

He also made it very clear that people should not go there from other countries.

*And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is near.*

*Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter into it (Luke 21:20,21).*

This warning is obviously being ignored, even by many Christians who eagerly support the Jewish peoples' return to



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the Holy Land.

The prophecies in the Old Testament that many Christians use to support the Jews' return to Israel are taken out of context. In the context recorded in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God tells the Jews that He will return them to the Holy Land after their 70 year captivity in Babylon is completed. He tells them that they will receive a new everlasting covenant (Jeremiah 31:31, 32:40), the temple will be rebuilt, the Messiah will come at that time (Malachi 3:1) and He will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

The purpose of God returning His people to Israel was to bring in the Messiah. They were also told in Daniel 9:26 that the Messiah would be killed and after that the city would be destroyed once again.

Jesus came, and was killed as prophesied 40 years before the city was destroyed by Titus in 70AD.

Jesus was rejected by His people resulting in His death because *"They did not know the time of their visitation"* (Luke 19:44). They did not recognize that Jesus was their Messiah even though the scriptures had painted such a precise and accurate map that detailed His coming. That rejection instigated the destruction of their city after a period of forty years during which the Jews had the opportunity to hear the gospel in their own land.

The prophecies show us that the Jews will again be in their land before Jesus' return. Ezekiel shows us in verse eight in the 38th chapter of his prophecy that in the "latter years" Gog the invader from the north, - *shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword* (a reference to their return after the destruction in 70AD) *and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have always been waste: but is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.*

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The prophecy goes on to describe their invasion and God's ultimate judgment upon their invaders.

While it is quite obvious that the Jews that have been gathered from many countries will be living in Israel in the "latter Days," the phrase "I will gather them" is conspicuously absent from the latter years' references.

Many orthodox Jews have refused to return to Israel because they have astutely recognized from the scriptures that it is the Messiah who will bring them back. Because they have rejected Jesus as the Messiah, they are still anticipating the coming of the Messiah, but that will be as the scriptures show after the second captivity.

Zechariah shows us that the Lord returns after the second captivity and it is then that He gathers His people the second time (Isaiah 11:11). There are no references that show the Lord gathering them a third time, only after the first captivity and the second, when Jesus will establish His millennial reign of peace (Isaiah 11:6-9, Revelation 20:1-3). It is interesting to note that one of the major reasons the Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah is that when He was on earth He did not instigate that prophesied time of peace. But they neglected to consider the details in Daniel's prophecy. Daniel prophesied that the Anointed One (Messiah) is killed before the destruction of Jerusalem, then he gives an historically accurate history of events that happen up to the judgment in chapter twelve. There is absolutely no mention of that time of peace, or the messiah coming, only destruction from the antichrist. It is obvious that the time of peace has to occur after the judgment when Jesus returns.

This all prompts us to ask a couple of questions. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70AD because the people rejected the Messiah Jesus. Why would God return them when they still refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah?

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Secondly, after the captivity, God returned them to their land as a religious nation. When He returns and gathers them after the second captivity, He also establishes a religious nation. Then if God established the modern nation of Israel, why is it a secular nation?

After the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah, God permitted Jerusalem to be destroyed in 70AD and the Jews were banished from the land. Subsequently the Holy Land became home to the Arabs for 1300 years. They lived in peace with the Jews who resided there who were only about 3% of the population.

Then in 1882, Baron Edmund Rothschild, grandson of Myer Rothschild, went to Palestine and began buying up land and started many businesses. Working with the Zionists, He began importing Jews from Europe to work in those businesses. So many of them came they were running out of housing, and when the Arabs refused to sell their land, the Jews formed terrorist groups to drive them out. This was when Israel was under British control.<sup>1</sup>

The Jews then were violating God's commands to live peaceably with the "strangers" Gentiles, in their land (Leviticus 19:34), or "Love one another." *Woe to him that builds a town with blood, and establishes a city by iniquity (Habakkuk 2:12).*

Then Baron Lionel Walter Rothschild, who was a prominent Zionist in England, was approached to help provide a homeland for the Jews which he was instrumental in accomplishing. It would be in the family's best interest to do so as they had so many investments there.

Because the people behind Zionism are basically opposed to God and His Messiah, God's laws are not foundational

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Historical Geography, Vol. 19 issue 2 April 1993, Vol. 10 Issue 4 1984*

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and the acceptance of a certain sexual sin that God has labeled as “Abomination” (Leviticus 18:22), is celebrated with yearly parades in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. We can also assume that possibly the “abomination that makes desolate” mentioned in Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15, that stands in the holy place, (“place” meaning a physical location in the Greek, and is not the word used for the Holy of Holies), could be one of the sins that eventually triggers God’s judgment on that nation as prophesied in Ezekiel 38. Thus we can understand why Jerusalem is labeled as “Sodom” in Revelation 11:8.

Israel is also referred to as “Egypt,” a Gentile nation, which is a reproach upon the Jews’ own bigotry against Gentiles. God’s commandments to treat the “strangers,” the Gentiles, in their land as equals is blatantly ignored, (Leviticus 19:34) which is evident by the Jews’ brutal treatment of the Palestinians over the years.

God has always used Israel’s enemies to be His chastening rod when His people consistently violated His commandments. Then when repentance has been achieved, God deals with Israel’s enemies in like manner. No one can invade Israel until God allows it. In the meantime prayers for all nations to come to repentance should be made fervently because God has promised that when men repent, so He will also repent of the judgments He has proclaimed upon their sin.

*If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent Me of the evil, which I purpose to do to them because of the evil of their doings (Jeremiah 26:3).*

The founding of the modern nation of Israel is an important marker in time that coincides with the Bible prophecies concerning the prophesied one world government, and the

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emergence of the antichrist. Therefore it is obvious that God has permitted the establishment of Israel by man to fulfill His purposes in these latter days.

Israel was generally viewed as the fig tree in scripture. Jesus said; -

*Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know summer is nigh. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Truly I say to you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (Matthew 24:32-34).*

The establishment of the nation of Israel is ordained to be the sign that we are living in the last generation before Jesus returns. Israel has just celebrated her 75th year as a nation and is nearing the time for her appointed judgment, as are the rest of the nations that have rebelled against God by rejecting God's moral laws and His Messiah Jesus. We must not ignore the signs Jesus said would precede the great time of trouble, Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation that will have repercussions for all of mankind. It is time to prepare spiritually as well as physically for this event.

Israel was given 40 years to hear the gospel in her own land before her destruction in 70AD, so God is also permitting her to hear the gospel before her second captivity. The evidence for this is contained in Micah's "Bethlehem Prophecy," as we have seen in chapter four. Those who have received the Messiah Jesus will have the peace that He gives, assuring them of their eternal life and their security in Him that lifts them above all the turmoil that will commence when the prophecies of this time begin to be fulfilled.

This is a crucial time in Israel's history and the history of the world. God is a God of righteousness and justice. He will

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only permit sin to continue for so long before our sins cause Him to withdraw His protection.

God's laws were always intended to separate His people from the practices of the lawless pagan nations around them. This principle still applies. God is calling His people, Jews and Christians alike out of Babylon, the compromise with secular ideologies that have polluted His people. He is calling us out of all apostate religious systems and into the arms of the Messiah who alone has been ordained by God to be our provision and safety. Someday Israel will hear His voice calling her out of the ashes of her second captivity when He returns as prophesied in absolute victory.

We cherish the Jewish people because God has chosen them out of all the nations to be the womb through which He would birth salvation for all of mankind through the Messiah Jesus. Let us continue to show her His love by warning her of the wrath to come and give her the opportunity to not only "flee to the Mountains," (Matthew 24:16), for her physical protection, but also to the much higher ground of the salvation that is found only in their Messiah Jesus; the Messiah they have rejected, who is so willing to have them return to Him and His promised land of eternal life.

## 6

# A Nation in One Day

**W**hen we study the Bible, it is always important to not take scripture out of context. We must always examine the surrounding texts, in order to avoid misinterpretations. One glaring example of how ignoring context can result in error is found in Isaiah's chapter sixty-six, verse eight. -

*Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? (Crops usually take some time to produce) Or shall a nation (people) be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.*

This verse is conveniently yanked out of context and interpreted to be a prophecy of Israel's becoming a nation in "one day." When we examine the facts, Israel did not become a nation in one day, it was a long arduous, and sometimes bloody process, but that's subject matter for another time. Now we need to recognize what this scripture is actually all about.

The chapter headings that were inserted by man, sometimes break the continuity of the texts. The last two chapters of Israel's prophecy are unified in theme. Chapter 65 begins a new portion that follows Isaiah's prayer in chapter 64. Chapters 65 and 66 are meant to be viewed as one. God

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speaks in the first verse of chapter 65. –

*I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not: I said, 'Behold Me, behold Me,' to a nation that was not called by My name (Isaiah 65:1).*

This is just one of the many scriptures concerning evangelism to the Gentiles through the Messiah who would be to them “light” and “rest” (Isaiah 9:2, 11:10). The Gentiles prophetic reply to God’s call is found in Isaiah’s chapter 63. –

*Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer; Your name is from everlasting (Isaiah 63:16).*

After God establishes the fact that it is His desire to call the Gentiles into His embrace, He immediately begins to rebuke the Hebrews.

*I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people, which walks in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provokes Me to anger continually to My face; that sacrifices in gardens, and burns incense upon altars of brick; Which remains among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things in their vessels (Isaiah 65:2-4).*

God’s people, who had been given His word, were emulating the practices of the pagan nations around them. Even though the Gentiles He was calling were doing the same things, they did not have the knowledge of God that had been revealed to the Jews. Therefore, the Jews had no excuse for their rebellion against God. To those to whom much is given,



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much is required (Luke 12:48).

Aside from these things, their worst sin in God's eyes, was their pride, which to God is a "smoke in His nose." -

*Which say, 'Stand by yourself, come not near to me; for I am holier than you.' These are a smoke in My nose, a fire that burns all the day (Isaiah 65:5).*

God hates pride and bigotry. His people had forgotten that God had separated these "Sons of Adam" (Deuteronomy 32:8) from the nations so that they could ultimately be a blessing to them as was promised to Abraham, who would be a father of many nations, Gentiles included (Genesis 17:5). This would be accomplished through the lineage of the Hebrews who would eventually birth the Messiah Jesus, who in turn would gather the Gentiles to God fulfilling the prophecies concerning their coming to God through one who is a Jew (Zechariah 8:23).

God continues to show them that He would preserve a righteous remnant, "a seed out of Jacob" (Isaiah 65:9). And He contrasts this remnant that has sought Him, with the punishments that He has reserved for those who have rebelled against Him in verses 11 through 15. -

*11 But you are they that forsake the LORD, that forget My holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering to that number.*

*12 Therefore will I number you to the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear; but did evil before My eyes, and did choose that in which I did not delight.*

*13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry: behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty: behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall*

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*be ashamed:*

*14 Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.*

*15 And you shall leave your name for a curse to My chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay you, and call His servants by another name:*

We see in verse 15 that He tells them that His servants, this remnant, will be called by another name. He would be designating this group as a separate tribe, so to speak, from the Hebrew nation.

The Lord continues through the remainder of the chapter, to show the restoration of Jerusalem and His people which obviously have sprung forth from the remnant seed that God has preserved for that purpose. Their offspring would be the ones who would eventually inherit the warless world when the Messiah Jesus returns as prophesied by Zechariah (Zechariah 14). This remnant seed would be rejected by their own Hebrew nation. –

*Hear the word of the Lord, you that tremble at His word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the Lord be glorified:' but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed (Isaiah 66:5).*

In the following verse, the Lord shows us that those who are not among this remnant camp are as His enemies. –

*A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that renders recompense to His enemies (Isaiah 66:6, 65:6).*

We have now been brought to the threshold of the verse in question that cradles the phrase – “a nation be born at once.” The door to that verse is blatantly ignored, because it is a

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prophecy of the Messiah, and relates His birth as the instigator of the nation born in one day prophecy.

*Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, (a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD) she was delivered of a man child (Isaiah 66:7).*

The birth of this special man child, instigates the birth of a “nation.”

*Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?...*

The word "nation" in Hebrew is *gow*, (go-ee) which means a “people.” This word transliterated is, “Goy,” the word that the Hebrews use to designate a Gentile.

*...For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children (Isaiah 66:8).*

This verse in question has nothing to do with the birth of a country, it has everything to do with the birth of the remnant out of Zion which would ultimately be called by “a new name,” as prophesied in Isaiah 65:15. This entire prophecy was fulfilled in the second chapter of Acts when God poured out His Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28). This mighty anointing that inspired and enabled the Apostle Peter to boldly proclaim the gospel to the Jews, caused three thousand Hebrews to repent and receive Jesus as the Messiah in one day. –

*Then they that gladly received His word were baptized and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls (Acts*

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2:41).

That Jewish remnant then caused the word of God, the Gospel, to flow out from Jerusalem to all the nations. The Gentiles came to Jesus as prophesied (Isaiah 66:12,19), and this new tribe/people consisting of Jews and eventually Gentiles that God birthed from the womb of Israel was called by a new name - Christians, which means Christ/Messiah in me.

This is the joy and glory of Jerusalem, the city that saw the birth of redemption for the entire world through the Messiah Jesus and a people, a church that was birthed in one day.

## 7

# Israel, the Tribulation and the Church

**A**s of this writing, the entire world is on a conveyor belt that is moving forward to the prophesied great tribulation. This event will be a time of trouble un-paralleled in human history. The Babylonian captivity can be viewed as a similitude of this event, as the Jews will face a repeat of their previous history; they will again experience an invasion of their land, this time by the antichrist (Daniel 11:41).

While God did promise the Holy Land to Abraham's seed, this promise was conditional. Their residency was contingent upon their obedience to the law. As history attests, they grossly violated God's commandments and refused to repent, ignoring the warnings that God had given them through the mouths of His prophets. The result of their disobedience, was expulsion from their land and a seventy year captivity in Babylon.

Many of the sins that propelled them into the Babylonian captivity will also be operational in Israel prior to the great tribulation. These errors will also be found in the Christian church as well.

Christians are saved by grace, but our blessings are always contingent upon our obedience and there are always consequences when we sin. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:7). Therefore I believe that it is expedient for us to

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understand the basic sins that propelled Israel into her time of trouble, so we can possibly be among those that the Lord considers to be worthy to escape the coming tribulation (Luke 21:36).

### **1. Idolatry as the Result of Apostate leadership**

*The priests did not say, "Where is the LORD?" And they that handle the law did not know Me, and the prophets transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit (Jeremiah 2:8).*

We are being shown here that Israel's falling away from God began with her leadership. "The priests did not say where is the Lord?" The leadership had stopped seeking God and His direction. His word was no longer being sought for guidance, and "the prophets prophesied by Baal."

Baal worship had been introduced to Israel many years previously by Jezebel. The Israelite Ahab had not followed God's commandment to not marry foreign wives and married the Phoenician Jezebel. Apparently she was a practicing witch (II Kings 9:22). Baal was a demon god and the leadership of Jeremiah's day had not been cleansed from this idolatry, but supported it. Therefore Israel's prophets "prophesied by Baal," which means the prophecies they were feeding to the people were being influenced by a demon spirit. Thus God's people were being encouraged in this idolatry.

In the book of Revelation's chapter two, we see this same pattern repeating in the church at Pergamos. This was basically a good church that was tenaciously holding onto the faith in a satanic stronghold. But some of her members were holding "the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel to eat things

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sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.” The leadership of this church was apparently lax in correcting this error.

Baalim had counseled Balac to cause the separated Israelites to violate God’s commandment to marry foreign wives. Balac wanted to destroy the Israelites, and Baalim knew that if the king could cause them to sin, then God would have to deal with them.

To relate this to the church at Pergamos and the church today, the Christians there had begun to embrace foreign doctrine, which is the spiritual equivalent of marrying foreign wives, the initial sin that plunged ancient Israel into her idolatry. God’s commandments were being neglected and as a result they were practicing sexual immorality as were the pagans in their day. This spirit of compromise would continue, resulting in a full blown Jezebel spirit in the church at Thyatira. Unless the individuals in this church repented, the Lord promises them that they will endure great tribulation (Revelation 2:22).

The Jezebel spirit is the same spirit that corrupted ancient Israel’s leadership and is referred to as the “spirit of whoredoms” (Hosea 4:14,5:4).

Many Christians today are under the influence of this spirit. Encouraged by a corrupt leadership, holiness is not an issue in their lives and repentance from sin is not being taught.

*But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings (Jeremiah 23:22).*

*Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned My holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither have they shown difference between the unclean and the*

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*clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them (Ezekiel 22:26).*

*And you shall know that I am the LORD: for you have not walked in My statutes, neither executed My judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you (Ezekiel 11:12).*

There are many professed Christians today who emulate the practices of the heathen around them by living together without being legally married and committing the sin of fornication, a practice that God's word forbids.

In the church today there are many leaders that are considered to be evangelical who are leading multitudes away from the authority of the scriptures by denying the need for repentance, the existence of hell and portraying a false unbiblical portrait of a God that never punishes or corrects His children.

Thus we can see that the apostasy of the leadership of ancient Israel is repeated in the contemporary Christian church. And unless they repent, like Israel, they will also endure a great tribulation.

The people of Israel had rejected God's word, and began to form their own doctrines "cisterns."

*For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13).*

*To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is to them a reproach; they have no delight in it (Jeremiah 6:10).*



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*The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them? (Jeremiah 8:9).*

When God's word is rejected or neglected, the Holy Spirit will not function in man-inspired doctrines and the church is left on her own to perpetuate her sin. This will only lead to God ultimately having to necessitate her correction.

In the vision Ezekiel was given of the temple (Ezekiel 40:44) God tells him that the people had set *their threshold, by My thresholds, and their post by My posts (Ezekiel 43:8)*. The temple in Ezekiel's vision did not only represent the promise of a new temple when they were returned to the Holy Land after the Babylonian captivity and after their second captivity (Zechariah 14:1,2); it was also symbolic of God's word which they had violated by putting their distorted version of it, their threshold and their post, on an equal basis with God's word.

Whenever a church or an individual begins to emulate this practice, they have begun the slide into apostasy.

A characteristic of an apostate church, or one that is on the way, is a lack of fear of God. *My fear is not in you (Jeremiah 2:19)*. God's people had gotten to the point where pleasing their holy Creator was no longer an issue and His promise to them that they would reap the consequences of their sin, as exemplified in the word that God had delivered through Moses, had been forgotten (Deuteronomy 11:27,28).

The concept that God would punish or correct His people was non-existent in their man inspired doctrines, as it is also in today's church. God says, *In vain have I smitten your children; they have received no correction (Jeremiah 2:30)*.

*O LORD, are not Your eyes upon the truth? You have stricken*

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*them, but they have not grieved; You have consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return (repent) (Jeremiah 5:3).*

*...no man repented him of his wickedness saying 'What have I done?' ... (Jeremiah 8:6).*

*They have belied the LORD, and said, 'It is not He; neither shall evil come upon us; nether shall we see sword or famine' (Jeremiah 5:12).*

*They still say to them that despise Me, 'The LORD has said, You shall have peace;' and they say to everyone that walks after the imagination of his own heart, 'No evil shall come upon you' (Jeremiah 23:17).*

The concept that God does not punish is taught in many churches today. I personally have shown scriptures that refute this teaching to one of them, who looked at God's word which should be our final authority, and replied, "Oh no that's not true." Let us not lose sight of the fact that this attitude is the result of Jezebel spirit influenced leadership.

*And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them... (Jeremiah 5:12).*

*Then the LORD said to me, 'The prophets prophesy lies in My name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke to them: they prophesy to you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nothing, and the deceit of their heart' (Jeremiah 14:14).*

*The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priest bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof? (Jeremiah 5:31).*

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This reminds me of the Apostle Paul's description of the church in the latter days. –

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables (II Timothy 4:3,4).*

When God is forced to correct His people and she is found writhing in the devastating results of her own choices, what will she do? Hopefully repent so her restoration can commence.

*I will pour their wickedness upon them (Jeremiah 14:16).*

While those who claim that the punishments that God inflicted were only because they were in the Old Covenant and everything changed under the New Covenant, we need to understand that the New Testament also chronicles God's necessitating correction when appropriate. In Acts 5:1-11, the devious Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead at the Apostle Peter's feet for lying to the Holy Spirit. We are also reminded in Hebrews 12:5-11, that God corrects His children. And in the book of Revelation we are shown that these terrible plagues that God is permitting to be poured out upon the earth are the result of man's sins and their unwillingness to repent (Revelation 9:20,21).

In the midst of God's warnings to ancient Israel, the prophet Jeremiah wants us to understand that the scenario he is describing is not constrained by the time he is living.

*The anger of the LORD shall not return, until He has executed, and till He has performed the thoughts of His heart: in the latter*

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*days you shall consider it perfectly (Jeremiah 23:20).*

He is showing us that the spiritual condition of ancient Israel will be operational in the latter days.

So far we have seen that Israel's downfall began when she drifted away from following the LORD and His word under apostate leadership that was under the influence of the Jezebel spirit. This diminished the people's fear of God and eliminated any concept that God corrects or punishes. The compromised lifestyles of the people and their worship of other gods, the works of their own hands, was compounded by a lack of compassion resulting in abuse of the poor. This is the second major contributor to Israel's captivity.

### **2 Abuse and Neglect of the Poor**

There are more scriptures concerning God's care for the poor than any other moral issue in the Bible.

*For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command you, saying, you shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land (Deuteronomy 15:11).*

This is a commandment that was being ignored by God's people and was instrumental in catapulting them into disaster.

In Jeremiah 22:13-15, the prophets describe people building luxurious houses and not paying the workers. In verses 15 and 16, God refers them to their father, a reference to David.

*15 Did not your father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?*

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*16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know Me?"*

*Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy (Ezekiel 16:49).*

*The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yes, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully (Ezekiel 22:29).*

In Psalm 72, David had written instructions to his son, Solomon, who was to reign in his place. In his outline of what a good government leader should do, which is also considered to be a Messianic Psalm as well, he says, *He shall judge Your people with righteousness, and your poor with judgment (Psalm 72:2).*

*He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor (verse 4).*

*For he shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper (verse 12) He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy (verse 13).*

We are shown in I Peter 4:8, that charity, (love), covers a multitude of sins. In other words if compassion is shown to those who need it, the sins that would require God's judgment (or for Christians loss of rewards at the judgment seat of Christ) would be overlooked.

It is quite possible that if the Jews had exhibited compassion on the poor, their punishment may not have been

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so severe, as God promises protection for those who take care of the poor.

*Blessed is he that considers the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.*

*The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.*

*The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: You will make all his bed in his sickness (Psalm 41:1-3).*

As God's word shows us, caring for the poor is a major issue, therefore it should be a major issue in our hearts. However, the Jews were not mindful of the poor as God had commanded, and we are shown the reason why, which brings us to number three.

### 3. Covetousness

*But your eyes and your heart are not but for your covetousness... (Jeremiah 22:17).*

*...it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity (Ezekiel 7:19).*

It has been my experience that many Christians today have a dangerous resentment toward the poor, the root of which I believe is covetousness. When I was explaining to a Christian friend how the scriptures support an individual's and the government's responsibility to take care of the poor, she replied with a vehement, "I work!" She failed to recognize that there are many who cannot work, or can't keep up with today's escalating costs, especially rent.

I met a woman who told me that she was working so many

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jobs just to keep a roof over her head that she had a stroke. That qualified her for government subsidized housing and thank God it was there for her.

The scriptures show us that we are to work. –

*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat (II Thessalonians 3:10).*

And the purpose of the work is to meet the needs of others.

*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs (Ephesians 4:28).*

A spirit of greed or covetousness will not submit to the authority of God's word on this subject, and this places Christians that are in this category on the same precarious footing as those ancient Jews who were facing the Babylonian captivity.

According to the example we are given in God's word, the tithe was for the priest and the poor. Everything else, building maintenance, etc., was to come from offerings. So we can conclude that funding for the poor should be a priority.

The Apostle Paul tells us that covetousness is idolatry, (Colossians 3:5), a warning that the church today that has been influenced by prosperity preachers needs to take seriously.

God warned Israel of the consequences of their covetousness.

*Therefore will I give their wives to others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for everyone from the least even to the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even to the priest every one deals falsely (Jeremiah 8:10).*

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Unfaithful spouses and loss of property were two of the judgments God permitted because of greed.

Keeping in mind that ancient Israel did not follow God's word as the pattern for her preservation, those who also do not allow themselves to be guided by God's word will not escape the consequences of disobedience.

Failure to value God's word as a guide, also results in the fourth category – moral failure.

### 4. Moral Failure

*I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none does return from his wickedness: they are all of them to Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah (Jeremiah 23:14).*

A lax, apostate Jezebel influenced leadership will accept sin that God has labeled abomination in His word, fail to uphold God's standards for marriage, and 'strengthen the hands'-refuse to correct those who are violating those standards by not preaching repentance.

*Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not; And come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations' (Jeremiah 7:9,10).*

Sounds like grace abuse, doesn't it? I met two pastors in one year, on separate occasions, who quit their churches because they were teaching what the Bible actually says instead of a watered down version of it. They were told by



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their congregations to stop. The people wanted to live their lives anyway they wanted to without God's restraints during the week. The pastors refused to compromise. One became an evangelist and the other opened a Christian book store.

Whenever a professed believer refuses to crucify the desires of his flesh, pick up his cross and follow Jesus on a daily basis, he is duplicating the spiritual condition of ancient Israel who also refused to be guided by God's word for their welfare.

I have actually heard a pastor say to me, "We don't have to obey God anymore, that's Old Covenant." Another I heard declared, "Christians have no moral code." If that is the case, then why did the Apostles tell us to keep the commandments? (I Corinthians 7:19, I John 2:3,4,3:22,5:2,3). We are not justified by our obedience to God's word, but we are rewarded by it and our love for God is expressed by our willingness to practice the things that please Him.

The spirit of Jezebel is alive and well and influencing the leadership of much of the contemporary Christian church.

Years ago I was visiting a church in California, whose leadership team had just returned from a conference. They were exuberantly bubbling about the fact that several of them had the same vision of dark clouds. They interpreted this to mean that there would be showers of blessings.

Dark clouds in scripture represent judgment (Joel 2:2, Zephaniah 1:15). Bright clouds are indicative of blessings (Zechariah 10:1).

The dark storm clouds of the tribulation are currently looming above our heads, bulging with impending disaster. The church that has refused to see herself reflected in the mirror of God's word contained in His warnings to Israel, has joined hands with the Israel of today that God has described as "Sodom" and "Egypt" (Revelation 11:8). Together they will

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live the future foretold in God's word that is reserved for all those who have refused to repent and change their ways.

### 5. Racism

Along with God's instructions for His people to care for the poor, He also counseled them to take care of the Gentiles among them, the "aliens" or "strangers" as they are referred to in God's word.

*And if a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not vex him.*

*But the stranger that dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 19:33,34).*

God tells them that they are to treat the Gentiles as one of them. God's commandments in this area were blatantly violated, and contributed to Israel's captivity in Babylon where they were themselves once again strangers in a strange land as they were when they were slaves in Egypt. Modern Israel has also violated God's word in this area which is apparent in their treatment of the Palestinians, many of whom are Christians.

As we were shown in chapter five, the Palestinians were driven out of their homes and businesses by Israeli terrorists. The Palestinians have not forgiven the Jews for the crimes that were, and still are being committed against them; and the Jews apparently cannot repent, which is the source of the conflicts in Israel today. If the Jews had obeyed God's commandment to treat the Gentiles in their land as one of them, then they would not be in the turmoil and danger they

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are in at the present time.

In the book of Revelation, the modern nation of Israel is labeled by God as “Sodom” and “Egypt.” As a secular nation, they have neglected God’s word regarding sexual sins represented by Sodom and the idolatry represented by Egypt. God’s reference in calling His people Egypt is also showing us that He sees them as Gentiles, a reflection on their own bigotry toward the Gentile Palestinians.

Many professed Christians today, especially in the Southern States of America, harbor racist attitudes towards the blacks and other races.

The Apostle Peter says, in Acts 10:28 ... *You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come to one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

The Jews in the Apostles’ day also had trouble accepting the fact that God favored the Gentiles on an equal basis with God’s “chosen people.” They had overlooked the fact that when God called Abraham, the Lord promised him that he would be the father of all the families of the earth, not just the twelve tribes (Genesis 22:18).

This unifying of Jew and Gentile would be accomplished through the everlasting covenant that was brought in through the Messiah Jesus, as it is prophesied that the Messiah would bring the Gentiles to God (Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 60:3).

It was God’s intention to eliminate all racial barriers and bring all the Gentiles, white, black and every variation, together as one under one shepherd, the Messiah Jesus.

Those Christians who have concluded that God has made some sort of error in creating folks of different colors and races, will have to tell the Lord so when they confront Him at the last judgment, which would be a daunting experience. It’s

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better to recognize where we have erred in this regard and repent now.

In God's kingdom, racism does not exist. Those who harbor any form of racism would have to be purged of this iniquity, and again that is what the tribulation's turbulent rebukes have been orchestrated to accomplish.

### 6. Involvement in the Occult

God has specifically forbidden His people to have anything to do with occult practices (Leviticus 19:26-28,31,20:6, Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Isaiah 8:19, Malachi 3:5).

Because ancient Israel was under the influence of apostate leadership, there was no correction. God's word had been abandoned as the standard for their behavior and the practices of the nations around them were being incorporated into their society. Likewise today there are many Christians who are also involving themselves with things that God's word has condemned.

I have a neighbor who wears a pentagram. She also claims to be a baptized Christian and an owner of several Bibles along with her collection of crystals. Like ancient Israel, this professed believer is preferring the demonic powers of the occult to a relationship with the Living God. As a result her life has been besought with one problem after another including, failed relationships, poverty, and jail time.

While she continues on in her own personal tribulation, like ancient Israel, she refuses to see the correlation between her rebellion against God and the consequences of her sins.

*Therefore You have forsaken Your people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of*

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*strangers (Isaiah 2:6).*

Soothsayers were fortunetellers. Today there are some Christians who are using tarot cards and actually promoting the use of them in the church. Again, this is part of the Jezebel spirit's attempt to compromise the church and bring her under God's judgment, a judgment that the unrepentant will not escape.

*Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds (Revelation 2:22).*



## 8

# The Remedy of Repentance

*Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent Him of the evil that He has pronounced against you (Jeremiah 26:13).*

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end (Jeremiah 29:11).*

**A**ny child who has been punished by a parent sees the reward of his misbehavior as evil. Yet, from the parent's perspective the act of correcting the child is the result of the parent's care and love, even though his actions are being misinterpreted by the object of the discipline.

God's actions to correct His people were necessary and were in proportion to their crimes. He had sent His prophets many years before the judgment would fall to get them to repent and change their behavior. Therefore the misery that was inflicted upon the Jews during the Babylonian captivity could have been completely avoided if they had listened and obeyed God's prophets instead of the false prophets who were only prophesying the things the people wanted to hear. In other words, the people had no one to blame for their misfortunes other than themselves.

The principles that were recorded for us in the Old

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Testament, are operational in this present day. And like ancient Israel, I fear that much of the church and the Jews that refuse to heed the words of scripture for their correction and repent, will face the same fate as their ancient counterparts.

The dictionary defines repentance as “Deep sorrow, compunction, or contrition for a past sin, wrong doing, regret for any past action.”

The Bible defines repentance as the need to change (Isaiah 55:7, 59:20, Proverbs 28:13, Job 36:10). Actually, it is sorrow for one’s sins and the recognition that we need forgiveness that leads to repentance, the desire to change one’s behavior.

When we believe the gospel, that Jesus died for our sins, the acknowledgment that we have sinned which caused Jesus’ suffering for us, should produce a deep remorse that results in repentance, a willingness to change, to turn from sins. Therefore repentance is the result of a genuine faith in the atonement.

*...you sorrowed to repentance... (II Corinthians 7:9).  
For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation... (II Corinthians 7:10).*

*Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin (Ezekiel 18:30).*

*To you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:26).*

*I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32).*



## The Remedy of Repentance

We are shown in John 15:5, that without Jesus “we can do nothing.”

When we believe we receive the Holy Spirit, who then works with the believer to change us into the people God wants us to become. The process of becoming a “New Creature” (II Corinthians 5:17), is the result of salvation, not the means.

The purpose of this transformation is to glorify God, validate the gospel message and bring others to Jesus. In the first century church, repentance, the need to turn from sin, was preached with the gospel.

*They went out, and preached that men should repent (Mark 6:12).*

*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).*

*...to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31).*

*...they should repent and turn to God, and do works befitting for repentance (Acts 26:20).*

Before ancient Israel was catapulted into her captivity, her apostate pastors did not preach repentance.

*Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way by promising him life (Ezekiel 13:22).*

There are many apostate pastors today who also refuse to preach against sin and thus encourage those who hear them to

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continue in behaviors that will guarantee them, like ancient Israel, first place in line to experience what happens when God withdraws His protection.

*Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds (Revelation 2:22).*

Those who are humble and wise, will heed the words and warnings of God and repent.

*Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.*

*Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 18:30,31).*

*There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said to them, Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?*

*I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.*

*Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, do you think that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*

*I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:1-5).*

*Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven*

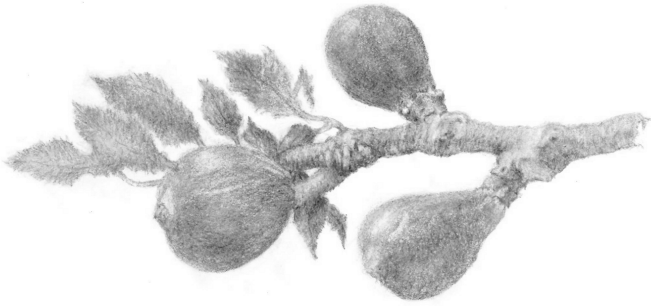
## The Remedy of Repentance

*by art and man's device.*

*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent: (Acts 17:29,30).*

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).*

If you are ever challenged by someone about the Biblical meaning of the word repentance, tell them to get a topical Bible and read all the verses relating to repentance and get the Biblical definition of what it means, instead of any man's opinion.



## 9

# The Remnant

**W**hen God was describing to His prophet Ezekiel, the judgments the Jews would endure because of their sin, the Lord mentions three similitudes of the people that would be preserved through the disasters to come.

*Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, says the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 14:14).*

These three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, represent the spiritual conditions and the characteristics of a remnant that God has promised to protect.

Noah represents obedience. He obediently followed God's instructions to not only build an ark for the preservation of his family and the animals, he was also obedient to God's moral requirements; a "preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5).

Daniel represents those who are spiritually separated and uncompromised. He refused to eat the pagan meat and food that had most likely been sacrificed to idols. He remained faithful to God and His word, even when faced with death.

Job endured great losses and physical illness, yet he remained faithful to God. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15). He did not let adverse circumstances affect

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his devotion to his Maker.

In the examples of these three men, we see the characteristics of the remnant that God preserved through the Babylonian captivity.

The characteristics of these faithful servants of God are also found in the remnant that God promises to protect that is shown to us in Jesus' admonishments to the churches in Revelation's chapters two and three. Here we see that it is only the Philadelphians who are promised protection from the "hour of temptation" (apostasy) which in turn would logically protect her from the "hour of His Judgment" in Revelation 14:7, the tribulation. The characteristics of obedience, separation and faithfulness that exemplify the remnant three; Noah, Daniel and Job, can be found in this latter day Philadelphian remnant; the only spiritual condition that is promised protection from the tribulation to come.

She shares the same characteristics with the church of Smyrna, the only other church that had no need to be corrected by the Lord. Both of these churches are martyrs in different ways. Some experience physical martyrdom, others like the Philadelphians are promised protection, but both churches are martyrs of the self and willing to die rather than deny Jesus. These churches are also not harboring the errors of the other five churches that would disqualify them from the remnant category.

I am going to give a brief overview of what each of those errors of the five churches are so we can avoid them and qualify for that Philadelphian category.

The church at Ephesus is the first church to be addressed. This church's error as we shall see, begins the slide into apostasy. To help us understand why, we need to comprehend what I call the "Three Pillar Principle."

We begin by recognizing with the Apostle Paul, that John,

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Peter and James were “Pillars” in the early church (Galatians 2:9). Each of these three apostles represent pillars of doctrine that must be retained in the proper balance or the church will no longer be functioning properly. The first pillar represented by John is the pure, simple Gospel.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

The second pillar illustrated by Peter, stands for holiness, the divine nature, (I Peter 1:4).

The goal God has ordained for every believer is to be conformed into the image of His Son. This means that those qualities that are in Jesus are to be developed in the believer over time by the Holy Spirit. This is what it means to be discipled, and that is what this second pillar represents.

The third pillar is represented by James who shows us the result of abiding in the first two pillars which is Christian service. Faith without works is a dead faith (James 2:17). We are saved by faith alone and if we are saved then that grace works in the believer, resulting in a changed life and service to our Lord. So we see that the first foundational pillar is the Gospel. The foundation of the first pillar is the atonement. When there is no atonement, we are standing upon a counterfeit gospel and an artificial pillar.

The foundation of the second pillar is John chapter fifteen. We must abide in the true vine of Messiah Jesus in order to be discipled correctly and to bear the fruit of a holy character that only His Spirit can provide.

The foundation of the third pillar is the first two pillars and their foundations. Fruitful service can only arise properly from these first two pillars. All of these pillars must be

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maintained in balance or the church will ultimately wobble off on her own and be in danger of removal. This is the error of the Ephesians as we shall see.

### 1. The Error of the Ephesians

Jesus begins His instructions to the believers at Ephesus with encouragement, which is the best pattern to follow when we have to administer correction to someone. Praise them for the good they are doing first.

*I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil; and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars; (verse 2).*

They were very zealous in their commission to guard the holy gates of the Lord's house. Their zeal was well pleasing to the Lord. He continues praising them for what they have done for Him. –

*And has born, and has patience, and for My name's sake has labored, and has not fainted (verse 3).*

This church has grasped the fact that every believer has been called to serve the Lord in some capacity. However, their zeal had become imbalanced. –

*Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love (verse 4).*

What was the first love of the church? In order to understand we must continue to verse five. –



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*Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of this place, unless you repent (verse 5).*

The church is being commanded to “do the first works.” The first works, or the first love of the church were the first two pillars. The early church zealously preached the Gospel; Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead. We are saved by grace alone. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, all need repentance. Believers were disciplined according to the words of our Lord and His apostles. Many years had passed since the Holy Spirit ignited the church at Pentecost. The Ephesians had become zealous spiritual policemen. They were neglecting the first two pillars to rid the church of apostates, not realizing that when the first two pillars are not balanced with service, the church has deviated from her purpose. When a church is no longer making the Gospel and discipling her priority, then she will ultimately be removed, because unless the church is producing reproducers, adding new believers and discipling them, then the church will die out.

The Ephesians had read Paul’s letter to them and had zealously held onto his instructions to; – *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:11).*

They were great reprovers, but they needed to “remember from where they had fallen.” They had to be reminded that they too were at one time sinners in need of the Lord’s grace; to remember how it felt when they knew they were forgiven and to impart that same message of forgiveness to everyone, including those they thought needed to be reprovved. An imbalanced message will produce condemnation and not converts, empty pews, closed doors, and a self-righteous,

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loveless, religious spirit in those who are doing the reprovng.

In summery; the church begins her descent into apostasy when she fails to make sharing the gospel and discipling (reproducing reproducers) her first priority. These are the “works” (Rev. 2:5) that the Ephesians neglected. The “first love” (Rev. 2:4) of the first century church was reaching people with the gospel and discipling believers into the image of Christ.

For a church to remain healthy this first century model must not be abandoned or neglected. The gospel must be first.

### **2. The Error of Pergamos**

The church must maintain sound doctrine as it was established by Jesus and His apostles. The church at Pergamos symbolically began to marry “foreign wives;” she was allowing herself to be influenced by doctrines that were not supported by the apostles. God’s word must be taken as the final word above man’s philosophies, opinions, and doctrines.

To remain healthy a church must cleave to the pure simplicity of the scriptures and not abandon the authority of the first century apostles who alone were handpicked by God to establish the doctrines of the church.

*“We (the first century apostles) are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (I John 4:6).*

### **3. The Error of Thyatira**

The move away from the pure authority of God’s word, breeds a spirit of compromise like worms on stale bread. The spirit of Jezebel that pollutes this church represents moral

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compromise with the world. Repentance from sin is not preached and God's moral standards are diminished. The world's acceptance of sexual immorality is emulated.

I know Christians who are compromised in this area and like those at Thyatira, they are promised great tribulation unless they repent. The spirit of Jezebel does not preach repentance and the scriptural fact that there are consequences for sin. Her mantra is "God does not punish" which is not supported by the scriptures. Because this church has negated God's word by permitting the doctrines of men to override the final authority of the scriptures, Jezebel's followers, who have been promised by this lying spirit that they will all go in a pre-tribulation rapture, are going to be in for a rude awakening.

In order for a church to remain healthy and not fall into apostasy, holiness and separation from the world must be embraced. A healthy church recognizes the value of the Lord's correction, and the benefits of holiness. This church rejects the spirit of compromise with the world and strives to live a separate holy life as we are exhorted to do by the apostles and the entire counsel of God's word.

### **4. The Error of Sardis**

This church is a further development of the same liberal spirit that infects Thyatira. Because she has allowed the doctrines of men to override God's pure, simple truth, this church is risking her salvation because she is abandoning the basics of the Christian faith. She no longer believes that the cross, or faith in the atonement is necessary for salvation, embracing the lie that all religions are valid. Thus this church is denying Jesus, the only other error that can cost a believer his salvation apart from perpetual unforgiveness (Matthew 10:33, 6:14,15). Therefore she is warned that unless she repents

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her name will be blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5).

A healthy church recognizes that Jesus is the only way to the Father and cleaves to the cross for her spiritual safety.

### **5. The Error of Laodicea**

While this church has retained a fundamental knowledge of the Lord, she has become complacent and self-centered. Her desire for comfort has replaced the desire to save the lost. She has no zeal for the things of the Lord. All of the errors of the previous four churches are operational to some degree in this church, which represents the culmination of the latter day apostasy.

A healthy church remains zealous for the things of God, makes sharing the gospel and discipling her first priority, cleaves to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, preaches repentance, refuses to compromise with the world, values and practices holiness, retains a healthy reverence for the Lord and is aware that obedience to His word is important. This church would rather die than deny that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and the only way to heaven.

I have just described the characteristics of the Philadelphian remnant who has kept God's word and will be rewarded for her faithfulness as the Lord has promised her. To those who remain trapped in the errors of the churches of the Ephesians, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea, I will say to you the one word the Jezebel spirit does not want you to hear, "Repent" in this space of time before the hour of God's judgment begins; and pray that the Lord will make you worthy to escape (Luke 21:36).

## 10

# The Three Covenants and Christianity

The scriptures record that there are three covenants that God had made with the Jewish people. The first covenant God made with Abraham was a promise to give the holy land to his descendants.

*In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates' (Genesis 15:18).*

The second “everlasting covenant” is a relational covenant in which God unifies Himself with His people.

*And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you (Genesis 17:7).*

This is the covenant that would make Abraham the father of all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3). This means that this is the covenant that would be instigated by the Messiah, who is the light of the Gentiles (Isaiah 11:10,42:1,6 49:6), therefore unifying the Gentiles with the Jews making Abraham the father of all the nations through the Messiah.

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The sign of this everlasting covenant is circumcision (Genesis 17:10). God instructs Abraham to put the sign of this covenant on the most intimate part of a man's body that is used to unify himself with a woman. This is a carnal symbol which is intended to illustrate a deeply spiritual principle. The new everlasting covenant is the covenant in which God unifies Himself with His people. Through the Messiah, believers receive the Holy Spirit and God comes into the believer making the two one.

It was Abraham's faith that qualified him to receive the covenants because *he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6).*

The third covenant of the law was given to Moses. The law had previously been given to Abraham orally.

*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him (Genesis 18:19).*

*Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws (Genesis 26:5).*

The oral law was apparently lost during the 400 years the Jews were slaves in Egypt; thus it had to be reintroduced through Moses.

When God gave the law, He told His people that their right to the Holy Land was conditional based on their obedience. The relational new everlasting covenant which was instigated through the Messiah Jesus, is also conditional based on faith. As long as faith in Jesus' atonement is maintained, believers have the right to the promised land of eternal life.

## The Three Covenants and Christianity

*But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end (Hebrews 3:6).*

*For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end; (Hebrews 3:14).*

*But whoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven (Matthew 10:33).*

*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in his goodness: otherwise you also shall be cut off (Romans 11:22).*

The new everlasting covenant is intended to gift the believer with the same intimate relationship that God had with Abraham.

Abraham communed with God and he “obeyed My voice;” he could hear the Holy Spirit and was guided by the Spirit (Genesis 22:5). Prior to the instigation of the New Covenant through Jesus, the Holy Spirit communicated directly with only a handful of chosen vessels, like Abraham, Moses, David, some priests and the prophets. In the New Covenant, the Spirit is made available to all who have put their faith in the Messiah Jesus. Because Christians have been given the Holy Spirit they are also led by the Spirit, like Abraham.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).*

*But if you are led of the Spirit, you are not under the law (Galatians 5:18).*

## Sign of the Fig Tree

While Christians have knowledge of God's laws just like Abraham; like Abraham, they are not justified by law, or under it. Believers in the Messiah Jesus are saved by faith. In other words, our salvation or acceptance by God into heaven is not contingent on our frail efforts to keep the law perfectly all our lives for our justification.

The Apostle Paul noted that 430 years before the law was given by Moses, the promises that God had made to Abraham could not be nullified (Galatians 3:17).

Even though God had given the law to Abraham orally, Abraham, like the Christians, was not justified by his obedience. He was counted righteous by God because of his faith. In turn, Abraham's faith produced the obedience that God blessed.

A true faith and love of God will produce obedience, and is the natural response to the love that God has shown to us in His sacrifice of His Son to redeem us from our sins.

We can look at the model of Abraham's relationship with God and rejoice that this foreshadow of God's desire to be intimate with His people, is available to us today through faith in God's plan of redemption that He instigated in Eden, and is fulfilled for us by the Messiah Jesus.



## 11

# Pentecost, War and Peace for Israel

**A**midst the devastations that befell ancient Israel as the result of her rebellion against God, the prophet Ezekiel was shown that there would be a time when the captives would be returned from Babylon to their land.

Jeremiah had previously foretold that Israel's captivity would last 70 years. In that generation the false prophets and corrupt leadership that were instrumental in leading Israel into her punishment would have been eliminated. Just as God used a 40 year sojourn in the wilderness to eliminate the people that could not inherit the promised land, His purpose in retaining Israel in Babylon and the other countries where the people had been scattered, served the same function and the corrupters would perish in the wilderness of their captivity.

In Ezekiel 36, God tells the prophet that the people would be restored to the land.

*For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land (Ezekiel 36:24).*

At that time they would be cleansed from their filthiness (verse 25), and they would be given a "new heart" (verse 26).

## Sign of the Fig Tree

*And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them (Verse 27).*

The promise of a time when God would put His law in their hearts was also previously prophesied by Jeremiah.

*Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

*Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the LORD:*

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, says the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people (Jeremiah 31: 31-33).*

With the promises of God's restoration of His people ringing in his heart, Ezekiel was transported in the Spirit into a vision of a valley of dry bones. In response to the prophet's obedience to God's command to prophesy over them, he watched as God's Holy Spirit brought the breath of life back into the dead.

This outpouring of God's Spirit was prophesied by the prophet Joel.

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:*

*And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit (Joel 2: 28,29).*

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This prophecy was dramatically fulfilled on the day of Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 2).

The prophet Daniel accurately foretold that the Messiah would be killed (Daniel 9:26). It was the Messiah's death that enabled the Holy Spirit to be released upon God's people.

As Ezekiel witnessed the restoration of His people through Pentecost as the result of the Messiah's sacrifice, he was also shown that the Messiah would be king through the similitude of David, and that He would be their prince forever, an eternal king.

*And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell there, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever: and My servant David shall be their prince forever (Ezekiel 37:25).*

The witness of an empty tomb proclaims that the Messiah Jesus would live forever and return to be the king who would not die.

*Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore (Ezekiel 37: 26).*

It would be through the Messiah's atoning death that the prophesied New Covenant would be instigated that would be the spiritual peace that the assurance of eternal life bestows. –

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

## Sign of the Fig Tree

With the vision of life restored in a valley of death, and the promise of an eternal king resounding in his being, Ezekiel's vision suddenly drops off into an abyss of time.

It would be many years later that the prophet Daniel would be given the remaining pieces of the puzzle that would complete the mural of God's plan for the future of His people and the world.

Along with Daniel's instructions by the angel that the Messiah would be killed, the prophet was also shown that Jerusalem would again be destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled forty years after Jesus' death when the city was annihilated by Titus' army in 70AD and the Jews were once again banished from the land.

Historically, this tragedy was the event that followed Ezekiel's vision of Pentecost and precipitated the great chasm of time, the gap in his prophecy that had to be traversed until the Jews once again would be seen in their own land surrounded by the armies of her enemies.

When Ezekiel is again privileged to peer through another keyhole into the future, he beholds to his dismay, a devastating vision of yet another attack on Israel.

We are shown in Ezekiel 38:8-16, that the vision the prophet is witnessing takes place in the latter days. Israel has once again been returned to the land - *is brought forth out of the nations (verse 8); that are gathered out of the nations (verse 12).*

These are the only references to modern Israel. When all the other verses pertaining to the Jews' return to the Holy Land are studied within their context, they are referring to the return after the Babylonian captivity and when they are brought back after their second captivity which is prophesied in Zechariah 14:1,2.

The attack on Israel that Ezekiel is shown in chapters 38 and 39, relates to the time in earth's history when the

## Pentecost, War and Peace for Israel

prophesied one world government (Revelation 13) has achieved full power.

By this time the antichrist is in control and according to Daniel's record of this same period, it is the antichrist who invades the holy land.

*He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon (Daniel 11:41).*

We see in Daniel's prophecy the link to Gog of Ezekiel's prophecy in verse 43.

*But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps (Daniel 11:43).*

*Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: (Ezekiel 38:5).*

Thus we are shown that Gog is identified as the antichrist. His invasion of the land of Israel propels the Jews into a second captivity, also graphically prophesied by Zechariah.

*Behold, the day of the LORD comes, and your spoil shall be divided in the midst of you.*

*For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city (Zechariah 14:1,2).*

This event correlates to "The Great Tribulation" described by Jesus in Matthew 24:21. -

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*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

We are also shown in Daniel 11:36-38, the characteristics of the antichrist. –

*He magnifies himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: - (Evil must come to its fullness before God destroys it (Genesis 15:16) – for that that is determines shall be done (verse 36).*

*Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (he comes from a religious background) nor the desire of women, or regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all (verse 37).*

This proclaiming of himself to be god, is reiterated by the Apostle Paul in II Thessalonians 2:3,4. The “day of Christ,” that is Jesus’ second coming, will be preceded by apostasy, a –

*...falling away before that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (verse 3).*

*Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (verse 4).*

The word temple here is not the word that is used to describe the temple building. This word that is used is naos which is associated with the holy of holies. This desecration, which is the proclaiming of man as God, in the place of God, is “the abomination of desolation,” prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 9:27), and referred to by Jesus, and is the event that precedes the second captivity, the great tribulation (Matthew 24:15).

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This antichrist is described by Daniel as “the prince that shall come,” (Daniel 9:26) from the people who destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. He confirms the covenant with many for one week (Daniel 9:27). The covenant is the everlasting covenant God gave His people through the Messiah Jesus. We were shown that the antichrist had a religious background. One of the ways that he initially deceives the masses into thinking he is a good guy so to speak, is that he portrays himself as religious to a point. Then halfway through the week, which could be symbolic of a period of seven years, each day of the week representing one year (Ezekiel 4:6, Numbers 14:34), he forcibly invades and takes over Israel. He cause the sacrifices and the oblation to cease. This is the point where he renounces his faith and denounces that sacrifice; that is the atonement of Jesus.

While many have interpreted this to mean that the temple has been built and he is stopping the Jews’ animal sacrifices, we need to understand that he is “antiCHRIST.” He is anti-Messiah and everything that Jesus is and represents. He breaks the everlasting covenant, renouncing Jesus’ atonement and this is the point when he declares himself as God.

Prior to this declaration, the apostasy has been carried along by an increase in the promotion of humanism, which basically is the belief that man can be his own god. So when the antichrist declares himself to be God, he is replacing Christianity with humanism and will be accepted by the masses who have preferred this lie above the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10,11).

Because the modern nation of Israel was founded by man as a secular nation, secularized Jews will accept the delusion. Orthodox Jews, Muslims and any remaining Christians will of course rebel against the antichrist’s blasphemous declaration.

The idea of the Jewish people accepting the antichrist as a

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humanist, or a communist, who eventually demands to be worshipped in the place of God, brings us back to Ezekiel's vision where we are shown the reason why Jerusalem is once again enduring a devastating invasion.

In chapter 38, verses 16 and 17, we are shown that it is God that is causing Gog to invade Israel.

*16 And you shall come up against My people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring you against My land, that the heathen may know Me, when I shall be sanctified in you, O Gog, before their eyes.*

*17 Thus says the Lord GOD; Are you he of whom I have spoken in old time by My servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring you against them?*

In Ezekiel 39, verses 23 and 24, we are shown the reason why God has permitted this tragedy.

*23 And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against Me, therefore I hid My face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so they all fell by the sword.*

*24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done to them, and hid My face from them.*

It is the sins of the people, including the rejection of the gospel that has caused the walls of God's protection to crumble at their feet.

What we are being shown is that Israel will once again endure a repeat of the Babylonian captivity, although this tribulation will not be as long. Because of the severity of this war, "The time will be shortened" as Jesus said, or no flesh would be saved (Matthew 24:22). There would be no one left



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alive.

There is an indication in Ezekiel 39:15 that nuclear weapons may be used to some degree. In verse 15 we are shown that after the war people are sent to bury the dead. When they find a body they “set a sign by it.” I was told by someone who had served in the military that some are trained to set a marker on a corpse that has been contaminated by radiation. Those who are familiar with the effects of a nuclear blast, see the description of God’s Judgment on Israel’s enemies as similar to a nuclear explosion. -

*And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth (Zechariah 14:12).*

Of course the supernatural fire of God’s wrath descending from above would also have the same effect.

True to the pattern in God’s word, when the punishment of Israel and the world has been fulfilled, God will cause those who have attacked Israel and caused her devastation to be destroyed.

We see in Ezekiel 39 that it is their attack of Israel that causes the attackers own destruction. God operates with what is already existing within the heart of man. The animosity that is harbored in the heart of Israel’s enemies is the element that God sees in the people He uses as His rod of correction. That hatred is the catalyst that instigates God’s punishment of the attackers. So God uses the sin of Israel’s enemies to correct the sin in His people.

When the beast, the one world empire is finally permitted by God to unleash its havoc upon the earth, we are to

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remember that the evil is perpetuated by the continuous sins of the nations. The evil is ordained to slay the wicked.

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:9).*

We see that God's people are fighting in Jerusalem, (Zechariah 14:13,14). God causes Gog to die upon the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:4) and sends fire upon his land of Magog (Ezekiel 39:6).

This final war correlates to the time that just precedes Jesus' second coming. The battle of Armageddon is a battle within the war that was instigated during the tribulation (Rev. 16:16).

Just prior to Armageddon, the sign of Jesus' return appears in the sky. It is at this time that the Lord sends His angels to gather the Christians and the dead are raised (Matthew 24:30,31). This is the event described by the Apostle Paul in I Thessalonians 4:14-17 which precedes the final outpouring of God's wrath on the wicked, the bowl judgments (Rev. 16) and the destruction of Babylon, the world system (Rev. 17), both religious and political. This time of wrath occurs in the space of time between the appearing of the sign in the sky and Jesus' actual return. This is the only time in the history of the Christian church that there will be no true Christians on earth. While the wicked are experiencing the culmination of the results of their rebellion against God and His people, there is a celebration in heaven when all of God's people are gathered at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The glorious finale to this time of devastation upon Israel's enemies is described in Ezekiel 39:25-29.

*25 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD; now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel,*

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*and will be jealous for My holy name;*

*26 After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against Me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.*

*27 When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;*

*28 Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them to their own land, and have left none of them anymore there.*

*29 Neither will I hide My face any more from them: for I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.*

We see in verse 27 that His people are gathered a second time (Isaiah 11:11, Joel 3:1) and returned to their land. We see in Zechariah 14 that Israel's restoration begins and the war ends when Jesus returns. His feet land on the Mount of Olives causing a massive earthquake. Jesus prophesied of His coming while He was sitting in the exact location of His return (Matthew 24:3).

It is at this time that all of the Jews that have survived the tribulation will at last receive Jesus as their Messiah. This is the time the Apostle Paul is referring to when he said, "All Israel will be saved." -

*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

*For this is My covenant to them, when I shall take away their sins (Romans 11:26,27 from Isaiah 59:20).*

Like the repentant thief on the cross writhing in the

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consequences of his sin, who received Jesus in the last few moments of his life (Luke 23:39-43), Israel will at last recognize her Messiah as she is delivered from her captivity.

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me (God in Christ) whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, (The Messiah), as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn (Zechariah 12:10).*

*In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem,...* (Zechariah 12:11), as the realization of what their previous rejection of the Messiah Jesus and their sins have caused them. As we witness the mourning of the people who had rejected their Messiah writhe in the ashes of their repentance, we return to Ezekiel's visions of a temple restored in his prophecy contained in chapters 40 through 48. The visions these chapters contain were given to him 14 years after Jerusalem was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar and concludes his book of prophecies.

The prophet is shown a temple restored. There would be a new temple built when they returned after the Babylonian captivity, but this prophecy is referring to another time in the future.

We had just witnessed in the previous chapters Gog's devastating attack on Jerusalem in the latter days, and the Jew's vindication. Ezekiel is now being shown the restoration of the worship of the one true God through His image, the Messiah, who has returned in victory (Zechariah 14).

Now because the Jews have received the New Covenant,

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they are given the land once again.

The new temple described in Ezekiel's vision also does not have a separate court for the Gentiles which is another reminder to the Jews that the land is to be shared on an equal basis with the Gentiles.

*And it shall come to pass, that you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance to you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be to you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.*

*And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourns, there shall you give him his inheritance, says the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 47:22,23).*

This time this commandment will be obeyed. There will be one fold, Jew and Gentile, Arab and Hebrew living together as one under and one shepherd, the Messiah Jesus, just as God had always intended.

When the temple is restored, the Jews are instructed to resume animal sacrifices. While Jesus has removed their sin and the sins of all the people, and poured out His Holy Spirit upon them (Ezekiel 39:29), we can wonder why God is permitting the restoration of animal sacrifices, as they were always intended to be a foreshadow of Messiah's sacrifice.

By that time all the previous prophecies and foreshadows concerning the Messiah have been understood, including God's use of animal sacrifice as a foreshadow of the atonement.

*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the*

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*blood that makes an atonement for the soul (Leviticus 17:11).*

The sacrifices are now being restored under the Messiah's rule as a memorial of what He had sacrificed for them and a reminder of their sin in previously rejecting His atonement. Thus the animal sacrifices to them would be the equivalent of what communion is intended to be for the Christian; a memorial of Jesus' sacrifice and the sins of the people that caused the need for His atoning death.

We have now entered a time in the landscape of prophetic history when the judgment seat of Christ prophesied by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 34) and reiterated by Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46) will have taken place. The evil one world totalitarian government will have been annihilated and replaced by a perfect theocracy with Jesus ruling the people with a compassionate, fair and just rod of iron; along with all those who had received Him in their earth lives and have returned with Him to serve as His magistrates.

In Zechariah's prophecy, we witness living waters being sent from Jerusalem to heal the seas (Zechariah 14:8) that have been devoid of life from man's pollutions. Oceans that have been contaminated and had become as the blood of a dead man (Rev. 16:3); a massive dead zone void of oxygen and fish, will be restored. This restoration correlates with Ezekiel's vision of the same miraculous event in chapter 47 of his prophecy where the water is seen emerging from the temple.

*And it shall come to pass, that everything that lives, which moves, wherever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come there: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live where the river comes (Ezekiel 47:9).*

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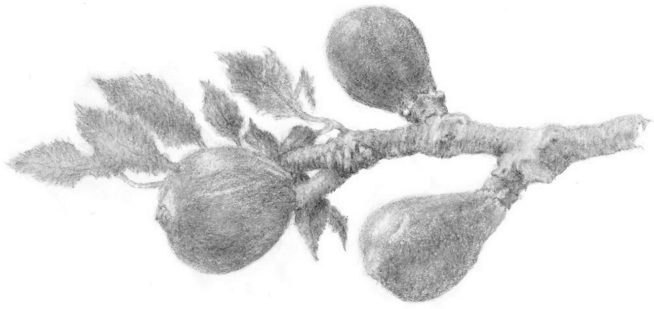
The planet is supernaturally restored from the ravages of man's greed, the men who destroyed the earth (Rev. 11:18). The evidences of war are destroyed (Ezekiel 39:9), and reformed into farming equipment (Isaiah 2:4) and the prophecies of happy children playing safely in the streets of Jerusalem and every city and town in the world are fulfilled.

*Thus says the LORD of hosts; 'There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.*

*And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets' (Zechariah 8:4,5).*

The warless world under the Messiah that was prophesied so long ago is gloriously fulfilled, precisely within the scriptures' time frame. The map and plan was always there, overlooked for the most part by the people God had chosen to be the womb for its fulfillment.

Those of us who have connected the dots and understood the mystery, should love our mother Israel who birthed our Messiah for us, and proclaim the gospel message of His deliverance in the time remaining before the final tempest arrives. Israel needs to repent, the Palestinians need to forgive and both sides need to receive the Messiah Jesus. Until then, there will be no real peace for Israel.





## Conclusion

It is my prayer that by now you are standing with me in this museum in our minds viewing the mural of Israel's relationship to the holy land in its entirety. We can see the reasons for her turmoil over the years; the consequences of her disobedience and the victory of her final restoration at the triumphant return of the Messiah Jesus.

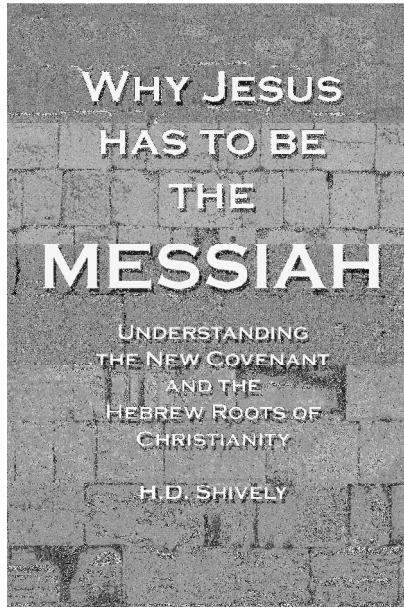
As we await the fulfillment of the prophecy, we also must endure with her the pain and devastation she faces as she journeys toward the future.

All believers in the Messiah Jesus should travail with her in prayer for her spiritual and physical restoration. She is the mother of our Messiah. Without her there would be no hope for the world, no promise of eternal life.

In her present infancy she has no clue as to the importance of her role in earth's history. God clasped her to Him tightly through the centuries for her preservation, knowing that if she had escaped from His grasp, and fallen away to other gods, all hope for the world would be lost and multitudes of souls would perish for eternity.

Let us love our mother Israel. Let us work to bring her with us to this museum, and let her gaze at the mural, and show her that all her failings and victories were orchestrated to bring her to her final destination - a homecoming to be embraced by her Savior.

It is a beautiful mural, painted in exquisite detail; a miraculous plan created from a palette of miracles with pigments glistening in everlasting love.



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Author and Bible scholar, H. D. Shively, directs us back through the centuries to explore the foreshadows and typologies that God has so brilliantly woven through His word to verify “Why Jesus has to be the Messiah.”

You will be brought to an understanding of the unique plan of redemption for mankind that God has orchestrated from the beginning of creation.

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