

ISRAEL

THE CHURCH

AND THE END TIMES



A FOUNDATION BUILDING STUDY GUIDE

Developed & Compiled By

JACK MICHAEL

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

A Foundation Building
Study Guide

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Jack Michael

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Israel, The Church, and The End Times

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ABOUT THE COVER

On the front and back cover is a photograph of the Eastern Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem (also known as the Golden Gate).

Ezekiel saw in a vision, the glory of God departing from the temple – by way of the East Gate (see Ezekiel 10:18-19). Shortly thereafter, the Babylonians destroyed the temple. In a later vision, Ezekiel saw the glory of God returning to a restored temple, also by way of the gate, which faces toward the east (see Ezekiel 43:1-5).

Furthermore, Ezekiel 44:1-3 states that the East Gate shall be shut, and remain shut, because the God of Israel has entered through it. However, those same verses speak of a Prince, who will be authorized to go in and out of the gate. Ezekiel 34:23-24 equates this Prince as being synonymous with King David. At this time in Bible history, David had been dead for a long time, so the reference to King David is clearly referring to a coming Messiah (see Luke 1:31-33).

Ezekiel's visions were partially fulfilled when the Jews returned from the captivity of Babylon, and rebuilt the temple, and also rebuilt the city walls.

In addition, because Ezekiel's visions referred to the Messiah, many prophetic teachers believe these visions also have a future fulfillment. Specifically, since the gate pictured is located just below The Temple Mount, and since the gate is sealed, it could possibly be the same gate associated with Ezekiel's visions, and the Lord Jesus Christ may enter this very gate when he returns to the earth.

Reportedly, when Muslims were building the Dome of the Rock (around 687 AD), they sealed the Eastern Gate because of Ezekiel's prophecy.

**Special thanks to David Jones for the photograph of the Eastern Gate.
Special thanks to Jimmy Pineda for the cover design.**

Introduction

Early in 1997, a longtime friend, Dr. Paul Kamanu called me from his church office in Hawaii. He said the Lord had spoken to him to take me to Israel. For a number of years, he had been leading tour groups to Israel.

To be honest, I had no desire to visit Israel. I was satisfied with the direction my ministry was headed. So, I told him: *"We will wait and see if the Lord provides the finances."* His answer eliminated my excuses: *"God not only told me to take you to Israel,"* he explained, *"He also told me to pay your way!"* Such blessings have a way of helping one make up his mind.

Even though I was really thankful for the blessing, during the months leading up to our departure, I was a big mouth. I told everybody I did not need to visit Israel. Of course, the trip would be beneficial; I would gain a greater historical, geographical, and cultural understanding of the Bible. However, I did not need to run over to Israel to have a spiritual encounter with God. After all, I had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, and the Spirit of God was already dwelling within me. Whatever spiritual experiences I needed, I could have wherever I happened to be, even in my own house. Israel was not important.

Well, so much for my boasting. When I returned from Israel, I had to repent. I had one of the most powerful spiritual experiences with the Lord of my entire life.

I will never forget my first morning in Israel. I arose very early, about 4:30 in the morning. I got dressed, quietly left my hotel room, and walked along the rocky shore of the Sea of Galilee. I broke down and wept like a baby. The presence of God was so real; it would not have surprised me if the Lord Jesus had come to me walking on the water. In fact, I was rather disappointed that he did not!

For several days my emotions were on edge; I cried and cried. I kept asking God what was wrong with me (or, what was right with me)? Before that time, I was not normally an emotional person. On the third day, the Lord spoke to me: *"The anointing of God, which already dwells within you, is being stirred up by walking where I walked."*

That initial trip to Israel forever changed my life. It set me on a quest to understand God's heart and plans for Israel, for Jerusalem, and for his original chosen people (the Jews, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). The Foundation Building Study Guide, which you now hold in your hands, is a product of that quest upon which the Lord God has placed me, perhaps for the remainder of my life.

But, this is not the end of the story. Read on...

When God called me to develop and compile this study guide, I felt very unqualified. Surely, there were numerous servants of God who were much more knowledgeable and qualified to write on the subject of Israel. Yet, when the Lord clearly confirmed the assignment in my heart, I said: *"Yes, I will obey."*

For more than four years, as I wrote, prayed, researched, and edited, the Holy Spirit continuously impressed upon me that I had been called to: **PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THE END TIMES.**

Therefore, on a regular basis (almost on a daily basis), I humbled myself before the Lord, and told him: *"I WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH."* I was willing to change what I believed about the End Times, if necessary, in order to be adjusted to the truth of his Word. I did not want to just restate what others have said; **I WANTED TO KNOW THE TRUTH!**

I prayed both a prayer of consecration, and a prayer of faith...

A PRAYER OF CONSECRATION – submitting myself to the Lord to write exactly what he wanted me to write; trusting in the promises of his eternal Word for guidance and direction:

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." (Psalm 32:8).

A PRAYER OF FAITH – trusting God by his Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth, as promised by the Lord Jesus:

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." (John 16:13).

I should alert you. The Lord was not hesitant to make many changes! Therefore, much of what is written in this study guide does not conform to longstanding church doctrines, and denominational beliefs about the End Times. Also, because of God's welcomed intervention, I did not succumb to the pressure of conforming to popular End Times themes.

Of course, I do not have exclusive rights to the truth of God's Word. Yet, upon my word, I did not compile this Foundation Building Study Guide from the standpoint of...

- ✓ My own personal agenda, or
- ✓ My own preferred End Times scenario.

As God is my witness, before whom I will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, I earnestly sought the Lord for truth. Then, I wrote exactly what I believe the Holy Spirit directed me to write!

I should continue to alert you. There are portions of this study guide that will undoubtedly offend Jews (those who do not yet understand that Jesus is the Messiah). Equally so, there are portions of the book that will likely offend Christians. Nevertheless, as previously stated, I earnestly, fervently, and regularly sought the Lord for truth. Then, I wrote exactly what I believe the Holy Spirit directed me to write.

I pray this study guide will help build a stronger foundation of God's Word into your life, and draw you closer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray the lessons contained herein will create in your heart – a love for Israel, and a love for God's original chosen people.

I especially pray the Spirit of God will use this book to help strengthen you to endure these End Times, in which we are now living!

For the sake of God's kingdom

Jack Michael

Special Instructions

1. This Foundation Building Study Guide has been designed to build a strong foundation of God's Word (the Bible) into the lives of Christians. In these End Times, it is essential for each individual believer to have a firm foundation of God's Word in his or her life. Jesus said:

"Therefore everyone WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE and PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its FOUNDATION on the rock." (Matthew 7:24-25 NIV).

2. This book was specifically designed to: LAY A FOUNDATION, rather than BUILD UPON A FOUNDATION. I fully expect teachers of God's Word to build upon the foundations I have laid. There are many other scriptures in the Bible on the subjects of Israel, The Church, and the End Times, which I was not able to include due to limited space. However, everyone building upon these foundations should heed the advice of the Apostle Paul:

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. But let each one TAKE HEED (be careful) how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

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 - b. Likewise, teachers or instructors may translate the lessons into other languages for the same purpose.
 - c. The lessons may not be copied, translated, or reproduced in any form for the purpose of resale.

4. This study guide is keyed to the New King James Version of the Bible. However, for purposes of clarity, I have also used scriptures from other translations, including: The Amplified Bible (AMP), New International Version (NIV), and the original King James Version (KJV). Also, I have tried to organize the material in such a manner that any legitimate translation of the Bible may be used.
5. Throughout this course of study, there are words or phrases enclosed in parentheses within a quoted portion of scripture. Although these words and phrases are not an actual part of the scriptures, they are in fact, explanations or emphases derived from scriptural word studies.
6. Some lessons may require one teaching session; others may require two or more sessions. Take your time! The purpose of this course of study is to build a strong foundation of God's word, regardless of the time required.

Definitions

Israel – The ancient nation, and the land, which the Lord promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Also, the nation, and the land, which God is restoring to his original chosen people during these End Times.

Jews – The word, JEW, is not a derogatory word. It was first applied to the children of Israel living in Judah – when Israel was divided into the southern kingdom of Judah, and the northern kingdom of Israel. After the Babylonian Captivity, all the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were referred to as Jews. This is especially evident in the New Testament.

The Church – Not a physical building, nor an institution, but God's redeemed people, regardless of church affiliation, or denominational affiliation. All who are born again by the Holy Spirit (including both Jews and Gentiles), because they have accepted Jesus as the Christ, and are trusting in his sacrifice upon the cross, and his shed blood for the remission of sins.

The End Times – The days leading up to, and including the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The days in which many sayings of the ancient prophets, writings of the New Testament apostles, and the words of Jesus himself are being fulfilled. The days in which we are now living.

The Restoration of Israel – A fulfillment of ancient Bible prophecies; a unique work, which the Lord is doing in these End Times, consisting of four distinct matters...

- 1) Re-gathering the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and bringing them back to the land of Israel.
- 2) Restoring to the original chosen people, all the land the Lord God promised to their fathers.
- 3) Turning the wilderness, or barren land into a fruitful field; restoring Israel once again into a land flowing with milk and honey.
- 4) Reviving the original chosen people, bringing them to a saving knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah, that they might enter into the New Covenant, which the Lord originally made with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.

Yeshua HaMashiach – Jesus the Messiah (also, Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Anointed One, or Jesus the Chosen One); a translation from the Hebrew language. The English word, JESUS, also of Hebrew origin, is a translation from the Greek.

Zion – Used in a variety of applications throughout the Old Testament. As examples, Zion is used to describe...

- The Temple, and the Temple Mount (see Psalm 74:2-3).
- The city of Jerusalem (see Psalm 87:1-3).
- All of Israel (see Isaiah 46:13).
- The children of Israel as the people of God (see Psalm 149:1-2).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

▪ Book One ▪

The End Times
Restoration of Israel

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO BOOK ONE

Perhaps nowhere in the Bible is the End Times Restoration of Israel so symbolically, yet graphically portrayed, than Ezekiel 37:1-14. In this portion of scripture, we see...

- The scattering of Israel throughout the whole earth in the form of disconnected, dry bones.
- A miraculous coming together, and reattaching of those bones, symbolic of the re-gathering of Israel.
- Sinews, flesh, and skin reappearing upon the bones, symbolic of a barren people, and a barren land being turned into a fruitful field.
- The breath of life being restored to God's original chosen people, symbolic of a spiritual revival.

“The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? So I answered, O Lord GOD, You know. Again He said to me, Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Then He said to me, Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

*Then He said to me, Son of man, **THESE BONES ARE THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.** They indeed say, Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off. Therefore prophecy and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it, says the LORD.” (Ezekiel 37:1-14).*

Israel, The Church, and The End Times (Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 1 – Scattered among the Nations

1. To Abraham, and to his descendants, the Lord promised all the land of Canaan (later renamed the land of Israel) as an everlasting possession:

“No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, ALL THE LAND OF CANAAN, AS AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION; and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:5-8).

- a. Pertaining to the land of Canaan (or, land of Israel), God reconfirmed his covenant with Abraham’s son, borne to him by his wife, Sarah. This son’s name was Isaac:

“Then the LORD appeared to him and said: Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; FOR TO YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS I GIVE ALL THESE LANDS, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” (Genesis 26:2-5).

- b. Pertaining to the land of Canaan (or, land of Israel), the Lord further confirmed his covenant with Isaac’s son, borne to him by his wife, Rebekah. This son’s name was Jacob:

“The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; AND TO YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU, I give this land.” (Genesis 35:12).

c. God changed Jacob's name, and changed his destiny:

“And God said to him, Your name is Jacob (supplanter, layer of snares), your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name. So He called his name Israel” (meaning – God prevails, prince with God, or he will rule as God). (Genesis 35:10).

2. During the days of Joseph, the children of Israel went down to Egypt because of famine in Canaan. They remained in Egypt for over 400 years, and became slaves of the Egyptians. Yet, even before Israel was born, God told his grandfather, Abraham, that his descendants would be strangers in a land that was not theirs, but promised they would return to the land of Canaan:

“Then He said to Abram (or, Abraham), Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation THEY SHALL RETURN HERE...” (Genesis 15:13-16).

3. After Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt – BEFORE JOSHUA LED THEM BACK INTO THE PROMISED LAND – God warned them of the possibility of being scattered throughout the earth:

“But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant ... I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.” (Leviticus 26:14-15, and verse 33).

“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you ... And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other...” (Deuteronomy 28:15, and from verses 63-64).

4. Periodically, because of their disobedience to God, the children of Israel were led away captive to other nations. Most notable were the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.
 - a. In 722-721 BC, Assyria defeated the 10 northern tribes of Israel, and many of God's chosen people were led away captive to Assyria (read about it in 2 Kings 17:5-23).
 - b. In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar defeated Jerusalem and Judah, and many of God's chosen people were led away captive to Babylon (read about it in 2 Kings 24:10 – 2 Kings 25:21, and Jeremiah 52:28-30).

Author's Notes:

There is no biblical account of Israel returning from the Assyrian captivity. Bible teachers often refer to those who were taken captive as the 10 lost tribes of Israel. However, in the Bible there is no mention of lost tribes.

Large numbers of Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity (read about it in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah). However, many Jews never returned to Jerusalem or Judah from the Babylonian captivity, and were also seemingly lost in history.

Using the word, LOST, to apply to those who did not return from captivity is actually erroneous. Nothing is ever lost to God. To this day, he knows who are the true descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Yet, the fact is, neither the Assyrian captivity, nor the Babylonian captivity resulted in THE ULTIMATE SCATTERING, which Moses warned about in Leviticus 26:33, and Deuteronomy 28:63-64 (← previous page).

The ultimate scattering, according to the word of the Lord through Moses, would be: **AMONG THE NATIONS - AMONG ALL PEOPLES - FROM ONE END OF THE EARTH TO THE OTHER.**

5. THE ULTIMATE SCATTERING.

- a. Less than 40 years after Jesus was crucified, the Jews revolted against Rome (who was ruling Israel). The Roman Army crushed the revolt, and in 70 AD, Titus (commander of the Roman Army) destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, and fulfilled the words of Jesus:

"...Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (from Matthew 24:2).

- b. Another Jewish revolt followed in 132 A.D., which was crushed by the Romans. In 135 A.D., the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, renamed Israel as Palestine (after Israel's ancient enemies, the Philistines). Thus, the Jews were literally scattered from one end of the earth to the other. This scattering is also known as the DIASPORA.
- c. The Diaspora was also directly attributable to Israel's rejection of Jesus. Almost 500 years before the birth of Christ, Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would be struck down, after which Israel would be scattered:

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion, says the LORD of hosts. STRIKE THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP WILL BE SCATTERED; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. And it shall come to pass in all the land, says the LORD, that TWO-THIRDS in it shall be cut off and die, but ONE-THIRD shall be left in it.” (Zechariah 13:7-8).

Author's Notes:

After the shepherd was struck (or, after Jesus was crucified), two-thirds of the Jews in Israel were cut off, and died. Many died in the revolts against Rome, but also, many were CUT OFF FROM THE LAND, and died in the nations to which they were scattered. Yet, one-third were left in the land. Since the days of Joshua, God has always reserved for himself, a remnant of his chosen people in the land.

- d. Jesus applied this prophecy from Zechariah to the scattering of his disciples (see Matthew 26:31). These additional warnings reveal that Jesus was also referring to all of Israel being scattered:

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, AND BE LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:20-24).

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said: If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, BECAUSE YOU DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE TIME OF GOD’S COMING TO YOU.” (Luke 19:41-44 NIV).

Author’s Notes:

After the resurrection of Jesus, and his obvious victory over those who had crucified him, the disciples asked an interesting question: *“Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying: Lord, will You at this time RESTORE THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?”* (Acts 1:6).

This was a valid question. Jesus had taught his disciples the Old Testament prophecies concerning himself (see Luke 24:44-45). Many such prophecies promised a NATIONAL RESTORATION of Israel, as well as a SPIRITUAL RESTORATION (see God’s promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:16. Also see Isaiah 9:6-7).

However, at this time, the followers of Jesus were not aware of the great scattering that was soon to take place in Israel, and did not understand that the Restoration of Israel was a very long time in the future. Thus, the Lord’s response to their question: *“...It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.”* (Acts 1:7).

6. GOD REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT.

- a. Through the ages, many Jews forgot the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Some even think the Old Testament is a book of Jewish mythology. But, **GOD DID NOT FORGET**, and in these End Times, the Lord is demonstrating his faithfulness by bringing his chosen people home again to Israel:

“He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying: To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance.” (Psalm 105:8-11 – also see 1 Chronicles 16:14-18)

Author's Notes:

As a matter of clarity about the previous scriptures (Psalm 105:8-11), it should be pointed out that the Old Testament contains more than one covenant between God and man. The covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, pertaining to **THE LAND** of Israel is an everlasting covenant.

However, as we will discover in future lessons, the covenant God made with Israel after he delivered them from the slavery of Egypt (atonement of sins through the blood of animal sacrifices), has been replaced with the New Covenant (remission of sins through the blood of Jesus).

7. FURTHER INSIGHT INTO THE TOPIC OF RESTORATION:

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21).

BIBLE DEFINITION: Restoration – To set in order, or to set back again into its former state.

- a. The **TIMES** of restoration obviously apply to the return of Jesus, when he will complete the work of restoration. Yet, many things are being restored now, in these End Times, as a prerequisite to his return. Please notice, the above scriptures promise...
 - THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS,
 - SPOKEN BY ALL OF GOD’S HOLY PROPHETS,
 - SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.
- b. Jesus not only came to save the world from sin; he also came to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs:

“For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs.” (Romans 15:8 NIV).

- c. As we will discover in coming lessons, the restoration of all things, and the confirmation of the promises made to the Patriarchs, also includes the **PHYSICAL** and **NATIONAL** restoration of Israel.

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 2 – Guidelines for Interpreting End Times Prophecy

Author's Notes

One could walk into almost any Christian bookstore, and discover numerous books on End Times prophecy. Strangely, many such books would contain differing viewpoints about the same events, which means some of the viewpoints could be truth, and some could be speculation.

There are certain events, pertaining to the End Times, which we will never figure out, nor fully understand until Jesus returns. Yet, there is much about the End Times that we can know, and unbeknown to many Christians, there are certain guidelines that can be discovered within the Bible, which will assist us with the interpretation, and understanding of End Times prophecy.

Such guidelines frequently apply to our subject of the Restoration of Israel, and periodically, throughout the pages of this Foundation Building Study Guide, we will see the reality of the following guidelines.

1. **GUIDELINE # 1** – Some prophecies are not FULLY REVEALED, until they are FULFILLED.

a. Wisdom from the Torah (books of the Law; first five books of the Bible):

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things WHICH ARE REVEALED belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

1) The above scripture fits perfectly with the response given by Jesus when his disciples questioned him about restoring the kingdom to Israel:

“...It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.” (Acts 1:7).

- b. However, once a prophecy is FULFILLED (or, begins to be fulfilled), and is therefore REVEALED, it belongs to us, and our children. Thereafter, we can include the fulfilled prophecy as a part of our doctrinal understanding.
- c. As an example, prior to the Day of Pentecost (that Day of Pentecost spoken of in Acts, chapter 2), there was probably much speculation about the words of Joel when he prophesied:

“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29).

- 1) However, when 120 disciples of Jesus Christ were baptized with the Holy Spirit on that day, and accused of being drunk, because they were speaking with tongues, Peter declared: *“...THIS IS WHAT WAS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET JOEL”* (see Acts 2:14-18). Thereafter, the prophecy was understood.
 - 2) The prophecy was now REVEALED, because it had been FULFILLED.
- d. Similarly, before May 14, 1948, Jewish Rabbis probably wondered about the interpretation of Isaiah 66:8:

“Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.” (NIV).

- 1) However, on that day, the nation of Israel was reborn in one day, after not being recognized as a nation for almost 2,000 years. Suddenly, the prophecy was understood.
- 2) The prophecy was now REVEALED, because it had been FULFILLED.

NOTE: The modern day nation of Israel was brought into existence by a 33 to 13 vote in the United Nations, but actually, by the hand of God.

2. GUIDELINE # 2 – Prophecy is sometimes fulfilled more than once; FULFILLED NOW, and FULFILLED LATER:

“That which is has already been, and what is to be has already been; and God requires an account of what is past.” (Ecclesiastes 3:15).

- a. Such prophecies are sometimes partially fulfilled, and then later, more fully fulfilled. As an example, when Judah was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, Jewish captives were detained at Ramah (a short distance north of Jerusalem) before being carried away to Babylon (see Jeremiah 40:1). Thus, the initial fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy:

“...A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.” (Jeremiah 31:15).

- 1) After the birth of Jesus (around 600 years later), Herod ordered the killing of all male children, two years old and under, in Bethlehem, and its districts (including Ramah). In his account of this tragic event, Matthew repeated Jeremiah’s prophecy:

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.” (Matthew 2:16-18).

2) Thus, the prophecy was FULFILLED TWICE.

- b. Looking at our subject, the Restoration of Israel, Jeremiah warned about Judah being carried away captive to Babylon:

“...I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword.” (from Jeremiah 20:4).

- 1) Then, he prophesied that Judah would return from captivity:

“Therefore behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, but, The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from THE LAND OF THE NORTH and from all the lands where He had driven them. For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.” (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

- 2) Later, Jeremiah repeated the same prophecy, but this time, he included the involvement of the Messiah (Jesus Christ):

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that they shall no longer say, As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, but, As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from THE NORTH COUNTRY and from ALL THE COUNTRIES where I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land.” (Jeremiah 23:5-8).

- 3) Thus, the prophecy was PARTIALLY FULFILLED as Judah returned from the captivity of Babylon, and is being FULLY FULFILLED during these current days of Israel’s restoration.

Author’s Notes:

From the above scriptures, Jeremiah prophesied that God’s chosen people would return from the NORTH COUNTRY, and from ALL THE COUNTRIES where the Lord had driven them.

At the time this study guide was published, according to reliable sources, well over 1,000,000 (one million) Jews had returned to Israel from Russia, and the nations that were formerly a part of the Soviet Union.

In addition, according to similar sources, it has been reported that Jews have returned to Israel from more than 100 nations of the earth. God is indeed fulfilling his Word in these End Times!

3. **GUIDELINE # 3** – Certain prophecies, after coming to pass, are thereafter CONTINUOUSLY FULFILLED.

- a. As an example, when the Lord Jesus was beginning his earthly ministry, Luke records the following events:

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE IS FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING.” (Luke 4:16-21).

- 1) When Jesus said: *“...Today this Scripture is fulfilled...”* he was not saying – This prophecy has come to pass, it is finished, let us move on to something else! Rather, he was saying: today this prophecy is PUT INTO OPERATION.
- 2) Through the Holy Spirit, a measure of the anointing that was upon Jesus is placed upon individual believers in Christ (see Acts 1:8 and John 14:12). Therefore, the gospel continues to be preached, the brokenhearted continue to be healed, and captives are continuously being set free.
- 3) Thus, the prophecy is being CONTINUOUSLY FULFILLED.

- b. Pertaining to our subject of Israel’s restoration, the Lord said:

“I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, NEVER AGAIN TO BE UPROOTED FROM THE LAND I HAVE GIVEN THEM, says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:14-15 NIV).

- 1) For well over a hundred years, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been returning to Israel...
 - ✓ They began to return prior to the rebirth of the modern day nation of Israel.
 - ✓ The return accelerated after the rebirth of the nation on May 14, 1948.
 - ✓ They continue to return despite wars with surrounding Arab nations, Palestinian uprisings, and numerous acts of terrorism against them.

- 2) Therefore, the prophecy by Amos (previous page ←) is being CONTINUOUSLY FULFILLED, because God says Israel will NEVER AGAIN be uprooted from the land.

4. **GUIDELINE # 4** – Sometimes prophecy is fulfilled over a long period of time, rather than being fulfilled quickly.

- a. As an example, approximately 700 years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet, Micah, declared the following:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah (Ephrathah – another name for Bethlehem, meaning fruitfulness), though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2).

- 1) Very likely, God’s People who were alive during the days of Micah thought this prophecy would be fulfilled immediately. Yet, it was nearly 700 years later before the Lord influenced the heart of an ungodly Roman Emperor to order a census, which required Joseph and Mary to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, just in time for Jesus to be born, and thus, fulfill the prophecy (see Luke 2:1-7).

- b. In another example, God sent the prophet, Samuel, to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, to anoint David (probably a teen-ager at the time) as King of Israel:

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.” (1 Samuel 16:13).

1) Yet, probably around 20 years passed before David reigned over all of Israel:

“David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.” (2 Samuel 5:4-5).

2) Thus, prophecy was fulfilled over a long period of time!

c. Pertaining to our subject, the Apostle Paul spoke about the End Times Restoration of Israel:

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:25-27).

Authors Notes:

Many Christians have an inaccurate view of the above scriptures, which say: *“...blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved...”* They view things in this manner...

- The last Gentile will be saved; The Church will be raptured.
- Immediately thereafter, the Restoration of Israel will begin.

However, the fulfilling of prophecy is not as simple as turning a page. Often, prophecy is fulfilled over a long period of time, and events are overlapping. As an example: The fullness of the Gentiles is still coming in (the Gospel is still being preached in all the world). Yet, at the time this book was published, the Restoration of Israel (as identified on page 10) had been underway for more than 100 years.

On a similar subject, Jesus said: *“...Jerusalem will be trampled (treated with insult, or contempt) by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”* (from Luke 21:24). Many prophetic teachers believe this prophecy began to be fulfilled during the 1967 six-day war, when Israel took control of Jerusalem. Yet, at the time this book was published, portions of Jerusalem (especially the Temple Mount) were still being trampled by Gentiles!

- d. CONCLUSIONS: Many prophecies pertaining to these End Times have already begun to be fulfilled. Yet, it may require many more years to completely fulfill all these prophecies. However, we are already living in: THE SET TIME TO FAVOR ZION, when God's focus is turning toward Israel:

"You will arise and have mercy on Zion; FOR THE TIME TO FAVOR HER, YES, THE SET TIME, HAS COME. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. FOR THE LORD SHALL BUILD UP ZION (or, rebuild Zion); He shall appear in His glory." (Psalm 102:13-16).

- 1) Thus, certain prophecies are fulfilled over A LONG PERIOD OF TIME!

5. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

Sometimes, Bible prophecy about future events seems to be OUT OF PLACE. The prophet will be speaking about current events, and suddenly, will begin to speak about future events.

As an example, in Isaiah, chapter 7, we find Syria (allied with Ephraim) coming against Judah. Isaiah was sent to prophesy to King Ahaz of Judah, that Syria would not prevail. In the midst of his prophecy, Isaiah began to prophesy about the birth of Jesus, which was more than 700 years in the future: *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."* (Isaiah 7:14).

I am convinced that the prophets often did not fully understand their own words, simply because they were prophesying by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, in this study guide, we will sometimes hear the prophets speaking about other matters, and then suddenly, they will begin to prophesy about the End Times Restoration of Israel.

The Bible was not always written in chronological order. In fact, with God there is no such thing as TIME. Yet, God's ways are perfect; he knew exactly where he wanted each prophecy inserted into his eternal Word: *"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him."* (Psalm 18:30 NIV).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 3 – Re-gathering God’s Original Chosen People (ALIYAH)

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“And in that day there shall be A ROOT OF JESSE (the Messiah, Jesus Christ), who shall stand as a banner to the people; FOR THE GENTILES SHALL SEEK HIM, and His resting place shall be glorious. It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” (Isaiah 11:10-12).

- a. The above scriptures identify a New Covenant timeframe, because the Messiah is involved, and Gentiles are included. Those verses reveal that God will: “...SET HIS HAND AGAIN THE SECOND TIME...” to assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, indicating a second great work of restoration on behalf of THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.
- b. The first great work of restoration was the Exodus, when the Lord delivered Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, and brought them back into the Promised Land. Among most religious Jews, the Exodus continues to be the most significant event in Jewish history. From that Old Testament book, we read:

“And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years – on that very same day – it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.” (Exodus 12:41-42).

- c. Yet, the days are coming, when the Exodus will cease to be the most significant event. Instead, the current re-gathering of God's chosen people will become the most significant event:

“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that they shall no longer say, As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, but, As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land.” (Jeremiah 23:7-8).

2. This re-gathering of the original chosen people, bringing them back into the land of Israel, has come to be known as the **ALIYAH**, which can be translated from the Hebrew as: *“GOING UP.”* In 2 Kings 4:8-10, ALIYAH was also used to describe the small upper chamber (or, prophet's quarters), which the Shunammite woman prepared for Elisha.

- a. Now, during these days of the End Times Restoration of Israel, ALIYAH is used to describe Israel's return from exile, going up to the land promised to their fathers.
- b. In Lesson One, we learned that after the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt – before they entered the Promised Land – he warned them of the danger of being scattered throughout the earth (the Diaspora). Likewise, the promise of ALIYAH was also given:

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.” (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).

3. God is doing an astounding work in these End Times. He who scattered Israel because of their disobedience is now remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is re-gathering his chosen people, and fulfilling the words of the ancient prophets:

“For thus says the LORD: Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel! Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth ... a great throng shall return there.” (Jeremiah 31:7-8).

“But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” (Ezekiel 36:8-11 NIV).

“I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:14-15 NIV).

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east (the rising sun) and from the land of the west (the setting sun); I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.” (Zechariah 8:7-8).

- a. God’s chosen people are returning to Israel from even the most distant, remote, and unknown regions of the world:

“Surely these shall come from afar; look! Those from the north and the west, and these from THE LAND OF SINIM.” (Isaiah 49:12).

NOTE: Some Hebrew study helps identify SINIM as southern China; also the southern most extremities of the world. Isaiah 11:12 reminds us that God’s chosen people will return from the four corners of the earth.

4. QUESTION: Must every Jewish person in the world participate in the ALIYAH, and return to Israel?

- a. God's plans and purposes are for all the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to return to the land of their fathers:

"I will multiply men upon you, ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, ALL OF IT; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 36:10-11).

"Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL; and I will be jealous for My holy name." (Ezekiel 39:25).

- b. However, from the scriptures, we also know the original chosen people can sometimes be stubborn. Therefore, they may not all be obedient to the moving of God's Holy Spirit in these last days:

"And the LORD said to Moses, I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!" (Exodus 32:9).

"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you." (Acts 7:51).

- c. But, according to the scriptures, every Jewish person in the earth will at least have the opportunity to return. Through the mouth of Isaiah, the Lord says:

"Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the EAST, and gather you from the WEST; I will say to the NORTH, give them up! And to the SOUTH, do not keep them back! Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 43:5-6).

- d. Even if all the chosen people do not return to Israel, there is one category of Jewish people that will definitely all return – those who live in what can be categorized as THE ENEMIES' LANDS ➤

“When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of THEIR ENEMIES’ LANDS, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and LEFT NONE OF THEM CAPTIVE any longer.” (Ezekiel 39:27-28).

Author’s Notes:

Apparently, the world did not learn a sufficient lesson from the Holocaust. At the time this study guide was published, anti-Semitism (hatred of Jews) was on the rise throughout the world, especially in Russia, and Europe.

Be assured that the ALIYAH will not be stopped by this evil spirit of anti-Semitism. Let’s recall the words of Joseph (as he reassured his brothers who had sold him into slavery): *“...as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.” (Genesis 50:20).* If necessary, the Lord will fulfill the words of Joseph for a second time. The very anti-Semitism Satan stirs up against the Jews, God will use to nudge the chosen people toward ALIYAH.

Indeed, if anti-Semitism continues to increase in these End Times, there may come a time when Israel is the only place on the earth where Jews can find a refuge; the only nation which will not be categorized as the Enemies’ Lands.

5. The ALIYAH will not be selective; it will not be limited to the strong, the healthy, the wealthy, and the wise:

“See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return.” (Jeremiah 31:8 NIV).

“In that day, says the LORD, I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever.” (Micah 4:6-7).

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.” (Zechariah 8:4-5)

6. The re-gathering of Israel is not just the nationalistic reestablishing of an exiled people. It is part of GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION:

*“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU** (this identifies a New Covenant revival – see 1 Corinthians 3:16) and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).*

7. The ALIYAH is a sign of the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ:

*“When the LORD shall **BUILD UP ZION** (or, rebuild Zion), he shall appear in his glory.” (Psalm 102:16 KJV).*

- 1) The word, APPEAR, in the above scripture literally means: “to see,” or “to gaze at,” agreeing with Revelation 1:7 that EVERY EYE will see the return of Jesus.

Author's Notes:

When the modern day nation of Israel was reborn on May 14, 1948, there were an estimated 600,000 (six hundred thousand) Jews in The Holy Land. At the time this study guide was published, the Jewish population in Israel had exceeded 5,000,000 (five million), and they are still returning.

Some Christians are concerned about whether the ALIYAH must be totally completed prior to the second coming of Jesus? Of course, they are hoping for a sooner return of the Lord, rather than a later return!

I do not know the answer. Perhaps Jesus will return, and the ALIYAH will continue into his Millennial Reign. Regardless, be assured that God is in control. He will complete the re-gathering of his original chosen people in his timing, and according to his purposes. In Isaiah 46:10-11, the Lord says:

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.” (NIV).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 4 – The Error of Dispensational Theology

1. The Apostle Paul wrote these foundation building words to Timothy, but the Holy Spirit is also speaking to The Church throughout the ages:

“What you heard from me, KEEP AS THE PATTERN OF SOUND TEACHING, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 1:13 NIV).

Author's Notes:

Gradually, God's People are changing; yet, at the time this study guide was published, the following statements were definitely applicable...

- Many born again Christians are unaware of the End Times work of God known as the Restoration of Israel.
- Others are vaguely aware of these matters, but their church is involved in other things, so there is no urgency about Israel.
- Some, because of incorrect teaching, do not see any spiritual significance to what is happening in Israel, neither do they believe God is involved.
- Strangely, some who call themselves by the name of Christ still have an anti-Semitic attitude (hatred against Jews), and are vocally anti-Israel.

Although wrong, such attitudes are understandable. For nearly 2,000 years (since the birth of The Church), the prophecies pertaining to Israel's restoration were lying dormant within the Bible, waiting for THE SET TIME to favor Zion (see Psalm 102:13-16). Nothing was happening in The Holy Land; therefore, The Church created doctrines that placed Israel's restoration far into the distant future - also known as Dispensational Theology. Or, they established doctrines that excluded Israel altogether - also known as Replacement Theology.

Now, however, the Restoration of Israel has begun. The prophecies are no longer dormant. God is remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, it has become necessary to deal with these errors in The Church, and correct them in light of God's eternal Word.

2. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

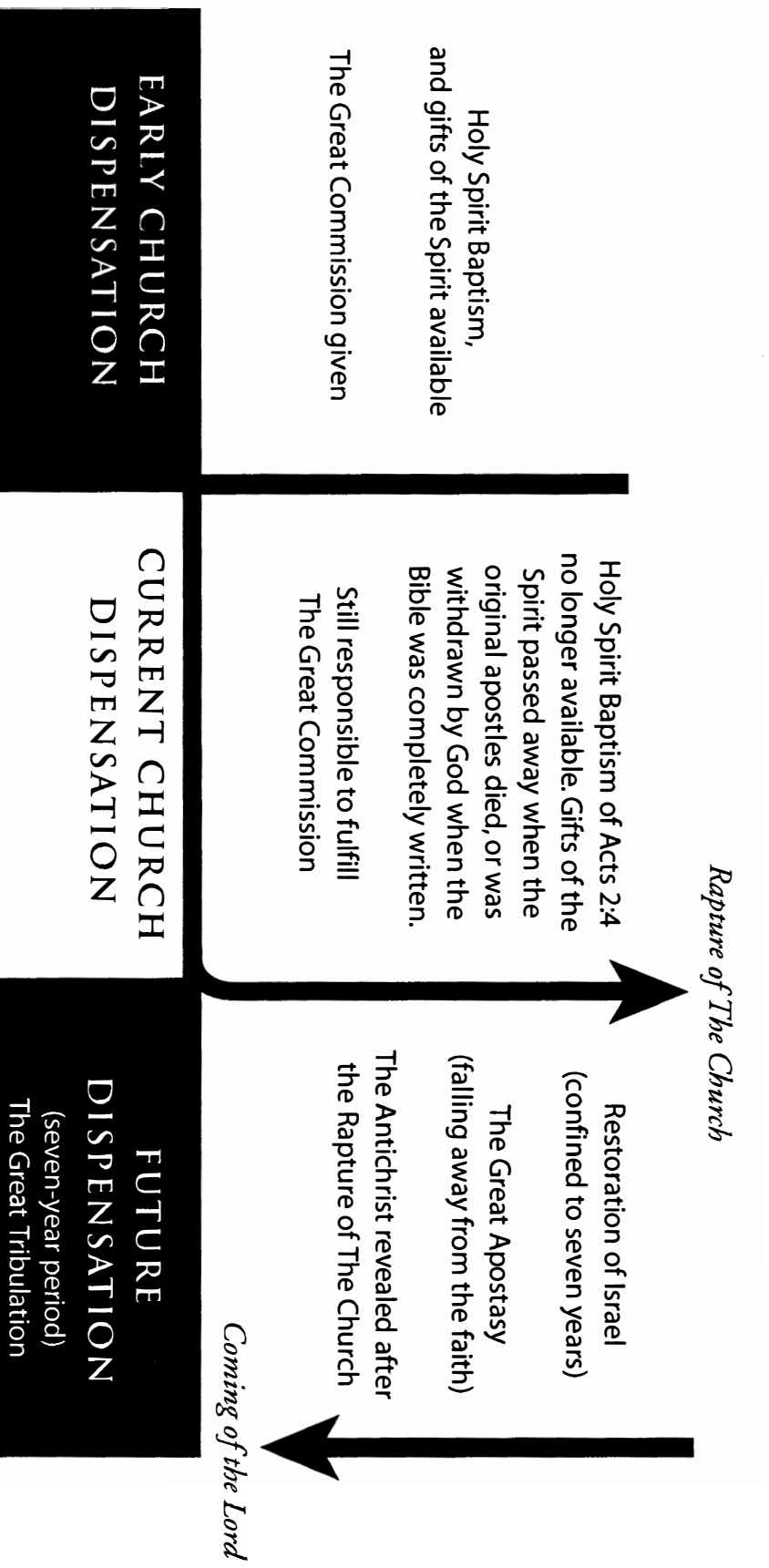
- a. I grew up in a church that believed in Dispensational Theology. This word, DISPENSATION, is found only four times in the Bible (King James Version), all in the epistles of Paul. The word literally means: *“Management of a household,”* and pertains to stewardship. Paul used this word to speak of the responsibility entrusted to him to preach the Gospel:

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.” (1 Corinthians 9:16-17 KJV).

- 1) In the New King James Version, STEWARDSHIP (the more accurate word) is used instead of dispensation:

“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.”

- b. Despite the clear definition of this word, we were taught a theology of dispensations, which DIVIDED CHURCH HISTORY into periods of time. I remember being taught that God worked a certain way in past dispensations, but he was working in a different manner in the current dispensation. Furthermore, we were taught that certain prophetic events would not occur until a future dispensation.
- c. This is how we rejected the experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit (especially such spiritual gifts as praying in unknown tongues, and healing, and miracles). We erroneously believed that such manifestations were limited to a so-called Early Church Dispensation, and were no longer needed, nor available in the Current Church Dispensation.
- d. Although Dispensational Theology probably varies from church to church, from denomination to denomination, and from Bible school to Bible school; in my childhood church, Dispensational Theology basically resembled the following illustration →



Author's Notes:

Concerning the experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit (refer to Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:8, and Acts 2:1-4), in my childhood church we were taught that such experiences were necessary in the Early Church Dispensation, because the Bible was not completely written. Supposedly, after the Bible was completely written, and the last of the original apostles died, such experiences either passed away, or were withdrawn by God. Furthermore, since such experiences were no longer valid in the Current Church Dispensation, any manifestations of spiritual gifts (especially speaking in tongues, or healing, or miracles) were false, and were from the devil.

We now know these dispensational doctrines are incorrect. In my lifetime, The Church has experienced what has been called The Charismatic Renewal, and millions of believers worldwide have been baptized with the Holy Spirit in the same manner as those early Christians in the book of Acts.

3. THE ERROR OF DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY – PERTAINING TO THE END TIMES RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

- a. In my childhood church, we were also taught that the Restoration of Israel would not occur until a FUTURE DISPENSATION. This future dispensation was a seven-year period known as The Great Tribulation, which would begin after a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of The Church. During this time of tribulation, the Lord would give the Jews a second chance to accept Jesus. Therefore, whatever happened in Israel prior to the Rapture of The Church was of no spiritual significance; neither was God involved.
- b. We were also taught that those Jews who accepted Jesus during the Tribulation would have to pay a terrible price. They would be beheaded by the Antichrist. Indeed, some Christians will become martyrs during the Tribulation (see Revelation 20:4), but there is no scriptural evidence that martyrdom will be limited to Jews only!
- c. Because of these erroneous doctrines, I developed an inaccurate mentality about God's dealings with his chosen people. The Jews who accepted Jesus during The Great Tribulation would be sort of SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS in Heaven; whereas, The Church, who reportedly would be taken in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, would be the more favored of God.

- d. I now understand that Dispensational Theology has no scriptural foundation, and is therefore incorrect. In fact, Israel's restoration has long since begun, and The Church has not been raptured. As previously defined (see page 10), Israel's restoration includes...
 - 1) Re-gathering the original chosen people, and bringing them back into the land of Israel,
 - 2) Restoring the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
 - 3) Turning the wilderness (or, barren land) into a fruitful field,
 - 4) And, spiritually reviving God's chosen people, bringing them into the New Covenant.

4. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

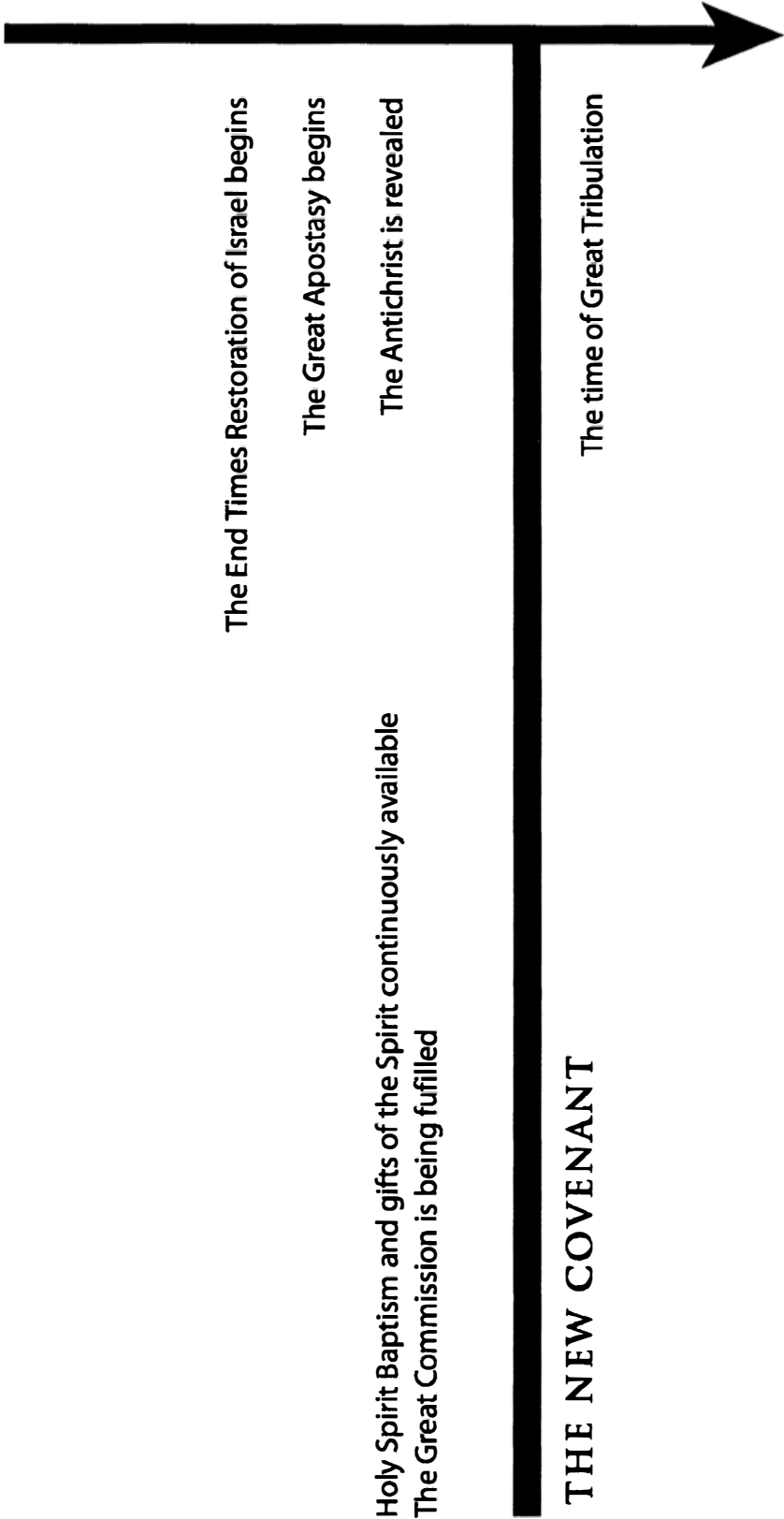
- a. The Lord Jesus never taught a theology of dispensations, such as is taught in many of today's churches and theological seminaries; neither did any of his apostles!
- b. As stated in 2 Timothy 1:13 (first page of this lesson), Paul instructed Timothy (and, the Holy Spirit is also instructing The Church): "**WHAT YOU HEARD FROM ME, KEEP AS THE PATTERN OF SOUND TEACHING....**" The Apostle Paul did not teach Dispensational Theology!
- c. Dispensational Theology was erroneously created by man. Such doctrines inaccurately compartmentalize God, and limit his power. Therefore, they are a violation of 2 Peter 1:20-21:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any PRIVATE INTERPRETATION, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Author's Notes:

In this lesson, we have focused on the error of Dispensational Theology as it pertains to the work of the Holy Spirit, and the End Times Restoration of Israel. In future lessons, we will take a closer look at erroneous dispensational doctrines as they pertain to: (1) The Great Apostasy, (2) The revealing of the Antichrist, and (3) The Second Coming of Jesus.

On the following page is a revision of the illustration that appeared earlier in this lesson. This revised illustration gives us a more TRUTHFUL and ACCURATE look at the events leading up to the return of Jesus →



The End Times Restoration of Israel begins

The Great Apostasy begins

Holy Spirit Baptism and gifts of the Spirit continuously available
The Great Commission is being fulfilled

The Antichrist is revealed

THE NEW COVENANT

The time of Great Tribulation

*The Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ
and our gathering together to Him*

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 5 – The Error of Replacement Theology

1. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

- a. Initially, the covenants and promises of God were to Israel:

“...Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” (Romans 9:4-5).

- b. Yet, Israel as a nation rejected Jesus as the Messiah, prompting Jesus himself to say:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! SEE! YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT TO YOU DESOLATE.” (Matthew 23:37-38).

- c. This has caused some in The Church to develop a doctrine called REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY. Such teaching purports that the covenants and promises of God now pertain only to Christians, and no longer to Israel as a nation, and no longer to the Jews as God’s chosen people.

- d. It is true that Gentiles who accept Jesus Christ enter into covenant with God, inherit his promises, and become his chosen people:

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE, BUT ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

2. KEY QUESTIONS: Has the Lord forever cast off Israel? Has he forever discarded his original chosen people?

- a. Listen as the Lord warns the children of Israel about the Diaspora (the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the earth), but then listen to what God says about **THE LATTER DAYS**:

*“And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you **IN THE LATTER DAYS**, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), **HE WILL NOT FORSAKE YOU, NOR DESTROY YOU, NOR FORGET THE COVENANT OF YOUR FATHERS** which He swore to them.” (Deuteronomy 4:27-31).*

- b. Isaiah also prophesied that God would not forget Israel:

*“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions, and said to you: You are My servant, **I HAVE CHOSEN YOU and HAVE NOT CAST YOU AWAY.**” (Isaiah 41:8-9).*

*“But Zion said, The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me. Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet **I WILL NOT FORGET YOU.** See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.” (Isaiah 49:14-16).*

- c. The Apostle Paul confirms the words of the prophets:

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin ... And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sin.” (Romans 11:1, 26-27).

3. THE GIFTS AND THE CALLING OF GOD:

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:29).

Author’s Notes:

Christians often use the above scripture to emphasize that once God calls someone into the ministry, they are forever called. Even if a minister falls into sin, they can repent, and be restored again to their office of ministry.

I believe this is an acceptable application (see Galatians 6:1). However, when the Apostle Paul originally wrote those words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they applied to Israel as a nation, and to the Jews as God’s chosen people. Once God selected Israel as his chosen people, they were forever chosen.

- a. From the Lord’s viewpoint, Israel has always been a nation. The establishing of the modern State of Israel (May 14, 1948) was not the birth of a nation, but the RESTORATION of a nation:

“This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar – the LORD Almighty is his name: Only if these decrees vanish from my sight, declares the LORD, will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.” (Jeremiah 31:35-36 NIV).

4. WHO KILLED JESUS CHRIST?

- a. For almost 2,000 years, the Jewish people have been unfairly labeled as Christ-killers, as if every individual Jew in the world – from generation to generation – is personally responsible for the crucifixion. Such attitudes have caused Replacement Theology to flourish in many Christian circles.
- b. Those propagating such attitudes forget that the early church was comprised almost entirely of Jews. It was those Jewish Christians who obeyed The Great Commission, and brought the Gospel to the Gentiles!
- c. At the same time, over the years, many Jews have developed a strong mistrust of Christians, thinking we blame all of them for crucifying Jesus.

- d. SO, WHO KILLED JESUS CHRIST? From a physical standpoint, both Jews and Gentiles killed the only begotten Son of God. The scriptures reveal the following:

“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both HEROD (who was part Jewish) and PONTIUS PILATE (who was Gentile), with the GENTILES and the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.” (Acts 4:27-28).

- e. However, the true answer is spiritual. Jesus purposely laid down his life, offered himself as a sacrifice (for both Jews and Gentiles), and shed his blood for the remission of our sins:

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep ... NO ONE TAKES IT FROM ME, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” (John 10:11, 18).

5. In these End Times, because his mercy endures forever, and because the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable, the Lord is remembering his covenant with Israel:

“He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying: To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance.” (Psalm 105:8-11).

- a. God is re-gathering his original chosen people from the ends of the earth, and bringing them home again to Israel:

“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I WILL GATHER YOU. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer.” (Isaiah 54:7-8).

- b. As the following scriptures reveal, the Lord is bringing his chosen people home for the purpose of redeeming them ➤

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU (identifying a New Covenant revival) and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

6. GOD’S WARNING TO THE CHURCH:

“And if some of the branches were broken off (speaking of unbelieving Jews), and you (believing Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, DO NOT BOAST AGAINST THE BRANCHES (the natural branches – the Jews). But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Romans 11:17-18).

- a. What is boasting against the branches? The attitude that Gentile Christians (and, a few Jews who mysteriously found The Church) are now exclusively God’s People, and God has discarded Israel.

“You will say then, Branches were broken off (unbelieving Jews) that I (believing Gentiles) might be grafted in. Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.” (Romans 11:19-20).

- b. Heed the warning:

“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.” (Romans 11:21-22).

- c. Consider the wisdom of Gamaliel, as the Jewish religious leaders were intending to kill the apostles to prevent them from preaching in the name of the Lord Jesus (see scriptures, next page →):

“Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it – LEST YOU EVEN BE FOUND TO FIGHT AGAINST GOD.” (Acts 5:34-39).

- d. Likewise, as God continues Israel’s restoration in these End Times, those who hold to Replacement Theology will be in a dangerous place. Why? They will even be found to fight against God!
- e. God has already begun that process of grafting his original chosen people back into The Olive Tree, and as we continue in these End Times, that process will accelerate:

“And they also (the Jewish people), if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you (Gentiles) were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” (Romans 11:23-24).

7. USING SOURCES OTHER THAN THE BIBLE AS OUR AUTHORITY.

Author’s Notes:

I once wrote the head of a large international ministry to question the anti-Israel comments in some of his literature. I asked if he believed in the current, on-going Restoration of Israel, Dispensational Theology, or Replacement Theology? He telephoned to explain that he did not believe in any of my choices. Instead, he began to unfold an elaborate explanation as to why there are no Jews today.

Author’s notes continue ➤

Some, he explained, became Christians during the period of the early church. Many were killed in the Jewish revolts against Rome in 70 AD and 132 AD. Others, he insisted, followed Mohammed and became Muslims.

Modern day Israel, he continued, was founded by the descendants of a tribe in Southern Russia - the Ashkenazi - who were not biologically related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Consequently, he concluded, there are no genuine Jews today.

He was diligent to explain the sources he used to arrive at such conclusions. THE BIBLE WAS NOT ONE OF HIS SOURCES.

Finally, this minister of the Gospel emphasized: *"Whatever is happening in Israel today is of no spiritual significance to The Church."*

During this one-sided conversation, I was silently praying, asking God for a biblical reply. The Holy Spirit quickly answered from Matthew 23:39, where Jesus said to the Jews: *"...you will not see me again until you say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."* (NIV).

If there are no Jews - no descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - who will say these words when Jesus returns?

Unfortunately, I never got to share what the Holy Spirit said to me. After this minister finished his elaborate explanation, he said: *"It has been nice talking to you,"* and then, he hung up!

- a. Upon further investigation, I discovered that Jews who immigrated to Israel from Northern and Eastern Europe are indeed known as Ashkenazim. However, I also discovered the following...
 - Israelis whose ancestors lived in Spain until they were driven out in 1492 are called the Sephardim.
 - Israelis who emigrated from Yemen, a small country on the Arabian Peninsula, are known as the Taymanim.
 - Israelis who came to Israel from North African Arab countries are known as the Edut Ha-Mizrach.
 - Black Jews, who emigrated from Ethiopia, are known as the Falasha, or Beta Israel.
 - And, there are other groups of Israelis, with distinct cultures, who immigrated to Israel from other regions of the world.

- b. Perhaps some who immigrate to Israel are not biologically related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, to say there are no Jews today is to deny the scriptures. In the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel prophesied to THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL regarding these End Times in which we are now living (see scriptures, next page →):

“Son of man, these bones are THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. They say: Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off. Therefore prophesy and say to them: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU (identifying a New Covenant revival) and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.” (Ezekiel 37:11-14 NIV).

8. In conclusion, let us recall the words spoken by the Apostle Paul to his spiritual son, Timothy:

“What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 1:13 NIV).

1) Paul did not teach Replacement Theology!

9. A WORD FROM THE HEART OF GOD.

Author's Notes:

These days - in their conversations, in their sermons, in their songs - I hear many Christians declaring: *“I want to be more like Jesus.”*

In the process of preparing this lesson, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to me to remind his people of the following scriptures:

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, HE WEPT OVER IT and said: If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.” (Luke 19:41-44 NIV).

The Spirit of Christ then instructed me to ask this question to his redeemed people: *“Have you ever wept over Jerusalem?”* And, from the above scriptures, he said to me: *“I HAVE.”*

Then, the Lord Jesus said to ask his people a further question: *“Do you truly want to be more like me?”*

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 6 – Restoring the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, ALL THE LAND OF CANAAN, AS AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION; and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:5-8).

2. **KEY EMPHASIS:** All the land of Canaan – later renamed Israel – was promised by God to...

- Abraham’s descendants through Isaac (his son by Sarah, his wife),
- Not to Abraham’s descendants through Ishmael (his son by Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian maid).

- a. In temporary unbelief, because he was old, Abraham asked that the blessing of the land might pass to Ishmael:

“Then God said to Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her. Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart: Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? And Abraham said to God, Oh, that Ishmael might live before You! Then God said: No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.” (Genesis 17:15-19).

b. For Abraham's sake, God also promised to bless Ishmael:

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation." (Genesis 17:20).

1) Ishmael settled in the land of Paran (south of Canaan):

"He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt." (Genesis 21:21).

2) God did indeed bless Ishmael. He is the father of the Arab race of people. Some lands they now possess are – Algeria, Bahrain, Dubai, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

c. But, Isaac remained in the land of Canaan:

"Then the LORD appeared to him and said: Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Genesis 26:2-5).

3. God's promise of the land of Canaan was then repeated to Isaac's son, Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel):

"Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: I am the LORD God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants." (Genesis 28:10-13).

a. Jacob renamed the place upon which he dreamed as BETHEL:

“Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel (meaning house of God), but the name of that city had been Luz previously.” (Genesis 28:18-19).

NOTE: Today, the location of ancient Bethel would be in the disputed area known as The West Bank. Regardless, according to the Bible, this is part of the land God promised to the descendants of Israel.

4. Later, the children of Israel (not the children of Ishmael) went down to Egypt, and sojourned there in a time of famine during the days of Joseph. Just as God had promised Abraham, they were delivered from the slavery of Egypt, and returned to the land promised to his descendants:

“Then He (the Lord) said to Abram: Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation THEY SHALL RETURN HERE...” (Genesis 15:13-16).

5. SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS.

a. As we learned in Lesson One, after the children of Israel returned to the Promised Land, they periodically went into captivity because they disobeyed God. Eventually, they were scattered to the ends of the earth, because they rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

b. However, in these End Times, God is remembering (acting upon) his everlasting covenant. He is re-gathering the children of Israel, and bringing them home again to the land promised to their fathers:

“He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance, when they were few in number, indeed very few, and strangers in it.” (Psalm 105:8-12).

6. THE BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL; QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

- a. At the time this study guide was published, Israel was a very small country (some have compared the size of Israel to the state of New Jersey; others have compared the size to Delaware). If all the Jews in the world return to Israel, where will they put all the people?

Author's Notes:

What is the worldwide Jewish population? The numbers differ according to various sources. Some sources place the number as low as 13 million, while other sources place the number as high as 18 million.

Sometimes, the question arises as to whether those who are half Jewish, or a quarter Jewish, qualify to return to Israel? I have been told by a reliable source that in order to qualify for Aliyah, one must have a grandparent who is Jewish. The Israeli Government established this standard, because this was the criterion used by Hitler to determine who was to be exterminated during the Holocaust.

But, the question is: What are God's standards? Regardless of the memories and emotions, which are still associated with the Holocaust, we must keep in mind that Israel's restoration is a work of the Lord God of Israel. God is not puzzled about who are the true descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is calling THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL back to the land of their fathers, and those who are qualified will hear, and they will come!

- b. In these End Times, there is a great political dispute over the land. What belongs to the Jews? What belongs to the Arabs (those who call themselves Palestinians)? Yet, the most important question is...
 - **According to God's Word (the Bible), what is the extent of the land originally promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their descendants?**
- c. The land God promised to Abraham is considerably larger than the disputed borders of modern day Israel. The land promised by God extended NORTH to the Euphrates River:

"On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt (a brook on the southern boundary of Israel) to the great river, THE RIVER EUPHRATES." (Genesis 15:18).

d. These boundaries were repeated to Moses:

“I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines (the Mediterranean), and from the desert to the River (Euphrates River). I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you.” (Exodus 23:31 NIV).

e. The NORTHERN BOUNDARIES are further identified in Numbers 34:7-9 as the entrance to Hamath. Today, the area that was once known as Hamath is located in northwestern Syria:

“And this shall be your northern border: From the Great Sea you shall mark out your border line to Mount Hor; from Mount Hor you shall mark out your border to THE ENTRANCE OF HAMATH; then the direction of the border shall be toward Zedad; the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and it shall end at Hazar Enan. This shall be your northern border.”

f. The above verse from Exodus 23:31 also identifies the territory of the Philistines (on the southwest coast of Canaan). Today, this territory is known as THE GAZA STRIP, which is occupied by Palestinians. Nevertheless, this is also part of the land God promised to Israel:

“This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families ... Ashdod with its towns and villages, GAZA with its towns and villages – as far as the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with its coastline.” (Joshua 15:20, 47).

Author's Notes:

As the children of Israel were preparing to enter into the Promised Land, Moses allowed the tribes of Reuben, and Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh, to settle on the EASTERN side of the Jordan River (see Numbers 34:14-15).

Although this territory was not a part of Canaan - which the Lord originally promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - some prophetic teachers believe God will eventually restore this land to Israel, as a part of their End Times Restoration. We will leave this matter in God's hands.

A complete description of Israel's boundaries appears in Numbers 34:1-12. Certain places may not be easily identifiable on today's maps, but be assured that God is well aware of the boundaries, for it was he who established them!

- g. As previously revealed, the territory known as THE WEST BANK is also part of the land God originally promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the Bible, this area is known as Judea and Samaria. These territories were allotted to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Israel's history cannot be denied in this area. These lands include...
- ✓ Hebron – where Abraham lived,
 - ✓ Shechem – the location of Jacob's well,
 - ✓ Jericho – conquered by Joshua, and the children of Israel,
 - ✓ Shiloh – ancient site of the Tabernacle, and
 - ✓ Bethlehem – where David lived, and where Jesus was born.
- h. When Joshua was old, the Lord emphasized to him that there was still much land to be conquered. Please read Joshua, chapter 13 in its entirety, but note verse 5 below:

"The land of the Gebalites, AND ALL LEBANON, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath."

Author's Notes:

At the time this study guide was published, as clearly revealed in this lesson, the modern state of Israel was significantly smaller than the land God promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The land promised by God included both The Gaza Strip and The West Bank, and extended northward into Syria as far as the Euphrates River, and included all of Lebanon. To declare such boundaries in these End Times would create a "Firestorm" of opposition, if not outright warfare. Yet, the fact remains that God promised all these lands to Israel.

Since the restoration of Israel as a nation (May 14, 1948), God has been slowly restoring the land. Yet, much to the frustration of many Bible believing Jews and Christians, the Israeli Government has given away some of the land in an effort to obtain peace with the Palestinians. Such actions remind us of certain politicians in the Old Testament (kings of Israel, kings of Judah), who disregarded the Word of the Lord. Likewise, in these End Times, there may sometimes be a great difference between what God is doing in Israel, and what the politicians are doing!

Nevertheless, the Lord will ultimately fulfill his Word, regardless of politics. Isaiah describes God's capabilities: *"You have enlarged the nation, O Lord; you have enlarged the nation. You have gained glory for yourself; you have extended all the borders of the land."* (Isaiah 26:15 NIV).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 7 – The Wilderness is becoming a Fruitful Field

1. FOUNDATIONAL BACKGROUND.

- a. When God delivered the children of Israel from the bondage and slavery of Egypt, he promised to bring them back to a land flowing with milk and honey:

“Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Deuteronomy 26:15).

BIBLE DEFINITIONS: Milk and Honey – In the Bible, milk is symbolically used to depict abundance. Milk can also depict fertility, thus an increase in both humans and animals. Honey can literally refer to honey from bees, or syrup made from grapes and dates. Joined together, milk and honey symbolically pertain to delicacies provided by nature.

- b. In Deuteronomy, chapter 28, God stated the blessings that would come upon his chosen people if they obeyed him. Some of those blessings pertained to the land:

“The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand...” (from Deuteronomy 28:12).

- c. But, the Lord also warned of curses that would come upon the land if they disobeyed him:

“And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.” (Deuteronomy 28:23-24).

- d. In the late 1800's, when the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob began returning to the Holy Land, after almost 2000 years of exile, indeed, they found it as Moses had prophesied...
 - A desolate wasteland with scarcely a tree in sight, barren of rain, scorching sun, rocky soil, mosquito infested swamps, and AN ABUNDANCE OF DUST.
- e. However, a change was soon to come. Isaiah prophesied about the days of Israel's restoration, when Jerusalem would become a praise in all the earth. In that same portion of scripture, he also prophesied about the land:

“You (Jerusalem) shall no longer be termed forsaken, nor shall YOUR LAND any more be termed desolate; but you (Jerusalem) shall be called Hephzibah (God's delight is in her), and YOUR LAND Beulah (married, thus ruled over), for the LORD delights in you, and YOUR LAND shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” (Isaiah 62:4-5).

- 2. Closely associated with the Aliyah, and restoring the land God promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the REPLANTING and REBUILDING of the land. This is equally a fulfillment of End Times prophecy, and as a result, Israel is once again becoming a land flowing with milk and honey:

“I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:14-15 NIV – also see Ezekiel 36:8-11).

- a. Of even greater significance than simply replanting and rebuilding, turning Israel once again into a land flowing with milk and honey, is the fact that the rebuilding of Israel is a sign of the End Times, pointing to the soon return of Jesus Christ:

“When the LORD shall BUILD UP ZION (or, rebuild Zion), he shall appear in his glory.” (Psalm 102:16 KJV).

3. SIGNS OF ISRAEL'S PROMISED PROSPERITY.

a. The trees of the field:

“Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.” (Isaiah 32:15).

- 1) Reportedly, when the Ottoman Turks ruled the Holy Land for 400 years (1517-1917), one criterion for levying taxes was the number of live trees on a piece of property. Therefore, the people cut down the trees to avoid paying taxes, eventually leaving Israel as a barren wasteland.
- 2) Exact figures are not available, because reforesting the land is an ongoing project, but at the time this study guide was published, an estimated 300 million trees had been planted in Israel since the rebirth of that nation on May 14, 1948.

b. The desert shall blossom:

“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing...” (from Isaiah 35:1-2).

- 1) Again, exact figures are unavailable, and ever increasing, but reportedly, Israeli farmers are growing billions of flowers annually, many in the Negev desert, and exporting them to many countries.

c. Filling the earth with fruit:

“In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.” (Isaiah 27:6 NIV – also see Ezekiel 36:30).

- 1) A great variety of fruits and vegetables are grown in Israel, and each year, hundreds of thousands of tons are exported to many countries. However, the greatest days of exporting fruit are yet to come, for the above verse says Israel will fill **ALL THE WORLD** with fruit!

Author's Notes:

No doubt, the previous verse also has a spiritual application. The Messiah came forth from Israel, and his disciples have preached the gospel throughout the world, filling the earth with spiritual fruit.

However, during these days of Israel's restoration, it has become evident that this scripture is also being literally fulfilled. During my trips to Israel, I have been extremely impressed with the abundance of fruits and vegetables, much of which is grown on land that was once desolate. The Israelis have been very industrious in draining swamps, reclaiming barren land, and turning literal rock piles into fertile ground that now yields produce in abundance.

The Israelis are world renown for developing various DRIP-IRRIGATION systems, whereby parched and unproductive parcels of land can be irrigated with small amounts of water, resulting in huge yields. They even export, and install these irrigation systems in other nations.

Driving through various parts of Israel, one sees large, neatly organized banana plantations, huge citrus groves, endless rows of date trees, olive groves in abundance, massive grape vineyards, and the list of fruits and vegetables goes on and on. Indeed, the wilderness has become a fruitful field, and once again, Israel is becoming the land of milk and honey.

On one of my trips to Israel, the people in our tour group began to count the different types of fruits and vegetables that grow in abundance in the Holy Land. I don't remember the final number, but we counted over 50 varieties.

At many biblical and historical sites, enterprising entrepreneurs, surrounded by mounds of fresh oranges, grapefruit, and pomegranates, stand ready to provide hand-squeezed cups of fresh juice for thirsty tourists.

d. Building and rebuilding:

“And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, THE DESOLATIONS OF MANY GENERATIONS.” (Isaiah 61:4).

- 1) Another thing one observes when visiting Israel is constant building, much of which is related to the endless stream of olim (Jewish immigrants) returning to Israel from the lands to which their fathers had been scattered. Literally, new towns are carved out of rocky soil, and settlements are built upon lands that were once barren and uninhabited.

e. An archaeological paradise:

“You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. For HER STONES are dear to your servants; HER VERY DUST moves them to pity. The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory.” (Psalm 102:13-16 NIV).

- 1) Truly, the Israeli people take pleasure in Israel’s stones, and show favor to her dust. Throughout the land, a tedious work of uncovering Israel’s past is ever ongoing.

Author’s Notes:

On one of my trips to Israel, our tour guide told us a fascinating story. In 1947, when he was 13 years old, the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in a cave by Bedouin shepherd boys. The scrolls had been preserved in jars of clay for nearly two thousand years. Soon to follow was an extensive archeological dig around the area of Qumran where the discovery was made.

Our tour guide shared that his father took him out of school, and he began working for the team that was excavating Qumran, and searching the multiple caves in the surrounding hills. In the process of time, every Old Testament book (except Esther and Nehemiah) was found in the area, a testimony to God’s faithfulness in preserving his Word. Today, one can visit Qumran, and view (from a distance) the actual cave where the initial Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.

f. Blessings of the deep.

- 1) Many centuries ago, as Israel blessed his sons before his death, he prophesied to Joseph:

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), by the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, BLESSINGS OF THE DEEP (a subterranean supply) THAT LIES BENEATH, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.” (Genesis 49:22-25).

- 2) Among Bible teachers who study the Restoration of Israel, some believe blessings of the deep refers to RESERVOIRS OF OIL that will one day be discovered in Israel; specifically, in the areas originally allotted to Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.
- 3) Probably, Jacob's blessing pertained to the whole of Israel, since God used Joseph to save Israel (see Genesis 50:15-21); in which case, BLESSINGS OF THE DEEP could apply in other areas. As an example, the Dead Sea contains huge deposits of minerals, thought to be more abundant than any single site on the earth. Reportedly, only a small amount of these minerals are being harvested. Untold wealth still lies beneath the salty waters.

4. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. During the short, modern day history of Israel, the new nation has made great progress in turning the wilderness into a fruitful field. However, Israel's most fruitful days are yet before her:

"The days are coming, declares the LORD, when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. I will bring back my exiled people Israel..." (from Amos 9:13-14 NIV).

- b. And, those greater days of blessing and prosperity are closely tied to the SPIRITUAL REVIVING of the people, which we will study about in the next lesson:

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. They will say: This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited. Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it." (Ezekiel 36:33-36 NIV).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 8 – Spiritually Reviving God's Original Chosen People

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin ... And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again ... And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” (The Apostle Paul, Romans 11:1, 23, 26-27).

READING ASSIGNMENT: Please read the entire 11th chapter of Romans.

2. PUTTING THINGS INTO THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE.

- a. The ongoing re-gathering of God's original chosen people from the ends of the earth, and bringing them back into the land of Israel is indeed a great miracle.
- b. Restoring the land that comprises the modern State of Israel was equally miraculous. An even greater miracle will be the restoration of all the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- c. Turning the wilderness (or, barren land) into a fruitful field is likewise miraculous, and equally a fulfillment of ancient Bible prophecies.
- d. Yet, all of these miracles are secondary to God's greatest work – **THE SPIRITUAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL**. Jeremiah spoke of an earlier time of spiritual restoration when Judah returned from the captivity of Babylon. In these End times, Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled for a second time (see scriptures, next page →):

“For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. THEN I WILL GIVE THEM A HEART TO KNOW ME, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.” (Jeremiah 24:6-7).

- e. The End Times Restoration of Israel is not just God remembering his covenant concerning the land, but especially his commitment to spiritually revive the chosen people...
 - **The Restoration of Israel is a vital part of God’s Plan of Redemption for the world.**

3. GOD’S METHOD OF REVIVING ISRAEL.

- a. In these last days, God is pouring out his Spirit on all flesh:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy ... And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (Acts 2:17-18, 21).

- b. Because of the outpouring of his Holy Spirit on all flesh, God could have said he would search throughout the whole earth, and find all the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and there, in the nations to which they had been scattered, he would pour out his Spirit upon them! Instead, the Lord said through the mouth of his prophet, Ezekiel:

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

c. CONCLUSIONS...

- ✓ RE-GATHERING the original chosen people, and
- ✓ RESTORING THE LAND promised to their fathers,
- ✓ Are essential to the SPIRITUAL RESTORATION of Israel.
- ✓ **THESE THREE MATTERS ARE INSEPARABLE!**

NOTE: Because of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on all flesh, many Jews throughout the world are already receiving Jesus as the Messiah. However, the ultimate revival will come as they are gathered back into the Promised Land.

4. KEY UNDERSTANDING IN REVIVING ISRAEL.

- a. Some prophetic teachers believe the Jewish Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and there will be a revival of Old Covenant Judaism. This is not the spiritual restoration spoken of in Ezekiel 36:24-28 (previous page ←). Those scriptures identify a **NEW COVENANT REVIVAL**, because God says: *"I will put My Spirit within you...."*
- b. Under the New Covenant, God does not dwell in temples made by men's hands. Believers in Jesus Christ are the temple of God:

"...For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (from 2 Corinthians 6:16).

- c. Jeremiah also prophesied about the spiritual restoration of Israel, and specified a New Covenant, not a revival of the Old Covenant:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make A NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: Know the LORD, for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

5. OBSTACLES TO SPIRITUAL REVIVAL IN ISRAEL.

- a. **OBSTACLE # 1** – Among the religious in Israel are various sects of Orthodox Jews, who although zealous, are futilely seeking to establish their own righteousness:

“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:2-4).

Author’s Notes:

Among Religious Jews in Israel (and, elsewhere), many are desperately trying to establish their own righteousness by obeying the Torah (the Law of Moses), and by trying to keep a myriad of conflicting commandments in the Talmud (oral traditions) passed down through generations of Rabbinic Judaism (see Mark 7:1-13).

In the end, it’s all futility, because they have no sacrifice for the atonement of sins (see Leviticus 17:11). Since the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, the Jews have not been able to offer sacrifices for sin. Even if they rebuild the temple, God will never again accept the sacrifice of animals!

Jesus is the solution. He was the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. Only his blood has the power to take away sins (see Hebrews 10:11-14). And, the good news is; the blood of Jesus was shed for both Jews and Gentiles: *“And He Himself is the propitiation (the appeasement) for our sins, and NOT FOR OURS ONLY (not for the Jews only) but also for the whole world.”* (1 John 2:2).

- b. **OBSTACLE # 2** – Most Israelis are not religious at all. Instead, they are secular. Although they may have nationalistic pride, they have no belief in God, nor interest in religion. To many secular Israelis, the Old Testament is just a book of fables, fairy tales, or Jewish mythology.

6. SO, HOW WILL THE LORD BRING GENUINE REVIVAL TO ISRAEL?

- a. **BRINGING REVIVAL TO ISRAEL; POINT # 1** – God is doing a SPECIAL WORK OF GRACE in Israel. His great work of restoring Israel is not happening because the Jews qualify for restoration ➔

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, BUT FOR MY HOLY NAME’S SAKE, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.” (Ezekiel 36:22-24).

- 1) Some Christians seem to think the Jews do not deserve a special work of grace. I would remind them that God also did a special work of grace among the Gentiles:

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6-8).

- b. **BRINGING REVIVAL TO ISRAEL; POINT # 2** – As revealed from Jeremiah 24:6-7 (earlier in this lesson), God will cause a GENUINE SPIRITUAL HUNGER to arise in the hearts of his original chosen people. The prophet, Hosea, spoke of a long period of time when the Jews would be spiritually bankrupt, then prophesied that an increased spiritual hunger would arise in the latter days:

*“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness **IN THE LATTER DAYS.**” (Hosea 3:4-5).*

- 1) Hosea said the children of Israel would abide many days...
 - Without King or Prince (God ordained leadership).
 - Without sacrifice (sacrifice for atonement of sins).
 - Without sacred pillar (personal memorial – for example, the bronze serpent, see 2 Kings 18:4).
 - Without ephod (high priest’s outer garments).
 - Without teraphim (family idol).

2) Then, says Hosea: “...*the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king ... IN THE LATTER DAYS.*” Once again, these verses confirm a New Covenant revival. DAVID THEIR KING is speaking of the Messiah (Jesus Christ), because at the time of Hosea’s prophecy, the original King David had been dead for a long time (see Luke 1:31-33).

c. **BRINGING REVIVAL TO ISRAEL; POINT # 3** – Although the Lord is doing a special work of grace among the Jews, and causing a spiritual hunger to arise in their hearts; yet, he will still require the same attitudes and actions from his chosen people today, as when Jesus originally came to Israel. Specifically, they must REPENT:

“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, REPENT, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17).

BIBLE DEFINITION: Repent – To change one's mind or purpose. In the New Testament, repentance always resulted in a change for the better. Repentance involves turning to God, but also turning away from sin.

1) In many portions of scripture pertaining to the Aliyah, there are surrounding verses that pertain to repentance:

“Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God ... Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.” (Ezekiel 36:28, 31).

2) **KEY EMPHASIS:** The Jewish people must repent – not only of trying to establish their own righteousness, or indifference toward God, or sinful lifestyles – but especially, **THEY MUST REPENT OF HAVING A CLOSED MIND.** They must open their hearts, and consider Jesus as their Messiah:

*“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless **WHEN ONE TURNS TO THE LORD**, the veil is taken away.”* (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

Author's Notes:

The previous verses speak of THE SAME VEIL, referring to the veil Moses wore upon his face, because his face shone after coming down from Mount Sinai (see Exodus 34:29-35). Yet, the shine eventually faded from Moses' face, and in the fullness of time, the glory of God was transferred to Jesus; a fact that many Jews cannot see until this day (see Matthew 17:1-8).

7. THE LAST, GREAT HARVEST.

- a. As previously explained, because of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, many Jews – INDIVIDUALLY – are already receiving Jesus as the Christ. However, the last, great harvest will come when the Lord Jesus returns, and Israel – AS A NATION – accepts him as their Messiah:

"...I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. THEY WILL LOOK ON ME, THE ONE THEY HAVE PIERCED, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son." (Zechariah 12:10 NIV).

- b. The previous scriptures, and the following verses, have prompted the saying that Israel will be – A NATION SAVED IN A DAY:

"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: THE DELIVERER (the Lord Jesus Christ – Yeshua ha Mashiach) will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:26-27).

- c. Again, I reemphasize: God is not interested in rebuilding a Jewish Temple, and reviving Old Covenant Judaism. At this last, great harvest, the New Covenant is clearly identified. The above verses say: *"...this is my covenant with them, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."* Old Covenant animal sacrifices could atone for (or, cover) sins, but those sacrifices could not take away sins:

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4).

8. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

In Zechariah 12:9-10 (previous page), we have an example of: **GUIDELINE # 2 FOR INTERPRETING END TIMES PROPHECY** - specifically, some prophecies are fulfilled more than once (for review, see pages 21-22).

In John 19:37 we find the first fulfillment. The Bible says of the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus: "*... They shall look on Him whom they pierced.*"

In Zechariah 12:9-10, the prophet identifies the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and says: "*...they will look on Me whom they have pierced....*" So, the prophecy will be fulfilled again.

Zechariah also emphasized that the Jews will look upon him whom they have pierced, AND MOURN. In Revelation 1:7, the Bible further reveals that everyone in the world will see the return of Jesus, AND MOURN: "*Behold, He is coming with clouds, and EVERY EYE will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him....*"

Yet, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE.

Zechariah 12:11 likens the great mourning among the Jews to an earlier time of mourning in Israel's history: "*In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.*"

This earlier time of mourning occurred after the death of Josiah, a beloved king in Judah: "*...And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments.*" (from 2 Chronicles 35:24-25).

So, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, and the Jews look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn, this time of great mourning will bring repentance, and so all Israel will be saved.

The unsaved Gentiles will also mourn, but there is no indication they will repent. To the contrary, the unsaved Gentiles will apparently rise up against the Lord: "*And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*" (Revelation 19:19).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 9 – Building the Temple... or, Rebuilding the Temple?

Author's Notes:

Since the early 1970's, when I first became interested in the End Times, I have heard numerous prophecy teachers declare that in the last days, prior to the return of Jesus, Religious Jews will rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps this is true? Maybe the temple will be rebuilt? We will wait and see!

Regardless, during these days of Israel's restoration, the Lord is moving by his Holy Spirit, and causing a spiritual renewal among his original chosen people. But, this spiritual renewal is not a revival of the Old Covenant in a rebuilt Jewish Temple. God is building a New Covenant Temple (which includes both Jews and Gentiles), and it is not a temple made by men's hands!

1. FOUNDATIONAL BACKGROUND.

a. In Old Testament times, King Solomon built a temple for God:

“And David said to Solomon: my son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; but the word of the LORD came to me, saying: You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.” (1 Chronicles 22:7-10).

b. Of course, Almighty God cannot be contained in, or confined to an earthly temple. Stephen, the first Martyr for the cause of Christ, quoted from the book of Isaiah (see scriptures, next page →):

“...Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me, says the LORD, or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?” (Acts 7:47-50 – from Isaiah 66:1-2).

- c. Nevertheless, as the Lord promised, his presence did temporarily dwell with the children of Israel. First, in the tabernacle that was set up in the wilderness, and later in the temple built by Solomon. Specifically, the presence of God dwelt in the Most Holy Place, above the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant, which was overshadowed by cherubim. This Most Holy Place was separated from the other areas of the temple by a curtain, also known as **THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE** (also see Hebrews 9:1-5):

- d. Once every year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, behind the veil of the temple, and offered the blood of animal sacrifices for the atonement of his sins, and for the atonement of the sins of the people:

“But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.” (Hebrews 9:7 NIV).

- e. However, at the end of his suffering on the cross, Jesus cried out: *“...IT IS FINISHED...”* (see John 19:30). Immediately thereafter, the veil of the temple was torn in two:

“And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” (Mark 15:37-38).

- f. The tearing of the veil in the temple was symbolic of the tearing of Christ’s flesh, thereby identifying a new and living way for man to approach God. Thereafter, the presence of God no longer dwelt in a temple made by men’s hands:

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to ENTER the Holiest (approach God) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.” (Hebrews 10:19-20).

2. EXAMINING ESSENTIAL NEW COVENANT FACTS.

- a. **NEW COVENANT FACT # 1** – Under the New Covenant, all who accept Jesus as the Christ – individually and collectively – become the Temple of God:

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

- b. **NEW COVENANT FACT # 2** – If a Jewish Temple is rebuilt – even to the exact specifications of the original temple – God would not dwell in that temple:

“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.” (Acts 17:24).

Author's Notes:

Pertaining to rebuilding the temple, rumors abound. I once heard a prophecy teacher say the stones for rebuilding the temple had been hewn, were being stored in Arizona, and would be shipped to Israel when the rebuilding begins. Anyone who has traveled to Israel will quickly recognize the folly of such a rumor. If there is anything Israel has in abundance, and has no need of, it is stones!

Likewise, for many years, rumors have circulated through the body of Christ that the Ark of the Covenant has been found. If true, it would be of no spiritual significance in the New Covenant kingdom of God. The presence of God will never again reside in an earthly temple, behind an earthly veil, above an earthly mercy seat, overshadowed by cherubim that were fashioned by men's hands.

Also, Jeremiah prophesied about the End Times Restoration of Israel, and declared that the Ark of the Covenant would never again be remade:

*“In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land, declares the LORD, men will no longer say, the ark of the covenant of the LORD. It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, **NOR WILL ANOTHER ONE BE MADE.** At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.” (Jeremiah 3:16-18 NIV).*

- c. **NEW COVENANT FACT # 3** – If the Old Covenant priesthood is re-established from the tribe of Levi – exactly as specified in the Law of Moses – God would not recognize the High Priest:

“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

NOTE: Jesus, our High Priest, was not from the tribe of Levi, but rather, from the tribe of Judah (see Hebrews 7:11-17).

- d. **NEW COVENANT FACT # 4** – If animal sacrifices are once again offered – in a rebuilt temple, to the exact specifications of the Law of Moses – God would never again accept those sacrifices as an atonement for sins:

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man (the Lord Jesus Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (Hebrews 10:11-14 – also see Hebrews 10:4).

Authors Notes:

Another rumor that regularly surfaces in the body of Christ - which excites those who are expecting the temple to be rebuilt - is that a Red Heifer, without blemish, has been found in Israel. The ashes of a Red Heifer were used as part of the sacrificial system for the atonement of sins (see Numbers 19:1-10).

However, if an unblemished Red Heifer was found, it would be of no spiritual significance in the New Covenant kingdom of God. The blood of Jesus, God's only begotten Son, has been shed for the remission of sins (for both Jews and Gentiles), and God is never again going to accept animal sacrifices:

“The blood of goats and bulls and THE ASHES OF A HEIFER sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:13-14 NIV).

3. IF THE TEMPLE IS REBUILT, A CONFLICT BETWEEN ISLAM AND JUDAISM MUST BE RESOLVED.

- a. The site upon which Solomon originally built the temple is located in Jerusalem. This site is also called The Temple Mount, or Mount Zion (read about it in 2 Chronicles, chapters 2 through 7). This Jewish Temple was built many centuries before Mohammed established the religion of Islam.
- b. At the time this study guide was published, The Temple Mount was governed by Muslims, and occupied by the Dome of the Rock (or, the Mosque of Omar), and the al-Aqsa Mosque. Muslims claim this area as Islam's third most holy site, behind Mecca and Medina (both located in Saudi Arabia).
- c. Religious Jews claim The Temple Mount as their most holy site, and fully intend to rebuild a Jewish Temple upon that exact site. Reportedly, The Temple Mount is mentioned more than 600 times in the Old Testament, but not even once in the Quran (or, Koran). If the temple is rebuilt, it would necessitate a removal of the Dome of the Rock, and the al-Aqsa Mosque. Should these Muslim sites be destroyed by the Israelis, it would undoubtedly incite the entire Muslim world to take up arms, and declare war against Israel.

4. MEANWHILE, GOD IS BUILDING A NEW COVENANT TEMPLE:

“And He (Jesus Christ) came and preached peace to YOU WHO WERE AFAR OFF (the Gentiles) and to THOSE WHO WERE NEAR (the Jews). For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:17-22).

“You also, as living stones, ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5).

- a. And, just as the Old Covenant Temple separated God's chosen people from the pagan practices of the world; so also, the New Covenant Temple is to be separate from the world:

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? FOR YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

5. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

Probably, an actual temple will eventually be rebuilt. Ezekiel, chapters 40-44 indicate that such is the case. However, the dimensions of the temple described by Ezekiel are considerably larger than the temple built by Solomon. Therefore, many prophetic teachers believe Ezekiel was describing a future temple during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

If so, why are animal sacrifices included in Ezekiel's description? Recalling **GUIDELINE # 2** for Interpreting End Times Prophecy (for review, see page 21), some prophecies are fulfilled more than once. Therefore, Ezekiel's prophecy obviously has a dual fulfillment...

- 1) An initial fulfillment (or, partial fulfillment) when the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, and rebuilt the temple.
- 2) A future fulfillment during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

Yet, questions remain! Some prophecy teachers insist that the temple must be rebuilt - prior to the return of Jesus - because 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says of the Antichrist: *"...he sits as God IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, showing himself (showing off, or, trying to prove) that he is God."*

This question, and other questions about the Antichrist, will be addressed in two future lessons: *"What Signs to Watch For (or, not watch for) in the End Times,"* and *"Recognizing the Antichrist."*

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book One – The End Times Restoration of Israel)

Lesson 10 – Enemies of Israel, Enemies of God!

1. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

- a. Throughout the ages, many enemies have risen up against Israel. Reading through the Old Testament, one discovers wars against Amalek, Ammon, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Moab, the Philistines, and many others.
- b. On May 14, 1948, Israel was once again recognized as a nation. Since that time, various Arab/Muslim nations that surround Israel have periodically waged warfare against the Jewish state, seeking to destroy the reestablished nation.
- c. In addition, various Palestinian/Muslim terrorist groups in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Lebanon have employed acts of terrorism in an attempt to discourage Israel, inflict economic hardship upon the Jewish state, and hopefully drive the Jews from The Promised Land, thus REVERSING THE ALIYAH.
- d. To the contrary, God’s Word promises Israel increasing prosperity, and guarantees that the chosen people will never again be driven from the land:

“The days are coming, declares the LORD, when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, NEVER AGAIN TO BE UPROOTED FROM THE LAND I have given them, says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:13-15 NIV).

2. IDENTIFYING THE REAL PROBLEM.

- a. Satan has cleverly disguised the current turmoil in Israel, making it appear to be only a dispute over territory. Even though the land is an important part of God's restoration, it is essential to understand that the real problem is SPIRITUAL, rather than political.
- b. On the ground, Israel's enemies are human beings (fundamentalist Muslims); yet, her real enemies are spirit beings (Satan, and demons):

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12).

- c. Satan has raised up the false religion of Islam, and is desperately using fanatical elements of that religion, in an attempt to...
 - **Prevent the fulfillment of Bible prophecies pertaining to the Restoration of Israel, and the End Times,**
 - **And, to discredit the Word of God** (the Bible).
- d. Satan has always opposed the Bible, but in these End times, he is especially opposed to Israel's restoration. Why? Because it is a sign of the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ:

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I AM COMING and I will dwell in your midst, says the LORD. Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.” (Zechariah 2:10-12).

- e. When Jesus returns, Satan's defeat will be openly manifested:

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished...” (Revelation 20:1-3).

3. FURTHER IDENTIFYING THE SPIRITUAL PROBLEM.

- a. Satan hates the Jewish people, and throughout the ages has tried to destroy them. Why? Because God chose the Jews as the race through whom he would impart salvation to the whole world:

“...I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” (from Isaiah 49:6 NIV – also see Acts 13:42-49)

1) Jesus declared to the woman at Jacob’s well: *“...SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS”* (from John 4:22 NIV).

- b. It is true that Israel as a nation rejected Jesus Christ. Yet, God still imparted salvation to the world through the Jewish race of people. The foundations of the Christian faith are Jewish:

“Now, therefore, you (Gentiles) are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on THE FOUNDATION of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.” (Ephesians 2:19-20).

4. IDENTIFYING THE SPIRITUAL PROBLEM EVEN FURTHER.

- a. Satan is still trying to annihilate the Jewish people because of this statement by Jesus, spoken to the Jews, after they rejected him as Messiah:

“Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, YOU WILL NOT SEE ME AGAIN UNTIL YOU SAY, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 23:38-39 NIV).

1) In Satan’s perverted way of thinking, if he could kill all the Jews, there would be no one left to say: *“...Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”* Thus, Jesus could not return!

NOTE: In these days of the Restoration of Israel, many Jews are already coming to faith in Jesus as Messiah. In expectation of his return, they are already proclaiming the above words; thus welcoming Jesus in advance! Yet, the day is coming when Israel, as a nation, will declare these words.

5. Why has Satan been able to incite the Arab race of people to come against Israel? Why not some other race of people?

a. Ezekiel prophesied against the inhabitants of Mount Seir:

“Because you have had AN ANCIENT HATRED, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity came to an end, therefore, as I live, says the Lord GOD, I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you.” (Ezekiel 35:5-6).

NOTE: Mount Seir was inhabited by the children of Esau (the twin brother of Jacob). Esau married the daughter of Ishmael, and their descendants are one source of the modern day Arab peoples.

b. What caused this ANCIENT HATRED of the Jews by the Arabs?

1) Ishmael was the son of the bondwoman, and did not receive the inheritance of Isaac:

“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham: Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac. And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham’s sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham: Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.” (Genesis 21:9-12).

2) Esau sold his birthright to Jacob (rights of the firstborn son – see Genesis 25:29-34). Later in their lives, Rebekah (their mother) conspired with Jacob to steal Esau’s blessing (blessing that accompanied the birthright – see Genesis 27:1-40):

“And Esau said, is he not rightly named Jacob (supplanter, layer of snares)? For he has supplanted me (taken away my place) these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing...” (Genesis 27:36).

Author's Notes:

Whenever man attempts to fulfill God's purposes through his own efforts, it always results in a mess! It was not necessary for Abraham to have sexual relations with Hagar (Sarah's Egyptian maid) in order to have a son. Before Hagar bore Ishmael, God had promised a son to Abraham (see Genesis 15:1-6).

Likewise, it was not necessary for Jacob to take away Esau's birthright, nor was it necessary for him and his mother to deceive Isaac in order to steal Esau's blessing. Prior to their birth, it had been prophesied that the nation which came from Jacob would be stronger than the nation which came from Esau, and Esau would serve Jacob (see Genesis 25:21-23).

Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, and Jacob should have waited for God's method, and God's timing for exalting those whom he had chosen. By failing to wait upon the Lord, they created a hatred that has endured to this day!

6. IDENTIFYING ANOTHER SPIRITUAL PROBLEM.

- a. Satan has incited the Muslim religion against Israel (not only Arabs, but also other Muslims). Why Islam? Why not some other religion? There is a DIRECT CONFLICT between Islam and the Bible.
 - 1) According to Islam, Ishmael was the son of promise, rather than Isaac. Contrary to the Bible, Muslims believe Abraham sacrificed Ishmael upon Mount Moriah (see Genesis 22:1-19). Therefore, any favor shown to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is an insult to Muslims.
 - 2) The Quran (or, Koran) and other writings of Mohammed make no mention of the Restoration of Israel. Islam was supposed to conquer, and rule the world. The birth of the modern state of Israel actually reversed territory Muslims had previously conquered. If allowed to continue, Israel's restoration would prove the Bible to be true, and the Quran to be false.
 - 3) Anyone familiar with the Quran would quickly recognize that a number of verses contained therein reflect the previously discussed ancient hatred. Satan – who was directly involved in the creation of Islam – has set Muslims on an irreversible collision against Israel, and against the God of the Bible.

b. Identifying Islam's ultimate goal:

“Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies (God’s enemies, not just Israel’s enemies) make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said: COME, AND LET US CUT THEM OFF FROM BEING A NATION, THAT THE NAME OF ISRAEL MAY BE REMEMBERED NO MORE.” (Psalm 83:1-4).

7. THE LORD HIMSELF WILL EVENTUALLY SETTLE THIS CONFLICT;
HE WILL HELP ISRAEL:

“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions (thus, identifying the Aliyah), and said to you: You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing, and those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them – those who contended with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing. For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you: Fear not, I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:8-13).

Author's Notes:

It should be noted that not all Arabs are fundamentalist Muslims. Some are genuine born again Christians. Just like everyone else who accepts Jesus as Lord, these Arab believers become the spiritual seed of Abraham. As such, they inherit God's promises; specifically, those promises that are available IN CHRIST.

However, even though the Lord deeply loves Arabs (including Palestinians) who have accepted Jesus Christ, and even though he very much desires to bless them, **THEY WILL NOT INHERIT THE LAND OF ISRAEL.**

Arab believers can live in Israel - in peace - but they must have an accurate understanding of the scriptures. They must recognize that God, by an everlasting covenant, promised the land to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Also, they must understand that Israel's restoration in these End Times is a part of God's plan of redemption for mankind.

8. THE HOPE OF RECONCILIATION.

- a. Despite the continuing efforts of various world leaders, there will never be a permanent solution, or lasting peace in Israel between Jews and Arabs (or, Israelis and Palestinians).
- b. Dividing up the land – which God promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – for the creation of a Palestinian state will not bring peace! Fundamentalist Muslims living in the disputed territories do not want a Palestinian state alongside of Israel. They want a Palestinian state instead of Israel.
- c. As we will learn in future lessons about End Times battles, these two ancient enemies are destined to come against one another in the last days.
- d. A lasting peace will come only when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, and establishes his kingdom on the earth:

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

- e. Yet, there is hope for reconciliation between INDIVIDUAL Jews and Arabs. This hope is in Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Jews and Arabs must first experience PEACE WITH GOD, and then, it will be possible to experience peace with one another:

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1).

“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one (Jews and Gentiles) and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.” (Ephesians 2:14-16 NIV).

Author's Notes:

The overwhelming majority of Arabs/Palestinians/Muslims will remain hostile toward Israel, and toward Jews worldwide. Yet, there will be a significant number of Arabs and Jews who will experience reconciliation through Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament story of Jacob and Esau, I believe we have a prophetic picture of the reconciliation that will take place in these End Times.

Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, had conspired to steal Esau's blessing; after which Jacob had to flee for his life. After many years, Jacob returned to the land of his fathers, but he did not know what kind of reception he would receive from his brother: *"Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother."* (Genesis 33:1-3 NIV).

Can you imagine the fear Jacob felt? It was similar to the fear experienced by many Israelis today, as they live daily with the threat of terrorism from the descendants of Ishmael and Esau.

Fortunately, the story had a good ending: *"But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept."* (Genesis 33:4 NIV).

So it will be during these End Times. Many Arabs and Jews will experience peace with God, and reconciliation with one another, which is only possible through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace!

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

- Book Two -

Israel; The Church's Involvement

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO BOOK TWO

God loves Israel with an everlasting love:

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.” (Isaiah 49:15-16).

The Lord Jesus came to redeem the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As a nation they rejected him as their Messiah, but Jesus loved Israel, and grieved over their rejection:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate.” (Matthew 23:37-38).

The Apostle Paul loved Israel so much that he would have forfeited his own salvation to see Israel saved:

“I speak the truth in Christ – I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit – I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel...” (from Romans 9:1-4 NIV).

The early Gentile church loved their Jewish brethren:

“And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples (Gentile disciples), each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” (Acts 11:27-30).

SHOULD TODAY’S TRUE CHURCH LOVE ISRAEL ANY LESS?

What then should be the attitude of the body of Christ toward Israel, and how should The Church of Jesus Christ be involved in this End Times move of God known as the Restoration of Israel?

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 11 – Re-discovering our (spiritual) Jewish Roots

Author’s Notes:

In these days of Israel’s restoration, Christians are increasingly identifying with Israel, and seeking to discover their Jewish roots. They are attending Bible studies that focus on the Restoration of Israel; learning Jewish, Messianic songs and dances; studying the Hebrew language, and taking tours to Israel.

I enthusiastically recommend the discovery of our Jewish roots, but there are some potential pitfalls. Therefore, pertaining to this subject, The Church has two important responsibilities...

FIRST: Christian leaders should acknowledge that The Church - to a certain extent - has discarded our Jewish roots. And, they should repent for replacing these roots with unbiblical, Gentile religious traditions.

SECOND: The Church must continue to **RIGHTLY DIVIDE** the word of truth (see 2 Timothy 2:15). Specifically, the New Covenant must be accurately divided from the Old Covenant, lest Christians (both Jews and Gentiles) lose their focus on the grace of God, and become inaccurately entangled in the Law of Moses.

1. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

- a. As we learned in previous lessons, much of Israel’s restoration is **PHYSICAL**...
 - Re-gathering the original chosen people, bringing them back into the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - Restoring all the land God promised to Israel.
 - Turning the wilderness (or, barren land) into a fruitful field.

- b. However, we also learned that these physical elements of Israel’s restoration, although important, are secondary to a greater work – the **SPIRITUAL RESTORATION** of Israel (bringing the original chosen people into the New Covenant).

- c. For Gentiles, the re-discovery of our Jewish roots is a SPIRITUAL matter. However, our spiritual roots are so closely tied to Israel's PHYSICAL restoration, that it's often difficult to separate one from the other. As a result, there has been confusion in The Church as to what is required by these re-discoveries? Therefore, we must lay the following foundation stones...
- God does not require Jewish believers to discard their roots, blend into The Church, and start acting like Gentiles.
 - Similarly, God does not require Gentile believers to change their physical roots, and start acting like Jews.
 - Both Jewish and Gentile believers are to be SPIRITUALLY TRANSFORMED into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For there is NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:12-13 NIV).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined (determined beforehand) to be conformed to THE IMAGE (the likeness, or resemblance) OF HIS SON, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29).

2. OUR SPIRITUAL (JEWISH) ROOTS – Who is our Heavenly Father?

- a. God revealed himself to Moses:

“Then Moses said to God: Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they say to me, What is His name? What shall I say to them? And God said to Moses: I AM WHO I AM. And He said: Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.” (Exodus 3:13-14 – also see John 8:56-58).

- b. But, often overlooked is the fact that the Lord continued to identify himself in the next verse:

“Moreover God said to Moses, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. THIS IS MY NAME FOREVER, and THIS IS MY MEMORIAL (or, by this name I am to be remembered) to all generations.” (Exodus 3:15).

3. **OUR SPIRITUAL (JEWISH) ROOTS** – Who is our Lord and Savior?

a. The Christ (the Messiah), the Son of the living God:

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying: Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? So they said: Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him: Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:13-17).

b. Jesus was also a Jew from the tribe of Judah (see Hebrews 7:11-17); a descendant of King David (see below scriptures ↓), and his mother was a young, virgin, Jewish girl named Mary (see Luke 1:26-27):

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of HIS FATHER DAVID. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:31-33).

4. **OUR SPIRITUAL (JEWISH) ROOTS** – God’s Covenant of Atonement, and Covenant of Redemption:

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make A NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying: Know the LORD, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” (Hebrews 8:7-12).

Author's Notes:

In my childhood church, I remember preachers applying the previous verses from Hebrews entirely to Gentile believers. I often wondered why those verses even included the name of Israel? Of course, all I ever heard was Dispensational Theology. We thought God had thrown Israel away (except for a few Jews, who somehow mysteriously found The Church). God would give Israel a second chance, we were told, but only during The Great Tribulation, after the rapture of the church.

We thought the Lord made an Old Covenant with Israel, and then, he made a New Covenant with The Church. However, the truth is: God made an Old Covenant WITH ISRAEL, and then, he made a New Covenant WITH ISRAEL.

The Old Covenant was a covenant of atonement (covering of sin) through the blood of animal sacrifices. The New Covenant is a covenant of Redemption (cleansing from sin) through the blood of Jesus. Both covenants were made with the house of Israel, and BY GOD'S GRACE, Gentiles are grafted into the New Covenant.

5. FOR CHRISTIANS, OUR ROOTS ARE JEWISH, AND MUCH OLDER THAN THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH:

"...Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen." (Romans 9:4-5).

a. Jesus himself referred to Israel as THE BUILDERS:

"...What then is this that is written: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone?" (Luke 20:17 – from Psalm 118:22).

b. When Gentiles receive Jesus, they do not join The Church only! SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING, they also become a part of Israel:

"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called, uncircumcised, by those who call themselves, the circumcision (that done in the body by the hands of men) – remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, EXCLUDED FROM CITIZENSHIP IN ISRAEL and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ." (Ephesians 2:11-13 NIV).

- c. Actually, everyone who accepts Jesus as the Messiah becomes a Jew (spiritually speaking), whether or not they are the physical seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” (Romans 2:28-29).

Author's Notes:

As mentioned earlier, the discovery of our Jewish roots is SPIRITUAL, but these discoveries are closely tied to Israel's PHYSICAL restoration. On my first trip to Israel (to view the physical restoration), I had a tremendous spiritual encounter with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. My life was forever changed.

Ephesians 2:12, (previous page ←) says of the Gentiles: *“...you were separate from Christ, EXCLUDED FROM CITIZENSHIP IN ISRAEL...”* However, because of the blood of Jesus, shed for the remission of my sins, I am no longer separated from Christ. In addition, I am no longer excluded from citizenship in Israel. Spiritually speaking, I am now a citizen of Israel.

So, as a concerned citizen, how could I not be greatly excited about the ongoing physical restoration of Israel? I now understand that Israel's physical restoration will culminate in (or, bring about) her spiritual restoration!

6. LESSONS FROM THE OLIVE TREE.

“And if some of the branches were broken off (unbelieving Jews), and you, (believing Gentiles) being a wild olive tree, were GRAFTED IN AMONG THEM, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Romans 11:17-18).

- a. In the above scriptures, Israel is depicted as THE OLIVE TREE. The branches are individual descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The ROOT and FATNESS of The Olive Tree is identified in Romans 9:4-5 (previous page ←), and includes...
- The Adoption, the Glory, the Covenants, the Law of Moses, the Service of God, the Promises, the Patriarchs, and most importantly, the Lord Jesus Christ.

b. Under the New Covenant, by God's grace, Gentiles are grafted into The Olive Tree, and become partakers of the root and fatness. However, it should be understood – The Gentile Church does not support the root (or, the foundation); the root supports them!

1) Many in Israel were obedient to the Lord – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Esther, Elijah, John the Baptist, Mary and Joseph, and many others. Through Israel, the Lord established a strong foundation that endured until the Word was made flesh (see John 1:14).

2) The Lord Jesus, and his apostles built upon this foundation (see Ephesians 2:20). In fact, the entire Bible (with the exception of Luke, and Acts) was written by Jewish prophets, and Jewish apostles. And, this foundation – established by Israel – will endure for eternity. Listen as the Apostle John describes a future scene from The Holy City, The New Jerusalem:

“Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:12-14).

c. Gentile Christians owe **A GREAT DEBT** to Israel!

d. Finally, it should be noted: when Jews accept Jesus as the Christ, they do not just join a Gentile Church. They are grafted back into **THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE**, and once again, along with believing Gentiles, become partakers of the root and fatness:

*“And if they (the Jews) do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN. After all, if you (Gentiles) were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into **THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE!**”* (Romans 11:23-24 NIV).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 12 – Becoming Involved in the Aliyah (the re-gathering of Israel)

1. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

- a. As stated in the last lesson, Christians owe a debt to Israel, and to the Jewish race of people. In times past, godly Israelites obeyed the Lord – the patriarchs, the Old Testament prophets, a select handmaiden of the Lord (Mary, the mother of Jesus), and the New Testament apostles. As a result, we now have...
- The Old Testament,
 - Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world,
 - The Covenants and Promises of God,
 - The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and
 - The New Testament.

“...For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.” (from Romans 15:27 NIV).

- b. During these days of the End Times Restoration of Israel, the time has come to begin repaying that debt:

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” (Isaiah 40:1-2 KJV).

“You will arise and have mercy on Zion; FOR THE TIME TO FAVOR HER, YES, THE SET TIME, HAS COME. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.” (Psalm 102:13-16).

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ALIYAH.

*“Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, **BRINGING YOUR SONS FROM AFAR**, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.” (Isaiah 60:8-9 NIV).*

- a. The Aliyah actually began in the late 1800's. Due to persecution in Russia, approximately 25,000 Jews immigrated to what was then called Palestine (so named by Hadrian in 135 AD – see page 16).
- b. In the early 1900's, approximately 30,000 more Jews from Eastern Europe immigrated to Palestine. It was during this period that olim (Jewish immigrants) began to establish settlements called Kibbutzim. Basically, the Kibbutz was a community in which all the inhabitants lived as one large family. Each member shared in the working of the land, and whatever benefits the land produced.
- c. Immigration continued through the early 1900's, but prior to World War II, because of the threat of persecution from Nazi Germany, almost 200,000 Jews from Eastern Europe fled to Palestine.

Author's Notes:

Unfortunately, most Jews living in Eastern Europe did not heed the warning signs from Adolph Hitler's Nazi Germany. As a result, more than 6,000,000 Jews lost their lives in the Holocaust. For well over half a century, countless people have sought to understand, and explain why the Holocaust happened? During the writing of this study guide, the Holy Spirit gave me the following insight...

Prior to the Holocaust, the first phase of Israel's restoration (the Aliyah) was already well underway. Satan - knowing the prophetic scriptures - realized that Israel's restoration would ultimately result in his demise. Therefore, he stirred up hatred in the heart of Hitler, influencing him to devise an evil plan to exterminate the world's Jewish population. Satan did this for the specific purpose of trying to **PREVENT BIBLE PROPHECY FROM COMING TO PASS!**

During those dark days, a small number of Christians tried to help the Jews (for example, the family of Corrie Ten Boom. A Christian book, *"The Hiding Place,"* tells the story). However, The Church as a whole was almost totally ignorant that the End Times Restoration of Israel had already begun, and Satan was already at work trying to prevent the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

- d. On May 14, 1948, the modern day nation of Israel was established by the United Nations. The very next day, Israel was attacked by seven Arab nations. After Israel's successful war of independence against overwhelming odds, large numbers of Jewish refugees flooded into Israel from many Arab countries, because of severe persecution, or because the Arab nations expelled them.
- e. In 1949 and 1950, nearly 50,000 Yemenite Jews, some of whom had never seen an airplane, were airlifted to Israel in: "*Operation Magic Carpet.*" Reportedly, some of these Yemenite Jews started a fire aboard one of the airplanes to cook their food. Prophetic teachers likened this airlift to the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "...they shall mount up with wings like eagles..." (from Isaiah 40:31).
- f. In 1991, around 15,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel in: "*Operation Solomon.*" These black skinned Jews claim to be the descendants of Moses and his Ethiopian wife (see Numbers 12:1), and Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (see 1 Kings 10:1-13).
- g. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, large numbers of Jews have emigrated from Russia, and countries that once comprised the Soviet Union. At the time this study guide was published, more than 1,000,000 (one million) olim had come from Russia, and the former Soviet Union, with several million more yet to come.
- h. Many more fascinating accounts of the Aliyah could be included, except for the lack of space. Reportedly, God's chosen people have come home to Israel from more than 100 nations of the world. God is indeed demonstrating his faithfulness.

3. HOW CAN CHRISTIANS BECOME INVOLVED IN THE ALIYAH?

- a. Provide financial support to Christian ministries that are helping God's chosen people return home to Israel. Concerning Abraham, and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob, God said:

"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3).

- b. Volunteer your time, or begin working with Christian ministries that are participating in the Aliyah:

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.” (Isaiah 49:22 NIV).

4. THE TIMES OF THE FISHERMEN:

“Therefore behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, but, The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them. For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers. Behold, I WILL SEND FOR MANY FISHERMEN, says the LORD, and they shall fish them...” (Jeremiah 16:14-16).

- a. The ministry of the fishermen can be likened to throwing out a net into which some are caught, and some escape.
- b. Among the fishermen are many Christians (both Jews and Gentiles), and they are going into every nation, city, town, and village where Jewish people live, and sharing with them the prophetic scriptures concerning the Aliyah, and encouraging them to make haste and return to the land of their fathers.
- c. At the time this study guide was published, God had already sent for MANY FISHERMEN, and their ministry was well under way.

5. THE TIMES OF THE HUNTERS:

“...and AFTERWARD I WILL SEND FOR MANY HUNTERS, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.” (continuation of Jeremiah 16:16 – above ↑).

- a. The days are coming when God will send out MANY HUNTERS. These hunters will be more thorough than the fishermen. They will find all of God’s chosen people, even those in obscure locations (every mountain, every hill, and the holes of the rocks).

- b. The hunters may not be as gentle as the fishermen, for these could be days of greater urgency in God's prophetic timetable. Very likely, the days of the hunters will be a time when Satan stirs up greater hatred against the nation of Israel, and anti-Semitism increases throughout the world. Therefore, the hunters will be used by God to strongly compel the Jewish people to return to the land of their fathers! Perhaps these will be the days spoken of by Zechariah, the prophet:

“Up, up! Flee from the land of the north, says the LORD; for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the LORD. Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. For thus says the LORD of hosts: He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.” (Zechariah 2:6-8).

Author's Notes:

There are a number of Christian ministries that are involved in the Aliyah, assisting God's chosen people in returning to Israel. In most such ministries, there are opportunities to become involved. It is my recommendation that all Christians should make contact with these ministries; then pray, and ask God where, and how they should become involved with the Aliyah.

For sure, God would have every Christian to pray. There are many issues facing potential Jewish immigrants - lack of finances; lack of proper identification papers; a reluctance to leave family, friends, and familiar surroundings, and most importantly, safety and protection once their journey begins.

For many Christians, God will require that we become involved financially, supporting ministries that are directly assisting Jewish immigrants in returning to the land of their fathers. What a great privilege to give of our finances to be involved in the fulfillment of ancient Bible prophecies.

Still others will be called upon by the Lord to become fishermen; to actually go into every nation, city, town, and village, and seek out Jewish people, and share with them the prophetic scriptures pertaining to the Restoration of Israel.

And, when the days of the hunters begin, no doubt, the Lord will call upon many Christian believers to go into obscure places, and find God's chosen people, who have escaped the fishermen's nets.

It has been said that God does not require our help to fulfill his Word. Yet, the fact is, he has chosen us to help! PRAY and ASK GOD: where would he have you to become involved?

6. BEYOND THE ALIYAH:

“And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples (a church of Gentile believers), each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea (a church of Jewish believers). This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” (Acts 11:27-30).

Author's Notes:

In an earlier lesson, we learned that God's chosen people, who have returned to the land of their fathers, have literally turned a wilderness (or, barren land) into a fruitful field. We discovered that the prophetic scriptures, which promised the Aliyah, also promised prosperity to the re-gathered nation. And, through those prophetic scriptures, we learned that Israel will experience even greater measures of God's prosperity in the coming days.

However, when Jews initially return to Israel, they are often poor, and very needy. There are numerous accounts of corrupt immigration officials, who stole jewelry, money, and other items from Jews wishing to make Aliyah, refusing to sign their exit papers without a bribe. Upon arrival in Israel, many olim have no immediate source of income, and oftentimes must learn a new language.

The Israeli Government does an admirable job with the resources they have; yet, during this End Times Restoration of Israel, I believe the Lord is also calling upon his redeemed people throughout the world (Gentile believers, in addition to Jewish believers) to: **COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.**

Some Christian ministries, which are involved in the Aliyah, are also involved in assisting God's chosen people once they have immigrated back to Israel. Other ministries are solely involved in helping Jewish people **BEYOND THE ALIYAH.** Again, pray, and ask God where, and how you should be involved.

- a. Most Jews making Aliyah do not yet know Jesus as Messiah, but we must remember that the re-gathering of Israel is part of **GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION.** Potentially, every Jewish immigrant is an heir of the grace of God, which leads to salvation:

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 13 – Learning to Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the LORD, our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD. For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: MAY THEY PROSPER WHO LOVE YOU. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces. For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, Peace be within you. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good.” (Psalm 122).

2. The Hebrew word for PEACE in the above psalm is: “SHALOM.” This word can literally refer to peace from warfare:

“My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace. I am for peace (shalom), but when I speak, they are for war.” (Psalm 120:6-7).

Author’s Notes:

Once, while praying for the peace of Jerusalem, because of violence that had erupted there, I became frustrated. It seemed like I was just making up some nice sounding words. I cried out: *“Help me, Lord. I don’t know how to effectively obey your command to pray for the peace of Jerusalem!”*

The Holy Spirit spoke a certain phrase into my spirit. When I researched those words, I discovered they were from Psalm 83. As I read those scriptures, and considered the warfare Israel faces on a continual basis, I realized the psalm is just as relevant today as the day it was written.

Then, the Holy Spirit spoke another word to my heart: *“PRAY THIS PSALM, WORD FOR WORD, IN ITS ENTIRETY.”*

- a. It should also be emphasized that when we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, WE ARE ENGAGING IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE, not just praying against Israel's physical enemies. We are standing with God against ALL THE ENEMIES of Jerusalem, whether those enemies are human beings, or spirit beings:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12).

3. MORE INSIGHT – HOW TO PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.

- a. I once heard a Jewish Messianic Bible Teacher explain that in the Bible, the word “*Shalom*” often refers to PEACE OF HEART. The only way the inhabitants of Jerusalem (and, all of Israel) can truly experience peace of heart is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace:

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, BY MAKING PEACE THROUGH HIS BLOOD, shed on the cross.” (Colossians 1:19-20 NIV).

- 1) So, when we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we should not pray only for peace between Israel and her physical enemies (Arabs/Palestinians/Muslims). We should also pray for spiritual revival in Jerusalem, and all of Israel.

4. WHY IS THIS CITY OF JERUSALEM SUCH A PROBLEM?

- a. God promised all of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, in the Bible, Jerusalem is never referred to as a city of the Jews. Another city is referred to as such:

“Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, A CITY OF THE JEWS, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” (Luke 23:50-52).

b. Jesus made reference to the cities of Israel:

“When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through THE CITIES OF ISRAEL before the Son of Man comes.” (Matthew 10:23).

c. However, Jesus ascribed a special designation to Jerusalem:

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.” (Matthew 5:33-35).

d. Jerusalem does not belong to the Jews; neither does it belong to the Muslims; neither does it belong to the Christians, although all three claim it. Jerusalem is the city God has chosen for himself. JERUSALEM IS THE CITY OF GOD:

“And to his son (Solomon’s son) I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, THE CITY WHICH I HAVE CHOSEN FOR MYSELF, to put My name there.” (1 Kings 11:36).

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the CITY OF OUR GOD, in His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the CITY OF THE GREAT KING. God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge.” (Psalm 48:1-3).

5. Because Jerusalem is the city of God, Satan is continually stirring up the enemies of God to come against her. Why? SATAN KNOWS THE HISTORY OF JERUSALEM.

a. Jesus was crucified near Jerusalem (outside the old city, but today, the site of his crucifixion would be within the city limits of Jerusalem):

“And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center ... for the place where Jesus was crucified was NEAR THE CITY...” (from John 19:17-20).

- b. Jesus was buried near Golgotha (near the old city; a site that would also be within Jerusalem today):

“Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews’ Preparation Day, FOR THE TOMB WAS NEARBY.” (John 19:41-42).

- c. And, from that garden tomb, the Lord Jesus Christ was powerfully resurrected:

“And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:2-6).

- d. It was in Jerusalem where the first human beings were inhabited by the Holy Spirit (and thus, were born again):

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, Peace be with you. Now when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. And when He had said this, HE BREATHED ON THEM (or, blew upon them), and said to them, RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.” (John 20:19-22).

- e. It was near Jerusalem, from the Mount of Olives, where the Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven (today, this site is also within Jerusalem):

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight ... Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, WHICH IS NEAR JERUSALEM, a Sabbath day’s journey.” (Acts 1:9, 12).

f. The disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem:

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them NOT TO DEPART FROM JERUSALEM, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5).

“Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4).

g. And, from the City of God, The Great Commission was launched:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME IN JERUSALEM, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

h. Finally, The Church of Jesus Christ was begun in Jerusalem:

“So continuing daily with one accord IN THE TEMPLE (which was located in Jerusalem), and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47).

6. HOWEVER, WHAT SATAN IS REALLY WORRIED ABOUT IS THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM.

a. Jesus will return to the place from which he ascended:

“And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.” (Zechariah 14:4).

Author's Notes:

According to the previous scripture (Zechariah 14:4), the Mount of Olives will be split in two - FROM EAST TO WEST - when Jesus returns.

Because of Ezekiel 43:1-4, some prophetic teachers believe Jesus will enter the Old City of Jerusalem by the Eastern Gate (also called the Golden Gate). This gate is currently sealed (see front cover). Therefore, when the Mount of Olives is split in two, this splitting will also affect the Kidron Valley (below the Mount of Olives), then proceed directly up the hill towards the walls of the Old City, and rip open the Eastern Gate for the King of kings to enter (see Psalm 24:7-10).

b. At that time, Jesus will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem:

“In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” (Zechariah 12:8-9).

c. Jesus will set up his throne in Jerusalem to rule the earth during the Millennium:

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:32-33).

“For thrones are set there for judgment (in Jerusalem), the thrones of the house of David.” (Psalm 122:5).

7. CONCLUSIONS.

a. Satan is worried about the future of Jerusalem, because when all the prophecies concerning the City of God are fulfilled, his defeat will be openly manifested (see Revelation 20:1-3).

b. Therefore, Satan is striving to wrest Jerusalem from God's chosen people, and deliver the city into the hands of God's enemies; trying desperately to prevent these prophecies from coming to pass!

8. GOD WILL NOT ABANDON JERUSALEM.

- a. The following words from Jesus (fulfilled by Titus and the Roman Army in 70 AD) will again be fulfilled during these End Times. Jerusalem will once again be surrounded by armies:

“But when you see Jerusalem SURROUNDED BY ARMIES (an encampment of troops), then know that its desolation is near.” (Luke 21:20).

NOTE: The above scripture is another example of prophecy being fulfilled more than once (for review, see Guideline # 2 for Interpreting End Times Prophecy, page 21).

- b. This time, the outcome for Jerusalem will be SALVATION, rather than DESOLATION:

“There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; GOD SHALL HELP HER, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.” (Psalm 46:4-6).

Author's Notes:

I sincerely believe all Christians should pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Likewise, I believe every Christian church should include praying for the peace of Jerusalem as a regular part of the church's prayer commitments.

However, certain people in the body of Christ have a special calling upon their lives as WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS pertaining to Jerusalem, pertaining to Israel, and pertaining to God's original chosen people.

Through the Prophet, Isaiah, the Lord says: *“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Isaiah 62:6-7).*

These Watchmen on the Walls - although they may not be physically located in Jerusalem - have been given a SPECIAL BURDEN, and a SPECIAL ANOINTING to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, to pray for the Restoration of Israel, and to pray for God's original chosen people.

We will take a closer look at the ministry of the Watchman in a future lesson, which is appropriately entitled: *“Watchmen on the Walls.”*

9. FINAL THOUGHTS.

- a. Through the mouth of the psalmist, God warned the Jews who had been carried away captive to Babylon not to forget Jerusalem. In these End Times, due to our responsibility to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, I believe the Lord is challenging The Church of Jesus Christ to have a similar commitment:

“If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth – if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.” (Psalm 137:5-6).

- b. Isaiah prophesied about the peace of Jerusalem, which the City of God will ultimately experience. The peace for which God’s People are faithfully praying:

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say: Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:1-4).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 14 – The Feasts of the Lord; fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Author’s Notes:

During these days of Israel’s restoration, many Gentile Christians are trying to keep the Feasts of the Lord (to get in touch with their Jewish roots). However, many such Christians do not accurately understand the feasts, and are actually keeping Jewish traditions, which have been added to the feasts.

The Feasts of the Lord - as originally established by God - all pointed to the coming Messiah. According to Colossians 2:16-17 (see below ↓), the feasts were a SHADOW (an image, or type) of Jesus Christ. Over the years, however, Jewish traditions have crept in, and eliminated many of the shadows of Christ.

Therefore, we will briefly look at the feasts as God established them in the Law of Moses. Then, we will move forward to the New Testament, and understand the feasts as they were **FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST**.

1. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING:

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are MY FEASTS” (literally – these are MY SET TIMES). (Leviticus 23:1-2).

- a. The word, CONVOCATIONS, in the above verses refers to public gatherings, but can also mean A REHEARSAL. The Feasts of the Lord were not A FINALITY in themselves, but only a rehearsal of the eventual fulfillment that was to come in Christ:

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to A RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL (the Feasts of the Lord), a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are A SHADOW (an image, or type) of the things that were to come; THE REALITY, however, is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:16-17 NIV).

2. THE FEAST OF PASSOVER (the 14th day of Nisan – Jewish calendar).

a. As originally established by God:

“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread (bread without yeast) and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire – its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.” (Exodus 12:3-11).

b. The Feast of Passover – fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

“...AS THEY WERE EATING (the Passover), Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is My body. Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:26-28).

Author’s Notes:

Christians often call the above events THE LAST SUPPER. More accurately, it was the time when Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Passover.

First, he kept the Old Covenant feast with his Jewish brethren (as commanded by the Law of Moses). Then, he introduced them to the New Covenant feast (also known as Communion), and identified **HIS BLOOD** by which the New Covenant would be established. That same day (the Jewish day is from sunset to sunset), Jesus offered himself as the Passover Lamb for all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles.

- c. **KEY UNDERSTANDING:** The blood of the original Passover lamb applied to the doorposts and lintel caused death to pass over the children of Israel (see Exodus 12:12-13). Similarly, the shed blood of Jesus Christ (our Passover Lamb) applied to the lives of sinful men, causes them to pass over from spiritual death into spiritual life:

“...For indeed CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER, was sacrificed for us.” (from 1 Corinthians 5:7).

- d. The Lord commanded the children of Israel to keep the Passover throughout their generations. Likewise, Jesus Christ commanded New Covenant believers (both Jews and Gentiles) to keep the fulfilled feast in remembrance of his death:

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said: Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. In the same manner He also took the cup AFTER SUPPER (after Passover), saying: This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

3. **THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD** (begins on the 15th day of Nisan, and continues for seven days).

- a. As originally established by God:

“On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.” (Leviticus 23:5-6 – description continues through verse 8).

- b. The Feast of Unleavened Bread – fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

Author's Notes:

Jews often tell an amusing story about unleavened bread (or, Matzah). The children of Israel had to leave Egypt so fast; their bread did not have time to rise. However, this was not a frivolous matter (see Exodus 12:15-20).

During this feast, the main emphasis was not THE EATING of unleavened bread, but rather, THE ELIMINATION OF LEAVEN. Symbolically, leaven refers to sin. Jesus identified the doctrine of the Pharisees as leaven (see Matthew 16:5-12), and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees as leaven (see Luke 12:1-3).

So, every year when the children of Israel strived to eliminate leaven from their homes (and thus, from their lives), they were symbolically rehearsing what Christ would accomplish by his sacrifice on the cross. It is only through the shed blood of Jesus that sin (or, leaven) can truly be eliminated from one's life.

- c. Also notice: The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be kept for seven days. Therefore, this feast – as fulfilled in Christ – signifies more than just a one-time elimination of leaven (as in being saved, or born again). It points to a LIFESTYLE OF REPENTANCE:

"Therefore, LET US KEEP THE FEAST, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Corinthians 5:8).

- 1) The fulfilled feast does not restrict Christians to seven days of tasteless bread. Rather, through Jesus Christ, this feast is CONTINUOUSLY FULFILLED as believers live a lifestyle of purity (continuously eliminating leaven from one's life).

Author's Notes:

Regarding REPENTANCE, remember also that unleavened bread was required during Passover. Keeping the fulfilled Passover feast (or, Communion) also requires repentance. Prior to receiving communion, Christians are very strongly advised to reflect upon their lives, and purge out the old leaven of sin:

"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing (or, discerning) the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep (have died). But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment." (1 Corinthians 11:28-31 NIV).

4. THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS (following Passover, the day after the Sabbath. Or, the first Sunday after Passover).

a. As originally established by God:

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; ON THE DAY AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it.” (Leviticus 23:9-11 – description continues through verse 14).

b. The Feast of Firstfruits – fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the FIRSTFRUITS (the first resurrected from the dead) of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

c. **KEY EMPHASIS:** The resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred on the Feast of Firstfruits, NOT AT EASTER!

Author’s Notes:

A Christian ministry sent me a beautiful Jewish calendar, which highlighted and explained the Feasts of the Lord, and other Jewish holidays. I was surprised to discover that the Feast of Firstfruits was totally omitted. The counting of days until the next feast (the Feast of Weeks) was included, but the Feast of Firstfruits was nonexistent. I asked the Lord why?

The Holy Spirit revealed to me that after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and repeatedly throughout the years, Religious Jews have purposely de-emphasized the Feast of Firstfruits in an effort to disassociate with anything that pertained to Jesus; especially anything that proved Jesus to be RESURRECTED, and ALIVE, and thus, proved him to be the Messiah.

After his resurrection, Acts 1:3 says: *“...He also presented Himself ALIVE after His suffering BY MANY INFALLIBLE PROOFS, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”*

- d. In the Old Covenant, Firstfruits celebrated the first harvest (or, early harvest). Likewise, there was also an early harvest of souls for the kingdom of God – those to whom Jesus appeared the same day he was resurrected, upon whom he also breathed (or, blew upon), and said: “...RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT” (see John 20:19-23).

Author's Notes:

This early harvest of souls was not limited to the above-mentioned disciples. It also included OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS, who had died in faith, waiting for the Messiah (see Hebrews 11:13).

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (previous page ←) reveals that Jesus Christ was the firstfruits of: “...those who are Christ's at his coming,” but also, the firstfruits of: “...those who have fallen asleep.”

After the resurrection of Jesus, strange things occurred: “*And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*” (Matthew 27:52-53).

Those Old Testament saints were waiting for the Messiah in the place Jesus called “*ABRAHAM'S BOSOM*” (see Luke 16:19-31). When Jesus was resurrected, he brought those saints with him, and they ascended with him into Heaven, to that place he has made ready for all who trust in him (see Ephesians 4:8-10).

5. UNDERSTANDING THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Author's Notes:

In order to accurately understand the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, one must discard the Gentile Church tradition of celebrating the resurrection at EASTER. Instead, we must go back to our Jewish roots, and reconcile these matters from: The Feast of Passover, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, and The Feast of Firstfruits.

Easter is not found in the Bible. Although the word, EASTER, appears in Acts 12:4 (King James Version), it is a mistranslation. The Greek word in that verse is “*Pascha*,” meaning Passover. Easter was a pagan holiday, which involved the worship of a female deity; specifically, the worship of a FALSE GODDESS OF FERTILITY; thus, the emphasis on bunny rabbits and eggs.

Author's notes continued ↗

A bit of research from various Bible study helps will reveal that the early church celebrated the resurrection at Passover. However, in the process of time, Gentile church leaders discarded the Feasts of the Lord, and inaccurately began to celebrate the resurrection at Easter. So, in order to accurately understand the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we must return to the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Firstfruits...

- 1) Jesus was crucified at Passover. As previously explained: He celebrated the Old Covenant feast with his disciples, introduced them to the New Covenant feast, and was crucified later that same day.
- 2) During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus was in the heart (the middle, or innermost part) of the earth. Only his body was in the Garden Tomb (see Matthew 12:40 and Acts 2:29-31).
- 3) Jesus was resurrected on the Feast of Firstfruits, which occurred after the Sabbath, following Passover (or, the first Sunday after Passover). This was God's SET TIME, or his appointed time for the resurrection!

Interestingly, because the Jewish day was from sunset to sunset, it is very likely that Jesus was resurrected on what Gentiles call Saturday night, instead of the commonly practiced Easter Sunrise Service on Sunday morning (see John 20:1).

6. THE FEAST OF WEEKS (or, PENTECOST – fifty days after Firstfruits).

a. As originally established by God:

“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. COUNT FIFTY DAYS to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.” (Leviticus 23:15-16 – description continues through verse 22).

b. The Feast of Weeks – fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

“Now when the Day of Pentecost (or, Feast of Weeks) had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4).

- c. The Feast of Weeks celebrated a second harvest. And so, Jesus baptized his followers with the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Weeks, and empowered them to reap a second harvest of souls:

“Then those who gladly received his word (Peter’s preaching on the Day of Pentecost) were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” (Acts 2:41).

- 1) And, this feast is being CONTINUOUSLY FULFILLED, as the Lord continues to baptize believers with his Holy Spirit, empowering them to reap a greater and greater harvest of souls throughout the entire world (see Acts 1:8).

7. ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS, AND FINAL THOUGHTS.

- a. Many prophetic teachers (including this author) believe the Feasts of the Lord represent **GOD’S PROPHETIC TIMETABLE**. When the Lord said: *“...these are MY FEASTS,”* he was not referring to a meal. Literally, God said: *“These are MY SET TIMES”* (or, my appointed times). In the fullness of time, Jesus came, and fulfilled the first four feasts (see Galatians 4:4-5).

- 1) And, Jesus will return, and fulfill the remaining three feasts: the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (which we will study in a future lesson).

Author’s Notes:

Under the New Covenant, Christians (including both Jews and Gentiles) should not go backwards in their faith, and try to observe the Feasts of the Lord in their Old Covenant form. Neither should believers feel compelled to honor Jewish traditions that have been added to the feasts. If Christians choose to celebrate the feasts, their fulfillment in Jesus Christ should be emphasized.

Remember, the feasts were only shadows, not reality. The first four feasts have been fulfilled by Jesus, and **THE SHADOWS HAVE BECOME SUBSTANCE**. *“Such [things] are only the shadow of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value. But THE REALITY - THE SUBSTANCE, the solid fact of what is foreshadowed, the body of it - belongs to Christ.” (Colossians 2:17 AMP).*

After the Lord reveals himself through Jesus Christ, he does not move from substance, back into shadow (see John 1:14-18).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 15 – The Righteousness, which is by Faith

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“For if that first covenant (the Law of Moses) had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them (Israel’s failure to keep the Old Covenant), He says: Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ... In that He says, a NEW COVENANT, He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” (Hebrews 8:7-8, 13).

Author’s Notes:

On one of my trips to Israel, I met a Messianic Jewish pastor, whose main ministry was reaching out to the Jews with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; with an emphasis on making disciples of new Jewish converts.

I asked this pastor what was his greatest challenge in ministering to Jews who had accepted Jesus as Messiah? Without hesitation, he said: *“Convincing them they do not have to keep the Law of Moses, in addition to faith in Jesus Christ, in order to OBTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS”* (or, a right standing with God).

He explained that many Jews who accept Jesus Christ - even some who were not previously religious - feel compelled to keep the Old Testament Law, as well as believe in Jesus as the Messiah. They have become the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ, but because they are also Abraham’s physical seed, they somehow feel an obligation toward the Old Covenant, as well as the New Covenant.

As I have previously stated; in these days of the End Times Restoration of Israel, many Gentile Christians are seeking to discover their Jewish roots in order to identify with this unique work of God. Unfortunately, many such Christians are falling into the same error as new Jewish converts. They feel compelled to keep certain aspects of the Law of Moses, in addition to their faith in Christ, in order to obtain righteousness.

2. THE EARLY CHURCH EXPERIENCED THIS SAME PROBLEM.

a. The Council at Jerusalem (for the entire account, read Acts 15:1-31):

“And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and the apostles, and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying: It is necessary to circumcise them, and TO COMMAND THEM TO KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES.” (Acts 15:1-5).

b. After much dispute, Peter asked an important question:

“...Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” (Acts 15:7-10).

- 1) Notice that Peter referred to the Law of Moses as: *“...a yoke on the neck ... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.”* The truth is; neither Jew nor Gentile can truly keep the Law, which is why we both needed a Savior!
- 2) Notice also; Peter declared that requiring Gentile believers to keep the Law of Moses would be testing God! The Apostle Paul said the same thing in a slightly different manner:

“I do not set aside (or, reject) the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Galatians 2:21).

c. Finally, James settled the matter:

“And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things (citing prophecy from Amos 9:11-12). Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.” (Acts 15:13-20).

Author's Notes:

Please notice; the Jewish leaders in the church at Jerusalem did not require the Gentile Christians to be circumcised, keep the Sabbath, keep the Feasts of the Lord, nor strictly adhere to all of the Old Testament food laws.

In fact, the final analysis of the Jerusalem Council was that righteousness (a right standing before God) could only be obtained through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; specifically, the purifying that comes by faith in his shed blood for the remission of sins.

However, the Jewish brethren did request four things of Gentiles who were coming to faith in Jesus Christ...

- 1) **ABSTAIN FROM THINGS POLLUTED BY IDOLS** - Acts 15:29 further clarified this request as THINGS OFFERED (or, sacrificed) to idols. This primarily referred to food that was sacrificed to false gods. Of course, the idols never ate the food, so people would go to the pagan temples, or to the marketplaces, and purchase the food (probably at a reduced price).
- 2) **ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY** - The Apostle Paul strongly settled this matter by exclaiming: *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you (not even ONCE), as becometh saints."* (Ephesians 5:3 KJV). The commitment to abstain from sexual immorality should characterize Christians in every church, in every geographical location, in every period of church history, regardless of whether those believers are Jewish or Gentile!

Author's notes continued, next page →

- 3) **ABSTAIN FROM THINGS STRANGLLED** - This specifically referred to meat from which the blood had not been properly drained. Such meat was considered a delicacy by many pagans, but did not meet kosher standards of slaughtering animals, and was highly offensive to Jews.
- 4) **ABSTAIN FROM BLOOD** - Abstain from eating blood, a continuation of the above request. Leviticus 17:11 reveals that the life of all living beings is in the blood. Therefore, in Jewish mentality, blood was used for the atonement of sins, not for eating. Spiritually speaking, this concept was carried forward into the New Covenant, because it is through the blood of Jesus that we receive life (the remission of sins).

Please notice; none of these requests pertained to obtaining righteousness (or, salvation). In fact, these requests were to be made of Gentiles who had already come to faith in Jesus Christ. Instead, they pertained to...

- ✓ Separation from the world,
- ✓ And, maintaining fellowship between brethren, especially between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

In his epistle to the church at Rome, the Apostle Paul speaks about the same matter: *"It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak."* (Romans 14:21).

3. KEEPING THE SABBATH.

- a. There are many facets to the Law of Moses (moral laws, civil laws, food laws). However, what to do about the Sabbath is probably the main topic of concern among Christians, who are identifying with Israel, and seeking to discover their Jewish roots.
- b. Keeping the Old Covenant Sabbath (sunset Friday to sunset Saturday) is not required under the New Covenant. One can attend church and worship the Lord any day of the week, including the Sabbath. The Apostle Paul warned Christians not to allow anyone to judge them pertaining to the Sabbath:

"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or A SABBATH DAY. These are a shadow (an image, or type) of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17 NIV).

- c. Actually, God did not originally establish the Sabbath as the day to attend church, but rather, as a day of rest:

“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.” (Deuteronomy 5:12-14).

- d. New Covenant believers can still set aside a day of rest, or a day of worship, but it does not have to be the Old Covenant Sabbath:

“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.” (Romans 14:5 NIV).

- e. Remember, according to the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus broke the Sabbath:

“Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him: Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” (Mark 2:23-24).

- f. Jesus’ reply revealed that the Sabbath was not a requirement for righteousness, but to give man a break from the rigors of life:

“...The Sabbath was made on account, and FOR THE SAKE OF MAN, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27-28 AMP).

4. Yet, there is a **TRUE SABBATH** for New Covenant believers:

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters GOD’S REST also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.” (Hebrews 4:9-11 NIV).

- a. In Colossians 2:16-17, we learned that the Sabbath was fulfilled in Christ. Therefore, **THE TRUE SABBATH** (the Sabbath that remains) is found in Jesus Christ, not in the keeping of days!
- b. This true Sabbath is found only in a relationship with Jesus Christ. We enter into **GOD'S REST** by accepting Jesus as the Christ, and then, continue to find **REST IN CHRIST** as we learn to live by faith in the promises of God's Word to provide for our every need:

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us (New Covenant believers) as well as to them (unbelieving Israel), but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For WE WHO HAVE BELIEVED do enter that rest...”
(Hebrews 4:1-3).

5. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS BY FAITH:

“But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way: Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”
(Romans 10:6-9).

Author's Notes:

By researching various Bible study helps, one discovers that the definition of righteousness is: *“The character, or quality of being right before God.”*

The CHARACTER of being right refers to right actions, by which believers should live, in order to conform to the standards of God's Word.

The QUALITY of being right (or, being justified) pertains to the free gift of righteousness, whereby all who believe in Jesus Christ are brought into a right relationship (or, right standing) with God.

In this chapter, we are focusing upon the QUALITY of being right through faith in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 speaks of a great exchange that takes place when we accept Jesus: *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (NIV).

- a. The Apostle Paul spoke of his own countrymen, who were seeking to establish their own righteousness by keeping the Law of Moses; a problem that still exists today among Religious Jews:

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:1-4).

- b. They failed to recognize that their father Abraham – from whom sprang the entire Jewish race – was justified by faith:

“Then He brought him outside and said: Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them. And He said to him: So shall your descendants be. And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:5-6 – also see Romans 4:3).

Author’s Notes:

Although salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, the Law of Moses should not be scorned, disdained, or taken lightly. In fact, according to the New Testament, **THE LAW IS HOLY:** *“Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”* (Romans 7:12). Without the Law of Moses, we would not be able to **IDENTIFY SIN:** *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said: You shall not covet.”* (Romans 7:7).

Therefore, certain portions of the Law of Moses are still valid. For example, The Ten Commandments (and, those laws that amplify The Ten Commandments). These laws continue to identify sin, provide guidelines for morality, and teach us how to live godly lives! Apart from obsolete animal sacrifices, and other laws rescinded by the New Testament (see Mark 7:14-19, Romans 14:17, and 1 Timothy 4:1-5), the Law of Moses is actually a good way to live one’s life.

Yet, it must be continuously emphasized that no one can be saved, justified, or made righteous through the Law: *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”* (Galatians 2:16).

- c. Under the New Covenant, the righteousness of God – **APART FROM THE LAW** – has been made available entirely through faith in Jesus Christ:

*“But now the righteousness of God **APART FROM THE LAW** is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference (between Jews and Gentiles), for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:21-24).*

- d. Our redemption (and thus, our righteousness) is based entirely upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins:

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:7).

- e. Therefore, righteousness is a free gift of God’s grace:

*“For if by the one man’s offense (Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden) death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of **THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17).*

- f. Pertaining to righteousness (for both Jews and Gentiles), **JESUS IS THE END** (the conclusion, the termination) **OF THE LAW**:

*“Christ is the end of the law so that there may be **RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES**.” (Romans 10:4 NIV).*

Author’s Notes:

The re-gathering of Israel (the Aliyah) is an astounding testimony to the truth of God’s Word. Restoring the land God promised to his original chosen people is a strong testimony of God’s faithfulness. Turning the wilderness (or, barren land) into a fruitful field is equally a fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel.

Yet, the Restoration of Israel will not be complete until the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob receive the gift of righteousness, which is available only through faith in Jesus as the Christ.

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 16 – The Blessing of Abraham

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“Now the LORD had said to Abram (or, Abraham): Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

- a. The blessing of Abraham involves seven specific blessings...
 - 1) I will make you a great nation.
 - 2) I will bless you.
 - 3) I will make your name great.
 - 4) You shall be a blessing.
 - 5) I will bless those who bless you.
 - 6) I will curse him who curses you.
 - 7) In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

2. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

- a. INITIALLY, and CONTINUOUSLY, the above blessings belong to Israel (the Jewish race of people). The Lord appeared to Isaac, and restated his promise to bless Abraham’s physical descendants:

“Then the LORD appeared to him and said: Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” (Genesis 26:2-5).

- b. Isaac prophesied to his son, Jacob, and restated God's promise to bless their descendants:

"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; AND GIVE YOU THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham." (Genesis 28:3-4).

- c. However, unbeknown to most Christians, the blessing of Abraham also belongs to Gentiles, if they have accepted Jesus Christ:

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. He redeemed us in order that THE BLESSING GIVEN TO ABRAHAM MIGHT COME TO THE GENTILES THROUGH CHRIST JESUS, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." (Galatians 3:13-14 NIV).

- d. SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING, everyone who accepts Jesus becomes a descendant of Abraham:

"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29 NIV).

3. IMPORTANT EMPHASES in understanding the blessing of Abraham.

- a. God's promise concerning **THE LAND** (the land of Canaan; renamed the land of Israel) belongs exclusively to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

"He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying: To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance." (Psalm 105:8-12).

- b. In addition to the land, those other blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants (as stated in the foundational scriptures) are also **PHYSICAL BLESSINGS**.

- c. However, there is a SPIRITUAL BLESSING, which corresponds to each physical blessing. These spiritual blessings, beginning with the promise of the Holy Spirit, belong to all who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah (Gentiles as well as Jews):

“That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”
(Galatians 3:14).

Author’s Notes:

Probably, you have noticed that the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob qualify for a DOUBLE BLESSING.

By virtue of being the physical seed of Abraham, they inherit the land of Israel, and the physical blessings of Abraham. Then, when they accept Jesus as Messiah, they also inherit the spiritual blessings, which correspond to (or, parallel) the physical blessings.

While this is indeed an honor for the Jewish people, it should not be an item for jealousy among Gentile believers. As we shall learn, the spiritual blessings of Abraham far outweigh the physical blessings.

4. KEY UNDERSTANDING for experiencing the blessing of Abraham.

- a. The physical blessings came upon Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and subsequently upon those from among their physical descendants, WHO BELIEVED GOD (they believed his Word, obeyed his Word, and waited in faith for the Messiah):

“Consider Abraham: HE BELIEVED GOD, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Galatians 3:6 NIV).

- b. The spiritual blessings now come upon the spiritual descendants of Abraham, because THEY BELIEVE GOD (they have received the Messiah, they believe his Word, and obey his Word):

“Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying: In you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” (Galatians 3:7-9).

5. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:
BLESSING # 1 – I will make you a great nation.

- a. God indeed made a great nation of Israel, reaching the pinnacle of greatness during the reign of Solomon:

“King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. All the kings of the earth sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.” (2 Chronicles 9:22-23 NIV).

- b. But, God is also making a great nation of the spiritual descendants of Abraham:

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, A HOLY NATION, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

6. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:
BLESSING # 2 – I will bless you.

- a. The Lord greatly blessed Abraham, and throughout the ages, has blessed many of his physical descendants:

“Abram (or, Abraham) was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.” (Genesis 13:2).

“The king (Solomon) made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland.” (2 Chronicles 9:27).

- b. God has also promised to bless the spiritual seed of Abraham:

“And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always and under all circumstances and whatever the need, be self sufficient – possessing enough to require no aid or support, and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation.” (2 Corinthians 9:8 AMP).

7. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS: **BLESSING # 3** – I will make your name great.

- a. God made Abraham's name to become great. He caused many of Abraham's physical descendants to become great. To name only a few: Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, and the greatest name of all – Jesus:

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. HE WILL BE GREAT, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:31-33).

- b. But also, to the spiritual descendants of Abraham – all who are willing to humble themselves before the Lord – God has promised to make their names great:

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and HE WILL LIFT YOU UP”
(or, he will exalt you). (James 4:10).

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, THAT HE MAY EXALT YOU IN DUE TIME, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Author's Notes:

This world is filled with people who are striving to make their own names great. Whether through athletics, business, politics, the entertainment industry, or even through crime, many people (like Nimrod of old - see Genesis 11:4) are trying to make a name for themselves.

To the contrary, if the Lord's redeemed people (the spiritual seed of Abraham) will simply humble themselves under God's mighty hand, and be faithful to do what the Lord has called them to do - **IN HIS TIMING** - God will make their names to become great. God will cause their lives to become valuable and important; he will cause his people to increase, and become influential, and he will enable them to do great and mighty things, but for the sake of the kingdom of God.

And God's people, in turn, will give him all the glory, which is exactly the opposite of people in the world, who seek their own glory.

8. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:
BLESSING # 4 – You shall be a blessing.

- a. Throughout the ages, many of God’s original chosen people have become renowned for being generous. From the Bible we see the generosity of King David, after he brought the Ark of the Covenant into the tabernacle he had erected:

“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. THEN HE DISTRIBUTED TO EVERYONE OF ISRAEL, BOTH MAN AND WOMAN, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins.” (1 Chronicles 16:1-3).

- b. Unfortunately, many Christians (the spiritual descendants of Abraham) have much to learn about this blessing. They prefer to be blessed, rather than be a blessing. They fail to honor God with HIS TITHE, and with THEIR OFFERINGS (in addition to the tithe). As a result, they fail to fully experience the blessing of Abraham. All Christians need to receive a revelation of truth from these words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ:

“...Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said: It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (from Acts 20:35).

9. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:
BLESSING # 5 – I will bless those who bless you.

- a. Through millennia, the Lord has blessed those who blessed Israel. From a previous lesson: *“Learning to Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem,”* we learned that God will prosper those who love Jerusalem, and pray for her peace.
- b. God will also bless those who are a blessing to Abraham’s spiritual seed. The Apostle Paul described how the saints in the Church at Philippi had provided for his needs, and then explained that God would bless those Christians, because they had blessed him ➤

“Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:18-19).

10. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:
BLESSING # 6 – I will curse him who curses you.

- a. In the Bible, nations fell into ruin because they cursed (pronounced judgment upon) the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. From Isaiah 13:19-22, the Lord declares:

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will caper there. The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, and her days will not be prolonged.”

- b. Be assured that the Lord will not overlook those who are cursing the spiritual descendants of Abraham:

“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written: VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY, says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

Author’s Notes:

Christians are required to forgive those who have wronged them, rather than exacting revenge. Romans 12:17-18 (which precedes the above scripture ↑) says: *“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”*

Because of the emphasis on forgiveness, most Christians believe a matter is settled once they forgive. Yet, the matter is not settled with God. Be assured that he will repay those who have cursed his redeemed people!

We will have more to say about the matter of God’s judgment in a future lesson, entitled: *“Judgment of the Nations.”*

11. COMPARING PHYSICAL BLESSINGS AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS:
BLESSING # 7 – In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

- a. Throughout history, the Jewish people have been a great blessing in ways that affected the entire world: advancements in agriculture, medicine, science, technology, and many other areas.
- b. Abraham’s spiritual descendants (initially, believing Jews from the early church, but then also believing Gentiles) bring an even greater blessing to all the families of the earth:

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion: Your God reigns!” (Isaiah 52:7).

“Then Peter began to speak (to the household of Cornelius): I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” (Acts 10:34-38 NIV).

- 1) From a future scene in Heaven, we see the confirmation that **ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH** were indeed blessed by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

“...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood OUT OF EVERY TRIBE and TONGUE and PEOPLE and NATION, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” (from Revelation 5:9-10).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 17 – Provoking God’s Chosen People to Jealousy

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (Romans 10:1-3).

“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, TO PROVOKE (to stimulate, to excite) THEM TO JEALOUSY, salvation has come to the Gentiles.” (Romans 11:11).

2. **QUESTIONS:** How can Gentile Christians provoke unbelieving Jews to jealousy? How will unsaved Jews recognize that salvation has come to the Gentiles?

- a. **THEORY # 1** – Gentile Christians should trust in Bible promises for financial prosperity, and become so blessed, that God’s original chosen people will become jealous, and desire to know Jesus as Messiah. Religious Jews would certainly recognize that God has promised to bless the people with whom he is in covenant:

“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you POWER TO GET WEALTH, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” (Deuteronomy 8:18).

- 1) But, this is not the primary means by which God will provoke the Jews to jealousy. There are no examples in the Bible of Jews believing in Jesus, because Gentile believers became rich (however, we will say more about this later in the lesson).

b. **THEORY # 2** – Gentile believers should diligently study the Bible, so they could reason with Jews, and provoke them to jealousy by their superior understanding of the scriptures.

1) The Apostle Paul regularly tried to reason with the Jews, and sure enough, it provoked them to jealousy, but not in the way Paul had hoped:

“When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days HE REASONED WITH THEM from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ, he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. BUT THE JEWS WERE JEALOUS; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here.” (Acts 17:1-6 NIV).

2) Thankfully, some of the chosen people are more reasonable than others:

“Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore, MANY OF THEM BELIEVED...” (Acts 17:10-12).

3) So, it is possible to provoke Jews to jealousy by reasoning with them. However, as the scriptures reveal, reasoning with Gentiles was much easier. While the Apostle Paul waited in Athens, he spoke about Jesus and the resurrection to certain Gentile philosophers. They said to him ➤

“...May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore, we want to know what these things mean. For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either TO TELL, OR TO HEAR SOME NEW THING.” (from Acts 17:19-21 – see verses 16 to 34 for complete account).

3. PROVOKING JEWS TO JEALOUSY; **A SCRIPTURAL KEY:**

“FOR JEWS REQUEST A SIGN, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block (or, an offense) and to the Greeks foolishness.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).

NOTE: The King James Version says the Jews REQUIRE a sign. The Amplified Bible says they DEMANDINGLY ASK for signs and wonders.

- a. Jesus once said to the Jews: *“...an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign...”* He was not saying signs were evil, but rather, the generation of people. We know this to be true, because following this statement, Jesus gave them a sign:

“...no sign will be given to it (the evil, adulterous generation) EXCEPT THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAH. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:39-40).

- b. However, many were not evil and adulterous, and they believed in Jesus specifically because of signs and wonders:

“...many of the people believed in Him, and said: When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?” (John 7:31).

- c. Genuine signs and wonders – FROM THE LORD – are powerful tools of evangelism, especially to the Jews!

4. SIGNS AND WONDERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

- a. Let us recall what happened among the Jews after the followers of Jesus were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues (see scriptures, next page →):

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem, JEWS, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another: Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born ... we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God ... Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS were added to them.” (Acts 2:5-8, 11, 41).

- b. After a lame man was healed by the beautiful gate (see Acts 3:1-10), a large crowd gathered, and Peter preached the Gospel. Because of that miraculous sign, a great thing happened that day:

“...many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND.” (Acts 4:4).

- c. Continuing signs and wonders in the early church:

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch ... And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.” (Acts 5:12, 14).

- d. Equally true today, many unbelieving Jews require a sign in order to change beliefs, discard traditions, or overcome fears that have been ingrained within them for millennia.

5. BECOMING A SIGN AND A WONDER.

- a. Remember, Gentiles are often won to Jesus Christ by employing THE WISDOM OF GOD. However, for unbelieving Jews, it may require THE POWER OF GOD:

“For Jews request (require, or demandingly ask for) a sign, and Greeks (or, Gentiles) seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).

b. Becoming a Sign and a Wonder; **EXAMPLE # 1** – Manifestations of God's love.

- 1) During the Restoration of Israel in these End Times, the love of God that Gentile believers demonstrate toward Israel, and toward the Jewish people, is potentially the greatest of signs and wonders!

Author's Notes:

I have spoken with Christians who have frequent contact with Jews living in Israel. Such Christians have shared that the Jews in Israel are puzzled by their actions, and often ask: "*WHY DO YOU LOVE US?*" This is an intriguing question, because much of the world is anti-Israel, and hates the Jewish people.

I can personally answer this question by explaining: "*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose only begotten Son died for my sins, has put his love into my heart for Israel, for Jerusalem, and for his original chosen people!*"

As we proceed further into these volatile End Times, and Satan continues to stir up the enemies of God against Israel, and anti-Semitism increases throughout the world, the days may come when the only friends Israel has on this earth are born again Christians.

Therefore, genuine manifestations of God's love, operating through Gentile believers, will increasingly become as signs and wonders to the Jewish people. Such unconditional love will provoke some Jews to jealousy, and compel them to seek the truth about the Messiah they once rejected.

Earlier, we mentioned the possibility of God financially blessing the Gentiles as a means of provoking Jews to jealousy. If Gentile Christians will give of their finances to help God's chosen people make Aliyah, or minister to the needs of Jewish people once they have returned to the land of their fathers, it may indeed provoke them to jealousy!

c. Becoming a Sign and a Wonder; **EXAMPLE # 2** – Manifestations of God's power:

"And these SIGNS will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents (meaning they will have dominion over Satan and demons), and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mark 16:17-18).

- 1) Christians who have the opportunity of ministering to Jews should expect God's power to be manifested through them, just as the early disciples experienced:

“So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through THE ACCOMPANYING SIGNS.” (Mark 16:19-20).

“Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power...” (from 1 Thessalonians 1:5 NIV).

- d. Becoming a Sign and a Wonder; **EXAMPLE # 3** – Manifestations of God's divine protection:

“LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, there is no help for him in God.” (Psalm 3:1-2).

Author's Notes:

In today's world, about the most dangerous thing a person can be, is Jewish. The Jewish race of people, above all the peoples of the earth (especially those in Israel), need to experience manifestations of God's divine protection.

Through our prayers, the body of Christ can help provide that protection. But remember, Gentile Christians are supposed to provoke the Jews to jealousy. So, we are not talking about hiding in our *“Prayer Closet,”* and praying for God's protection upon his chosen people. Gentile Christians who know unbelieving Jews should look them in the eyes, and declare: *“By faith in the Word of God, I am praying for God's divine safety and protection to be upon you, and your family.”*

- 1) One portion of scripture that promises divine protection is the 3rd Psalm. Gentile believers should share that entire psalm with their Jewish friends, but especially emphasize that they are praying verse 3 on their behalf:

“But You, O LORD, are A SHIELD FOR ME (a shield around me – NIV), my glory and the One who lifts up my head.” (Psalm 3:3).

- e. Becoming a Sign and a Wonder; **EXAMPLE # 4** – Manifestations of dreams, visions, or visitations:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams ... And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:17, 21).

- 1) One of the most famous Jewish Christians came to faith in Jesus Christ, because of such supernatural happenings:

“And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? And he said, Who are You, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads. So he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what do You want me to do? And the Lord said to him, Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” (Acts 9:3-6).

Author's Notes:

Through the years, I have heard testimonies, and read accounts of Jewish people - other than the Apostle Paul, or other Jews in the Bible - who came to faith in Jesus Christ, because they experienced a supernatural dream, vision, or visitation from the Lord.

Therefore, if you have Jewish friends or acquaintances, do not hesitate to ask the Lord to reveal the knowledge of the truth about Jesus Christ to them in dreams, visions, or visitations. God promised that his Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh in the last days, and such manifestations would take place.

Again, I should emphasize that Gentile believers must be bold in provoking unbelieving Jews to jealousy. Gentile Christians should not be afraid to tell their Jewish friends that they are praying for signs and wonders to be manifested in their lives. According to Psalm 102:13-16, these End Times are: **THE SET TIME TO FAVOR ZION**. Therefore, on behalf of the Jewish people, we should expect great signs and mighty wonders from the Lord.

Remember, it was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the Apostle Paul wrote: *“For the Jews require a sign....”* Indeed, Paul himself required a sign!

6. What will the results be, if Gentile Christians succeed in provoking the Jews to jealousy? LIFE FROM THE DEAD:

“Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but LIFE FROM THE DEAD?” (the Apostle Paul – Romans 11:11-15 NIV).

7. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

In Malachi 4:5-6, the Bible says: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

Malachi's prophecy was initially fulfilled during the days of John the Baptist (see Matthew 17:10-13). In these End Times, it will be fulfilled again!

The prophecy obviously has a literal application. When God is invited into the home, it often brings healing to families.

In addition, during these days of provoking God's chosen people to jealousy, these verses will also have a prophetic application. Specifically...

- THE FATHERS is symbolic of Israel, and
- THE CHILDREN is symbolic of The Church.

In these End Times, God is raising up prophets, who are going forth in the Spirit and Anointing of Elijah. Their words are miraculously turning the hearts of Israel (The Fathers) toward The Church (The Children). Many of God's original chosen people (in Israel, and elsewhere) are recognizing that in the TRUE CHURCH of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have a friend.

Likewise, the words of the prophets are turning the hearts of The Church (The Children) toward Israel (The Fathers). God's redeemed people are recognizing that Israel's restoration is the work of God, and a part of his Plan of Redemption. The Church is being stirred up to stand with Israel in these last days.

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 18 – The One New Man; fulfilling The Great Commission

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

*“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh – who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands – that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, **WHO HAS MADE BOTH ONE** (Jews and Gentiles), and has broken down the middle wall of separation (or, middle wall of partition – KJV), having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **ONE NEW MAN** from the two, thus making peace.” (Ephesians 2:11-15)*

Author’s Notes:

I have been in church for most of my life. From the above scriptures, I can remember hearing about the MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION. Preachers spoke of a wall that separated man from God. Then, when we accepted Jesus as our Savior, that wall was broken down, and we now have fellowship with God.

I suppose this is an acceptable application. Symbolically, there was a wall of separation between us and God before we accepted Jesus: *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”* (Isaiah 59:2).

However, the wall spoken about in our foundational scriptures is a separation between Jews and Gentiles; a wall that is broken down only when Jews and Gentiles become one in Jesus Christ. The early church experienced a breaking down of that wall of separation. During these End Times, these scriptures will be fulfilled again, and we will witness a further breaking down of the wall of separation, and a fresh emergence of the ONE NEW MAN.

2. Jesus once explained to his disciples, WHO WERE ALL JEWS:

“...other sheep I have which are not of this fold (or, not of Israel), them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be ONE FLOCK (which consists of both Jews and Gentiles) and one shepherd.” (John 10:16).

a. Later, he prayed to the Heavenly Father:

*“I do not pray for these alone (these Jewish disciples), but also for those who will believe in Me through their word (not just other Jewish converts, but also Gentiles), that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, **THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT YOU SENT ME.**” (John 17:20-21).*

b. During his earthly ministry, Jesus frequently prayed. Some of his prayers were quickly answered (see John 11:41-44). Some are being continuously answered (see John 17:15). Others – like the above prayer – have not yet been fully answered. One thing is certain; the Heavenly Father will eventually FULLY answer this prayer!

Author's Notes:

I have often heard the above prayer of Jesus explained in the following manner: If the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and the Pentecostals could all be in one accord, then our evangelistic efforts would be more effective. If all who confess Jesus as Lord could be in unity, rather than squabbling over doctrinal differences, then finally, the world would believe the Father sent Jesus!

It is true that all who confess Jesus should be in unity. In the book of Acts, we see the effectiveness of the early church, when the apostles were all in one accord: *“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And **THEY WERE ALL WITH ONE ACCORD** in Solomon's Porch. Yet, none of the rest dared join them (no one else attempted to become an apostle), but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.” (Acts 5:12-14).*

However, considering the geographical and cultural context of his prayer, Jesus was actually praying for a time when Jewish believers and Gentile believers would become one! He was praying for the emergence of the ONE NEW MAN, which the early church experienced, and which The Church of the End Times will increasingly experience during these days of Israel's restoration.

- c. Realizing this prayer of Jesus has not yet been fully answered, we come to a startling revelation...
 - **The most effective days of evangelism will occur only when the ONE NEW MAN emerges in The Church, and Jews and Gentiles become one in purpose to complete The Great Commission! Then, the world will believe the Heavenly Father sent Jesus!**

3. OBSERVATIONS PERTAINING TO THE GREAT COMMISSION.

- a. The Great Commission was first delivered to Jewish disciples:

“Then the eleven disciples (minus Judas Iscariot) went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying: All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” (Matthew 28:16-20).

- b. The baptism with the Holy Spirit (power to fulfill The Great Commission) was first imparted to 120 Jewish followers of Christ (see Acts 1:15):

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

- c. Later, the infilling of the Holy Spirit (and thus, power to fulfill The Great Commission) was also delivered to the Gentiles:

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, Then God has also granted TO THE GENTILES repentance to life.” (Acts 11:15-18).

- d. The Apostle Paul's missionary team, which was quite effective in fulfilling The Great Commission, consisted of the ONE NEW MAN:

“My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him). Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. THESE ARE THE ONLY JEWS AMONG MY FELLOW WORKERS FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and they have proved a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.” (Colossians 4:10-14 NIV).

Author's Notes:

There has always been a Jewish presence in The Church (see Romans 11:5). However, there is evidence, both scripturally and historically, that Satan has not only attempted to annihilate the Jewish race of people from the earth; he has also tried to eliminate the Jewish presence from The Church.

During the ministry of Paul, Acts 18:1-2 reveals the following: *“After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (BECAUSE CLAUDIUS HAD COMMANDED ALL THE JEWS TO DEPART FROM ROME)...”* This was a preparatory effort by Satan to eliminate the Jewish presence from The Church, and to eventually move the seat of authority in The Church from Jerusalem to Rome.

In 325 AD, during The First Church Council at Nicea - which Jewish church leaders were not allowed to attend - Constantine (Emperor of the so-called Holy Roman Empire), sent a letter to Gentile church leaders, urging them to disassociate with anything Jewish, and to adopt Easter as the day to celebrate Christ's resurrection. He also urged church leaders to eliminate the Jewish presence from The Church, calling them murderers of our Lord.

In the process of time, The Great Commission - as Jesus originally delivered it to his disciples - almost vanished from The Church. Certainly, other factors contributed to the departure from SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, but one definite factor was the attempt to eliminate the Jewish presence from The Church. Remember, Jesus said the world would believe the Father sent him when Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians became one!

- e. During this End Times Restoration of Israel, the prayer of Jesus will be fully answered; The Great Commission will be completed. A strong Jewish presence is being restored to The Church, and in the days leading up to the return of Jesus, we will increasingly see a fresh emergence of the ONE NEW MAN:

“Now if their stumbling – their lapse, their transgression – has so enriched the world [at large], and if [Israel’s] failure means such riches for the Gentiles, think what an enrichment and greater advantage will follow their full reinstatement!” (Romans 11:12 AMP).

4. A POTENTIAL HINDRANCE TO THE PRAYER OF JESUS.

- a. The numerous varieties of Gentile congregations, and the growing number of Messianic, Jewish congregations, often structure their worship services, and church activities according to CULTURAL PREFERENCES
- b. Maintaining one’s cultural identity is not wrong. Actually, there is a strong case for declaring that God was the originator of cultural diversity:

“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times, and the boundaries of their dwellings.” (Acts 17:26).

- c. However – FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL – it could become necessary to lay aside one’s cultural preferences:

“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law, but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I DO ALL THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL, that I may share in its blessings.” (the Apostle Paul – 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 NIV).

Author's Notes:

Maintaining one's cultural identity is not wrong. However, whenever cultural practices involve HONORING, or ACKNOWLEDGING A FALSE GOD, that part of a person's culture must be discarded. In the Ten Commandments, the Lord reveals that he is a jealous God, and warns against the worship of false gods: "*You shall have no other gods before Me.*" (Exodus 20:3).

I believe God's warning goes beyond the actual worshipping of idols, and even includes what some might consider harmless practices, such as engaging in cultural songs and dances, participating in cultural rituals, or repeating cultural slogans that honor, or acknowledge false gods.

5. A MORE SERIOUS THREAT TO THE PRAYER OF JESUS.

- a. As previously discussed, there is a strong, anti-Semitic spirit in the world. Strangely, this ungodly spirit sometimes rears its ugly head in churches or organizations labeled as Christian. In reality, such churches or organizations could not be genuinely Christian:

"If someone says, I love God, and hates his brother, HE IS A LIAR, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

- b. Equally so, many Jews have been taught to mistrust, and separate themselves from Gentiles, especially Gentile Christians. From the writings of the Apostle Paul, we discover that the early church also experienced such problems:

"Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy." (Galatians 2:11-13).

- c. In order for Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians to genuinely become one, to the extent that – THE WORLD WILL BELIEVE THE FATHER SENT JESUS – there must be repentance, and forgiveness from both sides ➤

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32)

6. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

- a. God’s Word will not fail; the prayer of Jesus will be fully answered! As we progress further into these End times, and more of God’s original chosen people accept Jesus as the Messiah, **Watch for a fresh emergence of the ONE NEW MAN...**
 - ✓ Watch for churches to employ both Jews and Gentiles for their pastoral staff.
 - ✓ Watch for evangelistic crusade teams to include both Jews and Gentiles.
 - ✓ Watch for missionary outreach teams to include both Jews and Gentiles.
 - ✓ Watch for Christian music groups to include both Jews and Gentiles
 - ✓ Watch for marriages between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

Author’s Notes:

In the nation of Israel, the fresh emergence of the ONE NEW MAN will be a significantly greater sign to the world that the Heavenly Father has sent Jesus, than Jews and Gentiles becoming one in other nations. In Israel, when Jews and Gentiles become one in Jesus Christ, it often translates into JEWS AND ARABS becoming one!

In an earlier lesson: *“Enemies of Israel, Enemies of God,”* we looked at the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau (see page 80), and likened it to a prophetic fulfillment between the descendants of Jacob and the descendants of Esau. When Jews and Arabs, who have been bitter enemies for millennia, begin to walk in love toward one another, the world will be astounded, and even the most cynical will have to admit: *“THIS MUST BE GOD!”*

Yet, there is still much work to be accomplished. Arabs who come to faith in Jesus Christ are often strongly taught REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY, and thus, they retain their hatred of Israel. Arab believers living in Israel, and throughout the Middle East (and, elsewhere) need to receive a fresh revelation from God’s Holy Spirit, pertaining to the End Times Restoration of Israel.

- b. As we progress further into these End Times, and increasingly see the emergence of the ONE NEW MAN, could these be the days spoken of by the Prophet, Zechariah?

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying: Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also. Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying: Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zechariah 8:20-23).

7. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

From the Amplified Bible, listen again to Romans 11:12 (used earlier on page 139): *"Now if their stumbling - their lapse, their transgression - has so enriched the world [at large], and if [Israel's] failure means such riches for the Gentiles, think what an enrichment and greater advantage will follow their full reinstatement!"*

Israel's rejection of Jesus caused a great blessing to come upon the entire world - Salvation came to the Gentiles! Yet, the above scripture indicates that a greater blessing will come upon the world as Israel is spiritually revived, and God's original chosen people are grafted back into The Olive Tree. What could possibly be a greater blessing than salvation coming to the Gentiles?

I believe the Holy Spirit has given me the following revelation: In these End Times, as the True Church of Jesus Christ embraces the Restoration of Israel, and welcomes the fresh emergence of the One New Man, we will see...

□ A RE-EMERGENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

God's people (both Jews and Gentiles) will begin to walk in love and harmony, and God's miraculous power, which freely flowed in the early church, will once again be manifested in the church of the End Times (see Acts 2:42-47).

And, the world will believe the Father sent Jesus!

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 19 – Rebuilding the Tabernacle of David

Author’s Notes:

When David was king over all of Israel, he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (for historical background, read 1 Samuel 4:1 through 1 Samuel 7:2). On his first attempt, David failed to transport the Ark in the manner required by God, thereby causing the death of Uzza (see 1 Chronicles 13). Three months later, he transported the Ark in the correct manner, and placed it in a tent, which he had set up in the City of David (see 1 Chronicles, chapters 15 & 16).

Normally, the Ark of the Covenant rested in The Most Holy Place, behind the veil in the Tabernacle, and was accessible only to the High Priest (from the family of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi), and then, only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Yet, during this brief period in Israel’s history, many had access to the Ark. This was a foreshadowing of the New Covenant, when, because of the sacrificial blood of Jesus, everyone could have access to God (see Hebrews 10:19).

Approximately 250 years later, Amos prophesied about the tent that David had erected for the Ark of God (see scriptures below ↓).

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does this thing. Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of my people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:11-15).

a. OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PROPHECY BY AMOS.

- 1) Amos prophesied that the Lord would raise up (or, rebuild) the tabernacle of David, and this work will include a remnant of Arabs, and all races of the Gentiles: *"...the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord...."*
- 2) Amos further declared that the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David will take place at a time when God brings his people, Israel, back into the land promised to their fathers: *"I will bring back the captives of My people Israel...."*
- 3) The rebuilding of David's tabernacle is specifically connected with the END TIMES, because God says: *"I will plant Israel in their own land, NEVER AGAIN TO BE UPROOTED from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God."* (NIV).

2. During the Council at Jerusalem, when the Jewish leaders of the early church were discussing what to require of Gentiles who were coming to faith in Christ, the Apostle James referred to the prophecy of Amos, and further clarified the meaning:

"And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things." (Acts 15:13-17).

- a. Rebuilding David's tabernacle is a SPIRITUAL matter. It does not refer to rebuilding a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. These verses are referring to A NEW TEMPLE (a new dwelling place for God) that would include all the Gentiles as well as Jews:

*"After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that **THE REST OF MANKIND** (other than Jews) may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My Name..."* (from above scriptures ↑).

3. THE EARLY CHURCH REFLECTED THE REBUILT TABERNACLE OF DAVID (included Gentiles as well as Jews):

“When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ, he said. Some of the JEWS were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of god-fearing Greeks (GENTILES) and not a few prominent women.” (Acts 17:1-4 NIV).

- a. However, as revealed in the last lesson, during The First Church Council at Nicea (325 AD), Constantine urged the Gentile church leaders to eliminate the Jewish presence from The Church. In the process of time, The Church became largely a Gentile church, and the rebuilt tabernacle of David once again fell into ruin.
- b. But now, in these End Times, God has begun the spiritual reviving of his original chosen people. God is rebuilding the tabernacle of David again. Only this time, rather than “*grafting-in*” the Gentiles, he is restoring the Jewish presence to The Church:

“And they also (the Jews), if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN. For if you (Gentiles) were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” (Romans 11:23-25).

- c. The rebuilt tabernacle of David is the **TRUE CHURCH** of the End Times, a church that includes Jews, Arabs, and all the Gentiles!

4. A DEEPER LOOK INTO REBUILDING DAVID’S TABERNACLE.

- a. After David placed the Ark of God in the tent, he continued to take certain actions, that could be described as RESTORING ORDER to the House of the Lord (see scriptures, next page →):

“And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. Of these, twenty-four thousand were to look after the work of the house of the LORD, six thousand were officers and judges, four thousand were gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the LORD with musical instruments, which I made, said David, for giving praise.” (1 Chronicles 23:2-5).

5. QUESTION: How does David restoring order to the House of the Lord in his days, now apply to restoring order in the TRUE CHURCH of the End Times (the rebuilt tabernacle of David)?

a. THE WORK OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD:

“...Of these, twenty-four thousand were to look after THE WORK OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD...” (from above scriptures ↑).

1) In today’s churches, many pastors are burdened down with administration, rather than devoting themselves to the Word of God and prayer. Worse yet, some pastors are cleaning toilets in the church, vacuuming the carpets, and mowing the church lawn. The leaders of the early church (Jewish leaders) understood the role of the Levite, and established similar responsibilities:

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them, AND WILL GIVE OUR ATTENTION TO PRAYER AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.” (Acts 6:1-4 NIV).

2) In the End Times Church (rebuilt tabernacle of David), the role of New Covenant Levites – now known as DEACONS – will be put back into its proper order.

Author's Notes:

As clearly established in Acts 6:1-4 (previous page ←), the responsibility of the deacon is to serve, not to lead. In too many of today's churches, deacons have been incorrectly given the power to hire and fire the pastor, and tell the pastor what he can, or cannot preach.

Of course, if deacons are FAITHFUL TO SERVE, there is the potential of being promoted to an office of leadership. Philip, one of the original deacons, was promoted to the office of the evangelist (see Acts 8:1-13 and Acts 21:8).

b. OFFICERS AND JUDGES:

"...six thousand were officers and judges" (overseers and governors in the House of the Lord). (from 1 Chronicles 23:2-5).

1) In the End Times Church (the rebuilt tabernacle of David), there will be a restoration of New Covenant church government:

"And God has APPOINTED (set forth, established) these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues."
(1 Corinthians 12:28 – also see Ephesians 4:11).

Author's Notes:

In many of today's churches, the offices of the apostle and prophet have been eliminated. In their place, those with the gift of administrations have been elevated to lead the church. As a result, we have churches that are well organized, and accurately administered. However, with the absence of apostles and prophets, such churches do not have a fresh word from the Lord.

Of course, administrators who are called by the Lord, and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are indeed a blessing to the church. However, they need to function within the church in the order in which God appointed them!

Similarly, many churches have also eliminated miracles, gifts of healings, and varieties of tongues (or, intercessors). As a result, apart from initial salvation, such churches are void of the power of God.

1 Corinthians 12:28 (above ↑) reveals that God appointed all these offices of ministry in the church, and in their proper order. There is no scriptural evidence for declaring that he later eliminated some of them!

c. THE GATEKEEPERS:

“...four thousand were GATEKEEPERS...” (from 1 Chronicles 23:2-5).

BIBLE DEFINITION: Gatekeeper – A keeper of the door. The gatekeeper guarded an entrance. As examples, the entrance to a city, or the entrance to the Temple. A gatekeeper was stationed at any entrance through which someone unwanted might enter, especially at night.

- 1) From 1 Chronicles 9:26-29, we learn that in the House of the Lord, gatekeepers often had greater responsibilities than just guarding the entrances to the tabernacle:

“...the four principal gatekeepers, who were Levites, were entrusted with the responsibility for the rooms and treasuries in the house of God. They would spend the night stationed around the house of God, because they had to guard it; and they had charge of the key for opening it each morning. Some of them were in charge of the articles used in the temple service; they counted them when they were brought in and when they were taken out. Others were assigned to take care of the furnishings and all the other articles of the sanctuary, as well as the flour and wine, and the oil, incense and spices.” (NIV).

- 2) God no longer dwells in a temple made with men’s hands. Under the New Covenant, the body of Christ (The Church of Jesus Christ) is the Temple of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). Yet, from the teachings of Jesus, we discover that the ministry of the gatekeeper is still valid, and would apply to The Church of the End Times (the rebuilt tabernacle of David). Pertaining to his return, Jesus said:

“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper (or, GATEKEEPER) to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming – in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning – lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” (Mark 13:33-37).

Author's Notes:

As we progress further into these tumultuous End Times, we will see the emergence of a new prophetic ministry. Just as David posted physical gatekeepers in the tabernacle he erected, the Lord will similarly post spiritual gatekeepers in the body of Christ, in order to keep sin and deception out of The Church.

We live in precarious times, when sin is allowed to creep into many churches. The truth of God's Word is compromised as homosexuals preside over churches, and perform same-sex marriages. Immorality is rampant; fornication and adultery are allowed to flourish unchecked. Standards of holiness have been replaced with a false doctrine of tolerance.

Of course, sinners - WHO DESIRE TO REPENT - are always welcome in The Church of Jesus Christ. However, as we proceed further into the End Times, New Covenant Gatekeepers will be required to discern between the godly and the ungodly, and guard the true church from becoming contaminated.

- 3) Again, from the teachings of Jesus, we discover the validity of the New Covenant Gatekeeper:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper (or, GATEKEEPER) opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." (John 10:1-3).

d. SINGERS AND MUSICIANS:

"...four thousand PRAISED THE LORD with musical instruments, which I made, said David, for giving praise." (from 1 Chronicles 23:2-5).

- 1) Because of the anointing of the Lord upon their lives, singers and musicians in the Old Testament often prophesied, and occupied the office of the psalmist:

"Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals." (1 Chronicles 25:1).

NOTE: As an example of singers or musicians who prophesied, and stood in the office of the psalmist, Asaph is credited with writing the 83rd Psalm, which we have referred to a number of times in this study guide.

- 2) In the End Times Church (the rebuilt tabernacle of David), God is again anointing singers and musicians. Increasingly, these worshipers are prophesying while singing, or playing musical instruments. Subsequently, their edifying words and music have been recorded, and employed for praising the Lord in worship services throughout the world.

Author's Notes:

As a matter of clarification, no additional psalms will be added to the Bible. However, in these End Times, many singers and musicians are being anointed by God to stand in the office of the psalmist. These New Covenant psalmists give us fresh renditions of words and music from the heart of God, thereby edifying the body of Christ.

As a result, like never before in church history, praise and worship is coming to the forefront; God is being highly exalted. I remember the days when praise and worship (if you could call it praise and worship?) consisted of a piano player and a song leader. However, in a growing number of today's churches, praise and worship now resembles Psalm 150:

"Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD." (NIV).

HEAR A PROPHETIC WORD:

In these confusing End Times, as the Lord rebuilds the tabernacle of David, and restores a strong church consisting of Jews, Arabs, and all races of Gentiles, the restoration of biblical praise and worship will be one of the characteristics that **SEPARATES** the Godly Church from the Compromising Church, and ultimately, from the Apostate Church.

(NOTE: In a future lesson: "*A snapshot of the church in the End Times*," we will study about these three churches: the Godly Church, the Compromising Church, and the Apostate Church).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Two – Israel; The Church’s Involvement)

Lesson 20 – Watchmen on the Walls

Author’s Notes:

As briefly mentioned in an earlier lesson: *“Learning to Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem,”* certain Christians are called as WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS. These saints have been given a special burden, and special anointing to pray for Jerusalem (and, for all of Israel) beyond the normal prayer commitments of others.

The ministry of the Watchman is not a new concept. As a child growing up in church, I remember reading books about missionaries who were called to Africa when that vast land was known as The Dark Continent. Many such saints prayed for Africa for years before God actually sent them. They were given a special burden, and special anointing for Africa.

Likewise, because these End Times are THE SET TIME TO FAVOR ZION (see Psalm 102:13-16), we will increasingly see Christians called, and anointed for this special assignment as Watchmen on the Walls for the house of Israel.

1. THE MINISTRY OF THE WATCHMAN; **ASSIGNMENT # 1** – Until God makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth:

“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Isaiah 62:6-7).

a. The word, PRAISE, in the above verses refers to: *“Adoration for an object of praise.”* In this case, Jerusalem, the city of God. Notice that the Watchmen are instructed to cry aloud, and give God no rest, until he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

1) The expression, *“...give Him no rest...”* refers to the relentless responsibility of the Watchmen. Somewhere in the world, day and night, there should always be a Watchman praying for the peace of Jerusalem (and, for all of Israel).

Author's Notes:

Nehemiah led a contingent of God's people, who returned from the captivity of Babylon to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Zerubbabel led another such group to rebuild the Temple. No doubt, during those days, Jerusalem once again became A PRAISE IN JUDAH.

However, in the previous scriptures (Isaiah 62:6-7), Isaiah prophesied about a time - obviously beyond the return from the Babylonian captivity - when Jerusalem would become A PRAISE IN ALL THE EARTH.

To the contrary, when this book was published, Jerusalem was a problem, not a praise. Both Israelis and Palestinians insist on having the city as their capital. Rather than a praise, Jerusalem is most often an object of political upheaval, or violent contention. Blood has been shed in the streets of Jerusalem!

So, once again (figuratively speaking), God is setting Watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem. And, once again, these Watchmen are being chosen from the ranks of God's people; only this time, the people of God are the body of Christ (both Jews and Gentiles). These Watchmen are once again crying aloud, giving God no rest, until he makes Jerusalem a praise; this time, in all the earth.

2. THE MINISTRY OF THE WATCHMAN; **ASSIGNMENT # 2** – Hearing prophetic words from the mouth of God, and giving Israel warnings:

“So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.” (Ezekiel 33:7).

- a. Warnings about imminent dangers (would include gifts of the Holy Spirit warning people about potential acts of terrorism and violence):

*“When he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. **BUT HE WHO TAKES WARNING WILL SAVE HIS LIFE.** But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.” (Ezekiel 33:3-6).*

b. Warnings to turn from sin and wickedness:

“When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die! And you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.” (Ezekiel 33:8-9)

- 1) From a New Covenant viewpoint, the above warning would include the commandment to REPENT – to turn away from wickedness, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ:

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to HIS OWN WAY (the way of wickedness), and the LORD has laid on Him (laid upon Jesus Christ) the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6).

3. THE MINISTRY OF THE WATCHMAN; **ASSIGNMENT # 3** – Pray for Israel to be delivered from her enemies:

“I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps all around THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, and delivers them.” (Psalm 34:4-7).

Author's Notes:

Because I have been called as a Watchman, I have a burden for the salvation of God's original chosen people. Therefore, whenever Jews in Israel are victims of warfare, or terrorism, my heart cries out in grief. I think to myself; what a waste to be re-gathered from the ends of the earth, and brought back to the land of their fathers, only to die without knowing Jesus as the Messiah!

Here is where the Watchmen have another specific assignment. In these volatile End Times, we must pray for Israel to be saved from her enemies, so they will have the time, and opportunity to consider the New Covenant. Yet, even as the Watchmen pray for safety, they must also warn Israel to seek the Lord their God. The above verses say the angel of the Lord will deliver **THOSE WHO FEAR HIM** (those who acknowledge the Lord; those who respect him, reverence him, and honor him).

4. THE MINISTRY OF THE WATCHMAN; **ASSIGNMENT # 4** – Pray for godly leadership to arise in Israel:

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.” (Proverbs 29:2).

- a. The Watchmen should pray for leaders to be elected (or, appointed) in Israel, who will be like King Jehoshaphat. When confronted with Judah’s enemies...
 - ✓ His first priority was to seek help from the Lord.
 - ✓ He was not ashamed to acknowledge his dependence upon God before the entire nation.
 - ✓ He heeded the voice of God’s prophet; therefore, Judah was delivered (read about it in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30):

Author’s Notes:

In times past, God often sent prophets to speak words of warning to the kings of Judah, and the kings of Israel. Similarly, during these End Times, the Lord will periodically select prophets from among the ranks of the Watchmen, and he will miraculously open doors for them to stand before political leaders in Israel, and deliver timely warnings from the mind of God.

God supernaturally helped King Jehoshaphat, and he will help today’s leaders in Israel, if they will hear the prophets: *“...Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”* (from 2 Chronicles 20:20).

5. THE MINISTRY OF THE WATCHMAN; **ASSIGNMENT # 5** – Pray for Israel to recognize that her hope is in Yeshua HaMashiach:

“I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. O ISRAEL, PUT YOUR HOPE IN THE LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.” (Psalm 130:5-8 NIV).

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, TO REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE UNDER THE LAW, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5).

6. THE MINISTRY OF THE WATCHMAN; **ASSIGNMENT # 6** – Remove the veil that lies upon the hearts of the Jewish people:

“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age (Satan) has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

a. Unbeknown to many Christians is the fact that Jesus has given authority to the body of Christ to help remove this veil:

“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name. And He said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I GIVE YOU THE AUTHORITY to trample on serpents and scorpions, and OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke 10:17-19).

Author's Notes:

For much of my Christian life, because I was taught Dispensational Theology, I believed the veil - which covers the hearts of the Jewish people - would be lifted by a sovereign act of God, totally apart from our involvement. In fact, we thought the veil would remain until after the so-called Rapture of The Church.

However, as I was writing this study guide, the Holy Spirit impressed upon me that the vast army of intercessors, which the Sovereign Lord is raising up in these End Times (the Watchmen), will play a vital role in Israel's spiritual restoration prior to the return of Jesus.

These Watchmen will intercede for Israel (and, for Jews elsewhere), and employ the truth of Luke 10:17-19 (above ↑). Specifically, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they will command Satan to stop blinding the minds of God's chosen people, and command the veil to be removed from their hearts!

Furthermore, according to 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (above ↑) these Watchmen will declare that the light (or, understanding) of the Gospel is now shining upon the Jews. And, many will have the veil removed before Jesus returns!

7. CONSIDERING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE TIMES.

- a. Obviously, the Lord is capable of restoring Israel, and saving his chosen people from their enemies, all by himself:

“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, THE WATCHMAN STAYS AWAKE IN VAIN.” (Psalm 127:1).

- b. Yet, God has chosen to call for Watchmen! As in ancient times, he is still searching for those from among his servants, whom he can employ as Watchmen on the Walls:

“SO I SOUGHT FOR A MAN AMONG THEM who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” (Ezekiel 22:30).

- c. Therefore, in these perilous End Times, every Christian should be readily available. Who knows whether the Lord will call them as a Watchman? May it never be said that God sought for a Watchman from among his New Covenant saints, but found no one!

8. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

Ezekiel's description of the Watchman's responsibility sounds rather harsh. Statements like: *“...his blood I will require at the watchman's hand,”* almost sounds like the Watchmen could lose their salvation! Actually, had Ezekiel failed to obey the Lord (which he did not), he would have been required to take an offering to the priest, which would have been sacrificed for the atonement of his sins.

Under the New Covenant, the ministry of the Watchman (and, all other offices of ministry) are governed by the grace of God. We have a better covenant, based upon better promises. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, we can go directly to our Heavenly Father, and immediately receive his forgiveness, if we should fail in our duties as the Watchman (see 1 John 1:9).

Nevertheless, even though the grace of God wonderfully and continuously sustains us, the office of the Watchman should be taken very seriously, and should not be entered into lightly!

Israel,
The Church,
and The End Times

▪ Book Three ▪

Israel, and
The End Times

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO BOOK THREE

If someone requested a brief summation of BOOKS ONE, and TWO, it could be provided by one KEY scripture:

“When the LORD shall BUILD UP ZION (or, rebuild Zion), he shall appear in his glory.” (Psalm 102:16 KJV).

The Lord is already rebuilding Zion; the Restoration of Israel is well underway – in preparation for the return of Jesus! In addition, other signs of the End Times are already clearly in evidence. However, at the time this book was published, certain signs were yet unfulfilled.

Once, the disciples were showing Jesus the buildings of the Temple (as if he was unaware of such things). He said to them: *“...Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”* (from Matthew 24:2).

Later, as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, and asked TWO QUESTIONS: *“...when will these things be? (When will the Temple be destroyed?) And, what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”* (from Matthew 24:3).

Immediately, Jesus began to answer those two questions (as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21). Some of what Jesus said applied to the destruction of the Temple, which occurred in 70 AD. Most of what he said also applies to the End Times in which we are now living.

Since my first visit to Israel, and my previously explained encounter with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I have come to realize that the events of the End Times do not center on America (or, any other nation). If we truly want to understand the End Times, we must focus upon Israel.

Of course, the events of the End Times will obviously affect the entire world. Just in my lifetime – in America – I have witnessed a great decline in biblical morality, a rapid increase in deception, and a growing tendency in many churches to be tolerant of sin; all clearly signs of the End Times!

Nevertheless, if we truly want to understand the End Times from the Lord’s viewpoint, **ISRAEL IS THE KEY.**

Israel, The Church, and the End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 21 – Judgment of the Nations

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. In the day that you stood on the other side – in the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem – even you were as one of them. But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity; nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; nor should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained in the day of distress. FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD UPON ALL THE NATIONS IS NEAR; as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head.” (Obadiah 10-15).

- a. The above prophecy, spoken through the mouth of Obadiah, was initially directed against Edom...
 - Edom (meaning RED) was the name given to Esau, Jacob’s twin brother, after he sold his birthright for a bowl of red stew (see Genesis 25:29-34).
 - The region where Esau and his descendants settled was also known as Edom (southeast of the Dead Sea).
 - One of Esau’s wives was Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael (Abraham’s son by Hagar – see Genesis 28:6-9). The descendants of Esau are one source of the Arab/Muslim peoples, who are the current enemies of the modern state of Israel.

- b. At the conclusion of his prophecy, Obadiah declared: *“For the day of the Lord UPON ALL THE NATIONS is near....”* Therefore, the prophecy, and the judgments therein, are applicable to all nations!

2. FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

- a. INDIVIDUALLY, and ULTIMATELY, God's judgment of mankind is based upon the acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ, and his sacrifice for the remission of sins. Jesus himself said:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24).

- b. However, the Judgment of God is a many-faceted subject. There is also a JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS (or, races of people):

"A noise will come to the ends of the earth – FOR THE LORD HAS A CONTROVERSY (a dispute) WITH THE NATIONS; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword, says the LORD." (Jeremiah 25:31 – read the entire 25th chapter of Jeremiah for a more complete account).

- c. In times past, God always judged those nations who came against Israel. In these End Times, be assured that God will continue to judge the nations based upon how they treat Israel, and how they treat the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

"Now the LORD had said to Abram (whose name was changed to Abraham), Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I WILL CURSE HIM WHO CURSES YOU; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3).

Author's Notes:

As a matter of review, please remember that all who accept Jesus Christ become the spiritual seed of Abraham (see Galatians 3:29). As a result, there is a SPIRITUAL FULFILLMENT of Genesis 12:1-3 (above ↑) that now comes upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (see Galatians 3:13-14).

Therefore, the promise of being blessed, and THE WARNING OF BEING CURSED, now applies to those Nations (or, races of people) who bless, or curse God's New Covenant People.

3. The Judgment of Nations is ongoing throughout the ages:

“Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians’ pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherd will rest his flocks there. But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. Hyenas will howl in her strongholds, jackals in her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged.” (Isaiah 13:19-22 NIV).

4. The Judgment of Nations is also an actual event at the end of the ages, at which Jesus will be the Judge:

*“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. **ALL THE NATIONS** (or, races of people) will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? And the King will answer and say to them, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these **MY BRETHREN** (Jews by birth; Gentiles by adoption), you did it to Me.”*

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me. Then they also will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You? Then He will answer them, saying, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me. And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31-46).

Author's Notes:

The previous verses (Matthew 25:31-46) used to trouble me. They seemed to imply that salvation is obtained by good works. To the contrary, the Bible is clear; redemption is available only by grace through faith (see Ephesians 2:8-9).

Obviously, those scriptures contain good principles by which Christians ought to live. However, this teaching from the Lord Jesus most accurately pertains to God's judgment of the nations (or, races of people), as to whether they blessed, or cursed his brethren (both Jews and Christians).

5. In these End Times – PERTAINING TO ISRAEL – God will judge the nations by their attitudes and actions on the following matters...

- ✓ Do they support the modern state of Israel, and her right to exist, or are they trying to DESTROY ISRAEL?
- ✓ Do they support the right of the Jewish people to return to the land of their fathers, or are they trying to REVERSE THE ALIYAH?
- ✓ Do they support the restoration of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or are they trying to DIVIDE UP THE LAND?

6. A CLOSER LOOK AT THE JUDGMENT OF NATIONS.

a. Judgment upon nations that attempt to **DESTROY ISRAEL**:

“Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, come, and LET US CUT THEM OFF FROM BEING A NATION, THAT THE NAME OF ISRAEL MAY BE REMEMBERED NO MORE. For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You ... Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.” (Psalm 83:1-5, 17-18).

- 1) Germany (and the Nazi political party) suffered a crushing defeat in World War II, because they tried to eliminate the world's Jewish population. The warnings from the above psalm (and, from the following scriptures) apply to every nation that tries to destroy Israel, or eliminate God's chosen people ➤

“At that time I WILL DEAL WITH ALL WHO OPPRESSED YOU; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes, says the LORD.” (Zephaniah 3:19-20 NIV).

2) Since the establishment of the modern day nation of Israel (May 14, 1948), the Arab/Muslim nations that surround Israel have periodically employed warfare in an attempt to destroy the Jewish state. Such actions will eventually bring God’s judgment upon those nations.

b. Judgment upon nations that attempt to **REVERSE THE ALIYAH** (or, once again, cause Israel to be scattered):

*“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, **WHOM THEY HAVE SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS**; they have also divided up My land.” (Joel 3:1-2).*

NOTE: Some have remarked that Joel’s prophecy applied only to Judah’s return from the Babylonian captivity. However, Joel prophesied that Israel would be scattered among the nations, not just to the Babylonian Empire. In addition, Babylon was not judged in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

1) Following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the once powerful Roman Empire was militarily responsible for scattering Israel among the nations (known as the Diaspora). God’s judgment is evident; all that remains of the greatest empire the world has ever known, are excavated ruins, and artifacts.

2) Various Muslim groups in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Lebanon have resorted to terrorism in an effort to drive the Jewish people out of Israel, and cause them to be scattered again among the nations. Terrorism will not succeed; there is a coming judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat!

- 3) To the contrary, God's Word promises that Israel will never again be scattered among the nations:

"I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, NEVER AGAIN TO BE UPROOTED from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God." (Amos 9:14-15 NIV).

c. Judgment upon nations that attempt to **DIVIDE UP THE LAND:**

*"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; **THEY HAVE ALSO DIVIDED UP MY LAND.**" (Joel 3:1-2).*

- 1) At the time this book was published, rulers of certain nations were committed to dividing up the land God promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for the purpose of creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel. They hoped such actions would bring peace to the Middle East.
- 2) Dividing up the land will not bring a lasting peace. Muslims do not want a Palestinian state alongside of Israel. Islam's stated goal is to destroy Israel, and have a Palestinian state instead of Israel.

7. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. As it was in the past, even so shall it be in these End Times – Every nation (or, race of people) that tries to: **DESTROY ISRAEL, REVERSE THE ALIYAH, or DIVIDE UP THE LAND** will eventually bring the Judgment of God upon themselves, because all such actions are...
 - Resisting the prophetic fulfillment of God's Word,
 - And ultimately, resisting God's Plan of Redemption!

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 22 – What Signs to Watch For... (or, not watch for) in the End Times

Author's Notes:

As recorded in Matthew 24:3, the disciples asked the Lord two questions. (1) When will the temple be destroyed, not one stone left upon another? (2) What will be THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING, and of the end of the age?

Throughout Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21:5-36, Jesus responded to those questions. Some of what he said pertained to the destruction of the Temple. Most of what he said also applied to the End Times in which we are now living.

There are other KEY portions of scripture, which when combined with the aforementioned passages, provide us with a clear understanding of what signs to watch for in the End Times.

Yet, there is confusion in The Church. Many believers are being taught to watch for signs that may not even happen! At the same time, signs that are biblically certain are being overlooked.

Following are a number of biblically certain signs. Also, THREE SIGNS that are based upon popular End Times themes, but they are not biblically certain!

1. WATCH FOR CONTINUED WARFARE; NOT PEACE ON EARTH:

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...” (from Matthew 24:6-7).

2. Watch for an increase in NATURAL DISASTERS – Famine, Pestilences, and Earthquakes (includes other types of volatile weather – see Matthew 8:24):

“There will be mighty and violent earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences (plagues, malignant and contagious or infectious epidemic diseases, deadly and devastating). And there will be sights of terror and great signs from heaven.” (Luke 21:11 AMP).

3. WATCH FOR A GREAT INCREASE IN DECEPTION:

“...what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age? And Jesus answered and said to them: Take heed (be careful) that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, saying, I AM THE CHRIST, and will deceive many.” (from Matthew 24:3-5).

- a. These deceivers will not claim to be that same Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in a stable in Bethlehem to a young, virgin, Jewish girl named Mary. They will claim to be the Messiah (the chosen one, or, the anointed one), instead of Jesus. Their main falsehood will be: **JESUS IS NOT THE WAY TO GOD** (or, not the only way):

“Then if anyone says to you: Look, here is the Christ, or there, do not believe it! For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you: Look, He is in the desert, do not go out! Or, Look, He is in the inner rooms, do not believe it!” (Matthew 24:23-26).

- b. Many of these deceivers, who claim to be the Messiah instead of Jesus, will also predict DATES and TIMES:

“...Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, I AM HE, and, THE TIME IS NEAR. Do not follow them.” (Luke 21:8 NIV).

Author's Notes:

The Lord has shown me that Jews, more so than any other ethnic group, will be vulnerable to deception in the End Times. Jesus the Messiah (Yeshua HaMashiach) has already come, but Israel rejected him (see John 1:11). Therefore, nearly 2000 years later, they are still futilely looking for a Messiah other than Jesus.

Both Jews and Gentiles should carefully consider these words spoken by the Lord Jesus, after Religious Jews became furious with him for claiming to be equal with God: *“You search and investigate and pore over the Scriptures diligently, because you suppose and trust that you have eternal life through them. And these [very Scriptures] testify about Me! And still you are not willing (but refuse) to come to Me, so that you might have life.”* (John 5:39-40 AMP).

4. WATCH FOR A FALSE DOCTRINE OF TOLERANCE:

“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, TO SUIT THEIR OWN DESIRES, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV).

Author's Notes:

As we proceed further into these End Times, ungodly people will aggressively attempt to eliminate the very concept of sin. Even churches and organizations, which call themselves Christian, will fall prey to this false doctrine of tolerance. There will be great pressure upon believers to be tolerant of sinful lifestyles that grossly violate the laws of God...

- 1) Sin will be justified (our society has changed, we must make adjustments).
- 2) Sin will be excused, or explained away (everyone is doing it).
- 3) Sin will be called by another name (such as low self-esteem).
- 4) Even among those who know the truth, sin will be covered up, overlooked, or just ignored.

To the contrary, **GOD IS NOT TOLERANT**. In these End Times, God still requires people to repent. Repentance involves turning to God, but also turning away from sin: *“In the past (in Old Testament times) God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30 NIV).*

There will be equally great pressure to be tolerant of religious viewpoints, which are clearly false by the standards of the Bible (see 2 Corinthians 11:4). To the contrary, **GOD IS NOT TOLERANT**. The only way to God is through Jesus Christ - no exceptions: *“Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6).*

5. WATCH FOR A SPIRIT OF REBELLION:

“But know this, that IN THE LAST DAYS perilous times will come (troublesome, dangerous, and furious times), for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

- a. The spirit of rebellion in these perilous last days will be especially characterized by **REBELLION AGAINST AUTHORITY**. Rebellion against earthy authority (political leaders, parental guidance, police, etc.), but especially rebellion against spiritual authority (the Bible, ministers of the Gospel). Ungodly people will try to eliminate all restraints from their lives (also see 2 Peter 2:10).

6. WATCH FOR THE GREAT APOSTASY:

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come UNLESS THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

- a. The above verses speak of a wonderful event – the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him. However, please notice that this event will not occur **UNLESS THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST**.
- b. The phrase, **FALLING AWAY**, is “*Apostasia*” (from the Greek), or in English – Apostasy. From researching various Bible study helps, apostasy has the following meanings...
 - 1) A defection from the truth,
 - 2) A revolt against the truth,
 - 3) A falling away from the faith,
 - 4) A departure from the faith.

Author's Notes:

Apostasy is a very dangerous matter, because it involves a departure from the faith **BY A CHRISTIAN**. An unbeliever, who has never entered into the faith, could not possibly depart from the faith.

Unfortunately, some prophecy teachers have disallowed apostasy altogether. In their zeal to prove a so-called Pre-Tribulation Rapture, they have incorrectly interpreted “*Apostasia*” to mean: **A DEPARTURE OF THE CHURCH** from the world, rather than **A DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH** during these End Times.

This is a very serious misinterpretation of the scriptures, because it gives Christians the false notion that there is no danger of apostasy!

- c. There are other warnings in the New Testament about apostasy (see 1 Timothy 1:19-20 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5). Such warnings are always addressed to believers, never to unbelievers! A reputable Bible dictionary defines apostasy as...
 - **A determined, willful rejection of Jesus Christ, and his teachings, by a Christian!**
- d. The Great Apostasy is an unfortunate, but biblically certain sign of the soon return of the Lord. In these End Times...
 - Watch for those who once confessed Jesus as Lord to totally turn away from God. Included in the apostasy will be some who were ministers of the Gospel; even some who were considered to be pillars of the faith.
 - Watch for sharp divisions in churches, denominations, and religious organizations. Some will remain committed to the integrity of God's Word; others will become tolerant of sin, and deteriorate into apostasy.
 - The End Times Restoration of Israel will also be a divisive issue. The godly will recognize that the Lord is remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and they will stand with Israel. The ungodly will stand against Israel.

7. Regrettably, we must watch for CONTINUED PERSECUTION AGAINST JEWS, and INCREASED PERSECUTION AGAINST CHRISTIANS:

"...in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God." (from John 16:2 NIV).

"And you will be hated by all men for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." (Mark 13:13).

8. WATCH FOR THE REVEALING OF THE ANTICHRIST.

"Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, AND THE MAN OF SIN IS REVEALED, the son of perdition." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

BIBLE DEFINITION: Antichrist – AGAINST CHRIST, or INSTEAD OF CHRIST, or a combination of both meanings. In other words, one who assumes the guise of Christ, and opposes Christ.

- a. According to the previous scriptures (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3), not only will the apostasy occur, but likewise, the Antichrist will be revealed BEFORE the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him! In a future lesson, we will learn how to recognize the Antichrist. For now, listen to the following warning:

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3).

Author's Notes:

The above verses warn us about the spirit of the Antichrist, which is already in the world, in advance of the actual Antichrist. Please notice; the spirit of the Antichrist is not of God, because that spirit does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. What exactly does this mean?

Every person speaking by the Holy Spirit of God will believe, and confess EVERYTHING THE BIBLE SAYS HAPPENED while Jesus was in the flesh (while he was in the likeness of man - see John 1:14).

However, if anyone denies ANYTHING THE BIBLE SAYS HAPPENED while Jesus was in the flesh, that person is not of God, and is influenced by the spirit of the Antichrist. This refusal to confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh will also characterize the actual Antichrist when he is revealed.

9. SHOULD WE WATCH FOR THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE?

- a. As stated in an earlier lesson: *“Building the Temple... or, Rebuilding the Temple?”* one of the most popular teachings about the End Times pertains to rebuilding the Old Covenant Temple upon The Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Reportedly (based upon the following scripture ↗), the Antichrist will set himself up in this rebuilt Jewish Temple, and declare himself to be God:

“Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

- b. However, we must recall several NEW COVENANT FACTS, which were studied in that earlier lesson...
 - 1) If a Jewish Temple is rebuilt, God will not inhabit it. The Lord no longer dwells in temples made by men’s hands. A rebuilt Jewish Temple would not qualify as THE TEMPLE OF GOD (as specified in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 above ↑).
 - 2) Under the New Covenant, God’s Temple is not a building in Jerusalem (or, a building anywhere else). Rather, all who accept Jesus Christ become the Temple of God, because they are inhabited by the Spirit of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16).

- c. The rebuilding of a Jewish Temple is not a biblically certain fact. Even if the temple is rebuilt, it would not fulfill the requirements of 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (above ↑). Do not be surprised if the Antichrist rises up from within THE CHURCH (the real Temple of God).

10. SHOULD WE WATCH FOR A PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE?

Author’s Notes:

In an earlier lesson, I explained that I grew up in a church, which believed in Dispensational Theology. The dispensational doctrines, which I was taught, limited the Restoration of Israel to a seven-year period known as The Great Tribulation. Such teaching has erroneously caused many Christians to believe that whatever is currently happening in Israel is of no spiritual significance.

Dispensational Theology also emphasizes that Jesus will remove his Church from the world at the beginning of this period of tribulation; an event known as the Pre-Tribulation Rapture (although the word, RAPTURE, does not appear in the Bible). Thus, teachers of Dispensational Theology believe Jesus will RETURN TWICE - once to remove The Church from the world in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, and seven years later to establish his kingdom on the earth.

The truth is; certain scriptures have been loosely interpreted to say what many Christians want to hear, thus creating a pre-tribulation theory. The concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is more comfortable for Christians who are fearful of facing difficult times. However, there is no solid, biblical foundation for declaring a Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

a. THE REAL WAY OF ESCAPE, as promised by Jesus:

*“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing (overindulgence), drunkenness, and cares (anxieties, distractions) of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore (be spiritually alert), and pray always that you may be **COUNTED WORTHY** (literally meaning – to overpower, prevail against, or be superior in strength) **TO ESCAPE** all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:34-36).*

11. THE BUDDING OF THE FIG TREE.

Author's Notes:

In End Times prophecy circles, there has been great excitement about the BUDDING FIG TREE: *“Then He spoke to them a parable: Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.” (Luke 21:29-32).*

Certain prophecy teachers have stated that the budding of the fig tree is synonymous with the rebirth of the modern State of Israel on May 14, 1948. They have further declared that the generation - which sees Israel's rebirth - would not pass away until Jesus returns. However, I must emphasize; this interpretation of the scriptures is THEORY, not CERTAINTY.

Although Jesus used the analogy of the fig tree, and applied it to the End Times, he did not identify the budding of the fig tree as the rebirth (or, restoration) of the nation of Israel. Prophecy teachers, in their zeal to hasten the return of the Lord, have fostered this theory.

The ongoing Restoration of Israel (identified on page 10) is definitely a biblically certain sign of the End Times. However, Jesus did not say the generation that sees the REBIRTH OF ISRAEL would not pass away until he returns. He said the generation that **SEES THESE THINGS HAPPENING** - that sees all the biblically certain signs - would not pass away until he returns! Watch for **ALL** the biblically certain signs in these End Times!

(NOTE: In addition to the biblically certain signs studied in this lesson, we will study other such signs in future lessons, including: (1) Revisiting the days of Noah, and the days of Lot, (2) the ministry of the Two Witnesses, (3) the Abomination of Desolation, and (4) the lack of natural order in the universe).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 23 – Revisiting the days of Noah, and the days of Lot

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURE:

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.” (Proverbs 14:34 NIV).

Author’s Notes:

I have talked with Christians who are very aware of what happens in Israel on a daily basis. They have made comments like: *“Every sin that is known to man, you will find in Israel.”*

This is disheartening to Christians, who expect to find a wonderful spiritual atmosphere throughout all of Israel. If Israel’s restoration is a part of God’s Plan of Redemption, then why is sin so rampant?

As we have learned in past lessons, Satan is desperately trying to stop the Restoration of Israel, and prevent the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in these End Times, because such matters will eventually result in his doom. Therefore, he has periodically motivated the surrounding nations to come against Israel in warfare, seeking to destroy the Jewish state. Because open warfare has failed, the devil has stirred up fanatical Muslim groups in The West Bank, Gaza Strip, and southern Lebanon, trying to reverse the Aliyah through terrorism.

In addition, Satan has also tried to convince certain world leaders that the answer for peace in the Middle East is to divide up The Holy Land, and create a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

In other words, Satan has attempted to stop this work of God identified as the End Times Restoration of Israel by stirring up enemies, or by deceiving world leaders from **OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL**.

In these End Times, Satan will also try to destroy Israel **FROM WITHIN**, specifically through sin and wickedness.

This should come as no great surprise. Jesus already told us that when he returns, it would be just like the days of Noah, and the days of Lot!

2. AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH:

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:37-39).

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:26-27).

- a. The days of Noah were characterized by **SPIRITUAL APATHY**:
*“...they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage ... and **DID NOT KNOW** until the flood came and took them all away....”* Satan is trying to create a similar atmosphere in Israel today.
- b. In the days of Noah, the earth was also filled with sin, wickedness, evil, corruption, and violence. Likewise, Satan is striving to create a similar atmosphere in Israel today:

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart ... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” (Genesis 6:5-6, 11-12).

- c. **CONCLUSIONS**: From the above scriptures, the sins in the days of Noah are the same sins Israel must guard against in these End Times to prevent destruction **FROM WITHIN**...
 - ❑ **THE THOUGHTS OF THE HEART** (continually seeking after sin, rather than seeking after God).
 - ❑ **CORRUPTION** (lies, dishonesty, and bribery – in business dealings, in government affairs, and even in religious affairs).
 - ❑ **VIOLENCE** (not only will Satan try to import violence across Israel’s borders; he will also try to stir up violence within Israel).

3. AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF LOT:

“Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke 17:28-30).

- a. The days of Lot were also characterized by **SPIRITUAL APATHY**. The people were oblivious to the fact that God’s judgment was imminent. Likewise, Satan is trying to create a similar atmosphere in Israel today; an atmosphere in which God’s chosen people are unaware of the dangers, and urgency of these End Times:

“So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said: Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city! But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.” (Genesis 19:14 NIV).

- b. However, in the days of Lot, there was a far greater problem than spiritual apathy. Sodom (where Lot lived) and Gomorrah were filled with sexual immorality, especially **HOMOSEXUALITY**. Likewise, Satan is trying to establish a similar atmosphere in Israel today. Concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, God said:

“...their sin is very grave” (or, very severe). (from Genesis 18:20).

*“As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having **GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO SEXUAL IMMORALITY** and **GONE AFTER STRANGE FLESH**, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Jude 7).*

BIBLE DEFINITION: Strange Flesh – Of uncertain affinity, or **UNCERTAIN ATTRACTION**. Sexual attractions are unnatural, rather than God’s natural order of Genesis 2:24. Men are attracted to men, women are attracted to women, and adults are even sexually attracted to children.

- c. In the days of Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah were characterized by **AGGRESSIVE HOMOSEXUALITY**. Likewise, in these End Times, Satan is attempting to create an aggressive homosexual agenda in Israel (see scriptures, next page →):

“Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom – both young and old – surrounded the house. They called to Lot: Where are the men who came to you tonight? (Referring to the two angels, who came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah). Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.” (Genesis 19:4-5 NIV).

- d. CONCLUSIONS: From the previous scriptures, the sins during the days of Lot are the same sins Israel must guard against in these End Times to prevent destruction FROM WITHIN...
- **SEXUAL IMMORALITY** (sexual relations outside of marriage).
 - **SEXUAL PERVERSION** (unnatural sexual relations).
- e. From Luke 17:32, pertaining to these End Times, Jesus also gave this specific warning: *“REMEMBER LOT’S WIFE!”*

Author’s Notes:

Please notice, Jesus issued the above warning: *“Remember Lot’s wife”* in an END TIMES CONTEXT. Exactly how this warning applies to the End Times is yet to be revealed, but do not fail to recognize that Jesus was warning us about the very days in which we are now living! This much we know for sure: By God’s grace and mercy, Lot’s wife was rescued from the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, and delivered from the destruction of those cities. Yet, SHE LOOKED BACK, and was still destroyed (read about it in Genesis 19:1-26).

Similarly, in these End Times, God is doing a strong work of grace and mercy toward his original chosen people. The Lord is remembering the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and (figuratively speaking - as the angels did to Lot’s wife) he is taking his people by the hand, re-gathering them from the ends of the earth, and bringing them back into the land promised to their fathers.

Yet, many of God’s chosen people do not recognize, nor acknowledge that the Restoration of Israel is a work of Almighty God, and they are not seeking the Lord when they come back into the land. Instead, they are choosing to live in sin and wickedness, as did many of their forefathers, whom the Bible says: DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD.

Admittedly, the following statement is potentially offensive to Jews living in Israel. Nevertheless, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, I must now declare...

“To be graciously brought back to Israel from the ends of the earth; to live in the land promised to their fathers, and then choose to live in sin and wickedness, is like SLAPPING GOD IN THE FACE!”

4. THE MINISTRY OF THE TWO WITNESSES.

- a. In the last days, during the times of the Antichrist, sin will become so prevalent that the Lord will send two witnesses to Jerusalem to preach repentance (the two witnesses are sent to Jerusalem, but their message will go out to the entire world):

“And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.” (Revelation 11:3-4).

- b. According to the above verses, the two witnesses will **PROPHESEY IN SACKCLOTH**. In other words...
- They will warn about the destruction that will come upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem (and, the entire world), if they do not repent of sin.
 - Probably, they will expose the Antichrist as a false messiah, because he will eventually kill them.
 - They will prophesy with an attitude of grief, or mourning, as did the Lord Jesus Christ (see Matthew 23:37-38).

- c. The two witnesses will have extraordinary, God-given powers:

“And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.” (Revelation 11:5-6).

- d. Eventually, the Antichrist will kill the two witnesses, but not until they have finished what the Lord has sent them to accomplish:

“Now when they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city (Jerusalem), WHICH SPIRITUALLY IS CALLED SODOM AND EGYPT, where also our Lord was crucified.” (Revelation 11:7-8).

Author's Notes:

There has been much speculation about the identity of these two witnesses. Some have said Moses will be one of the witnesses, because God gave him power over waters, to turn them to blood (see Exodus 7:14-17). Others have said Elijah will be one of the witnesses, because God gave him power to shut up heaven, so that no rain would fall on the earth (see 1 Kings 17:1).

It has been further emphasized that the two witnesses will almost certainly be Moses and Elijah, because they appeared with the Lord Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1-8).

Personally, this author believes the two witnesses will be Enoch and Elijah. Hebrews 9:27 says: *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."* Neither Enoch nor Elijah died!

ENOCH'S ASCENT INTO HEAVEN: *"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God."* (Hebrews 11:5).

ELIJAH'S ASCENT INTO HEAVEN: *"Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them (the chariot separated Elijah from Elisha), and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."* (2 Kings 2:11).

e. The ungodly will celebrate the death of the two witnesses:

"Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth." (Revelation 11:9-10).

f. But, God will raise them from the dead, they will ascend back into heaven, and there will be death and destruction in Jerusalem:

"Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them: Come up here. And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand men were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven." (Revelation 11:11-13).

5. A RENDING OF HEARTS.

- a. During his earthly ministry, Jesus described the religious leaders in Israel; a condition that still describes many in Israel today:

“Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed APPEAR BEAUTIFUL OUTWARDLY, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also OUTWARDLY APPEAR RIGHTEOUS to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” (Matthew 23:24-29).

- b. In these End Times, in preparation for the return of the Messiah, the Lord desires a people in Israel (and, elsewhere) who will REND THEIR HEARTS (repent, and be changed inwardly), rather than those who REND THEIR GARMENTS (or, make an outward show):

“Even now, declares the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. REND YOUR HEART and NOT YOUR GARMENTS. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” (Joel 2:12-13 NIV).

6. SOME GOOD NEWS.

- a. Even in the midst of wickedness, corruption, violence, and sexual perversion, there will still be great spiritual revival in Jerusalem, in Israel, (and, throughout the entire world) in these End Times:

“For as by one man’s disobedience (Adam’s sin) many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience (the sacrifice of Jesus Christ) many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound (that sin might be clearly recognized, or identified). But WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE ABOUNDED MUCH MORE, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:19-21).

- b. Many will indeed REND THEIR HEARTS. Therefore, the Lord will continue to pour out his Spirit, and many in Jerusalem, in Israel, and throughout the world will come to faith in Jesus Christ:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh ... And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (from Acts 2:17, and verse 21).

7. THE CHURCH IS COMMANDED TO PERSEVERE.

- a. Even as the days of Noah, and the days of Lot are fully revisited upon the earth, Jesus commands his Church to persevere. These words, spoken by the Lord to the church at Philadelphia (in ancient Asia Minor) also apply to The Church in the End Times:

“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” (Revelation 3:10-11).

- b. A closer look at the above commandments...
- The Church of Jesus Christ is commanded to PERSEVERE (meaning – to patiently endure).
 - For those who persevere, the Lord Jesus has promised to KEEP THEM (or, guard them from loss) during an hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world.
 - Literally, the hour of trial means: “A TIME OF PROVING.”
 - During this time of proving, The Church is commanded to: “...Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

Author's Notes:

In the above scriptures, The Church is commanded to: “...hold fast what you have...” Even as the days of Noah, and the days of Lot are fully revisited upon the earth, the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ must be strong, and continue to raise a standard against sin and unrighteousness!

In the next two lessons: “A snapshot of The Church in the End Times,” and “Recognizing the Antichrist,” we will gain an understanding of exactly what it means for the People of God to persevere as we progress further into these deteriorating and dangerous End Times!

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 24 – A snapshot of The Church in the End Times

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

*“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD**. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).*

Author's Notes:

Sometimes, God speaks to me early in the morning, revealing what he wants me to teach his people. The Lord used Isaiah 50, verse 4 to confirm his working in my life in this manner: *“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.”*

On a particular morning, the Holy Spirit showed me what could be described as: A SNAPHOT (or, photograph) OF THE CHURCH IN THE END TIMES. In this snapshot, I could see that three types of churches had emerged in the End Times. Each of these churches had clearly distinguishable characteristics, and could be identified as follows...

- 1) THE GODLY CHURCH.
- 2) THE COMPROMISING CHURCH.
- 3) THE APOSTATE CHURCH.

Then, the Spirit of the Lord spoke a further word of understanding - one of these churches will disappear BEFORE Jesus returns.

2. CHARACTERISTIC # 1 – The Bible.

- a. THE GODLY CHURCH – Doctrinal beliefs will be boldly based on the integrity of God’s Word:

“ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled (fixed, set in place) in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.” (Psalm 119:89-90).

- b. THE COMPROMISING CHURCH – Pastors may know the truth of God’s Word, but they will be reluctant to declare it, lest someone be offended. Therefore, philosophy (the pursuit of human wisdom), and the traditions of men will replace the truth of God’s Word:

“Beware lest anyone cheat you (or, plunder you) through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Colossians 2:8).

“Making the word of God of no effect (deprived of authority) through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” (Mark 7:13).

- c. THE APOSTATE CHURCH – The truth of God’s Word (those truths classified as absolutes) will be viciously attacked, and denied:

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men WHO SUPPRESS (or, hinder) THE TRUTH by their wickedness.” (Romans 1:18 NIV).

3. CHARACTERISTIC # 2 – Jesus Christ.

- a. THE GODLY CHURCH – Jesus Christ will be boldly proclaimed as the only way to God. There will be a strong emphasis on winning the lost, and making disciples of new converts ➤

“Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” (Matthew 28:19-20).

- b. **THE COMPROMISING CHURCH** – Theories that Jesus is not the only way to God will be welcomed, and explored. The people will question the authenticity of what the Bible says about Jesus:

“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV).

- c. **THE APOSTATE CHURCH** – The redemptive work of Jesus Christ will be demoted, explained away, and eventually denied:

“For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality, and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” (Jude 4 NIV).

4. CHARACTERISTIC # 3 – The Holy Spirit.

- a. **THE GODLY CHURCH** – The outpouring and manifestations of God’s Holy Spirit will be welcomed:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:17-18).

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation (wasteful, or riotous living), but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18).

- b. **THE COMPROMISING CHURCH** – Those in leadership will be fearful and reluctant to allow the working of the Holy Spirit. Some will stubbornly hold on to unbiblical doctrines, insisting that spiritual gifts have passed away, or are from the devil:

“Do not quench (suppress or subdue) the (Holy) Spirit. Do not spurn the gifts and utterances of the prophets – do not depreciate prophetic revelations nor despise inspired instruction or exhortation or warning.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 AMP).

- c. **THE APOSTATE CHURCH** – The people will listen to deceiving spirits (or, seducing spirits), rather than God’s Holy Spirit. Their beliefs will degrade into doctrines of demons:

“Now the Spirit expressly (clearly and plainly) says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” (1 Timothy 4:1).

“And no wonder, for Satan himself MASQUERADES (disguises himself, and changes in fashion or appearance) as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15 NIV).

5. CHARACTERISTIC # 4 – Sin.

- a. **THE GODLY CHURCH** – Sin will be clearly identified. Holiness will be manifested in the lives of the people. Repentance will be continuously practiced. What Ezekiel 44:23 said of Old Testament priests will now apply to New Testament pastors:

“And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”

“But immorality (sexual vice) and all impurity [of lustful, rich, wasteful living] or greediness must not even be named among you, as is fitting and proper among saints (God’s consecrated people). Let there be no filthiness (obscenity, indecency) nor foolish and sinful (silly and corrupt) talk, nor course jesting, which are not fitting or becoming; but instead voice your thankfulness [to God].” (Ephesians 5:3-4 AMP).

- b. **THE COMPROMISING CHURCH** – Tolerance will become the chief doctrine – tolerance of sin, and tolerance of other religions. Absolutes will be looked upon as a lack of love. People will view sin lightly, and become less and less serious about godliness. They will see no need for repentance in their lives:

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?” (1 Corinthians 5:1-2 NIV).

“For if he who comes preaches ANOTHER JESUS whom we have not preached, or if you receive A DIFFERENT SPIRIT which you have not received, or A DIFFERENT GOSPEL which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

- c. **THE APOSTATE CHURCH** – People will not be able to distinguish between good and evil. Sin will be justified, explained away, and eventually, just outright accepted:

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).

“And He (Jesus) said to them. You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” (Luke 16:15).

6. CHARACTERISTIC # 5 – Leadership.

- a. **THE GODLY CHURCH** – There will be recognition and restoration of God-ordained church leadership:

“And God has appointed (or, put in place) these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues ... And He Himself (Jesus) gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” (1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11).

- b. **THE COMPROMISING CHURCH** – Leadership will be weak. The authority of the pastor will be challenged. As the Apostle Paul warned, Grievous Wolves will enter in, and scatter the flock. In some cases, they will overthrow the pastor:

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse (distorted or misleading) things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29-30 KJV).

“Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because YOU ALLOW that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.” (Revelation 2:20-21).

- c. **THE APOSTATE CHURCH** – Leadership will be filled with sexual immorality. Adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, bisexuals, and transvestites will fill the pulpits. Under the guise of love, they will promote an agenda of immorality. Concubines will fill the pews:

“Therefore GOD GAVE THEM OVER (surrendered them) in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another ... Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, HE GAVE THEM OVER to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.” (Romans 1:24, 28 NIV).

7. CHARACTERISTIC # 6 – Praise and Worship.

- a. **THE GODLY CHURCH** – Biblical praise and worship will be an integral part of the church. God will be strongly exalted:

“Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.” (Psalm 150 NIV).

- b. **THE COMPROMISING CHURCH** – Worship will be structured by what is pleasing to the people, or comfortable to the people, rather than what exalts God. Often, the worship will be a reflection of the world’s music, rather than a reflection of God’s Word:

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain (to no purpose), their teachings are but rules taught by men.” (Matthew 15:8-9 NIV).

- c. **THE APOSTATE CHURCH** – Worship will be inward, rather than directed toward God:

“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things (ideas they created) rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen.” (Romans 1:25 NIV).

8. CHARACTERISTIC # 7 – Israel.

- a. **THE GODLY CHURCH** – The End Times Restoration of Israel will be recognized as foretold by the prophets. The Godly Church will stand with Israel in the last days:

“You will arise and have mercy on Zion; FOR THE TIME TO FAVOR HER, YES, THE SET TIME, HAS COME. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.” (Psalm 102:13-16).

- b. **THE COMPROMISING CHURCH** – Will not take a stand either for or against Israel. Too controversial; may not be politically correct.
- c. **THE APOSTATE CHURCH** – Will be strongly anti-Semitic; will stand against Israel, and even support Israel’s enemies:

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.” (Zechariah 12:2-3).

9. OBSERVATIONS AND WARNINGS.

- a. As we draw closer to the return of Jesus Christ, the SEPARATION between the godly and the ungodly will become wider, and more clearly recognizable. As this separation grows, The Compromising Church will increasingly mirror the Laodicean Church of Revelation 3:15-16, about which Jesus said:

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” (NIV).

- b. As a result, the days will come when The Compromising Church **WILL DISAPPEAR!** Some will get serious about God, and move up to The Godly Church. Unfortunately, many will refuse to give up their compromising ways, and will deteriorate into apostasy.

NOTE: The Compromising Church may not altogether disappear. Fragments of that church may still linger during the End Times. However, as we draw closer to the Coming of the Lord, for the most part, there will be only The Godly Church, and The Apostate Church.

- c. The Godly Church will be anchored in the truth of God’s Word, and will become more and more like the glorious church described by the Apostle Paul:

“That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself A GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:26-27).

- d. Strangely, The Apostate Church (because of great deception in the End Times – see 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11) will be convinced that they are the true church. The Apostate Church is very likely the vehicle from which the Antichrist will arise!

- e. **YOU MUST DECIDE; IN WHICH OF THESE CHURCHES WILL YOU RESIDE?**

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 25 – Recognizing the Antichrist

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself (showing off, trying to prove) that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

Author’s Notes:

Pertaining to the Antichrist, there is an abundance of speculation; more so than any other End Times subject. Theories abound about: Who is the Antichrist? Where will he come from? Is he alive right now on the earth?

The most prevalent theory is that he will emerge as the ruler of a ten-nation confederacy, comprised of European nations that once made up the ancient Roman Empire. Reportedly, he will make a covenant with Israel, allowing them to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and resume animal sacrifices. Some prophetic teachers call this ISRAEL’S COVENANT WITH DEATH (from Isaiah 28:14-19). Reportedly, in the middle of a seven-year period of Great Tribulation, he will stop the sacrifices, occupy the temple, declare himself to be God, and demand to be worshipped.

Yet, theories abound. During World War II, people thought Hitler was the Antichrist. Subsequently, many preachers have said the Pope (head of the Catholic Church) would become the Antichrist. And, due to the rise in fundamentalist Islam, some prophecy teachers are saying the Antichrist will be a Muslim.

Because theories abound, we should recall **GUIDELINE # 1** for interpreting End Times prophecy. Specifically, some prophecies are not **FULLY REVEALED** until they are **FULFILLED** (see page 19 for review). Therefore, rather than trying to solve all the mysteries, the Lord has directed me to focus on key indicators from the Bible, which will help God’s People **RECOGNIZE THE ANTICHRIST**.

2. RECOGNIZING THE ANTICHRIST.

NOTE: What 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2 says about the man of sin, or the son of perdition, so closely resembles the beast of Revelation, chapter 13, that they are believed to be the same person. Please read those two chapters.

a. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 1** – *“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled (they were astonished at the healing of the deadly wound) and followed the beast.”* (Revelation 13:3).

1) Precisely what will happen is still a mystery, but there will appear to be a RESURRECTION. This event – in the eyes of the world – will put the Antichrist in the same category as Jesus. This explains Key Indicator # 2 (below ↓).

b. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 2** – *“So they worshiped the dragon (also known as Satan) who gave authority to the beast; and THEY WORSHIPED THE BEAST, saying: Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”* (Revelation 13:4).

1) Everyone on the earth – except Christians – will worship the Antichrist (see Revelation 13:8). They will be enamored with him, and pledge their allegiance to him!

c. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 3** – *“Then He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.”* (Revelation 13:6).

1) The man of sin will not pretend to be a friend of Jesus, as do some deceivers. He will openly BLASPHEME against God (meaning: to defile with words, to rail at, to defame, or to speak evil of). Specifically, he will blaspheme...

- **AGAINST THE NAME OF GOD** (against the name of the Father – see Exodus 3:13-15. But, especially against the name of Jesus – see Philipians 2:9-11).
- **AGAINST HIS TABERNACLE** (God’s heavenly habitation, or perhaps the body of Christ – see 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
- **AGAINST THOSE WHO DWELL IN HEAVEN** (angels, the saints who have died in Christ, etc.).

- d. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 4** – The Antichrist has a helper, also known as the false prophet:

“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. HE PERFORMS GREAT SIGNS, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” (Revelation 13:11-13).

- 1) Although these signs may seem to be powerful, according to the following scriptures, they will be **LYING WONDERS** for the purpose of deceiving the unrighteous:

“The coming of the lawless one (the Antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all POWER, SIGNS, and LYING WONDERS, and with all UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).

- e. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 5** – An image of the Antichrist (a likeness, or statue, and thus, an idol) will be erected, and by some trickery, this idol will **APPEAR TO BE ALIVE**:

“And he (the false prophet) deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” (Revelation 13:14-15).

- f. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 6** – The Mark of the Beast:

“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has THE MARK, or THE NAME of the beast, or THE NUMBER of his name.” (Revelation 13:16-17).

- 1) Somehow, a mark (something engraved, an imprint, or an implant) will be placed upon the RIGHT HAND, or the FOREHEAD of those who follow the Antichrist.

- 2) Maybe they are one, and the same, but Revelation 13:16-17 (previous page ←) indicates the possibility that there could be three means of identifying those who follow the Antichrist...
 - The Mark of the Beast,
 - The Name of the Beast,
 - The Number of his name.

Author's Notes:

Many years ago, I remember several movies about the End Times circulating through the body of Christ. These movies portrayed the Mark of the Beast in a rather militant manner. One was reminded of an old cowboy movie in which cattle were chased around the corral, roped and tied, and then forcibly marked with a branding iron. The Holy Spirit has impressed upon me that receiving the Mark of the Beast will be quite the opposite of a forcible event.

The Bible reveals that those who believe in Jesus Christ are SEALED with the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 1:13-14). In the End Times, those who reject Jesus will be SEALED (figuratively speaking) in a different manner.

We live in a world that is becoming increasingly dependant upon electronic technology, rather than dependent upon God. As this dependency continues, and grows, those who do not know the Lord will become ELECTRONICALLY SEALED. In other words, a dependency upon electronic technology will become so thoroughly ingrained in people's minds, that every phase of their lifestyle will be controlled, and dominated by technology.

The Mark of the Beast will almost definitely involve electronic technology, rather than the branding iron effect. Keep in mind that Revelation 13:17 says of those days: "...no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The fear of not being able to buy or sell will cause a panic among those who have developed a dependency upon electronic technology, and they will RUSH TO RECEIVE the mark.

I can envision long lines of nervous people, eagerly awaiting this mark. I can envision police having to stand guard, and maintain order over mobs of people, who will incite riots in their anxiety to receive the mark. I can envision fights breaking out because people cut in front of others! At the same time, those who refuse to receive the mark will be looked upon as ignorant, and impeding progress.

- g. Recognizing the Antichrist, **KEY INDICATOR # 7** – “*Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: his number is 666.*” (Revelation 13:18).

- 1) The word, CALCULATE, in the above verse could lead some to believe that the number of the beast is a very complicated matter. Actually, this word simply means: TO COUNT WITH PEBBLES. Thus, once revealed, even a child will be able to recognize the number of the beast.

3. SITTING IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD???

“He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up IN GOD’S TEMPLE, proclaiming himself to be God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:4 NIV).

Author’s Notes:

As previously explained, the most prevalent theory about the Antichrist is as follows: He will make a covenant with Israel, allow them to rebuild the temple, and re-institute animal sacrifices. Then, in the middle of the Tribulation, he will stop the sacrifices, set himself up in the temple, and declare himself to be God.

However, even if the temple is rebuilt, and certain theories pertaining to the Antichrist prove to be true, it would simply be **SATAN’S DECOY** to distract from a greater deception! We must not overlook these New Covenant facts, which give us a more accurate understanding...

- ❑ The Church of Jesus Christ is now the Temple of God.
- ❑ A rebuilt Jewish Temple would not qualify as the Temple of God.

Be spiritually alert! Watch for the Antichrist to rise up from **WITHIN THE CHURCH** (the real Temple of God), rather than a rebuilt Jewish Temple. Of course, the Antichrist could not be a part of the true Temple of God (he could not be inhabited by the Holy Spirit). However, he could rise up from within The Compromising Church, and emerge as a false christ among those who fall away from the faith, and become The Apostate Church (see Matthew 24:23-26).

As such, the Antichrist could defile God’s Temple. How? **BY RENOUNCING JESUS AS LORD, AND PROCLAIMING HIMSELF TO BE GOD.** 1 Corinthians 3:17 clearly declares: “*If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*”

4. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION:

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.” (Matthew 24:15-20 – from Daniel 11:31 and 12:11).

BIBLE DEFINITION: Abomination of Desolation – Great Idolatry, which is utterly detestable to God, in which the spiritual condition of those involved is laid waste.

Author's Notes:

THEORY # 1 - Jewish Rabbis have said the Abomination of Desolation was fulfilled in 167 BC, when Antiochus Epiphanes (Greek ruler, who was presiding over Israel) sacrificed a pig on the altar in the temple. Obviously, that was an abomination at the time! Yet, when one considers Matthew 24:15-31, Jesus was actually speaking of the Abomination of Desolation as a future event, not as a past event.

THEORY # 2 - Some prophetic teachers believe the prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD, when Titus destroyed the temple. However, years earlier, Jesus had cried from the cross: *“...It is finished...,”* after which the veil of the temple was ripped in two. Thereafter, God no longer dwelt in a temple made with men's hands. Spiritually speaking, Titus destroyed an empty temple! This would not qualify as the Abomination of Desolation.

THEORY # 3 - Many prophecy teachers believe the temple must be rebuilt in order to fulfill this prophecy. They say the Abomination of Desolation occurs when the Antichrist sets himself up in the temple during The Great Tribulation, and proclaims himself to be God. However, if the Antichrist takes over a rebuilt Jewish Temple (which would not be inhabited by God) he would not be **STANDING IN THE HOLY PLACE** (as required by Matthew 24:15 - above ↑). Such a happening would merely be a false messiah replacing an obsolete religion. I question whether this would qualify as the Abomination of Desolation?

However, if the Antichrist rises up from within The Church (The Compromising Church, which deteriorates into The Apostate Church), and **RENOUNCES JESUS CHRIST AS LORD, AND PROCLAIMS HIMSELF TO BE GOD**, that would most definitely qualify as the Abomination of Desolation! Remember, the man of sin will not be Anti-Judaism; he will be Anti-Christ (see 1 John 4:2-3).

5. OVERCOMING THE SAINTS:

"It was granted to him (the Antichrist) TO MAKE WAR WITH THE SAINTS, and TO OVERCOME THEM. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation." (Revelation 13:7).

Author's Notes:

The above scripture sounds like defeat. It just sounds like all the saints on the earth during the times of the Antichrist will have no other choice, except to line up like sheep, and be killed. Probably, we are all familiar with Revelation 20:4: *"... Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."*

But, let's take a closer look. From a biblical perspective, what does it mean to overcome, or be overcome? In 1 John 5:4-5, we find the Bible definition of overcoming: *"For whatever (or, whoever) is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - OUR FAITH. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."*

Remember, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 (first page of this lesson), places The Great Apostasy, and the revealing of the Antichrist in the same timeframe - BEFORE JESUS RETURNS. Apostasy is already among us, but apparently, it will have its full expression during the actual times of the Antichrist. So, when Revelation 13:7 speaks of the Antichrist overcoming the saints, it is most accurately talking about TURNING THEM AWAY FROM CHRIST. It is a sad, but truthful fact that some who confessed Jesus will deny him during those days.

A greater, and more significant fact is that many saints will not succumb to The Great Apostasy, but will CHOOSE to become martyrs, rather than deny Jesus. For those who make that choice - like Stephen, the first martyr - God will give them the power to lay down their lives for the sake of the Gospel (see Acts 7:54-60). Martyrdom will not be defeat; it will be VICTORY!

It is also true that many of the saints will escape all these things. They will not deny the Lord; neither will they be killed by the Antichrist (see Matthew 24:22). After the Tribulation, according to Mark 13:27, Jesus will: *"...send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven."*

If all the saints on the earth during those days either commit apostasy, or are killed by the Antichrist, who would Jesus send out his angels to gather?

6. ESCAPING ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS:

*“Watch therefore (be spiritually alert), and pray always that you may be **COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE** all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36).*

- a. From the above scripture, the expression, **COUNTED WORTHY**, literally means: *“To overpower, prevail against, or be superior in strength.”* Jesus actually told us to watch and pray, that we might be superior in strength to **ESCAPE** the events of the End Times! So, unless the Lord calls you to be a martyr, **BE READY TO ESCAPE!**

Author's Notes:

In Matthew 24:15-20, Jesus gave these specific instructions about the Abomination of Desolation:

“...WHEN YOU SEE the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray (this is a specific prayer request) that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.” (also see Mark 13:14-18).

These instructions would obviously apply to believers residing in Israel. Yet, all of God's People must be spiritually alert during those days, because the warning to flee may also apply to Christians outside of Israel.

Revelation, chapter 12, also speaks of a fleeing into the wilderness for 1,260 days - to a place of **NOURISHMENT**, and a place of **PROTECTION** from Satan (read the entire chapter, but note verses 6 and 14). Whether this fleeing applies to Israel, The Church, or both, is yet to be revealed, but some prophetic teachers believe these times of fleeing are actually the same event.

Certain teachers have also said God's People will flee to **PETRA** (see Author's Notes, page 218), but that destination cannot be confirmed by the scriptures.

- b. The reign of the Antichrist will not be that long. Then, Jesus will destroy the man of sin, and his short reign of terror will end:

“And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.” (Revelation 13:5).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 26 – The Feasts of the Lord; yet to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.” (Leviticus 23:1-2).

Author’s Notes:

From an earlier lesson: *“The Feasts of the Lord; fulfilled in Jesus Christ,”* we learned that the word, convocations (above ↑) refers to public gatherings, but can also mean **A REHEARSAL**. The feasts were not **A FINALITY** in themselves, but only a rehearsal of the eventual fulfillment that was to come in Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17 confirms this fulfillment: *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL (the Feasts of the Lord), a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow (an image, or type) of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” (NIV).*

As previously explained, in these days of Israel's restoration, many Gentile Christians are trying to keep the feasts as a way of discovering their Jewish roots. However, Christians (both Jews and Gentiles) should not go backwards in their faith and begin practicing Judaism. Neither should they become entangled in Jewish traditions, which have been added to the feasts. The feasts should be celebrated as they were fulfilled, or **WILL BE FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST**.

- a. In addition to being a shadow of Jesus Christ, the feasts are also believed to represent **GOD’S PROPHETIC TIMETABLE**. The first four feasts – (1) Passover, (2) Unleavened Bread, (3) Firstfruits, and (4) Weeks (or, Pentecost) – have already been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The remaining three feasts are **YET TO BE FULFILLED**, and will be studied in this lesson.

2. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS (the first day of Tishri – Jewish calendar).

a. As originally established by God:

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of BLOWING OF TRUMPETS, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.” (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Author’s Notes:

This feast has been changed from the way it was originally established by God. The Lord told Moses the Feast of Trumpets was to occur on the FIRST DAY of the SEVENTH MONTH (Tishri - September/October timeframe). However, this feast is now called: Rosh Hashanah, meaning: “*Head of the Year.*” Rather than the first day of the seventh month, it is now the beginning of a New Year.

God had previously said the New Year was to begin on the first day of Abib (now called Nisan - March/April timeframe): “*Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying: This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.*” (Exodus 12:1-2).

Changing the calendar was a violation of God’s Law: “*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*” (Deuteronomy 4:2).

b. The Feast of Trumpets – to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ (the coming of the Lord will be accompanied by the blowing of a trumpet):

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with THE TRUMPET OF GOD. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, AT THE LAST TRUMPET. FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:29-31).

Author's Notes:

In the earlier lesson, we learned that the Feast of Firstfruits celebrated an early harvest, and the Feast of Weeks celebrated a later harvest. Likewise, when those feasts were fulfilled by Jesus Christ, they resulted in an EARLY HARVEST OF SOULS, and a LATER HARVEST OF SOULS.

Similarly, the Feast of Trumpets (and, the two remaining feasts), when fulfilled in Christ, will result in the ULTIMATE HARVEST OF SOULS.

3. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kippur – tenth day of Tishri).

a. As originally established by God:

“Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls (or, repent before the Lord), and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people.” (Leviticus 23:27-29 – description continues through verse 32).

b. The Day of Atonement was the one day of the year when the high priest entered behind the veil of the temple, into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled the blood of a sin-offering on and about the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant:

“But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.” (Hebrews 9:7-8 NIV).

Author's Notes:

Keeping the Day of Atonement year by year does not pertain to Christians (neither Jews nor Gentiles). Hebrews 9:7-8 (previous page ←) explains that the Day of Atonement was necessary year by year, because the way into the TRUE Most Holy Place had not yet been revealed. Now, however, the way has been revealed; it is through Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 9:24-26). According to Hebrews 10:19, we now have boldness to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus!

The moment a person accepts Jesus as Messiah, and trusts in his shed blood for the remission of sins, they experience a personal day of atonement (figuratively speaking). I say figuratively speaking, because ATONEMENT is not a New Covenant word. Although the word, ATONEMENT, appears once in the New Testament (see Romans 5:11 - King James Version), it is a mistranslation! The Greek word in that verse literally means reconciliation (as in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

On the other hand, atonement appears multiple times in the Old Testament. The word literally means: "*TO COVER.*" This word is first found in Genesis 6:14, where God gives Noah instructions about building the ark: "*...COVER IT inside and outside with pitch.*" Also, Yom Kippur literally means: "*Day of Covering.*"

Under the Law of Moses, animal sacrifices were offered TO COVER (make an atonement for) the sins of the people. Such sacrifices could not take sins away, and were only a temporary covering until the sacrifice of Jesus: "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*" (Hebrews 10:4).

The shed blood of Jesus does not atone for sins; it actually takes sins away: "*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said: Behold, the Lamb of God who TAKES AWAY the sin of the world.*" (John 1:29 - also see Romans 11:27). So, whenever someone accepts Jesus as the Christ - whether Jew or Gentile - they actually experience a DAY OF REDEMPTION, not a Day of Atonement.

Likewise, when Jesus returns, and Yom Kippur is fulfilled in Christ - ISRAEL AS A NATION - will experience a Day of Redemption, not a Day of Atonement.

c. The Day of Atonement – to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." (Zechariah 12:10).

"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zechariah 13:1).

“And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you (Gentiles) were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!” (Romans 11:23-24 NIV).

“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them (the New Covenant), when I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:26-27).

Author's Notes:

Please notice: the Feast of Trumpets occurs on the **FIRST DAY** of Tishri, and the Day of Atonement occurs on the **TENTH DAY** of Tishri. Apparently, Israel will have approximately ten days to decide whether or not to repent of unbelief, and accept Jesus (Yeshua) as the Messiah!

I always had the idea in my mind that the Jews would look upon Jesus whom they pierced - **SEE HIM COMING IN THE SKY** - and instantaneously accept him. Then, the Holy Spirit reminded me of the following scriptures:

“...they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei (Shimei - Hebrew: meaning famous, or renowned) by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.” (from Zechariah 12:10-14).

Obviously, such a period of mourning could not happen instantaneously! It would require time, perhaps as long as ten days. Some of Abraham's descendants may even have to travel in order to join with their families.

Also, in order for Israel - **AS A NATION** - to accept Jesus as the Messiah, perhaps an emergency session of the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) will be called. Almost certainly, a meeting of the reorganized Sanhedrin (Jewish religious leaders) will be convened. Perhaps a vote will be taken to decide whether or not to accept Yeshua HaMashiach? Thankfully, according to Romans 11:26-27 (above ↑), all of Israel will make the right decision!

4. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (or, Feast of Booths – 15th day of Tishri).

a. As originally established by God:

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD ... you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and YOU SHALL REJOICE BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD FOR SEVEN DAYS.” (Leviticus 23:33-34, & 40 – see complete account, verses 33-44).

NOTE: For interesting reading pertaining to the Feast of Tabernacles, see Nehemiah 8:13-18.

b. Under the Old Covenant, the Feast of Tabernacles also involved the children of Israel living in booths for seven days:

“You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 23:42-43).

1) A booth is defined as: *“A crude shelter, made from shrubs, or tree branches, similar to an animal’s lair.”* As revealed in the above scriptures, dwelling in booths was to remind the children of Israel of their temporary dwellings in the wilderness, and of God’s provision during that time (see Nehemiah 9:20-21).

c. The Feast of Tabernacles – to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

“The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be A SHELTER FOR HIS PEOPLE, and the strength of the children of Israel.” (Joel 3:16).

1) Living in booths will not be required when this feast is fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Joel’s prophecy (above ↑) will be fulfilled, and the Messiah will live and walk among us. He will be the only shelter his people need! There will no longer be a need to reenact Israel’s sojourning in the wilderness.

- d. When the Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled in Christ, thereafter the emphasis will be on rejoicing before the Lord:

“And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.” (Leviticus 23:40).

- e. This feast will also be CONTINUALLY FULFILLED in Jesus Christ (during the Millennial Reign):

“Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles ... On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite (by implication – an unbeliever) in the house of the LORD Almighty.” (Zechariah 14:16, 20-21 NIV).

Author’s Notes:

The above verses speak of: ALL WHO COME TO SACRIFICE. During the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, there obviously will not be a return to worthless, Old Testament, animal sacrifices. The sacrifices offered will be those of PRAISE and WORSHIP: *“Therefore by Him (through Jesus Christ) let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* (Hebrews 13:15).

The reference to bells of the horses and cooking pots reveals that the total environment will be holy, and saturated with the glory of God: *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”* (Isaiah 11:9). Think about it, and rejoice...

- ✓ No more blasphemy spewing from the mouths of Rock & Roll singers,
 - ✓ No more sexual perversion pervading every aspect of our society,
 - ✓ No more profane language, trashy sayings, or crude graffiti,
 - ✓ No more babies destroyed through abortion,
 - ✓ No more pressure to be politically correct, and
 - ✓ No more injustice!
-

- f. The Feast of Tabernacles will be a very serious event during the Millennial Reign of Christ, and there will be punishment upon all who do not attend:

“And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Zechariah 14:17-19).

- g. The question is; why would anyone refuse to come to Jerusalem in those days?

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say: Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:1-2).

Author’s Notes:

Once, during this feast, Jesus made an interesting statement: *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying: If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”* (John 7:37-38).

This statement did not pertain to the Feast of Tabernacles being fulfilled in Christ. That fulfillment is yet to come! Jesus was addressing a Jewish custom that occurred on the last day of the feast. The high priest poured out vessels of water at the altar, and prayers were offered for God to send rain upon the land, and thereby, give them a successful crop-growing season the next year.

Jesus was emphasizing that man’s greatest need was not rain upon the land, but rather, the water of God’s Holy Spirit, which would soon pour forth from the innermost being of those who believed in him: *“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”* (John 7:39).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 27 – The Coming of the Lord

Author's Notes:

For most of my Christian life (having been in church from an early age), I believed in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of The Church. Supposedly, this event was to occur at the beginning of a seven-year period known as The Great Tribulation. Thus, I was taught that Jesus would RETURN TWICE - once to remove The Church from the world in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, and seven years later to establish his kingdom on the earth. I just believed what I was taught, and what I read in popular books about the End Times, without ever asking God: *"What is the truth?"*

In time, however, I inquired of my Heavenly Father to know the truth, even if it meant changing what I believed. A big change came in May of 2000. The Lord spoke a strong word of new direction into my life: *"I have made you a Watchman on the Walls in the body of Christ."* As a Watchman, one of the first things God dealt with me about was the fallacy of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Repeatedly, since that time, the Holy Spirit has impressed upon me that one of my major responsibilities is to **PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THE END TIMES.**

1. THE COMING OF THE LORD; ONE EVENT, NOT TWO EVENTS!

- a. The word, COMING, as it pertains to the second coming of Jesus Christ, appears in the New Testament more than 40 times. As an example:

"Therefore be patient, brethren, until THE COMING OF THE LORD. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for THE COMING OF THE LORD is at hand." (James 5:7-8)

- 1) Always, in every portion of scripture pertaining to the return of the Lord, the singular word COMING is used. Never is the plural word COMING(S) used.

- b. The word, DAY, as it pertains to the return of Jesus, appears in the New Testament more than 30 times. As an example:

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though THE DAY OF CHRIST had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

- 1) Always, the singular word DAY is used. Never is the plural word DAY(S) used.

- c. The word, APPEARING, is used at least four times in the New Testament to describe the second coming of the Lord:

“Looking for the blessed hope and GLORIOUS APPEARING of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:13-14).

- 1) Always, the singular word APPEARING is used. Never is the plural word APPEARING(S) used.

2. HIS COMING WILL INDEED BE AT A TIME OF GREAT TRIBULATION:

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but FOR THE ELECT’S SAKE those days will be shortened.” (Matthew 24:21-22).

- a. However, there is no conclusive scriptural evidence to support a Pre-Tribulation Rapture – specifically, that Jesus will return...
- ALMOST TO THE EARTH,
 - HOVER IN THE CLOUDS,
 - SNATCH THE CHURCH OUT OF THE WORLD,
 - TURN AROUND, and...
 - TAKE THE CHRISTIANS BACK TO HEAVEN FOR SEVEN YEARS (thus, they would avoid the time of tribulation).

- b. In fact, the following verses of scripture clearly dispute the notion of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture:

*“Immediately AFTER THE TRIBULATION of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT** (is this not the rapture?) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:29-31).*

- c. Mark also confirms an AFTER THE TRIBULATION rapture:

*“But in those days, AFTER THAT TRIBULATION, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and **GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT** from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.” (Mark 13:24-27)*

Author's Notes:

Matthew 24:21-22 (previous page ←), and both of the above passages refer to THE ELECT (or, from the Greek - chosen ones). Those scripture passages clearly place the elect on the earth during the time of tribulation.

Dispensational teachers, who hold to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, would insist that THE ELECT refers only to Israel (the Jewish race of people), who will be given a second chance to accept Jesus during The Great Tribulation.

Israel is indeed chosen, or elect (see Isaiah 41:8). However, Christians are also called THE ELECT (or, chosen ones): *“But you are a CHOSEN (or, elect) GENERATION, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10).*

Read those passages of scripture again; there is no reference to Jews only. THE ELECT are born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. THE LAST TRUMPET.

- a. Following are two passages of scripture that are favorites among teachers of Dispensational Theology, who insist that there will be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of The Church:

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with THE TRUMPET OF GOD. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, AT THE LAST TRUMPET. FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

- b. However, dispensational teachers would also insist that the below verses occur at the end of The Great Tribulation, seven years after the Rapture of The Church:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:29-31).

- c. Please notice; all three portions of scripture speak of the sounding of a trumpet. Then, notice that 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 specifically identifies **THE LAST TRUMPET**. If the last trumpet occurs at a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, how then could there be another trumpet seven years later?
- d. **CONCLUSION:** All three of the above passages are referring to the same event – the second coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus will not return twice; there will be only one coming of the Lord.

Author's Notes:

Many prophecy teachers believe the time of tribulation before the return of Jesus can be further identified as: DANIEL'S SEVENTIETH WEEK (taken from the book of Daniel, chapter 9, verses 20-27).

Many prophetic teachers also believe this time of tribulation will be seven years. Those scriptures from Daniel use the terminology, WEEKS (literally, sevens), and further examination does reveal that a week is very possibly the equivalent of seven years. Sixty-nine weeks are accounted for in those verses, leaving one week unaccounted for. The seventieth week (or, the unaccounted for week) is believed to be The Great Tribulation, prior to the second coming of Jesus.

Teachers of Dispensational Theology would insist that The Church will be removed from the earth by a Pre-Tribulation Rapture at the beginning of this seventieth week; and thus, avoid the Tribulation. Unfortunately, much of what dispensational teachers declare as CERTAINTY, is actually THEORY.

Much of the book of Daniel is obviously prophetic, and applicable to the End Times. However, much of what is contained therein is still a mystery! Despite the best efforts of prophecy teachers, some of the prophecies in Daniel may not be FULLY REVEALED, until they are FULFILLED. Near the end of the book, even Daniel admits: *"I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked: My lord, what will the outcome of all this be? He replied: Go your way, Daniel, because the words are CLOSED UP and SEALED until the time of the end."* (Daniel 12:8-9 NIV).

THE MAIN POINT: Even if Daniel's Seventieth Week is definitely the time of Great Tribulation prior to the return of the Lord Jesus, nowhere in the book of Daniel is there any biblical evidence, nor even a suggestion, that God's People will be removed from the earth (as in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture).

4. Much of the tribulation in the End Times will be a direct result of warfare against Israel. The following words from Jesus (initially fulfilled in 70 AD), will be fulfilled again, but with different results:

"But when you see Jerusalem SURROUNDED BY ARMIES, then know that its desolation (this time, her salvation) is near." (Luke 21:20).

a. From the above scripture, some have pointed out that Israel is already surrounded by hostile nations. However, this verse says Jerusalem will be SURROUNDED BY ARMIES, literally meaning: *"An encampment of troops."* Watch for the time when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies preparing for attack!

5. Just prior to the return of Jesus, **THE NATURAL ORDER** of the universe will be out of synchronization:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Matthew 24:29). (NOTE: for additional study, also see Luke 21:25-26, Joel 2:30-31, Acts 2:19-20, and Isaiah 13:9-10).

- a. It was immediately after Jesus explained about the lack of natural order, that he spoke this oft-repeated quote:

“Now when these things begin to happen, LOOK UP and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (Luke 21:28).

6. **THE COMING OF THE LORD** – Despite the tribulation, the warfare against Israel, and the lack of natural order, Jesus will return to this earth in the same manner in which he ascended into Heaven:

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel (two angels – see Luke 24:4), who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet (the Mount of Olives), which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.” (Acts 1:9-12).

- a. Jesus ascended into a cloud, and he will return on the clouds:

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:30).

- b. A small group of followers watched as the Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven. Every eye will observe his return:

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” (Revelation 1:7).

Author's Notes:

As revealed by the previous verse, EVERY EYE will see the return of Jesus. However, some who teach a Pre-Tribulation Rapture say Jesus will first come like a THIEF IN THE NIGHT, and secretly snatch away The Church. Then, when he returns after The Great Tribulation, every eye will see him.

Yet, a closer look into God's Word reveals that the Lord's coming as a thief has nothing whatsoever to do with a Pre-Tribulation Rapture (see 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 2 Peter 3:9-13, Revelation 3:1-3, and Revelation 16:12-16). According to these scriptures, the Lord's coming as a thief will not even affect the TRUE CHURCH, but rather, will affect unbelievers, and The Apostate Church.

When Jesus Christ returns, everything in which the ungodly have hope, and everything to which they are clinging (political leaders, political solutions to world problems, false spiritual ideologies, personal fortunes, and worldly pleasures), will all be snatched away from them like a thief plundering valuables in the night (also see Luke 21:34-35).

- c. From Matthew 24:30 (previous page ←), what is the SIGN of the Son of Man? We do not know for sure, but consider the following:

“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:27).

- d. Angels were involved when Jesus ascended into Heaven; angels will be involved when he returns:

“And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.” (Mark 13:27).

- e. All who know the Lord – both alive and deceased – will be caught up in the clouds **TO MEET** (or, **TO WELCOME**) the Lord in the air:

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

- f. The saints of all the ages (both Old Testament and New Testament) will accompany the Lord at his return:

“...Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” (from Jude 14-15).

- g. Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives; he will return to the Mount of Olives:

“And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.” (Zechariah 14:4).

7. PREPARING GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THE END TIMES.

Author's Notes:

As stated earlier in this lesson, the Lord has strongly impressed upon me to PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THE END TIMES. To the contrary, many ministers of the Gospel are not preparing God's People for the End Times. Instead, they are PREPARING THEM TO LEAVE (via a Pre-Tribulation Rapture).

These are serious days for The Church. The Great Apostasy is upon us, and many who confess Christ will turn away from him. Those who are clinging to the false hope of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture will be among the vulnerable. Ministers of the Gospel should be preparing God's People to ENDURE TO THE END.

“...when the Son of Man comes, will He find (persistence in) the faith on the earth?” (from Luke 18:8 AMP).

“WATCH THEREFORE (be spiritually alert), and PRAY ALWAYS that you may be counted worthy (that you may overpower, prevail against, and be superior in strength) to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36).

“And you will be hated by all men for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Mark 13:13).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 28 – The End Times Battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.” (Joel 3:1-2).

Author’s Notes:

The above scriptures have convinced some prophetic teachers (including this author) that there will be **TWO** End Times battles...

- An initial battle in the area known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
- A subsequent battle in the area known as Armageddon.

Admittedly, there could be one battle, fought on two battlefields. However, it is probable that there will be two separate battles, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be personally involved in both battles!

Despite ongoing turmoil, there will apparently be a season of peace in Israel prior to these End Times battles. Through his prophet, Ezekiel, the Lord speaks directly to the nations that will eventually come against Israel: *“After many days you will be visited. IN THE LATTER YEARS you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now ALL OF THEM DWELL SAFELY.”* (Ezekiel 38:8).

However, regardless of whatever peace negotiations take place, the season of peace in Israel will be short-lived, and will be a false peace. Again, through his servant, Ezekiel, God commands the nations: *“You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be IN THE LATTER DAYS that I will bring you against My land...”* (from Ezekiel 38:16).

2. IDENTIFYING THE BATTLEFIELD.

Author's Notes:

The location of the Valley of Jehoshaphat is not conclusively identified in the Bible. According to various study helps, the LOCATION, or MEANING, could be identified as follows...

- 1) An actual valley in which God will judge the nations at the end of this age. According to ancient Jewish tradition, the Valley of Jehoshaphat was that part of the Kidron Valley, which is located between the Mount of Olives and the Temple Mount.
- 2) The Valley of Berachah. This valley is located about 10 miles southwest of Jerusalem (in ancient times - between Tekoa and the main road from Bethlehem to Hebron. Today - in The West Bank). It was in this valley that King Jehoshaphat assembled the people of Judah to bless the Lord for the victory over Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir (see 2 Chronicles 20:26-30).
- 3) Jehoshaphat means: "*Jehovah has judged*," leading some to conclude that the Valley of Jehoshaphat is not an actual location, but rather, a decision each nation must make concerning Israel, in order to avoid, or incur the judgment of God. Joel 3:12-14 (below ↓) speaks of the nations being in a valley of decision. No doubt, every nation in the earth will have to make a decision to stand with Israel, or stand against her!

Very likely, all three explanations are correct, and will all apply to the Lord's judgment of the nations. For example, the Valley of Berachah (explanation #2 ↑) eventually connects to the Kidron Valley (explanation #1 ↑). Also, in our foundational verses (previous page ←), God says he will gather all nations, and "*...bring them DOWN to the Valley of Jehoshaphat...*," which would fit with explanation #2. In the below scriptures, God says: "*Let the nations be wakened, and COME UP to the Valley of Jehoshaphat...*," which would fit with explanation #1.

3. THE BATTLE IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT:

"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe (the time, or season of judgment is ready). Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow – for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision." (Joel 3:12-14).

- a. This End Times battle will focus upon Jerusalem:

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.” (Zechariah 12:2-3).

- b. Whether or not every nation in the earth will have military forces on the ground is uncertain. Joel 3:12 (previous page ←) speaks of: *“...all the SURROUNDING NATIONS,”* and Zechariah 12:2 (above ↑) speaks of: *“...all the SURROUNDING PEOPLES....”* Yet, from Zechariah 12:3 (above ↑), the scriptures seem to imply a wider involvement: *“...though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.”*
- c. Perhaps all nations will be against Israel politically, but the actual combatants will likely be a fulfillment of ancient prophecy:

“Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said: Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more. For they have consulted together with one consent; THEY FORM A CONFEDERACY AGAINST YOU (against God, not just against Israel) – the tents of EDOM and the ISHMAELITES; MOAB and the HAGRITES; GEBAL, AMMON, and AMALEK; PHILISTIA with the inhabitants of TYRE; ASSYRIA also has joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot.” (Psalm 83:1-8).

Author's Notes:

Pertaining to the above named enemies of Israel, the Psalmist prophesied: *“...they form a confederacy...”* Never before in Israel's history (whether ancient or modern history) has there ever been such a confederacy. The 83rd Psalm will not go unfulfilled! Therefore, almost certainly, this is an End Times prophecy, which will be fulfilled during the battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

On the following page, as we further identify the peoples and nations listed above, please notice that in today's world, they are all Muslims!

4. FURTHER IDENTIFYING THE PEOPLES AND NATIONS NAMED IN PSALM 83 (Identified by using various Bible study helps).

- a. EDOM – The descendants of Esau (Jacob's twin brother). Esau also married Ishmael's daughter. In today's world, the location of ancient Edom would be in southwestern Jordan.
- b. ISHMAELITES – The descendants of Ishmael (Abraham's son by Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid). In today's world, the descendants of Ishmael could include all Arab nations.
- c. MOAB – Descendants of Lot by his daughter. In today's world, ancient Moab would be located in southwestern Jordan, north of where Edom was located.
- d. HAGRITES – Arabic tribe that dwelt east of Israel (across the Jordan River). In today's world, western Jordan.
- e. GEBAL – Ancient Phoenician seaport. In today's world, western Lebanon, north of Beirut. Also, mountainous area in southwestern Jordan, between Petra and the southern end of the Dead Sea.
- f. AMMON – Descendants of Lot by his daughter. In today's world, Ammon would be located in western Jordan, north of where Moab was located.
- g. AMALEK – An ancient tribe that descended from Esau's grandson. They roamed widely throughout Canaan, and continuously caused trouble for Israel (see Exodus 17:16). In today's world, Amalek could be likened to Palestinian terrorists, who continually attack Israel.
- h. PHILISTIA – Territory on the west coast of Canaan. Home of the ancient Philistines. In today's world – The Gaza Strip.
- i. TYRE – In southwestern Lebanon, on the Mediterranean coast. In today's world, Tyre has become a stronghold for Israel's enemies.
- j. ASSYRIA – Vast ancient kingdom that originated in Mesopotamia. In today's world, the ancient Assyrian empire would include Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and portions of western Iran.

5. THE BATTLE BEGINS, AND INITIALLY, IT WILL APPEAR THAT THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL ARE WINNING:

“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” (Zechariah 14:1-2).

a. Then, the Lord Jesus Christ himself will intervene:

“Then the LORD will go forth and FIGHT AGAINST THOSE NATIONS, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.” (Zechariah 14:3-4).

Author’s Notes:

When Jesus returns, the Mount of Olives will be split in two FROM EAST TO WEST. The direction in which this splitting takes place will almost certainly rip open the Eastern Gate (pictured on the cover).

In addition, this splitting will create A VERY LARGE VALLEY, which will also likely destroy whatever is situated on the Temple Mount at the time, whether it be the current Dome of the Rock, or a rebuilt Jewish Temple!

b. Revelation 19:11-16 further describes the Lord’s intervention:

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should STRIKE THE NATIONS. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

- c. Some of God's Chosen People (perhaps the women, children, or those not able to fight) will flee from the battle:

“Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah (see Amos 1:1). Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.” (Zechariah 14:5).

Author's Notes:

The above scripture speaks of God's Chosen People fleeing from the battle. As to where they will flee is uncertain. The location of Azal cannot be conclusively identified in the Bible. However, from Zechariah 14:3-4 (previous page ←), we know that Azal will be accessible through the large valley that is created when the Lord Jesus stands upon the Mount of Olives.

As stated in an earlier lesson, Revelation, chapter 12, also speaks of a fleeing (see verses 6 and 14). However, the fleeing described in Revelation would definitely be a different event from the one described above, because after Jesus returns, there will be no need to hide from Satan for 1,260 days. The verses in Revelation likely apply to God's protection of his people during the Tribulation.

Certain prophecy teachers have created an enthusiasm that God's People will flee to PETRA (in either, or both cases). Petra (also called Sela - see 2 Kings 14:7) is located about 50 miles south of the Dead Sea in southwestern Jordan. The ancient city is carved out of rose-colored sandstone, and is accessible only by passing through a narrow, high-walled gorge, more than a mile in length, which provides the city with an excellent defense. Also, Petra is carved out of the rocks in such a manner that it could likely survive a flood (as described by Revelation 12:15-16).

However, despite the enthusiasm, the scriptures make no mention of Petra as the destination of the Revelation 12 fleeing, nor of the above fleeing described by Zechariah. In both cases, the destination is unrevealed.

- d. With God's help, those who fight will do so valiantly, but ultimately, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who will defend Jerusalem:

“In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy ALL THE NATIONS THAT COME AGAINST JERUSALEM.” (Zechariah 12:8-9).

- e. The description of how Israel's enemies will be slain, have caused some to speculate that Israel may use nuclear weapons:

"And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall DISSOLVE (pine away) while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths." (Zechariah 14:12).

Author's Notes:

The use of nuclear weapons in this End Times battle is highly unlikely. Such an explosion in any portion of the Valley of Jehoshaphat would not only destroy the enemies of Israel, but could also endanger all of Jerusalem, and much of Israel.

I am convinced that it will simply be: **THE APPEARANCE** of the Lord, and **HIS WORDS**, that will slay the enemies of Israel. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 describes the encounter between the Antichrist and Jesus: *"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming"* (or, the brightness of his presence). According to Revelation 19:21, all of God's enemies will be destroyed in a similar manner.

Revelation 19:15 gives us further insight about Jesus consuming his enemies with the **BREATH OF HIS MOUTH**: *"Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations..."*

And, from Revelation 1:16-17, the Apostle John gives us insight pertaining to the **BRIGHTNESS OF HIS COMING**: *"...His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead..."*

6. KEY OBSERVATIONS.

- a. Although this battle will be fought for the entire city of Jerusalem, there is a very specific piece of real estate, which the Lord Jesus Christ will occupy as a result of his triumph over Israel's enemies; namely – **THE TEMPLE MOUNT** (or, Mount Zion).
- b. Before Lucifer (who became Satan) was kicked out of Heaven, he had access to the **HEAVENLY** holy mountain of God:

"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God ... And you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God..." (from Ezekiel 28:14, 16).

- c. Since being kicked out of Heaven, Satan has strived to occupy the EARTHLY mountain of God. At the time this book was published, Satan still controlled the Temple Mount. It was being governed by Muslims, and was occupied by the Dome of the Rock (the Mosque of Omar), and the al-Aqsa Mosque.
- d. Some prophecy teachers insist that the presence of Islam will be removed from the Temple Mount, and a Jewish Temple will be rebuilt before Jesus returns. Regardless, after the battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, there will definitely be a new, permanent resident on the Temple Mount:

“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, DWELLING IN ZION, MY HOLY MOUNTAIN. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again.” (Joel 3:17).

NOTE: From the NIV, the last sentence of the above scripture reads as follows: *“Jerusalem will be holy; NEVER AGAIN WILL FOREIGNERS INVADE HER.”*

7. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. The devastating defeat of Israel’s enemies in this first End Times battle will greatly incense the Antichrist, causing him to command the kings of the earth to mobilize their armies for war with Israel. And strangely, the Antichrist will actually declare war against the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently...
 - THE CONFLICT WILL WIDEN, and the battle will move to the area known as Armageddon.
- b. And finally, some good news.
 - 1) Despite the judgment of God demonstrated during these End Times battles, God’s ultimate purpose remains the same – TO COMPLETE HIS PLAN OF REDEMPTION:

“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among THE REMNANT (or, the survivors) whom the LORD calls.” (Joel 2:32).

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 29 – The End Times Battle of Armageddon

1. FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon (also known as Satan), out of the mouth of the beast (the Antichrist), and out of the mouth of the false prophet (the Antichrist’s helper). For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.” (Revelation 16:12-16).

READING ASSIGNMENT: Read Ezekiel, chapters 38-39.

Author’s Notes:

As explained in the last chapter, some prophetic teachers believe there will be two battles against Israel in the End Times, and Jesus Christ will be personally involved in both battles. Specifically, a first battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat; followed by a second and final battle in the area called Armageddon.

It is believed that the Battle of Armageddon will be a direct result of the previous battle. Because of the swift and devastating defeat of Israel’s enemies in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, **THE CONFLICT WILL WIDEN.**

Of particular significance is the fact that the Antichrist (the Beast in the above scriptures) will be personally involved in the Battle of Armageddon; whereas, there is no biblical evidence of his involvement in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Astonishingly, as we will soon discover, the Antichrist will have such control over world rulers, that he will influence them to mobilize their armies - not just to attack Israel - but **TO ATTACK THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

2. IDENTIFYING THE BATTLEFIELD.

Author's Notes:

Armageddon is derived from two Hebrew words, which mean: "*Mountain of Megiddo.*" Megiddo was a walled city overlooking the crossroads of two ancient trade routes that linked Egypt and Syria. Because of this location, Megiddo was a strategic military site.

Megiddo also overlooked the Valley of Jezreel (also called the Plain of Esdraelon). In more recent times, this valley has simply been called the Valley of Armageddon. This valley is located about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. At its widest, the valley extends about 12 miles (north to south). From east to west, the valley runs from the Jordan River plain to the Mediterranean Sea, a distance of about 40 miles.

As a prelude to the battle, those touring Israel can enjoy great views of the Valley of Armageddon from the ancient ruins of Megiddo, and also from the top of Mount Carmel. It was on Mount Carmel where Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (see 1 Kings, chapter 18). Verses 41-46 tell us the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah, and he outran King Ahab's chariot from Mount Carmel to the entrance of Jezreel. This supernatural run of around 22 miles was right through a portion of the Valley of Armageddon.

The End Times Battle of Armageddon will not be the first time warfare has been waged in this valley. In Old Testament times, a number of battles between Israel and her enemies were fought in the area. As examples...

- 1) Barak and Deborah's victory over Sisera, and his 900 chariots of iron (see Judges, chapter 4).
- 2) Gideon's victory over the Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men (see Judges, chapters 6 through 8).
- 3) The defeat and death of King Saul, and three of his sons, at the hands of the Philistines (see 1 Samuel, chapter 31).
- 4) The death of King Josiah of Judah, as he unnecessarily went to war with the armies of Pharaoh Necho (see 2 Chronicles 35:20-27).

By its literal meaning, the word Armageddon reveals that this End Times battle will extend well beyond the area in the valley. Ezekiel 39:4-5 confirms that the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ will fall on THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, and also on THE OPEN FIELD.

Apparently, the battle will even extend outside of Israel. Ezekiel 39:6 says: "*And I will send fire on Magog, and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.*"

3. THE CONFLICT WIDENS.

- a. As stated in the last lesson, those who fight against Israel in the Valley of Jehoshaphat could be similar – if not the same – as the enemies of Israel described in Psalm 83. Specifically, nations and peoples NEAR TO ISRAEL.
- b. As the conflict widens, the likely combatants on the ground in this final battle in the Valley of Armageddon are described in Ezekiel, chapter 38:

“Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, set your face against GOG, of the land of MAGOG, the prince of ROSH, MESHECH, and TUBAL, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. PERSIA, ETHIOPIA, and LIBYA are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; GOMER and all its troops; the house of TOGARMAH from the far north and all its troops – many people are with you.” (verses 1-6).

4. FURTHER IDENTIFYING THE PEOPLES AND NATIONS THAT COME AGAINST ISRAEL AT ARMAGEDDON (identified by using a variety of Bible study helps).

- a. GOG – The leader of a confederacy of armies that attack Israel. Some prophetic teachers believe Gog, and the Antichrist, are one and the same.
- b. MAGOG – An ancient region between Cappadocia and Media. In today’s world, Magog would stretch from central Turkey to the northwestern part of Iran.
- c. ROSH – A Scythian tribe that lived north of the Taurus mountain range, near the Volga River. (NOTE: Certain prophecy teachers have unequivocally declared that Rosh was the origin of modern day Russia. This could be true; however, it cannot be conclusively substantiated).

Identifications continue, next page →

- d. MESHECH – Extended from the borders of Armenia to Colchis; a region around the Black Sea, south of the Caucasus Mountains. In today's world Meshech would lie in the Central Asian republics, which were formerly a part of the Soviet Union.
- e. TUBAL – Eastern Asia Minor. In today's world, Tubal would be located in the nation of Turkey.
- f. PERSIA – Modern day Iran. However, the ancient Persian Empire in today's world would extend to Central Asia in the north, portions of India to the east, and portions of Africa to the west.
- g. ETHIOPIA – Ancient Ethiopia was known as Cush (southern part of the Nile River region). In today's world, Cush would include Ethiopia, but also other nations such as Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan.
- h. LIBYA – In ancient times Libya was known as Put, and referred to tribes west of Egypt. In today's world, not just the nation of Libya, but probably also other nations in Northern Africa such as Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.
- i. GOMER – Region to the far north, beyond the Black Sea. Today, Gomer would be located in the Ukraine, and possibly the southern part of Russia.
- j. TOGARMAH – Region around Armenia. In today's world, part of the Central Asian Republics, formerly part of the Soviet Union.

Author's Notes:

Did you notice that the peoples and nations NEAR TO ISRAEL (those identified by Psalm 83 in the last lesson) are seemingly missing from the above list of peoples and nations? Could their absence be explained by the fact that they were destroyed in the Valley of Jehoshaphat? And, did you notice that in today's world, most of the peoples and nations named in Ezekiel 38:1-6 are also Muslim?

Revelation 16:12 (first page of this lesson) reveals that the Euphrates River will be dried up to make way for THE KINGS FROM THE EAST. This would hasten the movement of a vast army, which could take considerably longer using only available roads and bridges.

Author's notes continue ➔

These kings from the east were long thought to represent Communist China. Prophecy teachers have suggested that China will field an army of 200 million (taken from Revelation 9:13-21). However, there is another possibility. In light of the nations identified in Ezekiel 38, and the great increase in fundamentalist Islam in these End Times, the kings from the east could represent Muslim nations (or, portions of Muslim nations) located east of the Euphrates River. Such nations would include - Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Pakistan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Also included in such a gathering of Israel's enemies would likely be Muslims from other nations east of the Euphrates River. I am referring to nations that are not officially classified as Muslim, but nations where Islam has gained a foothold. As examples - China, India, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand.

Such a gathering would indeed result in a massive army, the size of which all the wars of history have not seen the equivalent. Also, a fatal blow to Islam at Armageddon would be a fitting demise to a brutal religion that is dedicated to the annihilation of Israel, and violently opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. THE ULTIMATE DECEPTION.

- a. The most remarkable thing about the Battle of Armageddon is that the fight will not be against Israel only, but also against Jesus:

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.” (Revelation 19:19).

Author's Notes:

For a long time, I thought the Antichrist would be instantaneously destroyed the exact moment Jesus appears in the sky. However, from the previous scripture (Revelation 19:19 ↑), it seems apparent that the battle will take place after the Lord returns! Please notice; the Beast (the Antichrist), the kings of the earth, and their armies **GATHERED TOGETHER** to make war against the Lord.

Based upon my 10 years of experience in the Marine Corps, I feel certain the Battle of Armageddon could not be a spontaneous attack against Jesus the exact moment he appears. This **GATHERING TOGETHER** (or, mobilization) could require many days, because preparing a massive army for war requires enormous logistical support. Thus, there could very likely be a lapse of time between the Battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and the Battle of Armageddon!

- b. How then, could the kings of the earth be so deceived as to devise elaborate war plans against Almighty God?

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” (Revelation 16:13-14).

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason GOD WILL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

6. During these final hours, it will be an extremely serious matter to stand against Israel:

“And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, that My fury will show in My face. For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake (literally, a great shaking) in the land of Israel, so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.” (Ezekiel 38:18-20).

- a. As in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the defeat of Israel’s enemies at Armageddon will once again be swift:

“I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains, says the Lord GOD. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.” (Ezekiel 38:21-23).

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven: Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.” (Revelation 19:17-18).

- b. The defeat of the Antichrist, and the false prophet will be equally swift, and equally devastating:

“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.” (Revelation 19:20).

Author's Notes:

In the previous battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the armies of Israel are very much involved, and fighting with all their strength to defend Jerusalem, when Jesus Christ appears, and turns the tide of the battle.

In the Battle of Armageddon, there is no biblical evidence that Israel will be involved in the fight. This final End Times battle will pit the Antichrist, the kings of the earth, and their armies, against the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. ISRAEL WILL BE SEVEN MONTHS CLEANSING THE LAND:

“It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog. FOR SEVEN MONTHS THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL WILL BE BURYING THEM, IN ORDER TO CLEANSE THE LAND. Indeed all the people of the land will be burying them, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified, says the Lord GOD. They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. The search party will pass through the land; and whenever anyone sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land.” (Ezekiel 39:11-16).

8. FINAL THOUGHTS.

Author's Notes:

Prophecy teachers often include two passages of scripture from the book of Revelation when describing the Battle of Armageddon, which upon further study, may not apply to this End Times battle.

FIRST: From Revelation 9:13-21, prophecy teachers have stated that the Kings from the East will field an army of 200 million horsemen. Those scriptures may not refer to Armageddon, because verse 15 says this army will kill a third of mankind. To the contrary, the armies that come against Israel at Armageddon will apparently kill no one, but will themselves be killed!

Some prophetic teachers have suggested that the 200 million horsemen are actually demon spirits, who are responsible for all the wars since the Apostle John received this revelation. Wars, when taken cumulatively, account for the deaths of a third of mankind.

SECOND: In Revelation 14:17-20, the Bible refers to the winepress of the wrath of God, and states that blood will come out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles. Prophecy teachers have taught that blood will accumulate as high as the horses' bridles in the Valley of Armageddon. However, those scriptures say blood will come up to the horses' bridles for one thousand, six hundred furlongs. The furlong was a measure of distance based upon a Roman stadium, or racecourse. 1,600 furlongs would far exceed the Valley of Armageddon. Such a distance would be about 200 miles, which would exceed the size (from north to south) of the current State of Israel.

Perhaps these scriptures also apply to something other than the Battle of Armageddon? Perhaps this passage is symbolic of the overall Judgment of God, which will affect the entire world at the return of Jesus?

At this point, let us recall *Guideline #1 For Interpreting End Times Prophecy* (for review, see page 19). Specifically, some prophecies are not fully revealed, until they are fulfilled. Therefore, much about these End Times battles may not be fully known, until the battles are actually fought. Obviously, many portions of scripture, especially in the book of Revelation, are still in the realm of mystery, and may remain so until Jesus returns.

- a. Of even greater significance than the defeat of Israel's enemies in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and at Armageddon, will be the defeat of Satan. In our final lesson, entitled: "*Reigning with Christ*," we will study about Satan's defeat.

Israel, The Church, and The End Times

(Book Three – Israel, and The End Times)

Lesson 30 – Reigning with Christ

Author's Notes:

Many great sermons have been preached, and many stirring songs have been written about going to Heaven. There is a big emphasis on *GOING UP THERE*.

Of course, this emphasis is acceptable. When Jesus departed this earth, he ascended up into heaven (see Acts 1:9).

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul spoke about being absent from the body, and present with the Lord: *"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Yet, as I was writing this study guide, the Lord prompted me to remind his people: *"Don't forget about the Millennium!"* When Jesus Christ returns, and those End Times battles are won, we will not be *GOING UP TO HEAVEN*. We will be reigning with Christ *ON THIS EARTH* for 1,000 years.

1. WHEN JESUS RETURNS, SOME AMAZING THINGS WILL HAPPEN:

"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south." (Zechariah 14:4).

- a. Living waters will flow from Jerusalem, probably through the above mentioned valley:

"And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea (the Dead Sea) and half of them toward the western sea (the Mediterranean Sea), in both summer and winter it shall occur." (Zechariah 14:8).

BIBLE DEFINITION: Living Waters – Waters that are fresh and flowing, which produce greenery (vegetation), and are reviving (as the springtime). But also, **WATERS THAT ARE HEALING**.

b. Ezekiel saw these living waters in a vision:

“...This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea (the Dead Sea). When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and EVERYTHING WILL LIVE WHEREVER THE RIVER GOES. It shall be that fishermen will stand by it From En Gedi to En Eglaim; there will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.” (Ezekiel 47:8-10).

Author's Notes:

I have been to En Gedi, located by the Dead Sea. Currently, there is nothing alive in the Dead Sea - no fish, no vegetation. By some estimates, the sea is 33% salt. Yet, amazingly, when these living waters flow into the Dead Sea, those salty waters will be healed, and there will be an abundance of fish.

But, please also notice that the above scriptures say: *“...everything will live wherever the river goes!”* After the devastation from those End Times battles (see Ezekiel 38:19-22 and Ezekiel 39:6), the earth will be in great need of healing.

Occasionally, I have ministered in churches where people in the congregation were saved out of the New Age Movement. Sometimes, it takes a while to get the New Age Philosophy out of such people! They are often very concerned about SAVING THE EARTH. They are worried about pollution on the earth, pollution in the sky, and pollution in the oceans and rivers (toxic waste, smog, ozone, etc.).

I have seen people's faces brighten up as I have taught about these living waters. When I tell them Jesus is going to SAVE THE EARTH, there is a look of relief on their faces. Suddenly, they realize the burden to save the earth is not on their shoulders. Well, the Bible does say the truth will set us free!

c. These living waters will produce more than fish:

“But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt (apparently, we will still need salt). Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.” (Ezekiel 47:11-12).

2. SATAN WILL BE BOUND FOR A THOUSAND YEARS:

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.” (Revelation 20:1-3).

a. With Satan bound, the earth will be a wonderful place:

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:6-9).

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes.” (Isaiah 35:5-7).

3. All believers must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Bible does not identify **WHEN**, or **WHERE** this judgment will take place, but it will probably occur at the beginning of the 1,000 years. This judgment may determine the extent to which we will reign with Christ:

“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord (or, the fear of the Lord), we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.” (2 Corinthians 5:9-11). (NOTE: for further study, see Romans 14:10-13, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Matthew 25:14-30, and then 1 John 4:16 – 5:3).

4. There will be a great feast: THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. Certain prophecy teachers portray this event as taking place in Heaven, after a so-called Pre-Tribulation Rapture. The fact is; the Bible does not identify **WHEN**, or **WHERE** this feast will take place:

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb...!” (Revelation 19:7-9). (NOTE: for further study, see Matthew 22:1-14, Matthew 25:1-13, and Luke 14:15-24).

5. JESUS WILL HAVE 144,000 PERSONAL ATTENDANTS:

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Revelation 14:1-5).

Author’s Notes:

Some prophecy teachers - who hold to a dispensational viewpoint - have said God will send out 144,000 Jewish evangelists after the Rapture of The Church, and these Jewish evangelists will preach the Gospel during The Great Tribulation. The 144,000 are definitely Jewish (see Revelation 7:4-8), but from the Bible, there is no evidence that they will be evangelists; neither is there any mention of what they will be doing during the Tribulation.

In the above scriptures, the 144,000 are standing with Jesus on Mount Zion (obviously, after his return). According to those verses, they will: (1) Play upon harps, (2) Sing a new song, which only they can learn, and (3) Follow Jesus everywhere he goes. Apparently, the 144,000 will simply be personal attendants to the Lord Jesus Christ during his Millennial Reign.

6. REIGNING WITH JESUS CHRIST FOR 1000 YEARS ON A HEALED, RESTORED EARTH:

a. A specific group of martyrs will reign with Christ:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4).

b. All the saints will reign with Christ:

*“Blessed and holy is he who has part in **THE FIRST RESURRECTION** (refer to 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6).*

7. WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT MEAN TO REIGN WITH CHRIST?

Author's Notes:

Obviously, we will not be able to fully answer the above question until Jesus assigns our individual responsibilities. Yet, almost definitely, the saints will occupy positions of authority (see Luke 19:11-27). Certain things we know for sure...

- There will not be any ungodly Dictators during the Millennium.
- The world will not be a Democracy; no one will be elected by popular vote.
- The world will be a Theocracy, ruled by Christ himself, and lesser offices of authority will also be appointed by Christ.

The Bible provides us with the following insight on this subject...

a. The Saints will judge the world:

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (1 Corinthians 6:1-2).

b. The Saints will also judge angels:

“Do you not know that we shall judge angels...?” (1 Corinthians 6:3).

1) This is obviously referring to fallen angels:

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9).

c. The twelve Apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel:

“Then Peter answered and said to Him: See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have? So Jesus said to them: Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:27-28).

Author's Notes:

Who will replace Judas Iscariot in the role of judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Almost certainly, it will be the Apostle Paul, since Jesus himself appointed Paul as an apostle (see Galatians 1:1).

Prior to Paul's calling as an apostle, Peter decided that the eleven remaining apostles should choose a replacement for Judas. However, Jesus never told Peter to take such actions (read the complete account in Acts 1:15-26).

Peter incorrectly decided what were the qualifications for someone to be an apostle (see Acts 1:21-22). To the contrary, the New Testament identifies a number of apostles - other than the original twelve - and some of those apostles did not meet Peter's qualifications. As examples: Andronicus and Junia (see Romans 16:7), Titus, and some other unnamed apostles (see 2 Corinthians 8:23), and Epaphroditus (see Philippians 2:25). (NOTE: the word, Messenger, in 2 Corinthians 8:23 and Philippians 2:25 is "Apostolos," or Apostle).

Then, the apostles cast lots to decide Judas' replacement. Casting lots was approved by God in certain Old Testament situations (see Leviticus 16:8-10 and Proverbs 16:33). However, it was not a New Testament practice.

Author's Notes continue ➤

THE MAIN POINT: Jesus did not tell his disciples to choose a replacement for Judas! God alone selects those who serve as apostles (see 1 Corinthians 12:28). Mathias (the man upon whom the lot fell) is never again mentioned in the Bible, whereas Paul emerged as perhaps the most well known of all the apostles.

d. During the Millennium, we may be leading tour groups to Israel:

“Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Zechariah 14:16 NIV).

8. STRANGELY, AFTER THE 1000 YEARS, SATAN WILL BE LOOSED, AND WILL ONCE AGAIN CAUSE TROUBLE:

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.” (Revelation 20:7-8).

a. This rebellion is short-lived, and Satan meets his final demise:

“They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Revelation 20:9-10).

9. FINAL JUDGMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE:

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-15).

Author's Notes:

As mentioned earlier in this lesson, the Judgment Seat of Christ pertains to believers, and will probably occur at the **BEGINNING OF THE 1,000 YEARS**.

The Great White Throne Judgment (previous page ←) pertains to unbelievers, and will occur at the **END OF THE 1,000 YEARS** (see Revelation 20:5).

The Judgment of Nations (studied in an earlier lesson) will involve the righteous and the unrighteous (see Matthew 25:31-33). The timing of this judgment is uncertain, but it may begin immediately following the End Times battles, and be administered **DURING THE 1,000 YEARS** (see Psalm 122:4-5).

10. AFTER THE 1,000 YEARS, THERE WILL BE A NEW HEAVEN, AND A NEW EARTH:

*“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, **NEW JERUSALEM**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”* (Revelation 21:1-2 – this description of the New Jerusalem continues throughout Revelation, chapters 21 & 22).

Author's Notes:

Interestingly, the New Jerusalem will have a Jewish emphasis, but also a Gentile emphasis. The city will have twelve gates, upon which are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (see Revelation 21:12). These twelve gates will be made out of pearl (see Revelation 21:21).

Under the Law of Moses, the oyster - from which comes the pearl - was an unclean animal. Religious Jews would never own a pearl. Yet, God chose the pearl as the material out of which the gates of the New Jerusalem will be made. Then, he writes the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on those pearl gates.

Because of the redeeming blood of Jesus, Gentiles (those who were thought to be unclean by Religious Jews) are now acceptable to God (along with believing Jews), and the Lord establishes this truth forever in the New Jerusalem.

- a. Throughout eternity, we will live in the New Jerusalem, and enjoy the riches of God's grace:

“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:7).

A Prayer to Receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord

Heavenly Father – the one true God, who revealed himself to Moses as: I AM; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – I come to you in prayer, seeking to establish a right relationship with you.

Thank you for sending your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMashiach) into this world as the sacrificial Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your death upon the cross – for willingly shedding your blood for my redemption – the forgiveness, and remission of my sins.

Heavenly Father, I believe you raised Jesus from the dead. He is alive now, and forevermore! He can come into my life, and live within me by your Holy Spirit.

Lord Jesus, right now, I invite you into my life. I choose to repent (to turn away) from sin, and turn to you. Lord Jesus, I receive you as Messiah – as my Savior and Lord. Please forgive my sins, and cleanse me from all unrighteousness with your shed blood.

I thank you Heavenly Father, that by the authority of your Word (the Bible), I am now born again. I am a new creation, because the Spirit of your Son, Jesus Christ, is dwelling within me.

Lord Jesus, from this moment forward in my life, I confess that you are my Lord and my God. Help me, I pray, to live a holy life, and obey your plans and purposes for my life.

Thank you. Amen!

MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

Most months, depending upon outreach schedules, and operational priorities, Jack Michael Outreach Ministries publishes a ministry newsletter.

Jack Michael is a FOUNDATION BUILDER. As such, you will quickly recognize from the newsletter that he is committed to building a strong foundation of God's Word into the lives of God's People.

Jack Michael is also a WATCHMAN ON THE WALLS in the body of Christ. As such, God has given him the following responsibilities...

- 1) Address controversial issues that affect the body of Christ.
- 2) Warn Christians of existing and impending deception.
- 3) Teach on the End Times Restoration of Israel.
- 4) Strengthen The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5) Prepare God's People for the End Times.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Michael was born in 1944 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. During most of his youth, he attended a strong, evangelical church, and prayed to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior at an early age.

In 1968, when he graduated from college, Jack entered the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam conflict. During a 10-year stay in the Marines, he served a combat tour of duty in Vietnam, and achieved the rank of Captain.

In 1976, due to the influence of other Marine Corps officers, who were Spirit-filled Christians, Jack was baptized with the Holy Spirit. This strong experience with the Lord, which was not taught in his childhood church, greatly changed his life, and propelled him into the ministry in November of 1978.

For 14 years, Jack served the Lord in the State of Hawaii. He served in pastoral positions for four churches, and also conducted outreach ministry throughout the islands of Hawaii, and to other South Pacific island destinations, including: American Samoa, Fiji, The Kingdom of Tonga, The Solomon Islands, and Western Samoa.

In 1992, Jack, and his wife, Barbara, and their two daughters moved back to North Carolina to be closer to aging parents. From his ministry base in North Carolina, he continued ministering to the diverse peoples who inhabit the islands of the world, conducting a number of ministry trips to Jamaica.

In 1997, Jack experienced another life changing encounter. During his first trip to Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob powerfully influenced his heart, and imparted unto him, a love for Israel, and a love for God's original chosen people.

May of 2000 brought the most dramatic change in the history of Jack's ministry. The Spirit of the Lord spoke to him, and said: *"I have called you as a Watchman on the Walls to the body of Christ."* As a Watchman, he is diligently and faithfully fulfilling the unique calling upon his life to: PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THE END TIMES.

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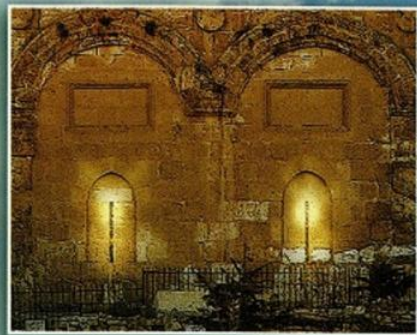
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ISRAEL, THE CHURCH, AND THE END TIMES

After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, his disciples inquired of him: “...Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” The followers of Christ did not realize that the Restoration of Israel was a very long time in the future. They did not understand that soon, the chosen people would be scattered throughout the whole earth.

As a result of this scattering (also called the Diaspora), the words of the ancient prophets—pertaining to Israel’s restoration—lie dormant within the scriptures for nearly 2,000 years, awaiting THE SET TIME TO FAVOR ZION. Meanwhile, The Church discarded much of her Jewish roots, and created doctrines that excluded Israel.

Now however, in these End Times, God is remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel’s restoration has begun! The Lord is re-gathering his original chosen people from the ends of the earth, and is bringing them back to the land promised to their fathers. Most importantly, the spiritual restoration of Israel has also begun. Increasingly, the chosen people are being grafted back into The Olive Tree.

Should The Church of Jesus Christ be involved? Should she sit idly by, and watch these events from afar? If those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus truly want to be involved in what God is doing in these last days, they must be involved in the End Times Restoration of Israel.

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