

FULFILLING BIBLICAL PROPHECY:

Israel and the Jewish People Today

(From Chapter 13 of *Restoring the Early Church*)



Restoration MinistriesInternational

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz



Email

Mike: mikedowg@aol.com

Sue: Suedowgie@aol.com

Web: Restorationministries.org

Phone: (719) 573-4911

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“This is what the Lord says... ‘Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,’ declares the Lord, ‘will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.’

This is what the Lord says: ‘Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done,’ declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:35-37).

Obedient trust in God and the truth of His Word hinges on His utter reliability to keep the promises He has made. The glorious riches of the New Testament are fulfillment of the prophetic promises voiced in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus followers of Christ have security in the reality that the vows of God yet to be fulfilled will surely come to pass in His timing.

Over a three-day period in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit quickened in us the verses cited in this chapter that pertain to Israel and the Jewish people. We also sensed specific categories for each verse to emphasize key promises to the Jewish people. Many of these promises are being fulfilled before the world’s eyes. Now indeed is the time for a “Gentile Awakening” among believers in the US churches!

Scarcely a day passes without news of Israel appearing in the media. How remarkable from a purely secular viewpoint that such a tiny piece of real estate should consume such public attention! Yet from a biblical point of view, God is exposing and tearing down the walls that have divided Jews and Christians for centuries. In many Christian circles, however, these dramatic events go unnoticed because they appear irrelevant. The Bible indicates otherwise. This chapter emphasizes the importance of prophetic fulfillment of these promises as they apply to your personal walk with Jesus.

Israel: What Is God Doing? Should It Mean Anything to Me?

“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3).

The roots of Judaism and Christianity go back to our common father, Abraham. Nineteen hundred years of ecclesiastical prejudice and ignorance concerning the Hebraic roots of Christian faith have resulted in persecution of the Jews. For centuries

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the church has lacked the power and vitality of the first century Church as documented so clearly in the Book of Acts. As a Hebraic understanding of God's Word is being restored, does God desire for the church today to bless the Jewish people? Will He not fulfill His promise to bless those who bless the Jews? Will part of the blessing the church receives entail a *restoration* of the early vitality and power that once characterized it?

God Is Changing the Hearts of the Gentiles

In response to a heightened interest in fully appreciating God's faithfulness to His Word, many followers of Christ have become more aware of an ever-increasing amount of "divine activity" occurring among the Jewish people and the land of Israel. Consider the following news items that highlight repentance among Christian churches, a repentance that acknowledges with shame the historic persecution of the Jews.

In 1962 Pope John XXIII convened Vatican Council II. At that gathering, the Jews were decreed innocent of the charge of "Christkiller." (During World War II, Monsignor Angelo Roncalli, who would later become Pope John XXIII, had developed an extraordinary reputation for saving thousands of Jews from Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria by providing Jews with fake Catholic baptismal certificates.)

The following prayer, composed shortly before the Pontiff's death, admitted the church's sins against the Jewish people and sought forgiveness from God for injustices committed:

We realize now that many, many centuries of blindness have dimmed our eyes, so that we no longer see the beauty of Thy Chosen People and no longer recognize in their faces the features of our first-born brother. We realize that our brows are branded with the mark of Cain. Centuries long has Abel lain in blood and tears, because we had forgotten Thy love. Forgive us the curse which we unjustly laid on the name of the Jews. Forgive us that, with our curse, we crucified Thee a second time.

The Diocese of Cincinnati concurred: "The Jewish people is not collectively guilty of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, nor of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. The Jewish people is not damned, nor bereft of its election. Their suffering, dispersion, and persecution are not punishments for the crucifixion or the rejection of Jesus."

A recent newspaper noted, "The Vatican is also reported to be drafting a document that would acknowledge the church fostered centuries of anti-Semitism and failed to stop the Holocaust"

Lutherans have recanted of Martin Luther's writings against the Jews. In 1984, celebrating the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth, the World Lutheran Federation issued this statement: "We cannot accept or condone the violent verbal attacks that the Reformer made against the Jews. The sins of Luther's anti-Jewish remarks and the violence of his attacks on the Jews must be acknowledged with deep distress, and all occasion for similar sin in the present or the future must be removed from our churches...Lutherans of today refuse to be bound by all of Luther's utterances against the Jews."

Added to these acknowledgments of sinful atrocity is a document from the United

Methodists: “Jews have been victims of systematic oppression and injustice...Christians must also become aware of that history in which they have deeply alienated the Jews...The persecution by Christians of Jews throughout the centuries calls for clear repentance and resolve to repudiate past injustice and to seek its elimination in the present.”

“I the Lord do not change” (Malachi 3:6).

The representative verses included in this chapter are predicated on:

- the eternal nature of the Abrahamic covenant
- God’s promises to, and relationship with, the Jewish people
- the biblical basis of the hatred of the Arabs toward the Jews
- God’s unconditional relationship to the land of Israel
- the regathering of the Jewish people back to Israel
- God’s purposes in this regathering as they pertain to

Gentiles the world over

It is our heartfelt desire that believers who ponder the promises that relate to the Jewish people will be encouraged in their faith. God does indeed keep His Word. Ignorance of God’s promises and of His faithfulness to keep those promises can often leave Christians discouraged and despairing. Wholehearted trust in God’s faithfulness fills believers with confidence, hope, and joy. Maintain intimacy with the One Who keeps His Word, the Messiah Jesus.

Please review the following verses thoughtfully and prayerfully.

The Abrahamic Covenant

The covenant with Abraham was instituted and initiated by the sovereign God Who gave His oath to uphold it. Only God has the right to say “I will” and it will be.

[God speaking to Abraham] *“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you”* (Genesis 12:2-3).

The duration of the covenant that God established with the people of Israel was *forever*.

“All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever” (Genesis 13:15).

The boundaries of the land given to Abraham were established by God.

“To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18).

This covenant was promised to pass through Abraham's son Isaac and to his descendants forever. It did *not* pass through Ishmael, as claimed by the Muslims.

"Then God said, 'Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him'" (Genesis 17:19).

God then confirmed to Isaac's son Jacob and to his descendants the covenant of the promised land and the blessings to be poured upon them.

"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying...All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:13-15).

God confirmed the patriarchal covenant with Moses, who then reminded the Israelites of God's covenant promise to them of the land they were about to enter.

"And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord" (Exodus 6:8); *"When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey—you are to observe this ceremony in this month...After the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and gives it to you, as he promised on oath to you and your forefathers"* (Exodus 13:5,11).

Even when the Israelites had been removed from the land during their exiles and dispersion, God did not forget His covenant.

"Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 26:44-45).

God's Sovereign Election of the Jew Is His Encouragement to the Elect of the Church

God's actions on behalf of Israel emanated out of His love for them and out of His oath to the patriarchs.

"The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

Similarly, Peter reminded believers that they too were chosen by God in His foreknowledge and through the work of the Holy Spirit. The election of followers of Christ as well as the chosenness of the Jewish people were initiated by God for His pleasure, pur-

poses, and glory.

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance” (1 Peter 1:1-2).

Those who are in Christ stand assured that no one can bring any charge against God’s chosen ones.

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies” (Romans 8:32-33).

The Land of Israel Is God’s Possession

The land of Israel belongs to God. The Jews are tenants of His property. It was not designed to be broken up or traded away.

[God speaking]: *“The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants” (Leviticus 25:23).*

God speaks possessively of both the Jewish people and the land, and of the severe consequences for violating either.

[God speaking]: *“I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land” (Joel 3:2).*

God’s Relationship with the Jewish People Is Everlasting

The Jews are God’s “treasured possession.” As such, He set them aside for His specific purposes.

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

God chose the Jews to make a name for Himself, a relationship designated to be “forever.”

“And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O Lord, have become their God” (2 Samuel 7:23-24).

God is prepared to destroy every other nation except the Jews. He has disciplined the Jewish people but has promised that He will not utterly destroy them.

“Do not fear, O Jacob my servant, for I am with you,” declares the Lord. “Though I com-

pletely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished” (Jeremiah 46:28).

God’s relationship with Israel was as intimate as that of a nursing mother with her child. His people have been etched into His very hand.

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me” (Isaiah 49:15-16).

As a servant to the Jews, Jesus Christ validated the promises that God had given to the patriarchs and fulfilled His promise that many nations would be blessed through the seed of Abraham.

“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 so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy” (Romans 15:8,9).

In light of God’s relationship with the Jew, even Gentile believers are encouraged to share their resources with the Jewish people.

“They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings” (Romans 15:27).

Today God Is Reassuring the Jewish People by Regathering Them to the Land of Israel

God assured His people that there would be a second regathering of the Jews to the land of Israel from the four corners of the earth.⁷ It is HE Who will accomplish this.

“In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth” (Isaiah 11:10-12).

God promised that HE would use the Gentiles to help gather the Jews back to Israel.

“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).

Jeremiah spoke of a future “exodus” to Israel beyond that made by the Jews from Egypt. This gathering of the Jews would be even more notable than their departure from Egypt.

“However, the days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when men will no longer say, “As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,” but they will say, “As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.” For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers” (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

God again affirmed through Ezekiel that HE was the One Who would scatter and gather the Jews. After HE has brought them back to Israel HE will give them a new spirit and a new heart.

“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.” They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezekiel 11:17-20).

God assured the Jews that their future regathering would be a sign to other nations of His holiness. Again, God repeats the phrase used fifty-nine times in Ezekiel, *“Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.”* God’s ultimate purpose for the Jewish people is spiritual reconciliation with Himself. Israel will acknowledge the Lord when HE brings them back from captivity.

“Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel’ declares the Sovereign LORD” (Ezekiel 39:25-29).

After Returning the Jewish People to the Land, God Will Establish a New Covenant with Them and Cleanse Them from Their Sins

God will make a new covenant with Israel unlike the previous one made with Moses.

“The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:30-32).

The new covenant to be established will be everlasting.

“In those days, at that time,” declares the Lord, “the people of Israel and the people of Judah together will go in tears to seek the Lord their God. They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces toward it. They will come and bind themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten” (Jeremiah 50:4-5).

After their return God will cleanse the Jews and give them a new heart and a new Spirit. Their obedience, as it is with Christians, will be based upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you” (Ezekiel 36:24-29).

The time of this return and the pouring out of the Spirit appear to be after the time of Christ's first advent.

“And 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).

From Jerusalem (Mount Zion) God will reign forever over the Jewish people.

“In that day,” declares the Lord, “I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief. I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The Lord will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever. As for you, O watchtower of the flock, O stronghold of the Daughter of Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to the Daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:6-8).

God Acts for His Own Name's Sake

For God's own name's sake He acted on behalf of the Israelites.

“But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations they lived among and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt” (Ezekiel 20:9).

For His name's sake upon which He gave His promises to Abraham, God did not deal with Israel according to what they deserved.

“You will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices, O house of Israel,” declares the Sovereign LORD (Ezekiel 20:44).

God forgave their sins not because of the merits of the Israelites but for His name's sake.

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (Isaiah 43:25).

For His name's sake God promised that He would not cut off the Jews. He afflicted them in order to bring them to repentance.

"For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off. See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another" (Isaiah 48:9-11).

The Arab Hatred toward the Jews Is Recorded as Animosity of the Descendants of Ishmael toward the Descendants of Isaac

God foretold to Hagar, the Egyptian slave, that the child she had conceived by Abraham (Ishmael, the father of the Arabs) would be hostile to his brothers. Isaac was Ishmael's half-brother by Abraham and Sarah.

"The angel of the Lord also said to [Hagar] 'You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers'" (Genesis 16:11-12).

Unlike Abraham who procured a wife (Rebekah) for Isaac from God's own people, Hagar obtained a wife for Ishmael from Egypt.

"While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt" (Genesis 21:21).

Esau, a son of Isaac and the twin brother of Jacob, married two daughters of Ishmael. Also called Edom, Esau became the father of the Edomites who did harm to the Israelites when they entered the Promised Land in their Exodus from Egypt. (Seir, in the hills east of Israel, is located in what is now called Jordan.)

"So Esau (that is, Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir" (Genesis 36:8).

King Jehoshaphat reminded God of the injustice the Israelites had suffered at the hands of Ammon and Moab (see Genesis 19:37,38), who were descendants of the incest of Abraham's nephew Lot with his daughters. Mount Seir was the land of Edom, Esau's descendants.

(Jehoshaphat speaking) *"But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you"* (2 Chronicles 20:10-12).

The Arabs also opposed the Israelites during the time of Nehemiah when the latter returned to the land of Israel from exile in Babylon.

“But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat” (Nehemiah 4:7-9).

In the time of the Psalmist, the Arabs used cunning against the Israelites, just as the Arab nations do against the Jews of Israel today in order to secure their land.

“O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still. See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. ‘Come,’ they say, ‘let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more.’ With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites” (Psalm 83:1-6).

Ezekiel prophesied against Edom, Esau’s descendants. God’s hand was against the Edomites because: 1) They had hated Israel since ancient times. 2) They had shed the blood of Israel. 3) They wanted Israel’s land. 4) They spoke blasphemies. 5) They boasted against the Lord. These motivations still represent the attitude of the Arab nations against the Jews. These five points, in fact, were reaffirmed in the 1964 PLO Founding Charter, calling for the total destruction of Israel.⁸ Despite current peace documents and handshakes, that charter remains in effect to this day.

“Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax...Because you have said, ‘These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them,’ even though I the LORD was there, therefore as surely as I live,’ declares the Sovereign LORD, ‘I will treat you in accordance with the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them and I will make myself known among them when I judge you. Then you will know that I the LORD have heard all the contemptible things you have said against the mountains of Israel. You said, ‘They have been laid waste and have been given over to us to devour.’ You boasted against me and spoke against me without restraint, and I heard it” (Ezekiel 35:5, 10-13).

God’s Command for Aliens Living in Israel Is Still in Effect Today

Non-Jewish people are permitted to live in the land of Israel. Many Arabs, currently referred to as Palestinians, own homes and property in Israel. Some are members of the Knesset, the governing body of Israel.

“You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along

with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the alien settles, there you are to give him his inheritance,' declares the Sovereign LORD" (Ezekiel 47:21-23).

Israel Born in a Day: Seeing Is Believing

For many Gentiles, the verses from Isaiah 66:8-11, below, would have gone unnoticed and without meaning if, on November 29, 1947, God had not caused the United Nations to vote to partition British-held Palestine. This ballot established an official homeland for the Jews. In the face of great Arab adversity, on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was declared—in a day!

"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. Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?' says the Lord. 'Do I close up the womb when I bring to delivery?' says your God. 'Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance'" (Isaiah 66:8-11).

God Is Awakening the Gentiles by His Actions on Behalf of Israel

God is regathering the Jews to Israel a second time, using this action as a banner or signal to the nations. He desires for the Gentiles to help the Jews to return: *"I will bless those who bless you" (Genesis 12:3).*

"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).

As God shows favor and compassion to Israel, other nations of the world will learn to fear the name of the Lord.

"But you, O Lord, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. 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. He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea" (Psalm 102:12-17).

In the last days, people will go up to Israel, and the law of God will flow forth from it. Peace will pervade the nations and war will be a thing of the past.

"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of

the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore” (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Nations will flock to Jerusalem to honor the Lord.

“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” (Jeremiah 3:17).

As God gathers the Jews and rebuilds Israel, the nations will know that He is the Lord. His word is reliable and true.

“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 36:36).

God promises the nations that if they learn what He has taught the Jews, He will establish them among His people. Severe consequences await those who fail to learn obedience to Him.

“This is what the Lord says: ‘As for all my wicked neighbors who seize the inheritance I gave my people Israel, I will uproot them from their lands and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to his own inheritance and his own country. And if they learn well the ways of my people and swear by my name, saying, ‘As surely as the Lord lives’—even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal—then they will be established among my people. But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it,’ declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 12:14-17).

After God restores the Jews to Israel, He will judge the nations based upon their treatment of the Jewish people.

“In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land” (Joel 3:1-2).

Activities for Believers to Consider

As the Holy Spirit continues to move Christians to look favorably on the Jews as *“the apple of [God’s] eye”* (see Zechariah 2:8), pray for increased repentance on the part of believers and growing unity between Christians and Jews.

- The arrival of 700,000 Jewish immigrants to Israel from the former USSR. The airlift of 15,000 Falasha Jews from Ethiopia to Israel. The return to Israel of Jews from China whose ancestry dates back to the exile period. God is using His activity as a “banner to the nations.” We trust that you will become sensitized to seeing these events as God’s

