

Title: Israel - A Miracle Nation

Text: Ezekiel 37:1-11

On May 14, 1948, an historical event took place which traces its beginning to WW I. Against all human reasoning, a nation that had been dead for 19 hundred years suddenly came to life. On that day the world with out knowing it took a giant step closer to the end of the age, for Israel became a self-governing nation just as the prophets had foretold.

Many Christians were not surprised by this development. ^{There are} ~~In fact~~ so many Scriptures ^{referring} ~~refer~~ to the nationhood of Israel in the last days. But skeptics would have us believe that any similarity between prophecy and the established facts of hustry is just a "coincidence."

But what the skeptics classify as a coincidence is in reality an infallible sign of the divine authorship of the Bible. Who but God could have inspired writers to make a prediction 2,500 years ago that defies history and human nature and is fullfilled before our eyes.

ISRAEL - A MIRACLE NATION

I believe the very fact that the Jewish nation exists today is nothing short of a miracle. After 2,500 years without self-government and 1,800 years without a national home, the Jewish people have every reason to be extinct. In all the records of history, no other people deprived of their homeland has been able to maintain its identity and "resurrect" its county.

America is a good example of what happens when Englishmen, Swedes, Poles, Frenchmen, and others live together. Slowly but surely there is a blending of the nationalities and reaces until a new strain emerges. Many countries, such as Mexico and the South American nations, have such a blending in just 3 to 4 hundred years until it is difficult to detect the original ancestry. The Jews provide the one international exception. Although scattered all over the world these last 1,800 years, exposed to practically

every genetic strain that exists, they are still a people with ethnic, social, and religious similarities which no one can fail to identify.

Why is this so? The answer to the question is found in the promises of God to Israel: "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed"(Deut. 32.9;Malachi 2:6)

The importance of Israel's existence is better comprehended when compared to other nations. Have you ever met a Babylonian? Or a Hittite Or a Philistine? At one time these were great nations; today they are extinct. In fact, when the Jews were captives of the Baylonians they numbered ~~400~~ much less than 100,000, whereas their captor were many times that number and ruled the world. The Babylonians have suck beneath the sands of time, but the Jews live on - almost 3 million in Palestine alone, just as God promised. Is that really a "coincidency."?

During the reign of Russia's Peter the Great, an aged preacher of the Word of God was imprisoned because of his testimony for Christ. On night the czar called the aged saint before him and asked the question, "Can you give me one infallible proof to verify the Bible?"

The old man said, "Yes, sire, the Jew."

The existence of Jewish people, scattered in most countries of the earth but maintaining their distinctive nationality, can be attributed only to the supernatural power and special purpose of God.

Vision of Dry Bones

(READ EZEKIEL ~~37~~:1-11)

Ezekiel, chapter 37, presents a very stange vision to the prophet. He is seen looking down into a valley full of dry bones. Upon hearing the word of the Lord, he observes this valley of bones suddenly start to move. The bones find their natural place, "bone to bone, muscle covered the

bones, and flesh came up; skin covered them." Last of all God breathed "breath" into them. The identity of these bones cannot be questioned, for in verse 11 we are told, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." Inasmuch as these bones are pictured as coming to life to form a great army, and they are identified as "the whole house of Israel," the only possible explanation is that the nation of Israel, which for 1,900 years has been a valley of dry bones, would some day be revived.

It is interesting to ^{NOTICE} ~~notice~~ the progression of this chapter. In verse 3 the Lord asks the prophet, "Can these bones live?" The prophet's answer is obviously that of a spiritual man, for he replies, "O Lord God, you know." For 2,500 years man has scoffed at the prediction that the people of Israel would one day have their nation. In A.D. 70 the armies of Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem and drove the Jews out of the Holy Land. For 1,948 years the only evidence that they would one day be gathered existed in the Word of God. Thus, it could be said of God, "Only you know." Today, however, the world knows, because the world that lives by sight can see the nation of Israel.

The gradual progression of the nation from scattered ~~skeleton~~ skeleton to full body development is startling. As Ezekiel's prophecy indicates: "There was a noise and a shaking and the bones came together, bone to its bone." Following this, "the muscle came together, and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them." Obviously, from the sound of an earth-shaking event the seemingly dead nation of Israel was to gradually formulate a body after which the spirit would be breathed into the nation. I believe that history records the birth of the nation of Israel exactly in this ~~man~~ manner, beginning in 1917.

The gathering back of the Jews into the land of Palestine/~~after~~/the was indeed a slow development(bone to bone). In 1917 it is estimated that there were less than 25,000 Jews in the land. By 1922 there were 83,000; by 1932 - 180,000; by 1935 - 300,000; by 1937 - 430,000; and by 1945 ~~500,000~~, 500,000. To day the population is appraoching 3 million. Between 1917 and 1948 slowly but certainly, "bone came to its bone."

?THE?NEW?TEMPLE

JESUS THE PROPHET

Jesus' predictions regarding the restoration of Israel are extremely significant when you recall that He predicted a world-wide dispersion and complete destruction of the nation which would begin with the generation which crucified him(Matthew 23.36; Luke 21,22-23)

Yet when Jesus looks into the future and describes the conditions which whould prevail at His coming, He puts the Jews back in the land as a nation.

It is in this context that Jesus predicts an extremely important time clue. He says: "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things, recongize that He is near, right at the door" (Matt 24:32-33)

When the signs (these birth pangs") that we have been talking about began to ~~happen~~/ multiply and increase in scope its like leaves coming out on a tree in spring. The important sign in Matthew chapter 24 in WW I. But the second most important sign is the parable of the fig tree. (Matt. 24.32) When the Jewish people, after nearly 2,000 years of exile, under all kinds of persecution, became a nation again on 14 May 1948 the "fig tree" put forth its first leaves.

Jesus said that this would indicate that He was "at the door," ready to return. He said in verse 34 of chapter 24, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs - chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. A generation today is around 70 years. If this is a correct deduction, then within 70 years or so of 1948 all these things could take place. Many Bible Scholars think so.

The New Temple

The hands on Israel's prophecy clock leaped forward June 8, 1967, when the Israeli troops march into the Old city of Jerusalem. For the first time in 2,500 years the Jews had gained complete control over the most important area in the entire world. Suddenly the world was aware of what Bible teachers have been saying for a long time, that the site of the Temple, Mount Moriah, was to the Jews the most coveted ground in the world.

The deep significance of the 1967 Six-Day war is seen in the prospect that at long last Israel can rebuild its temple. This is not just a national yearning -- it is a prophetic requirement of God's Word. There are six biblical passages that require the rebuilding of the temple in the last ~~67~~ days.

READ: DANIEL 9:27; Daniel 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14;
2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 11:1-2

These verses all predict that in the middle of the tribulation period the Antichrist will desecrate the temple of God. There is only one spot of ground in all the world so designated -- the spot where Solomon built the first temple, where the Jews built the second temple after the Babylonian captivity. As you know this temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Ever since the Jews were driven out of the land by the Romans in the second century after Christ, it has been impossible for them to rebuild the temple.

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Obviously, for the temple to be destroyed during the Tribulation period it must first be rebuilt. The obstacles to rebuilding the temple are quite high. The Muslims' multimillion dollar Dome of the Rock is ~~located~~ located on the spot where the temple should be. The Arab countries threaten war. Most Jews profess disinterest, the new government of Jerusalem has guaranteed protection to all existing holy sites. But this you can be certain -- there will be a third Jewish temple in Jerusalem. And it will be on the same site.

In a fascinating article written shortly after the recapture of old Jerusalem, a reporter interviewed a famous Israeli Historian, Israel Eldad. In answer to the question, "do your people intend to rebuild the Temple?" Eldad said, "From the time that King David first conquered Jerusalem until Solomon built the Temple, just one generation passed. So will it be with us."

The reporter was so startled by that answer that he asked, "What about the Dome of the Rock which now stands on the temple site?"

Eldad replied, "It is, of course, an open question. Who knows, maybe there will be an earthquake."

On May 21, 1967 an ad appeared in the WASHINGTON POST:

The project to rebuild the temple of God in Israel is now being started. With divine guidance and hope the temple will be completed. It will signal a new era in Judaism. Jews will be inspired to conduct themselves in such a moral way that our Maker will see fit to pay us a visit here on earth. Imagine the warm feeling that will be ours when this happy event will take place.

Prophetically speaking, there can be no question that the temple will be rebuilt. What is of critical concern to us is that after nineteen centuries the events of the last few years have thrust a temple into the realm of probability. Wait and watch -- when the walls start to go up - then look up -

Any Questions

CONCLUSION

Truly these are thrilling days, when so many long-prophe-sied events enter the realm of possibility at the same time - since they stem from the first sign of World War I as predicted by our Lord. Certainly it should ~~make~~ Christians vitally concerned about living so as to be prepared when the Lord comes for his Church.

With this in mind, I would ask you: Have you personally received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour? If not, or if you have a doubt concerning your relationship to him, why not except Christ tonight? Don't put it off, but listen and responde to the call of Jesus.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any ~~man~~ ~~hear~~ hear my voice, and ~~open~~ the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with me" (Rev 3.20).

And Christians, oh how we need to get out of our comfortable chairs and invite the lost to hear the preaching of the Word. Our church should be full every Sunday morning and Every Sunday night. It can be if you are willing to pray, live, and. work, and invite.
