

ISRAEL IN THE LAND, PART 2

In part 1, we discussed the fact there are two worldwide regatherings of Israel back into the land, one in unbelief as preparation for discipline and one in belief in fulfillment of the biblical covenants God entered into with Israel.

Ezekiel 38-39 reveals the Gog of Magog attack against Israel. For purposes of this lesson, the important thing to note is that an attack against Israel necessarily requires Israel's existence in the land; exactly when that attack takes place is immaterial in terms of this lesson. The attack will occur during the time of regathering in unbelief or during the Tribulation. If Israel isn't back in the land, this prophecy cannot be fulfilled until they are living in the land again.

Ezekiel 38:8 ⁸“After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.

Ezekiel 38:16 ¹⁶and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.”

The timing of this Gog of Magog invasion is disputed. Dr. LaHaye believes it occurs immediately prior to the Tribulation and precipitates the peace treaty that marks the beginning of the Tribulation. Others believe it occurs at the mid-point of the Tribulation. Dr. Fruchtenbaum teaches that this battle must be at least 3 ½ years before the Tribulation because the Jews will burn the fuel as spoil for seven years after God wins the battle on their behalf (Ezek. 39:9) but there is

nothing that says this period cannot extend into the Kingdom. There is also nothing that says the Jews being protected at Petra couldn't use it; however, they will be supernaturally provided for by God while there so they might not have need of fuel in that place. Since the Jewish people are dispersed from Jerusalem at the midpoint of the Tribulation, they must, according to Fruchtenbaum's theory, begin burning the fuel prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord the time of Jacob's trouble in order to fulfill a seven-year prophecy (3 ½ years prior to the Tribulation and through the first half which is another 3 ½ years for seven years in total). Still others teach this battle is the battle of Armageddon. This cannot be correct since the methods the Lord uses to win those wars (meaning the Gog and Magog war and the final war at Armageddon) greatly differs between the two. Both battles are supernaturally won by God, but the method He uses differs between the two so they cannot be the same. Comparing Ezekiel's Gog of Magog battle with the battle of Armageddon in Revelation reveals the differences.

Ezekiel 38:21–22 ²¹“I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains,” declares the Lord GOD. “Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²²“With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.

Revelation 19:21 ²¹And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The Gog and Magog battle is won by the supernatural intervention of God through physical phenomena; Armageddon is ended by the Word of the Lord.

Zionism is the movement the purpose of which is to establish the Jews in the land and to create a Jewish state. Zionism and the fact of Israel's present existence are intimately connected. Christian Zionism, that is, Christian support for Israel, is hated by anti-Semitic, liberal "Christians" who detest Israel and would like to see the nation destroyed one way or another. That's what the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) movement among liberal denominations is all about. BDS is an economic movement devoted to the destruction of Israel which would serve to eliminate them as a national entity. While some Jews have been in the land since the beginning of the dispersion, the latter part of the nineteenth century marks the point where a powerful movement was established in order to accomplish this task. In other words, there have always been Jewish people living in the land but the numbers were insignificant before the Zionist movement began.

The man most responsible for establishing the Zionist movement was an eastern European Jew from Hungary named Theodore Hertzl. He was a journalist working in Paris during the trial of a Jewish French army officer named Alfred Dreyfus in 1894. The trial was over a false accusation of treason. This is known in history as the Dreyfus Affair. Dreyfus was tried a second time in 1899 on more false charges and cleared in 1906. He was accused of treason the nature of which was passing military secrets to the Germans. The charges were entirely

false and during the trial a vast amount of anti-Semitism was exhibited. Even though many people knew he didn't commit the crime and they knew who did commit it, anti-Semitism kept him from being cleared for twelve years. But that really was nothing new; France was a hotbed of anti-Semitism at the time and most of the rest of Europe has always been anti-Semitic as well. Hertzl was also aware of the pogroms in Russia at the time which are organized massacres of a particular ethnic group. Hertzl's work would eventually result in many Russian Jews immigrating to Israel. During the Dreyfus Affair, Hertzl came to the conclusion that the only way the Jewish people would ever be truly safe was back in their land as their own nation. "The Dreyfus trial was a watershed in Jewish history. Jews everywhere asked themselves what had gone wrong with Jewish life. Why was there anti-Semitism? Three ways out of the trap seemed to present themselves: to become assimilated into the nation with whom one was living, to fight for a revolutionary socialism that would cure all the evils of the world including anti-Semitism, or to seek a 'normal' Jewish life in a Jewish land with a government. Herzl was drawn to the last option." [Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History*, p. 10]. In 1896, Herzl published a book, entitled *The Jewish State* that was very influential in the Zionist movement. If the Jews had known their own Scriptures, specifically Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, they never would have asked these questions because they would have understood what was happening to them and why. The rabbinical interpretations they are told today are not accurate which keeps the Jewish people bound in spiritual darkness. Right now, they are

partially hardened to the truth, they don't seek the truth, and they don't seem to care about the truth. One of their options was assimilation into the people groups of the other countries in which they lived, but God supernaturally prevented them from doing that in order to preserve them as a distinct people.

Herzl founded the World Zionist Organization in 1896. His belief was that once the Jews were back in their own land another dispersion, or diaspora, could never happen again unless the whole world were to collapse. That actually is going to be proven correct; when they are dispersed again during the Tribulation, the world will be on the verge of collapse. Herzl's vision was for a secular Jewish state modeled after European civil forms of government and it was to be a government with church and state separated one from the other; he wanted a totally secular state. Herzl wanted Israel to be just another nation in the world which the Jews have longed for since the days of Samuel when they wanted a king to lead them like all the other nations (1 Sam. 8:5). They will never be just another nation in the world; they were specifically created to be a nation set apart and they will never be reckoned among the nations (Num. 23:9). Many Jewish people resisted the idea of a Jewish nation and discouraged Hertzl's efforts. Orthodox Jews didn't like the secular nature of Herzl's concept. They thought the only way they would be restored to the land was through the appearance of Messiah and men could not bring that about. Of course, they are correct, only God will bring it about, but the Rabbis have no understanding of a regathering in unbelief for the purpose of divine discipline. Secular Jews believed the prospects of a peaceful future were to be found in the nations in which they were then living. Herzl talked to the Chief Rabbi of Vienna who thought the future of the Jews was "in being dispersed throughout the world." [Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History*, p. 12]. The ignorance the Jewish rabbis have of their

own Scriptures is just appalling. We have to remember that at the time these things were being said, the World Wars and the Holocaust were all still in future.

1 Samuel 8:5⁵ and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

Numbers 23:9⁹ "As I see him from the top of the rocks, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people who dwells apart, And will not be reckoned among the nations.

From our vantage point, we know what will happen during the Tribulation but Hertzl, of course, had no knowledge of that although if he had known the Jewish Scriptures, he could have figured at least some of it out. Despite numerous obstacles, Hertzl persisted and he became convinced that the Jewish state had its beginnings during his lifetime. He was right. The regathering in unbelief began in earnest and Theodore Herzl deserves much of the credit.

After the first meeting of the Zionist Congress, Herzl, on 3 September 1897, wrote in his diary, "Were I to sum up the Basle Congress in a word—which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly—it would be this: At Basle I founded the Jewish state. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in fifty, everyone will know it." [Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History*, p. 15]. Less than fifty-one years after Herzl wrote those words (fifty years, eight months, and eleven days), the nation of Israel was established in unbelief. When researching the history of this period of time, it is very apparent how these things fit right into all the Bible has to say about the *diaspora* and the regathering of Israel in unbelief.

The final regathering in belief.

After being returned to the land in belief, the Jewish people will also return not only to the God of the Word but to the Word of God. Judaism as we know it today is not biblical Judaism; it is rabbinical Judaism. Jews do not study the Old Testament much; they study the Rabbis and their writings. After being regathered in belief, they will listen to His voice and keep His commandments and His statutes that conform to Kingdom standards under the auspices of the New Covenant. Among the promises of the New Covenant is the fact the Jewish people will know God's law whatever that means at the time. This seems to be an instinctive God-given blessing to the Jewish people. All Jewish people living during the Millennium will be believers; they will all know Him and they will all know His laws. This will not be the Mosaic Law; that has been done away, but there will be some sort of law administration during the Kingdom. There will be a grace orientation to living under the Kingdom Law just as there is a grace orientation to living under the law of Christ in this dispensation of grace.

Jeremiah 31:33–34 ³³“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴“They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Isaiah predicted this restoration in Isaiah 11:11-12. As noted in the last lesson, this Scripture not only proves the restoration in belief but it confirms the restoration in unbelief which is the first period of restoration. There are only two worldwide restorations of the Jews into the land.

Isaiah 11:11–12 ¹¹Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. ¹²And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

Jesus predicted the regathering in belief during His explanation of the end in the Olivet discourse.

Matthew 24:31 ³¹“And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Mark 13:27 ²⁷“And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

God predicted this event as far back as the formation of Israel into a nation.

Deuteronomy 4:29–31 ²⁹“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. ³⁰“When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. ³¹“For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

If God can break His Word to Israel, then He has violated the very essence of who He is, and He simply cannot do that. Replacement theologians have a very low, blasphemous view of God. God cannot do any less than keep His promises to Israel. If He cannot or will not keep His promises to Israel, then what assurance do these people have He will keep His promises to them?

Deuteronomy 30:1-10 reveals what we refer to as the Land Covenant or land promise. This is an amplification of the land promise God made to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant. In Leviticus 26:40-45, one of God's stated purposes for bringing the Israelites back into the land as their permanent possession is due to the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Deuteronomy 30:1–10 ¹“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, ²and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, ³then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴“If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. ⁵“The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶“Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. ⁷“The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. ⁸“And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. ⁹“Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; ¹⁰if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

The Land Covenant confirmed that the final curse to be invoked against Israel would be dispersion from their land. That happened and we still see the results to this day. Of course, the historical record now bears witness to the *dias-*

pora that has been ongoing since A.D. 70. The blessings for obedience were intimately connected with the land; therefore, being banished from the land was the ultimate curse from which all the terrors of persecution would follow. As was noted in the discussion of the Zionist movement, the Jews do not understand the *diaspora* and the context of the blessings and the curses that preceded it. But sometime during the Tribulation, the spiritual light is going to come on and they are going to understand. Whether that is the result of the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists or of the two witnesses or of the persecution as they stare annihilation right in the face or of a combination of all these factors, they are going to come to the knowledge of the truth. The nation is going to be restored, the covenants promise it. The land promise will result in the final restoration, in belief, of the Jewish people from wherever they are in the world. The land promise is not being fulfilled right now; fulfillment awaits the faithful generation that is going to believe in Messiah. At the end, there will still be individual Jewish persons who refuse to believe (Zech. 13:8-9), but they will be dealt with by the Lord and they will not enter the Kingdom. During the Tribulation, the Jewish leadership is going to lead many Jews to recognize the Messiah and believe in Him as He returns. The Lord is going to gather them into the land by means of sending forth His angels to bring them into Israel (Mt. 24:31). The Abrahamic Covenant promised curses on those who cursed Abraham and His descendants and the land promise confirms that will happen. The enemies of Israel will experience all the curses that God once visited upon Israel. The difference is, the

Gentile nations and their unbelieving citizens will be destroyed before the Kingdom begins. Once Israel returns to the Lord in belief, they will again be blessed.

Leviticus 26:40–45 ⁴⁰‘If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— ⁴¹I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, ⁴²then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. ⁴³‘For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. ⁴⁴‘Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. ⁴⁵‘But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.’”

The concept that God is looking for a faithful generation of Jews for the fulfillment of His covenant promises to the Patriarchs is identified here. Even throughout the long period of time Israel has been unfaithful, God has not abandoned them. God is going to be faithful to His covenant promises to Israel. The Messianic King is going to save the Jews from annihilation at the hands of Antichrist and He is going to inaugurate the Messianic Kingdom at which time the Jewish people—all of them who believe—will be living in the land of Israel. Numerous Scriptures reveal the gathering of the Jewish people into the land as faithful believers in their Messiah.

The Jews are going to be gathered from every place on planet earth and returned to Israel. The mention of all four directions is an indication of just how

complete this is going to be. Every believing Jew will be relocated from wherever they have been dispersed around the world during the Tribulation and brought back to the land. In Isaiah 43:7, God specifically said He created the Jewish people. As we have noted before, Israel is a nation that cannot be counted among all the other nations of the world. God is comforting the people through the prophet; He is giving them hope for the future. Obviously, the Jews first reading Isaiah's book lived over 2,500 years ago and the context concerns Babylon. However, with the declaration their offspring will be regathered from all over the world, this seems to have double reference both near and far. The return from Babylon was not a worldwide return; it was only a return from the north. Constable recognized this. "Return from Babylonian captivity would not be from the four compass points and so does not qualify as the complete fulfillment. He will do this when Jesus Christ returns to the earth. [Thomas L. Constable, *Constable's Notes on the Bible*, 4:120].

Isaiah 43:5–7 ⁵"Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. ⁶"I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, ⁷Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

God is going to regather the Jews from all over the world and bring them into the land where they will worship Him on the holy mountain in Jerusalem. A great trumpet will announce this effort to bring the people back to the land. The great trumpet brings to mind the Lord's words in the Olivet Discourse when He

said He will send His angels at the sound of a great trumpet to gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (Mt. 24:31).

Isaiah 27:12–13 ¹²In that day the LORD will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel. ¹³It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

The regathering of the Jews and the reestablishment of Israel as a nation in belief will be such an astounding event the Exodus will pale in significance. “Jeremiah introduced God’s promise of future blessing for Israel with the phrase the days are coming. This is an eschatological formula the prophet frequently used to speak of events occurring in the distant future during the end times. Here the prophet is telling of a time, after Judah’s return from captivity in Babylon, when there would be a new ‘exodus.’ No longer would the people look back to the first exodus when God brought Israel out of Egypt. Ultimately, at the end of days, Israel as a nation would be restored to her land and would then enjoy God’s blessing.” [Charles Dyer with Eva Rydelnik, “Jeremiah” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 1131].

Jeremiah 16:14–15 ¹⁴“Therefore behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when it will no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ ¹⁵but, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.

Jeremiah once again confirmed the worldwide regathering of Israel from even the most remote parts of the earth. No Jewish person will be neglected or

ignored; the crippled, the wounded, the weak, the starving, the helpless, all of them will be gathered up by God and brought back. God said He is a father to Israel and like a father caring for his family, He will bring them back as a family, because God is a faithful, covenant keeping God. The same God who promised Israel curses for disobedience with the ultimate act of discipline being dispersion from the land, will keep His promise to bring them back and restore them.

Jeremiah 31:7–10 ⁷For thus says the LORD, “Sing aloud 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.’” ⁸“Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; A great company, they will return here. ⁹“With weeping they will come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they will not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.” ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.”

As promised in the curses, God drove Israel out of the land in anger, wrath, and great indignation, but as He declared in the land promise, they will eventually turn to Him in faith and be restored. When that happens, the faithful remnant of Israel will finally realize the full implementation of all the covenants.

Jeremiah 32:37–40 ³⁷“Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. ³⁸“They shall be My people, and I will be their God; ³⁹and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰“I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

The Scriptures present promise after promise God made to Israel to restore her to the land in belief after which the Jewish people will enjoy the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. That has yet to happen, but happen it will.

In addition to the promise to regather the people of Israel in belief, Ezekiel emphasized God's declaration of His divine protection of the Jewish people in the midst of all the persecutions during the dispersion. The preservation of the Jews has been a marvelous demonstration of God's grace and omnipotence. They have been forced into ghettos where they could easily be murdered and otherwise persecuted, but also where they were preserved as a distinct ethnic group of people, God's people. They probably would have been fully assimilated into the peoples of the world centuries ago if they had been allowed free access to society wherein they could have intermarried. They were murdered by the Roman Catholic Church during the Crusades and during the Inquisition in Spain and the Russians have instituted numerous murderous pogroms against them. The Muslims have hated the Jews and have been murdering them since Mohammed, but through it all, God has preserved them as a distinct people. They are His specifically created people for His specifically designated purposes. Some of the Protestant Reformers do not have clean hands either when it comes to persecuting the Jewish people. Many Replacement theologians have written things about Israel and the Jews that are in varying degrees clearly anti-Semitic. In the normal course of human history, any nation experiencing what Israel has experienced would have resulted in their elimination as a people

group. Any other people group would be just a footnote in the historical record, but they have a God who superintended their preservation. This is truly a miraculous situation.

Ezekiel 11:14–18 ¹⁴Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹⁵“Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, your fellow exiles and the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Go far from the LORD; this land has been given us as a possession.’ ¹⁶“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.”’ ¹⁷“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”’ ¹⁸“When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it.

The accomplishments of the Jewish people in the midst of all this persecution are also remarkable. They are truly blessed by God. Jews have amassed numerous Nobel Peace prizes in various profession fields including law, science, music, the arts, and so on. They are successful bankers and businessmen of all types. For the most part, they are good citizens wherever they reside.

One of the hallmarks of the Messianic Kingdom will be the amazing productivity of the land. This will characterize the world, but Amos specifically related it to Israel. Hunger will not be a problem in the Kingdom; the production of food will not be an issue. The life of the Israelis will be characterized by peace and tranquility. “The blessings of the millennial Davidic kingdom include the restoration of the land.... Israel will return to the land and rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will enjoy security, abundant food, and blessings possible only in peacetime. Israel will put roots down in the promised land, never to leave

it again. Nothing in Israel's historical restoration after exile fulfilled the promises given here. These promises are yet to be fulfilled in the millennium when Jesus Christ, David's descendent, rules from Jerusalem." [John A. Jelinek, "Amos" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p.1356].

Amos 9:14–15 ¹⁴"Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵"I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

Zechariah's prophecy promising the regathering of Israel is particularly significant because he wrote it after the return from Babylon. That means he must be referring to another regathering; a regathering in belief; a regathering that is not the return from Babylon. In Zechariah 10:6, the reunification of Israel and of Judah was predicted.

Zechariah 10:6 ⁶"I will strengthen the house of Judah, And I will save the house of Joseph, And I will bring them back, Because I have had compassion on them; And they will be as though I had not rejected them, For I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.

This negates any theology that claims this is only a restoration after the Babylonian captivity because the two kingdoms were not reunified at that time. The point is, when the faithful generation believes in the Messiah, God will be faithful to fulfill His promises to Israel and restore them to the relationship with Him they were created to have.

Zechariah 10:8–12 ⁸"I will whistle for them to gather them together, For I have redeemed them; And they will be as numerous as they were before. ⁹"When I scatter them among the peoples, They will remember Me in far countries, And they with their children will live and come back. ¹⁰"I will bring them back from

the land of Egypt And gather them from Assyria; And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon Until no room can be found for them. ¹¹“And they will pass through the sea of distress And He will strike the waves in the sea, So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up; And the pride of Assyria will be brought down And the scepter of Egypt will depart. ¹²“And I will strengthen them in the LORD, And in His name they will walk,” declares the LORD.

Understanding the timeline.

The Tribulation cannot begin until the seven-year covenant is made between Antichrist and Israel. This covenant cannot be enacted with Israel unless the state of Israel exists; therefore, a Jewish state must exist before the Tribulation can begin. This fact makes the establishment of the Jewish state in unbelief an immensely important development in our time. Throughout history, people have imagined all sorts of ways to try and determine when these prophetic events were going to occur. Most of western civilization thought the Lord was going to come back in A.D. 1,000. Many people since have tried to set dates for His return. The Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses were born out of Miller's attempt to do this in the nineteenth century. Many dispensationalists have used current events to make end times predictions. The only event that has any bearing on these prophetic events is the reestablishment of Israel. Israel was not in place before but she is now and that is the only significant prophetic event that has certain meaning in our time. There are circumstances surrounding the current existence of Israel that are also significant, but their significance is inextricably linked with Israel's existence as a national entity. For example, it is significant that Israel is surrounded by Muslim nations that hate them and want to de-

stroy both the nation and the Jewish people and it is significant that Russia and Persia are sticking their national noses into the mix, but if Israel didn't exist, these things would be nonissues at this time in terms of prophetic significance. Therefore, we, that is, many premillennial dispensationalists, think a lot of things going on in the world play into the end times scenario, but we can't be totally certain about that. We can be certain that Israel has been reestablished in unbelief and that is a prophetically significant event and we are certain about that because it has been revealed in the Word of God that it would one day take place.

Daniel 9:27 ²⁷"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Since there are only two worldwide regatherings (Is. 11:11-12), then it is significant that Israel is back in the land at this time. It is my belief, based on the Scriptures we've gone over, that Israel will not be, cannot be, removed from the land before the Tribulation occurs. They will, however, be dispersed again at the midpoint of the Tribulation when the Antichrist desecrates the Temple, an occasion Christ Jesus called the abomination of desolation. Before that time, it does not appear they can be removed from the land.

Matthew 24:15-22 ¹⁵"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷"Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. ¹⁸"Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰"But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

²¹“For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²²“Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Revelation 13:14–15 ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. ¹⁵And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Jerusalem will be a stone of stumbling and an object of the world's attention in the end times. This could not happen unless and until Israel is back in the land and back in Jerusalem. Even though Israel was back in the land in 1948, they were not back in Jerusalem until 1967. Israel cannot be removed from Jerusalem prior to the Tribulation despite all the efforts of the world, Islam, and the United Nations to do so.

Zechariah 12:2–3 ²“Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. ³“It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

Summary and conclusion.

There are only two worldwide dispersions of Israel and two subsequent regatherings of Israel back into the land. The first regathering is in unbelief and that is underway at this time. It will continue until the midpoint of the Tribulation when Israel will once again be dispersed when the Antichrist desecrates the Temple and demands to be worshipped. At the end of the Tribulation Christ will return

when the Jewish people cry out to Him, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Matthew 23:39 ³⁹"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

At Christ's return, the people will be gathered into the land in belief at which time the covenantal promises, the Abrahamic Covenant and its amplifying Land, Davidic, and New Covenants, will be completely fulfilled.

Israel cannot be completely removed from the land prior to the midpoint of the Tribulation when they will flee the Antichrist. Israel's presence in the land today is prophetically significant; the Bible proclaims it again and again. Many of the end times prophecies cannot be fulfilled unless Israel is actually in the land. There can be no Antichrist unless and until there is an Israel with whom he will sign a peace treaty.

Dr. Barbieri addressed the issue of whether or not Israel can be removed from the land prior to the Tribulation. "The tendency one must avoid when writing on prophesy is to become a prophet. This author does not know what is going to happen to the state of Israel in the immediate future. It could have many days of relative peace or be attacked at any time. However, it seems clear from biblical prophecies that there will be a Jewish nation in existence when the prophetic events detailed in the Scriptures begin. Therefore the nation as it is known today will probably survive in some form in order to fulfill the details of the biblical texts." [Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "The Future for Israel in God's Plan" in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, p. 165].

The only way to maintain the truth of the Word of God is to interpret it according to a literal method of interpretation. When that method is used, it is clear that the church has not replaced Israel, that God is still working with Israel and the Jewish people, they are being restored to the land according to the Word of God in this age, and Israel will inherit all the covenant promises God made to them during the Millennial Kingdom when they are restored to the land in belief never to rebel against the Lord their God again.