

“THIS LAND IS MINE!”

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance... He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel... Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” — Deuteronomy 32:8, 9

For more than 100 years, the nations of the earth have failed to bring about peace in the Middle East. Why? Because these nations have not recognized that the Land of Israel has always belonged to Almighty God alone, for God said: **“This Land is Mine.”** (Leviticus 25:23) But, many ask, if God owns the Land, why has a bloody conflict continued in Israel generation after generation? Why doesn't He just stop all the trouble by miraculous intervention?



children of Jacob — the Jews. In Amos 3:2 a confirmation of God's special favor toward Israel is found where God says of Israel, *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”* The origin of this favoritism of God toward one nation over another is the unique covenant relationship God established with the Nation of Israel through their forefathers — specifically Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Through Scripture, both Christians and Jews must ultimately learn that God has been preparing His Holy Land for a major role in mankind's future affairs when He establishes His Kingdom throughout all the earth. Now, however, there is no peace, as Satan and those under his influence struggle to maintain an improper control of what is not theirs. The promise given to Daniel's people was: *“At that time shall Michael [Israel's Messiah] stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation... and at that time thy people shall be delivered...”* (Daniel 12:1) Thankfully, we are living in this *“time of the end”* spoken of by the prophet Daniel, and we are close to the time when God WILL, through Messiah, His appointed King, put a stop to all conflicts — declaring *“Peace, Be Still.”* Mark 4:39

In Genesis Chapter Twelve we read: *“I am the LORD that brought thee [Abraham] out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this Land to inherit it.”* (Genesis 15:7) The most complete description of the Land which Abraham's seed was to inherit is found in Deuteronomy 1:6-8. *“...take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites [the Nebo ridge on the east bank of the Jordan], and unto all the places nigh thereunto [the Jordan valley, east of the river itself], in the plain [in Hebrew, Arabah, the Great Rift of the Jordan valley south of the Dead Sea], and in the hills [the Judean hills], and in the vale [in Hebrew, Shephelah, lying between the coastal plain and the Judean hills], and in the south [the Negev], and by the seaside [the Mediterranean coastal plain], to the land of the Canaanites [particularly the Plain of Sharon and the Jezreel Valley], and unto Lebanon [a portion to the north], unto the Great River, the River Euphrates. Behold, I have set the Land before you: go in and possess the Land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.”*

“THE PROMISED LAND” — A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

With three groups claiming that the Land of Israel has been promised to them — Christians, Muslims and Jews — it is little wonder that this ancient Land is hotly contested. Therefore, Christians must rely on Scripture to determine the valid recipient of God's promised Holy Land. All of God's prophets have spoken about the beautiful prospects ahead for *God's Land* and, in particular, for *the Jewish people of faith*. According to our Deuteronomy 32:8 theme text, God set the boundaries of all nations according to His dealings with the

Just who is this *seed* of Abraham? In Scripture, the firstborn of Abraham was his son Isaac, given by miracle to his faithful wife Sarah. Later, Isaac's son Jacob received this inheritance of the Land when his twin brother Esau, the actual firstborn, carelessly sold his birthright to Jacob for fleeting earthly gain. Because of his powerful faith, and through inspiration of God, Jacob passed the inheritance on to his twelve sons — the twelve tribes of Israel.

Much history has elapsed since Jacob's death and the ancient days of his twelve sons. In the course of time, the Israelites became slaves of the Egyptians, and then, after Moses freed them from bondage, he led them through the wilderness toward the *promised Land*. When Moses died, God told Joshua to lead Israel in conquering the land of the Canaanites — *the promised Land*.

In the early days of their kings, under David and Solomon, Israel reached its zenith of power, encompassing most of the *promised Land* of Genesis 15. This, however, did not last long. The kingdom was soon divided — ten tribes breaking off to form the ten tribe nation of Israel, while two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, maintained the kingdom of Judah. During these years, the power and territory of these nations waned, until finally, the last king of Judah, the wicked King Zedekiah, was dethroned by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. God then pronounced the following judgment against Zedekiah in Ezekiel 21:25-27: *“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel... Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, take off the crown... I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”* Since that time, Gentile nations have had control of the Land in Israel. After 2520 years, in A.D.1914, Bible prophecy and world history proved that Gentile dominion over Israel came to an end. *“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”* (Luke 21:24) Yes, the *“times of the Gentiles”* ended when, in World War I, the crown heads of Europe ceased to be monarchs of any significance.

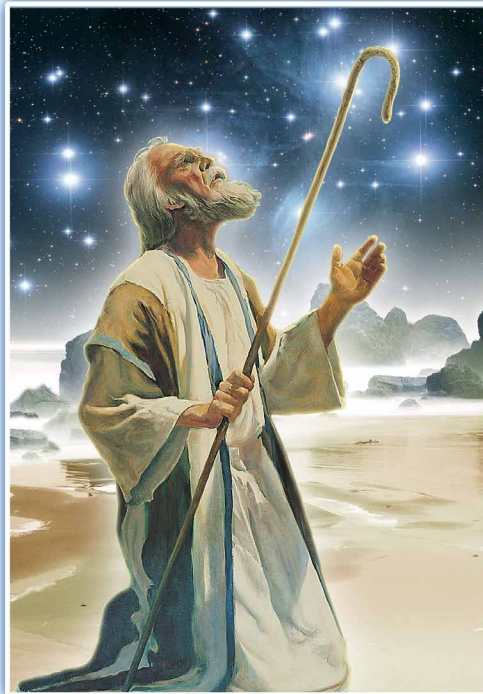
Since then, a great marvel has been occurring in Israel until, today, Israel is a *Nation of Miracles*, and all eyes are upon her!

This prophecy, *“until he come whose right it is”* is of pivotal importance. Not only was Abraham's *seed* promised to be a nation upon the earth, but the promise to Abraham included bringing forth a heavenly *seed*: *“...because thou... hast not withheld thy son, thine only son [Isaac]... I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed...”* [Genesis 22:16-18] From Abraham would come a *heavenly nation* — Christ and his Church — *“...the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David...”* (Revelation 5:5) Together, the earthly *seed* and the heavenly *seed* will soon bless *all nations of the earth!* But, until then, the earthly nation (*seed*) has been and will be for a time considered a *burdensome stone*.

ISRAEL — A BURDENSOME STONE?

“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people...” (Zechariah 12:3) And is this not true? In fact, today nearly every nation is troubled by Israel. Does this mean

that God has forgotten His oathbound promise to Abraham? Have the Jewish people lost God's favor and marvelous gift of the Land? Hear the words of Ezekiel: *“...when the house of Israel dwelt in their own Land, they defiled it... Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the Land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen [Gentile nations] ... But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned.... Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake.... And I will sanctify my great name... and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD.... For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own Land.... And ye shall dwell in the Land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.... I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded... This Land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden... Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate....”* See all of Ezekiel 36:17-38



GOD'S PROMISES TO THE ARAB NATIONS

Thus far we have looked at God's promise of the Land of Israel given to the Jewish people, but what about the claims of the Arab nations and the Arabs who claim to be Palestinians? Are they to be left without a homeland of their own? We should never forget that the entire earth is God's, and it is His to apportion unto humanity

as He pleases: *“...for all the earth is mine.”* Exodus 19:5

Most of the Arab nations have sprung from one of four biblical ancestors — Ishmael, Esau, Moab, and Ammon — all four are of the extended family of Abraham and his nephew Lot. In Genesis 16:12 we read about Ishmael who was the older half-brother of Isaac. Ishmael was Abraham's son by Sarah's bondmaid, Hagar. Of Ishmael's descendants we read: *“He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”* This implies a shared inheritance with the children of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob — the Israelites. This promise is particularly fitting, because the Bedouin Tribes are descendants of Ishmael who have historically lived alongside the Jews in the Land of Israel.

Further promises were granted to Ishmael's other descendants: *“As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.”* *“And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy [Abraham's] seed.”* (Genesis 17:20; 21:13) Ishmaelites, too, were to become a blessed people because of the faith of their father, Abraham.

Similarly of the descendants of Esau [many of today's Arab nations] it is written that God has given them a distinct territorial grant of their own. "*Meddle not with them [the Edomites]; for I will not give you [Israel] of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.*" (Deuteronomy 2:5) The territory of Mount Seir is in present-day Jordan, between the Moabite territory at the southern end of the Dead Sea, southward to Aqaba, on the Red Sea.

The other two noted ancestors of today's Arab tribes were Moab and Ammon, the children of Abraham's nephew, Lot. "*Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee [Israel] of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.*" (Deuteronomy 2:9) "Ar" is the mountain range to the east of the Dead Sea, just south of the Arnon River. This is to be a possession forever for the children of Lot. Likewise, of Ammon, we read in Deuteronomy 2:19: "*When thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee [Israel] of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession.*" This "land of Ammon" is the western portion of present day Jordan. Indeed, Jordan's capital city, Amman, takes its name from this ancient heritage of the children of Ammon. Thus, with the Ishmaelites, the Bedouins living amongst the Israelis, and with provision for the other Arab nations which descended from Moab, Ammon and Esau living to the east of the Dead Sea, the Bible lays the groundwork for a peaceful solution with equality toward all in due time — for Jews, for Bedouins and for Arabs.

ISRAEL'S RECEIVING MEANS LIFE FROM THE DEAD

Christians should especially appreciate the words of the Apostle Paul concerning the importance of the Jewish people to Jehovah, lest Christians become boastful that they had supplanted His promises to natural Israel: "*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?.... For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles [those who are Christ's] be come in.... And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer [Christ and his Church], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them [Jacob's descendants], when I shall take away their sins.*" Romans 11:15, 25-27

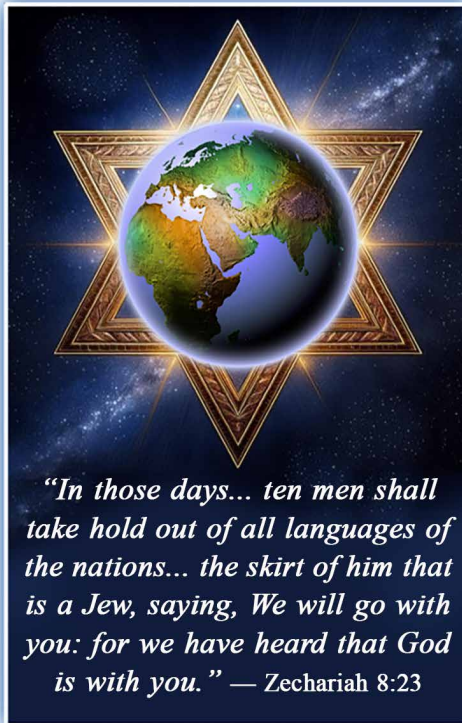
Note again verse 15: "*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*" The return of Israel to her ancient homeland is closely linked scripturally with the greater biblical promise that the entire world of mankind will return to life from their captivity in the prison house of death. Their return to life again from the grave will be the answer to the Christian's often repeated prayer: "*Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" This is the Kingdom that will replace war with peace, as we read in Micah 4:3: "*...they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*" This is the Kingdom

that will replace sickness with health, as we read in Isaiah 35:5, 6: "*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*" This is the Kingdom that will replace poverty with security, will replace death with life, and sadness with gladness. Revelation 21:4 pictures this time: "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*"

BEHOLD THE FIG TREE, AND ALL THE TREES

The nearness of this Kingdom is noted in what has come to be known as "*The Lord's Great Prophecy.*" Using the symbol of Israel as a fig tree, Jesus said in Luke

21:29-31: "*Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*" And then Jesus added in verse 32, "*Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.*" What generation is this? — We are living in the very century when these things shall come to pass! May it yet be that the generation, which has seen the establishment of the Nation of Israel in 1948, will be the same generation which finally witnesses the fruition of every Christian's prayer, of every Jewish dream, and the desire of all nations — the establishment of God's Kingdom of peace and righteousness upon the whole earth. This Kingdom will bring peace and security, not only to Jew and to Arab, but to all humanity. "*Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people [Israel]: for He will.... be merciful unto His Land, and to His people.*" (Deuteronomy 32:43) For this reason we should all join with zeal in the prayer of David found in Psalm 122:6: "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*"



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