

“ISRAEL MY GLORY”

Israel’s Mission, and Missions to Israel

by

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATIONAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL, AND “THE TIME OF JACOB’S TROUBLES”

Will the elect nation of Israel ever return to the land of their fathers? Many Christians say, No; many other Christians say, Yes. Those who deny the future restoration of the nation contend that all the prophecies relating to restoration were fulfilled on the return from Babylonish captivity, or that they are to be spiritualized and referred to the Church.

In the first place, then, we propose to quote predictions of restoration to Palestine couched in terms which were not fulfilled on restoration from Babylon, and which have never yet been fulfilled; and in the second place, we insist that such predictions must be as literally fulfilled as were those relating to restoration from Babylon. We encourage very earnestly the gathering of spiritual lessons from every part of the Word of God, since “**all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect**”—whether that Scripture relates primarily to Jew or Gentile, and whether “**the man of God**” is of one nation or another.

It is one thing to draw spiritual lessons from God’s dealings with His elect nation, and quite another to spiritualize or allegorize the terms which describe that nation and their land. Take for instance, “**He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock**” (Jeremiah 31:10).

The scattering was literal; shall not the gathering be as literal as the scattering?

The scattering was of the national Israel; shall not the gathering be the national Israel also? But to interpret Israel by the term Christian, and temporal blessings in Palestine by spiritual blessings in Christ, instead of taking one as simply typical of the other, is to confound things that differ, and confuse the simple reader of the Word of God.

The boundary line or limit of national rejection seems to be suggested by the words of our Lord when He said, “**Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord**” (Matthew 23:38, 39).

We may safely infer that the nation will one day say, **“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,”** but we may also as plainly infer that they will first see Him before they say so. It is very instructive here to refer to another utterance of our Lord; after He had given the parable of the vineyard, and declared the destruction of the husbandmen, He said, **“Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, The same is become the head of the corner: This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?”** (Matthew 21:42)

Now the two passages quoted above— **“Blessed is he,”** &c, and **“The stone,”** &c,—are both taken from the 118th Psalm, and we shall find the context of those quotations most instructive and precious.

“I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD” (Psalm 118:21-26).

Here the stone which the Jewish builders rejected is no longer the rejected one, but has become the head of the corner; and as Christ is no longer the rejected of the nation, the nation is no longer rejected, for now the nation says, **“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD.”** The Lord having returned and become the accepted of the nation, and the nation the accepted of the Lord, millennial day opens—the day of the Lord; and the nation exultingly shouts:

“This is the day which the LORD hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

The boundary line or limit of national rejection is further suggested by the words of our Lord when predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of the land:

“And shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

We have already noticed this passage when we referred to the *duration* of Israel’s national rejection. The limit of national rejection is further suggested by what is said in the last chapter of Daniel.

Reference having been made in the opening of the chapter to the time of Jacob’s trouble, which is yet future, we have the instructive words:

“And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people (the elect nation), all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:6, 7).

It is well to compare this passage with the 10th chapter of the Apocalypse, where an angel, with his right hand lifted up to heaven, swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there should be delay no longer; but that:

“In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Revelation 10:7).

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

These passages suggest the limit of Israel’s national rejection, limited by the return of the Lord, the destruction of Antichrist, followed by the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

Restoration is plainly suggested by the answer to a question put to our risen Lord. **“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”** The question related to the time—**“this time.”** The Lord replied, **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons”** (Acts 1:6, 7).

Now either the Lord used the word **“times”** in the same sense as the word **“time”** in the question, or He did not. If He did not, there would appear an equivocation we should hesitate to charge upon an earthly friend; if He did, then the restoration of the kingdom is only a question of time.

The latter we take to be the truth. How beautifully this is confirmed by a passage in the prophet Micah!

“In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:6-8).

Having examined various passages which evidently suggest the limit of Israel’s national rejection, we now proceed to more direct evidence for a future restoration.

First point—A restoration is predicted as a second one.

Now the first restoration was from Babylonish captivity, and that only a partial one of some fifty or sixty thousand persons.

The second must be future.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again *the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea*” (Isaiah 11:11). This has never yet been fulfilled.

Second point—A restoration is predicted **“from the four corners of the earth.”**

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:12).

Here we have a gathering from the four corners of the earth. The captivity in Babylon was local, the present dispersion is universal. Israel was never in the four corners of the earth till this present captivity, consequently the gathering can only be fulfilled in the future.

Besides, the whole nation is here referred to— **“the outcasts of Israel”** and **“the dispersed of Judah,”** when only portions of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and Levites, with some individuals of the tribes of Israel, were restored from Babylon.

Third point in favor of a future restoration—A restoration is predicted after which there shall never be another dispersion.

This one point, if clearly proved by even one plain passage of Holy Scripture, should settle the question of future restoration.

“Thy people also shall be all righteous: *they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time*” (Isaiah 60:21, 22).

“For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and *not pull them down*; and I will plant them, and *not pluck them up*” (Jeremiah 24:6).

“But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation” (Joel 3:20).

“And I will *bring again* the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and *they shall no more be pulled up out of their land* which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God” (Amos 9:14, 15).

These passages speak for themselves and need no comment.

Israel must be restored if such predictions are ever to be fulfilled.

Fourth point in favor of a future restoration—Because the Promised Land is still the land of promise, having never yet been possessed in all its promised length and breadth.

If there be no future restoration for Israel, then all the promises relating to restoration to Palestine must have been already fulfilled; for God's Word cannot be broken. The extent of the land actually possessed has passed into a proverb— **“from Dan to Beersheba”**—as we say, “from John-o'-Groats to Land's End.”

Now this comprises only about twenty-eight or thirty thousand square miles. God called the Promised Land **“a good land and a large”** (Exodus 3:8). Large is large by comparison. Compared with other countries, Dan to Beersheba is a very small land, about the size of Wales or two or three English counties.

According to *“The Land of Israel,”* by Dr. Keith, the Promised Land extends to Mount Cassius on the river Orontes, as the north-west boundary—the true **“entering in unto Hamath”** and to Bir or Berothah on the upper Euphrates, as the north-east boundary. This is about one hundred miles across from west to east, with the mountains of Amanus at the back, shutting in the Promised Land like an enclosed garden. The south-west boundary is **“the river of Egypt”**—the Nile; and the south-east boundary is the river Euphrates, where it empties itself into the Persian Gulf.

“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18. See also Ezekiel 48).

The southern breadth of the land, from the Nile to the Euphrates, is eleven or twelve hundred miles. The Mediterranean Sea is of course the western boundary, and the Euphrates river the eastern boundary. The length of this land from south to north is about six hundred miles; the average breadth about five hundred; which makes the Promised Land at least 300,000 square miles in extent. This is twice and a half as large as Great Britain and Ireland together. It is not only good but also large. Now it is admitted that all the Promised Land was under tribute to both David and Solomon, but not actually possessed.

Israel must have in possession every inch of land God has promised, but Israel has possessed only about one-tenth of that which God has promised; we therefore naturally infer a future restoration of Israel.

Fifth point in favor of a future restoration—This fifth and last point is really two in one.

The *tribes* are to be *differently located*, and the land *differently distributed*, from any previous possession of the land. A careful examination of the 48th chapter of Ezekiel will fully illustrate this fifth point. Here we have the tribes of Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah located respectively from the northern part of the land southward. Then we have a large portion set apart for the city and the sanctuary between the tribes located on the north side and those located on the south.

Then on southwards we have Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad. Here we have Gad on the extreme south, when formerly this tribe was on the east side of the Jordan.

Here we have Benjamin placed south of Judah, when formerly these tribes were in a reversed relationship: and so with several other tribes. Then it must be noticed that the land is distributed in *straight portions from east to west*. So that as the tribes are located, and the land distributed on a principle never realized in history, we may safely infer a future national restoration of Israel.

The Scriptures further teach that the Jews are to be restored *in unbelief*

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 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” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

Here we have restoration to **“your own land;”** **“from among the heathen (nations)”** and **“out of all the countries,”** followed by the blessing of **“a new heart”** and **“a new spirit,”** and the people resume their old relationship to God as His people, and He acknowledges Himself as their God. This is confirmed by Ezekiel 11:16-20.

The 37th chapter of the prophet Ezekiel, under the picture of a valley **“full of bones,”** **“very many,”** and **“very dry,”** graphically sets forth the restoration of the nation, followed by national conversion; then, under the figure of the union of two sticks, Judah and Israel, is set forth the union of the twelve tribes, forming **“one nation in the land,”** with **“one king”** over them all; and a **“covenant of peace”** made with them, even **“an everlasting covenant,”** and God’s sanctuary placed **“in the midst of them for evermore.”**

Then shall the knowledge of Israel’s restoration and sanctification be extended to the Gentile nations. **“And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore”** (Ezekiel 37:28).

This same truth is beautifully confirmed as follows:— **“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name . . . When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD”** (Ezekiel 39:25, 27-29).

“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them *one heart*, and *one way*, that they may *fear me for ever*, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul” (Jeremiah 32:37-41).

“And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And *I will cleanse them from all their iniquity*, whereby they have sinned against me; and *I will pardon all their iniquities*, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it” (Jeremiah 33:7-9).

Other passages might be quoted proving conversion to *follow* restoration, but the above are sufficient.

Many Christians, in ignorance of the passages which clearly teach restoration to Palestine in unbelief, and in ignorance of the purpose of God in thus restoring them, have contended that to restore the Jews in unbelief would tend to confirm them in their unbelief; and that as the rejection of Christ was one of the causes of their national rejection, why should they be restored to Palestine before they repented of the sin of rejecting Him, and before they acknowledged Him as Messiah and Lord.

Our first reply to this difficulty is a reply that, with the Christian, should solve all difficulties where God has plainly spoken; and that is, God says it, and that is enough.

But the difficulty is lessened, if not entirely obviated, by the consideration that the Jews are not to be restored for *immediate* blessing, for between national restoration to Palestine and national blessing we are to have the **“time of Jacob’s trouble.”**

God’s heaviest chastisement on the nation of Israel will be administered in Palestine itself, in the very place where the national sins were committed which caused the national rejection. The rejection of Father, Son and Spirit took place in the land of Israel, and it is fitting that the chastisement due to the nation should be inflicted on the nation, after the scattered people have been reconstituted a nation by restoration to their land. God says, **“I will bring a sword upon you that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant.”**

“Jacob’s trouble,” yet future, is described in the strongest language possible, **“And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.**

“Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:4-7).

“And at that time shall Michael 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 even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1).

The Lord Jesus confirms this when He says, **“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”** (Matthew 24:21).

The Lord's **“fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem”** (Isaiah 31:9), and the Lord's Word by Ezekiel is equally strong and clear.

“Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you” (Ezekiel 22:18-22).

Many more passages on this topic might be quoted, but these will suffice to show the reality, the character, and the intensity of Jacob's trouble.

It is instructive to notice that under the influence of envy and jealousy the Gentiles have sought in all ages to crush Israel, and that God has thus used the Gentiles as His rod to chastise Israel for sin against Him.

God has then broken the rod by crushing the Gentiles for seeking to crush Israel; that is, He chastises Israel through the instrumentality of Gentiles, but chastises the Gentiles Himself. He blesses Gentiles through the instrumentality of Jews, but nationally blesses Israel himself.

- When Israel sins, God says, **“I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with *the stripes of the children of men.*”**

- When Gentiles crush Israel God says, **“And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction”** (Zechariah 1:15).

- When God blesses Gentiles, it is through the Jews—**“Salvation is of the Jews.”**

- When the Lord blesses Israel as a nation, He says, **“But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation”** (Isaiah 45:17).

- Direct blessing to Israel from God,
- Indirect blessing to Gentiles through Israel;
- Direct chastisement on the Gentiles from God,
- Indirect chastisement on Israel through the Gentiles.

Jacob's trouble will reach its climax in the culmination of the power of Antichrist. The Antichrist, just prior to his destruction by the personal advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, will make a desperate, but unsuccessful, effort to destroy the Jewish nation. He will perfectly understand that blank Atheism can never be universally established as long as faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures exists, because the Scriptures teach the existence of the Father and the Son.

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is *antichrist*, that denieth the Father and the Son” (I John 2:22).

With faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures dead, another difficulty presents itself in the existence of the Jew—a powerful living testimony to the existence of God, and to the inspiration of the Scriptures—hence the overwhelming forces are combined in one supreme effort to wipe the Jewish nation from the face of the earth.

The language of Israel's ancient enemies—Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Philistines, &c, will be most appropriate to Antichrist and his forces:

“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against *thee*” (Psalms 83:4-5).

Confederacy against Israel with a view to Israel's annihilation is confederacy against God. Just at the moment of Israel's extremity, when the Antichrist seems within measurable distance of complete success, the clouds part asunder over the Mount of Olives, Christ returns, the Jews are delivered, Antichrist is destroyed, there is universal mourning amongst the inhabitants of Jerusalem, followed by the national conversion of Israel, the occupancy of the throne of David by David's Son and Lord, the cessation of war, the commencement of the millennial reign, and the blessing through Israel of the whole Gentile world.

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