

The Charge of Beer Sheva A Prophetic Perspective

Dr. Deane J. Woods

Being married for almost 50 years, Margaret and I have many things in common. There is nothing strange about that. One would like to think that such a claim would be true of all such couples regardless of marital years, especially those who are believers and who work together in the LORD's ministry.

However, one thing in particular has always created special rapport throughout our married life: Looking up the **"On This Day"** column in Papers and Magazines. There is an upcoming date which has prompted eager discussion in recent years. Let us share it with you.

The date is the **31st October**.

In our opinion, three stunning events occurred on that day: One happened in Israel, another in Germany and the third in Rome. The first related to the "Charge of Beer Sheva" by the Australian and New Zealand Light Horse Regiments in 1917 – 100 years ago this year! The second saw Luther nailing his "95 Theses" to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg,



Australian Light Horsemen on their "Walers".
3 of the 39,348 brought to the Middle East
between 1915-1917. Image Acknowledgement:
Australian War Museum, Canberra



90th Anniversary "Re-enactment-in-Solidarity Muster", 31st October, 2007. Source Acknowledgement: Image provided courtesy of Olive Tree Travel, North Caulfield, Melbourne, Vic.

in 1517 – 500 years ago, to the day!
The third took place 476 years ago as Michelangelo Buonarroti completed his famous fresco painting *The Last Judgement* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, in 1541. He'd worked on his masterpiece for four years!

These last two significant events must be overlooked here and left for discussion at another time. It is the "Charge of Beer Sheva" that we firmly believe has special *prophetic* nuances, as well as co-sharing *historic* significance with the other two.

May we invite you to "listen in" on our personal interactions to show why we believe this to be so?

Tuesday, 31st October 2017, will be a most memorable day for all Australians and New Zealanders, whether "Down Under" or somewhere else around the world. We submit to you that this day will prove to be even more significant for Israel, along with all the nations, *ultimately!*

On this day, the Centenary Celebrations of **"The Charge of Beer Sheva"** will come to a climax with the re-enactment of the now famous "Charge" by about 200 descendants of those larger-than-life, young stalwarts who rode in the "last successful Cavalry Charge in history".

The youngest recruit was a 16 year old lad from Broken Hill - Australia's renowned silver, lead and zinc mining town, 1,000 kilometres west of Sydney. He was later fatally wounded, a fact grievously attested to by his grave and Head Stone in the Beer Sheva War Memorial Cemetery.

Australia's and Israel's Prime Ministers, Malcolm Turnbull and Benyamin Netanyahu, are expected to attend the celebrations, along with a cortege of Government Officials from both countries. They will host the proceedings before an

expected capacity crowd, the majority of whom will have come from "the other side of the world". And, yes, the Friends of Israel (Australia/New Zealand) "Commemorative Tour" – already "booked out" at the time of writing this present article - will be part of the joyous crowd, as well!

"The Charge" was made famous by 800 Australian and New Zealand Light Horsemen which led to the capture of this desert City and its life-saving wells, 100 kilometres south of Jerusalem.



Subsequently, they "(secured) the Gaza Line" and, two months later with General Edmund Allenby and the Allies, took Jerusalem on 11th December that same year. Later, Damascus also fell to the Allies as well, the Australian Light Horse regiments again playing a major role. In fact, as history has shown, four of them rode into the city's Central Square and obtained a signed "Surrender Note" from the Turkish Authorities some days before Lawrence of Arabia and his Official entourage did! Aussie "pluck" or "pragmatic diligence"?

While Jerusalem was "captured" in 1917, the reunification (complete "liberation") of "God's City" (2 Chron. 6:6; Ps. 132:13-14) would come 50 years later during the "Six Day War" in June, 1967. It will be remembered that after the incredible victories of Egypt and the other Arab League Countries in the Sinai, Jewish soldiers fought their way to the Holy City and raced to the Western Wall. With them was their IDF Rabbi, Shlomo Goron who jubilantly blew the triumphant blasts on his shofar in the Old City for the first time in almost 2,000 years! The Jews were thus "back home" at the sacred site of the First and Second Temple. What is more, we recall that 50 years in the Jewish



Australian Light Horse Regiments approaching Jerusalem, 8th December 1917.

Image Acknowledgement: War Photographer, Frank Hurley - Australian War Museum, Canberra



The Australian Light Horse (4th & 12th Regiments) after "The Charge", riding to Jerusalem which was "captured", 11th December, 1917, and later "liberated" (re-united), in the Six Day War, June 1967.

Image Acknowledgement: Frank Hurley

calendar is "Jubilee" – a "freedom" Year! The whole of Jerusalem was now freely accessible to the Jewish people!

So, on 11th December, 1917, Jerusalem was finally free from the yoke of 400 years of Ottoman Turkish Rule! Their Empire was defeated and now defunct.

Do you already detect some potential, intrinsic, "prophetic significance" might be emerging in all these events? *Selah!*

SETTING

World War I "prepared the Land (later: Israel) for the Jewish People".

The 800 Light Horsemen on their beloved steeds - "Walers" (as they are known), brought with them from family farms in far-away Australia, and for which they were paid 35 Pounds - made a major contribution to opening the way for hounded, Jewish Diaspora, to "come back home" after nearly 2,000 years. Exiled, "scattered among the nations of the world" and hated by so many since the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. (or C.E. as our Jewish friends designate it), these physical sons of Abraham would have their centuries' longings and Pesach (Passover) prayers of "next year in Jerusalem", come to pass. They could now return to "the Land" of their forefathers!

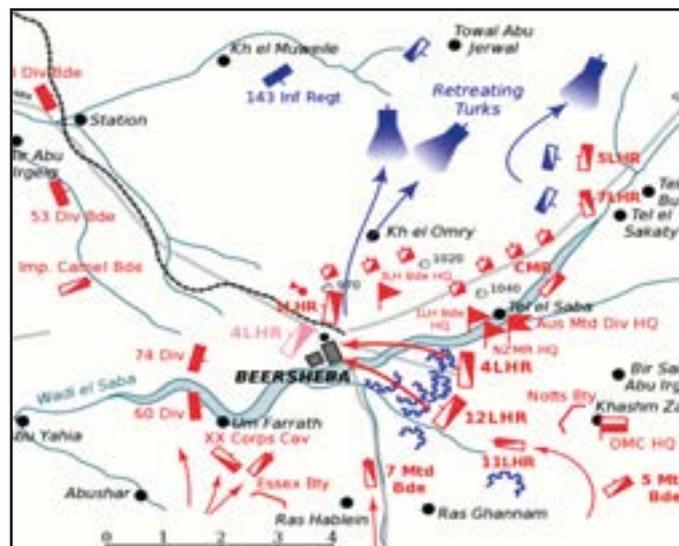
STORY

As World War I broke out in 1914 between Great Britain and Germany with their Central Axis Powers' as Allies, Commonwealth countries of the expansive British Empire rallied to "fight for Mother England". Australia was among them. Young men left their farms and city jobs to enlist, most thinking the War would be over in "a couple of months" with Britain and her armies proud of their anticipated victory. As it turned out, nothing could have been further from the truth!

Their quickly-enlisted, comparatively ill-equipped and certainly less-than prepared, Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs) made an ill-fated, disastrous landing at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula, on 25th April, 1915. The Allies' plan was to engage the entrenched Ottoman Turkish troops who had been aligned with Germany and her Axis Powers' Allied troops.

As various "waves" of soldiers left their troop carrier ships just before dawn and waded ashore, they were met with unrelenting enemy machine gun fire. Those who were not cut down by the hail of bullets stormed across the beach, courageously, and began clawing their way up steep hillsides and ravines seeking at all costs to "dig in".

Over the next eight months bitter, trench-to-trench fighting took place. Lacking



Beer Sheva War Map showing attacks.

ammunition, supplies and most of all, precious drinking water, the ANZACS fought on against all odds. Amongst the "madness and carnage of war", exploits of gallantry, heroism and touching tales of "mateship" were manifested. "Simson and his donkey" is but one of the many legends that have been passed down to succeeding generations.

By December that year, the battle had ground to a stalemate and the order for "Retreat" was finally given. Of the Australian 30,638 soldiers who were involved in the war, 8,708 Australians had been killed, and thousands more injured. New Zealand casualties totalled an additional 2,721.

The battles welded these raw recruits from the former six colonial States back in Australia into one, united, fighting force. In the crucible of this bloody conflict, the indomitable "spirit of ANZAC" legend was born. It was marked by unreserved dedication, selfless commitment and sacrifice, underpinned by mutual respect and a bond of insoluble "mateship" amongst all.

Yes, the "Commonwealth of Australia" had been inaugurated on the 1st January,

1901, but in the trenches of Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula landing, Australia's national identity and many of our national identity and relatively unique "values and virtues" were birthed. The "ANZAC spirit" forged in those dark days of battle and ultimate defeat, has lived on as a national character trait, ever since the Great War ended in 1918. "ANZAC Day", the 25th April, is therefore a revered national holiday for Australians. Crowds line our cities' streets and gather in towns across the nation to commemorate the sacrifice of so many of our forefathers to give "freedom" to succeeding generations. Year after year these Memorial Dawn Services draw increasing numbers, despite no original diggers still being alive, today.

The battered ANZAC Forces regrouped in Alexandria (Egypt), over the next twelve months. They gained strength, consolidated their resilience and ranks, and were further trained for up-coming military action as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces (EEF) Campaign under General Henry George Chauvel. Finally, orders were given to trek through Sinai sand dunes and engage the combined Forces of the entrenched "Johnny Turk" armies, once again.

On 30th October, after riding 30 miles to circumvent Beer Sheva under the cover

in the Enemy's eyes. At 4:30PM on the afternoon of 31st October 1917, with just 20 minutes' daylight remaining, they took their bayonets (not cutlasses nor lances) in hand, and with their .303 rifles slung across their backs, the Cavalrymen began their anticipated manoeuvres at just over a mile's distance. Walk! ... Trot! ... Canter! ... **"Charge!"** – at full gallop!

Heavy Turkish gunfire met them, ranged in "at 2,000 yards". Most of the horses had not been watered for over 48 hours, and not to capture the Turkish positions (and more importantly), the life-saving water from Beer Sheva's "seven wells" (for thus the name connotes), would be, by any measure, fatal! Victory was therefore a necessity, not merely a military notion!

With the thunderous noise of the attack, panic overwhelmed the Turkish Defenders and they forgot to lower their gun sights! Bullets and shrapnel whizzed and whistled over many of the galloping Cavalrymen's heads – another miracle in itself!

The records show that once these desperately dehydrated horses "got the smell of water" from the Beer Sheva wells, "not even top horsemen with the best 'hands' in the world, could have 'held bridle' and stop them from 'having their head' and bolting to slake their thirst"!

Horses and riders leaped over the trenches, trampled on soldiers, overturned mounted Machine Gun nests, and created havoc in open Pill Boxes. Some riders dismounted and captured terror-stricken, "loyal sons" of Mustafa Ataturk, taking them prisoners by hand. Others continued galloping on, triumphantly, into Beer Sheva. In all, 700 prisoners were taken. There were 31 Light Horsemen killed and 36 wounded. There was a similar, "comparatively small number of equine casualties" due to the "oversight of the Turks"- no pun intended!

From that victory, The Light Horse columns quietly wended their way northwards, finally joining General Edmund Allenby and the Allied Forces near

Jerusalem, on 8th December. The next day, the "Holy City" was captured "without a shot fired" and on 11th, the highly respected, Christian General, entered the walled City through Jaffa Gate, dismounted, and walked to the "Signing



Entering through the Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem, on 11th December, 1917, General Edmund Allenby dismounted and walked to the Signing Ceremony, "in respect of the Holy City". Photos & Source Acknowledgements: Wikipedia articles - "General Edmund Allenby" and the "Battle of Jerusalem".

Ceremony" at David's Citadel, saying: "I will not ride on these cobble stone streets where once my Saviour walked". **The LAND was being prepared for the PEOPLE!** Prophecy was certainly being fulfilled!

SIGNIFICANCE

Just as World War I prepared the **LAND for the PEOPLE**, so it would be World War II that prepared the **PEOPLE for the LAND!** How? Because of the Holocaust!

The **link** between these two events, of course, was the famous "**Balfour Declaration**", dated 2nd November, 1917 – just **two days** after the "Charge of Beer Sheva"! On that day, Britain's



General Edmund Allenby (a Christian) and Allied Forces captured Jerusalem on 11th December, 1917. Photo & Source Acknowledgement: Wikipedia "Battle of Jerusalem".



Bronze statue of "The Charge" in the Melbourne (Australia) based Pratt Foundation Memorial Gardens, Beer Sheva. Note: .303 rifle bayonet-in-hand, not a cutlass or lance!

of darkness, the Light Horsemen of the 4th and 12th Regiments, made ready for the "Charge", at dawn. The plan was to position themselves strategically, so that whenever the "Order to Charge" would be given, the setting sun would be

Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour sent a letter to Lord Rothschild, a prominent Zionist and a friend of Chaim Weizmann (later, Israel's first President of State), specifying that:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

Specific Scriptural prophecies of God's ancient people returning to their God-entrusted land were being fulfilled in no uncertain terms for, on 14th May, 1948, the "Miracle" of the "Rebirth of the Modern State of Israel" was realized! The rest is history!

Why do we assert that this Charge had "prophetic" significance? In short, we may say it is because of three divinely-given scriptural revelations:

- God's special "Promise" of His **BLESSING** (Genesis 12:3b)
- God's specific "Prophecy" of Israel's **RESTORATION** (Ezekiel 37)
- God's significant "Purpose" in the **GLORIFICATION** of Himself in the Kingdom and all Eternity (Is. 2:1-4; Mt. 6:10; Rev. 11:15; 19:22; cf. also Eph. 1:1-14, esp. verse 11; Heb. 12:28; cf. Rom. 11:36).

For Australia and New Zealand? – The blessing of the "Promise" being part of God's unconditional, irrevocable, Covenant with Abraham: *"I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you"*. (Gen. 12:3; cf. also Gal. 3:13-14). Aussies, generally, call their Land "The Lucky Country". This designation incorporates perceived multitudes of reasons, in their view.



Commemorative Penny -
Struck for the Centenary Celebrations
has long since been sold out!
Image Acknowledgement: The Australian Mint

Perhaps their contention is best illustrated in the game of "Two Up". This betting game first surfaced amongst Aussie troops in World War 1. It remains an illegal activity "other-than-Anzac Day" when the constabulary "turns a blind eye"! Participants gather around a ringed area and a "Spinner" with a flat wooden "holder" of two pennies tosses them into the air to see if they fall into the circle in the way the gamblers have "called" in their bets. The outcomes of this "Heads" and "Tails" game, is, of course, is ostensibly determined by the proverbial source of "luck" or "chance". The celebratory drinking associated with "Two Up" is said to give a "good time had by all", though as one participant told us one time: "It was champagne at night, and real pain in the morning!".

On the other hand, Bible Believing Aussie Believers refer to Australia as a "Blessed Country" made so, *inter alia*, because of God's promise, via "The Charge of Beer Sheva"! Others with religious interest don't go that far but cite the Roman Catholic Portuguese explorer Pedro Fernandez de Queiroz (de Quiros). On 3rd May 1606, he claimed a new land he'd discovered "Australia Del Espiritu Santo" (The Southland of the Holy Spirit) with great religious fervour! In actual fact, he and his three expeditionary ships, their crews, soldiers and Catholic friars numbering 280, had landed in what is now known as Espiritu Santo (Vanuatu) and not "Terra Australis Incognita" (the much longed for "Unknown Southland"). Those advocating this perspective often sing Geoff Bullock's 1991 hit song "The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit" with great gusto, but always in reference to Australia.

For Israel and her people (In the Last days)? - Hope and Rest! God promised: *"I will bring you back into the Land"* (Ezek. 37; cf. Lev. 26:33-45; Mt. 24:32ff). Who can deny that this has been happening, especially since World War I, and (in our present context), "The Charge", and continues still today as End Times events unfold?

For The World, finally? – Messiah's righteous Judgements and universal Peace ("Shalom")! God has pledged that in His Messiah, our LORD Jesus Christ: *"The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the LORD and His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever"* (Rev. 11:15; cf. Is. 2:1-4; Luke 1:31-33). We believe that, currently, the "Stage is being set" for His return to Planet Earth

to set up His Kingdom. Jesus Christ will rule universally from David's throne in Jerusalem and from there for 1,000 years and then in the Eternal State when "time shall be no more"!

For all believers – Jew and Gentile, alike? – Seeing, Worshipping and Serving the Lord Jesus Christ – The Promised Messiah! *"Your eyes shall see the King in His glory"* (Is. 33:17; cf. 1 Jn. 3:1-4; Rev. 22:1-7ff). What a prospect and certainty of hope lies before all Believers! All God's salvific purposes will finally be consummated for HIS GLORY and by His GRACE! Scripture is clear on this, for "all things are of Him, through Him and to Him" (Rom. 11:36).

Thus, the **"Charge of Beer Sheva" on 31st October 1917**, was a prophetically significant event because ultimately, all history, is in fact, His Story!

Conclusion: Look up, "fellow Traveller", and thank God for the "Charge of Beer Sheva" and its associated prophetic events. It was inherently part of God's foreshadowed End Times historical events, the ramifications of which we still see today!

Would you not agree that current events in the Middle East and in other "Hot Spots" around the world should make us pause and reflect on a glorious biblical truth: Our LORD will return personally, literally, suddenly and visibly just as He promised in Acts 1:11! Could it be that "our redemption draws nigh"?

In the interim while He still tarries, we would do well to heed Hebrews 12:28-29: **Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.** (Emphases added).

The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (Australia) Inc.

P0 Box 171 Melrose Park SA 5039
Australia

Office and Books:

c/o EBC Community Centre
Suite 406 (Upstairs)
Cnr. Rothesay Ave and Dorene St
St Marys SA 5042 AUSTRALIA
Phone/Fax: (+ 618) 08 8276 1333
Email: australianoffice@foi.org