

# **IT IS NO DREAM**

**Israel: Prophecy and History—The Whole Story**

**COMPLETELY UPDATED AND REVISED**

**ELWOOD MCQUAID**

**The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.**

*It Is No Dream*

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Elwood McQuaid

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*It Is No Dream*

*Bible Prophecy: Fact or Fanaticism?*

Elwood McQuaid

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*In memory of those victims we must never forget.*



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# FOREWORD

My intention in approaching this work was not simply to produce one more volume on Bible prophecy. There are many works available that deal effectively with prophetic and dispensational themes. Furthermore, I shrink from the thought of contributing a sensationalized work that makes extravagant claims but in actuality delivers little substance.

What I feel can be helpful is a book that scans the entire biblical and prophetic program for Israel while integrating documented, historical insights into the outworking of God's program for the Jewish people. Essential to this aim is an understanding of the Chosen People, what they have experienced, why they have been thus dealt with, and where their journey through history will finally bring them. I have, therefore, restricted research to predominantly Jewish sources. I spent many weeks in Israel conducting research and interviewing individuals holding positions that allowed them to provide vivid perspectives.

Although specific acknowledgments are given elsewhere, I must immediately recognize the graciousness, availability, and patience of the Israelis who have unhesitatingly cooperated in this venture. Military officials, Zionist Agency personnel, government leaders, and religious representatives have sacrificed both their official and personal time to open offices, libraries, and homes to assist in the compilation and review of the content you're about to read. In the United States, staff members of the Embassy of Israel in Washington, DC, and the Jewish Consulate in New York responded graciously to my requests. My earnest and enduring gratitude is offered to these men and women, many of whom have become friends.

This book is written from an evangelical Christian point of view. Certainly, great differences exist between my religious views and the majority of the people mentioned above. Their official and personal cooperation does not imply an endorsement of the Christian content. However, it is everywhere obvious that the people of Israel wish all segments of our fragmented world to understand the Jewish people's inherent right and desire to live in peace in the land given to Abraham and his posterity.

My ultimate purpose is twofold:

The first is to help Christians understand the Jewish people and their problems, aspirations, and divinely destined place in history. I hope to show, through the unfolding of God's prophetic program, the unchallengeable miracle of Israel, her sons, and daughters; to give believers a fresh sense of kinship with the land and the Jewish people; and, consequently, to provide a renewed awareness of

our responsibility to share what a sovereign Messiah has accomplished in the lives of true Christians.

The second is to help Jewish readers differentiate between Christendom in general—which has heaped scorn, ridicule, suffering, and persecution on them—and true Christians who emulate the genuine spirit of Christ toward the Chosen People of God. I pray this work will help Jewish people comprehend the enormous dimensions of their unique relationship to the God of the universe, as well as show Jehovah's faithfulness in delivering all the irrevocable promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his seed.

It is my fervent hope this book will, in some measure, accomplish these purposes. Of course, my readers must judge the relative success of the effort. If I have failed, be assured the deficiency is due to a lack of literary skill, not to a lack of heartfelt concern for the Jewish people or God's Land.

Elwood McQuaid



# SETTING THE STAGE

When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad (Ps. 126:1–3).

For millennia, the Jewish people have held a hope in their hearts, a dream embodied in the Israeli national anthem, “Hatikvah.” That dream is “to be a free nation in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.”

The unshakable belief that one day the Jewish people will “possess their possessions” (Obad. 1:17) in the ancient land of their fathers is perfectly consistent with what the Scriptures have taught for thousands of years.

During the years of dispersion and wandering in inhospitable Gentile environments, the vision never waned. It was never far from the Jewish mind and heart. Equally true is the fact that buffeted and beleaguered Jewry has never been out of the heart of God.

The great wonder we have witnessed in this modern age is the merging of Jewish desire with divine design. The Jewish people are returning to their land. History is playing out before us; and prophecy, splashed across the pages of the biblical record—Old Testament and New—provide details yet to unfold.

But what has unfolded sent shockwaves through the nations, as they witnessed an event the vast majority thought impossible.

## HISTORY'S GREATEST STORY

When Theodor Herzl coined the phrase, *If you will it, it is no dream*, he actually spoke of two worlds: the “will” God infused in Jewry, a quality that has persisted throughout the ages; and the “dream,” which the Jewish people have tenaciously held on to and struggled to make reality. Thus we have before us a story told in the Holy Book and acknowledged by history; and it is history’s greatest story. It could be said that the telling in itself—without theology or related disciplines—captivatingly reveals all to be cherished or loathed in humanity’s march through the ages. Above all, this narrative anticipates a spectacular consummation, the much-sought-after “happy ending” to the greatest drama on this planet.

The drama revolves around the record of a people deemed insignificant, written off as dispensable by the secularist powers that be. The truth is that the Jewish people and their Holy Land are unparalleled gifts from God to humanity.

And yes, Jerusalem is the center of the earth and focus of the future. And lest we forget, Jesus the Christ—God’s supreme gift—came to us in Bethlehem of Judea, born of a Jewish woman.

What can we then take away from history’s greatest story?

Foremost, we can accept it for what it is: life on the ground, not the stuff of myth or fable. It shows us real life, with all its bumps, bruises, tests, and triumphs. It shows us the hand of God, preserving what He promised.

It has been well said that if the Lord breaks one promise He has made to Abraham’s posterity, we have no shred of assurance He’ll be faithful to us. But He has not breached or broken those promises, and He never will.

That’s good news. So it follows that we have much to learn and appreciate when we look at Israel’s history and the Jewish people. Of utmost importance is the transformative heart-and-soul desire for peace and commitment that we see within this nation chosen to provide a light in the storm that is darkening the world around us.

## **THE STATE OF ISRAEL HAS RISEN**

After more than 2,500 years of Gentile domination, the nation of Israel was about to rise from the ashes. The event was planned in secrecy, but half the city of Tel Aviv waited in the streets as David Ben-Gurion’s car pulled up to 16 Rothschild Boulevard at 4 p.m. Wearing a dark suit and dark tie and carrying a portfolio under his arm, Ben-Gurion exited the back seat and ascended the steps of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art where a different crowd waited inside.

**Residents of Tel Aviv wait for the delegates to leave the Museum Building there after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.**



Seated at a long, skirted table with 12 other Jewish ministers of the National Council—a portrait of Zionism’s founder, Theodor Herzl, hanging directly above his head—Ben-Gurion rose to his feet. “On the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly,” he told the crowd in Hebrew, “we hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel.”

The room exploded into clapping, cheering, and crying. The man who would soon become Israel’s first prime minister read the country’s freshly minted Declaration of Independence. “Placing our trust in the Almighty, we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the Provisional Council of State, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (14th May, 1948).”

It was appropriate that Herzl’s portrait seemed to survey the historic scene, for it was Jewish journalist Theodor Herzl who assessed the ominous clouds gathering over European Jewry in the late 1800s and concluded it was time to go home. To dissenters who thought a modern Jewish state in Ottoman-Turkish Palestine impossible, he uttered the now immortal words, *If you will it, it is no dream.*

Few people thought that dream would come true. After 2,000 years of surviving among nations often hostile to their presence, the Jewish people could return home. What occurred on the evening of May 14, 1948, was astonishing, a unique event in the annals of history. A nation long dead was being resurrected and restored to its original land. Surely nothing of that magnitude could transpire without God. He had promised in His Word, “I will bring you back” (Jer. 15:19; 29:14; Zeph. 3:20). And He was doing just that.

In a sense, the event was an awakening to a new reality. The Jewish people were returning as a nation—a resounding affirmation to some, a bewildering prospect to others. Sorely disquieted by the phenomenon were theologians who held to Replacement Theology (RT), which sees no biblical future for Israel.

RT scoffs at the idea that God will fulfill all of His promises to Israel literally. Theological revisionists postulate that somehow Old Testament Israel has morphed into the church, and the church has become the “New Israel,” replacing Jacob’s physical children.

However, the State of Israel’s existence today should send a stark warning that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He does not make promises He doesn’t keep. Jehovah is not a “force.” He is God Almighty. “He said, and will He not do?...Has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19).

God is no one to trifle with, and *replacement* is not a word encoded in any aspect of the divine program. In fact, the concept in any form flies in the face of biblically charted history and its culmination, as assured by our Maker.

## WHEN DOES FOREVER NOT MEAN FOREVER?

If asked to define the word *forever*, we Christians have a ready answer—no quibbling or equivocation. *Forever* means “forever.” End of story. If asked about eternal life, we quote John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

How long is “everlasting”? The dictionary says *everlasting* means “enduring through all time: eternal.” In other words, it means “forever,” for a time without limit. Scripture says God is an “everlasting God” (Isa. 40:28) whose righteousness is “everlasting” (Ps. 119:142) and whose Kingdom is “an everlasting kingdom” (145:13). God, His righteousness, and His Kingdom will endure forever, for all time. They will never cease to exist.

Ironically, some people fail to apply the same standard of certainty to *forever* when the promises are given to Israel. God told Abraham,

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Gen. 17:7–8).

Replacement theologians contend this promise does not mean what it says and is not to be taken literally. This new interpretation sprung up when some of the early church Fathers opted to plot a theological course not formerly traveled in order to make the church supreme. Yet in doing so, they deprived it of the whole story of Israel and the Hebrew people.

My intent here is not to parse semantics or grapple with divergent theological positions. Rather, I hope to tell the story of Israel and show why understanding the entire biblical portrait can enrich our lives and instill in us a clear vision of Israel’s future, as well as that of the church.

It is overwhelmingly important to come to grips with the knowledge that we do not worship a God who deals in half measures. What He promises He will deliver in full—always, and in His time. Nowhere is this biblical truth more compellingly executed than in His program for Israel. To cut off the story half told and unfulfilled is like teaching about Christ’s death without ever mentioning His resurrection. What a huge mistake that would be. We need the entire story of Israel to understand God and His wondrous program for humankind.

The saga of Israel’s journey to its ultimate destiny far surpasses any novel that could ever be written or any historical documentary that could ever be produced. It depicts the birth of a nation and contains romance, unrequited

love, struggle, indescribable suffering, survival against all odds, national resurrection, fiery trials, a coming King, reconciliation, fulfillment, restoration of relationships, and delivery in full of every promise made by the God who never fails to keep His word.

Contrary to the often-dreary depictions of life in our time, usually accompanied by sullenly depressing endings, Israel's epochal journey has a glorious consummation—a happy ending. One reflecting rich personal incentives for 21st-century believers—and one that assures us God will never stop loving us.



# The Prophetic Nation

Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he [Abraham] became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:18, 20–21).

A solitary figure watched the sun creep over the lush meadows of his new land. As the light emerged, his eyes swept the horizon. To the west, the azure Mediterranean sent rhythmic breakers to wash its coastal sands. Before him lay a breathtaking panorama of plunging descents, rolling plains, and great valleys. Away to the east, the Galilee sparkled against the basalt cliffs of the Golan. Clearly visible was the point where the Jordan River quit the southern tip of Kinneret to furrow a serpentine course through the land and eventually find its terminus beneath the vaporous haze marking the place where the Dead Sea patiently garnered its treasures.

On the flanks of the lower Jordan rested a semitropical garden where the fruits of creation were gathered without regard for the times and seasons restricting husbandmen in other climes. In the distant south rose the soft, brown mountains of Judea, where barren Moriah silently anticipated its bedecking as the eternal Jerusalem. Farther on, the Negev watched Bedouin and trader ply their way down to the land of the pharaohs, ancient Egypt.

It was a unique land for a unique man, a man whose life would begin not at the proverbial 40, but at a patriarchal 75. Abraham would be one of a kind, yet he would endure as the spiritual prototype of all believers in Jehovah who would follow after him. In this first Hebrew, the world would witness a fresh phenomenon. A branch was being grafted out of humanity through which the divine purposes would flow, around which all history would revolve, and in which all biblical prophecy would one day triumphantly culminate. God was creating a new thing: Jehovah was forming His Israel.

## THE STORY WITHIN THE STORY

We must never overlook, minimize, or ignore the people—as much a slice of humanity as you or I—who were essential instruments in the divine scheme of things. From their personal stories, we can learn life-transforming lessons as we open the Scriptures. In a dramatic sense, Abraham is among those people.

Soul-arresting indeed is the legacy of this godly man. Abraham's altars dotted his trek across the land that was Israel's inheritance. Though he did not know it, he was humanity's new beginning: A new era of faith—with promise, both personal and enduring forever—had arrived.

In the space of a few chapters in Genesis, God defined the parameters in His program for the new nation that would alter the course of history on Earth. In fact, so dramatic were the consequences of His intervention through Abraham that Israel would essentially become the center of the planet.

Through this man we encounter the greatest mountain peaks of promise found in all of God's Word, promises that span the whole of history and place markers never to be erased. Abraham touches not only the sons and daughters born of his seed but, in one way or another, every nation and individual.

You may be asking yourself, *What is it about this first Hebrew that matters to me?* It is this: “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*” (Rom. 4:3, emphasis added). Simple as it may appear, believing

Artist rendition of Abraham journeying into the land of Canaan





faith—unquestioning obedience to God—is the spiritual staff of life for true believers. And, as was true with Abraham, such enabling faith guides us confidently into the yet unseen. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence *of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1, emphasis added).

Therefore, the impact of Abraham’s call cannot be taken lightly. It would become the fountainhead of all biblical prescience. Consequently, it would become an essential study for all who aspire to understand history and its most enigmatic elements, the Jewish people and their land.

No people on the face of this sphere have been as consistently conspicuous as the descendants of Abraham. Certainly, none have aroused emotions, attracted a greater measure of attention, or made more indelible contributions to humankind than have the Jewish people. Why? Why, after all, did God call them? Why did He so obviously set them apart? What did (and what does) He intend to show the world through this tiny nation? How is every child of Adam influenced by the Jewish presence and Jehovah’s program for Israel? The answers to these questions, as we shall see, are intriguing, illuminating, and potentially soul-satisfying.

Why does little Israel figure so prominently in the news? Why does little Israel matter? A partial explanation appears in God’s Word:

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Dt. 7:6–8).

Through these Chosen People, God will manifest His love, as well as His faithfulness, to His promises; and through them He will bring the prospect of light and life to all people.

His program contains four phases: dispersion, preservation, restoration, and reconciliation.

## **I WILL BLESS THEE**

To properly appraise the full significance of Abraham’s place in history, we must view events from his introduction to us in the biblical record:

Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:1–3).

Embodied in this initial unveiling of Jehovah’s plan for the future is a fourfold application of *I will*:

1. I will show you a land. This involves *divine direction*.
2. I will make you a great nation. This speaks of *divine determination*.
3. I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. This reveals *divine promotion*.
4. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. This shows the *divine program*.

These remarkable words were spoken to Abraham, the childless Shemite son of an idolater from the ancient city of Ur in Mesopotamia. He accepted them by faith and moved in the appointed direction without knowing his precise destination. After arriving in the land God had identified to him, the declarations given earlier were amplified. Three passages illuminate the dimensions of Jehovah’s promises:

And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever” (Gen. 13:14–15).

On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates” (15:18).

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an

everlasting possession; and I will be their God (17:7–8).

The magnificent sweep of these prophetic words was profound and permanently binding—but not immediately realized. A man, childless at 80 years old, is promised a son. This son, he is told, will become a great nation. The nation is given a land by God; it is to be theirs forever. Jehovah enters into a covenant with the Jewish nation, insuring the nation's longevity and national identity as long as history continues. Through Abraham's seed, a Messiah will come to bring blessing and benefit to the entire world.

God made these declarations some 4,000 years ago. If we accept the Bible as His instrument for communicating with us, we must also acknowledge that its trustworthiness and reliability will be evaluated based on whether His promises are faithfully fulfilled. Therefore, these declarations to Jacob and his progeny put the Bible to the ultimate test. Will all of them come to pass over the span of thousands of years? Furthermore, will the results establish beyond question that God's Word is to be taken literally?

If these predictions come true, it is folly to propose that the Bible is anything less than God's revealed Word to humanity. Fulfillment also will establish the fact that God is on the world scene, moving history toward an orderly culmination—one that He Himself has chosen.

## THE UNBORN HEIR TO THE COVENANT

It is crucial to understand that the fulfillment of the divine Covenant program would come through Isaac and the Jewish people, not Ishmael, Abraham's firstborn son by Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian handmaid.

Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him [not Ishmael] for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham" (17:19–22).

## THE WORLDS OF ISAAC AND ISHMAEL

Much of the political world these days is promoting the fiction that the vast

majority of the world's problems are somehow related to Israel's existence and the fact that Israel insists on secure borders and adequate land to ensure its survival. Radical Islamists call for Israel's annihilation and the banishment or extermination of its people. They claim Ishmael was Abraham's favored son and, therefore, the legitimate heir to all rights to the land and sanctuaries.

Needless to say, Islam's claims concerning Ishmael and the Abrahamic Covenant are false and irrelevant. Islam did not exist until the 7th century AD, and God's promises in Scripture clearly go from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to the Jewish people.

Respected scholars describe Ishmael's descendants as the Arab people who, for the most part, live in settlements and Bedouin-like camps in northern Arabia. In addition, the Muslim Arabs, following Muhammad's example, claim descent from Ishmael. Muslims further claim that Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, are buried in the Ka'aba at Mecca in Saudi Arabia. To Muslims, the Ka'aba, Muhammad's birthplace and home for half a century, is the most sacred place of worship; and Mecca is the most sacred city on Earth—not Jerusalem.

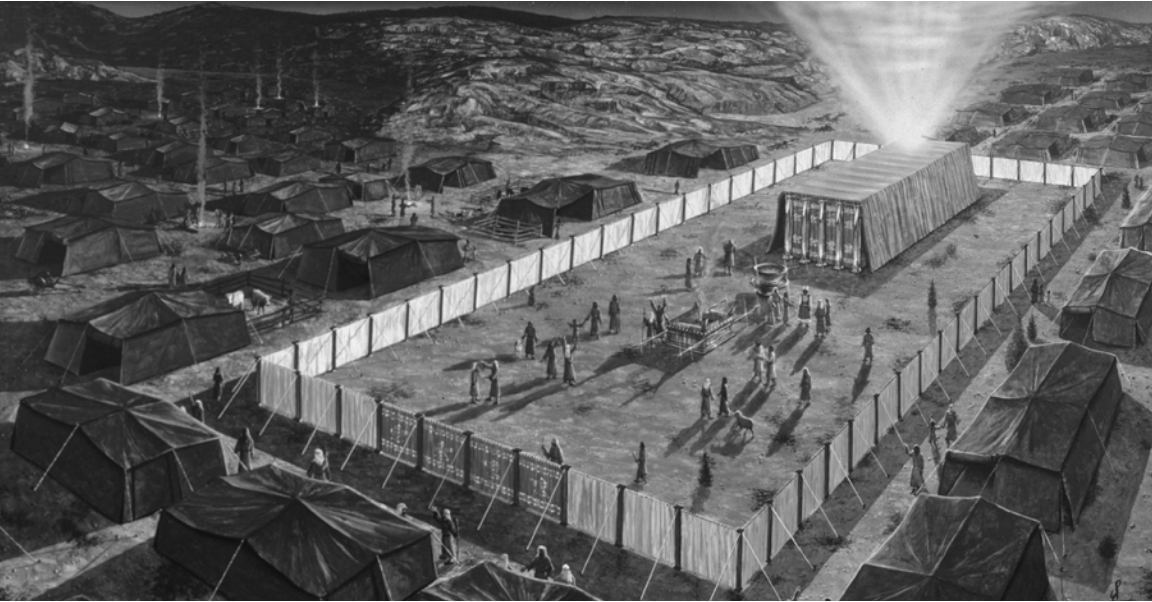
The fact that the Arab world engulfs 99.9 percent of the land across northern Africa and the Middle East, possesses enormous wealth, and wields major influence internationally testifies to the fulfillment of God's promise that Ishmael's descendants would receive a great heritage.

But as Jehovah specified to Abraham, "My covenant I will establish with Isaac."

In the course of time, Abraham received the promised son, Isaac. His son had a family, and the family moved to Egypt to escape a severe famine. Under Egyptian bondage, the family struggled through the birth pangs of delivering a nation. Some 500 years after those divine proclamations to a lone patriarch in a distant city, an estimated 2.5 million souls marched out of Egypt to again occupy the land promised to their forefathers.

## THE NATION

Israel's exodus from Pharaoh's domain endures as one of the great sagas of all time. Moses contesting with Pharaoh, the successive plagues that rolled over the land, and Israel's miraculous deliverance through the Red Sea are all familiar events to Jews and Christians alike. Jewish people have celebrated the Exodus in annual Passover ceremonies worldwide for more than 3,000 years. Christians revere the memory of the Exodus as one of the great Old Testament previews of the sacrificial work of Christ. Hundreds of novels and historical works have been based on the Exodus, and filmmakers and songwriters have repeatedly used its theme. More recently, we think of it as we see Jewish people trek across the nations to return home since the birth of the State of Israel.



Sketch of the Tabernacle

Israel's deliverance from servitude in Egypt and its subsequent journey through the wilderness would be one of the most productive short periods in history. We are all beneficiaries of those momentous days. During that time God gave the Law to Moses, Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible (the Torah), and God established Moses as perhaps the greatest leader the world would know.

During the trip from Egypt to Canaan, the Israelites paused for nearly a year before Mount Sinai to receive unprecedented revelation from God. The priestly ministry was established; and the Tabernacle, the first national house of worship, was built. It was a time of great optimism. Israel had been favored by direct communication from God. Through the Law, He instructed them regarding their religious worship and service. The land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lay before them. To Jewish people of the day, the future seemed aglow with glorious prospects.

But suddenly, God sent a prophetic shiver down the national spine. He introduced the Israelites to the principle by which they would occupy the land he had given them: They must obey Him. He had given Canaan to the Jewish people in perpetuity. They would own it forever. But if they failed to obey Jehovah, He would expel them from the land made sacred by His hallowed promises.

In the brief span of two chapters in the Bible (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28), the Jewish people's entire future is outlined. It is striking in its detail and precision. The facts of Jewish history recorded in the history books coincide so completely with these prophecies that even someone who doesn't believe in

God can't help but see the similarities.

This astounding revelation identifies four distinct movements in the divine program for the Jewish people: dispersion, preservation, restoration, and reconciliation. These periods mark the way of Jewry during its national pilgrimage. The sequence first appears in Leviticus and is restated in Deuteronomy.

Moses was the first prophet to touch on these points. Then the Old Testament writers who came after him reiterated them repeatedly. New Testament writers later took up the threads and wove additional patterns into the fabric. Around these four movements all international developments will revolve. From beginning to end, this little nation will be central to all of God's dealings with mankind. We can interpret history correctly only if we understand Israel's singular niche in the unfolding drama of global affairs.

As we look at Leviticus and Deuteronomy, we can easily see Israel's prewritten history as it came from the hand of God:

## DISPERSION

And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins (Lev. 26:27–28).

I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste (v. 33).

Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life (Dt. 28:64–66).

## PRESERVATION

Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them (Lev. 26:44).

Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among

all the nations where the LORD your God drives you...(Dt. 30:1).

## RESTORATION

My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember (Lev. 26:42).

The LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you (Dt. 30:3).

## RECONCILIATION

But for their sake I will remember the covenant of 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 (Lev. 26:45).

Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And 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, that you may live (Dt. 30:5–6).

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul (Jer. 32:37–41).

Nothing approximating the scale of these restoration and reconciliation prophecies has yet occurred in the history of Israel. Some argue that the return spoken of in these passages took place when the Jewish people returned from captivity in Babylon under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and Ezra. However, there are obvious facts that refute that theory:

- ◆ Relatively few Jewish people went back to Israel during these returns.

The rest chose to remain in the more comfortable circumstances in Babylon. The number of Jews in the land from the time of the returns until the Romans destroyed the second Temple in AD 70 was always a remnant of the nation, not a full complement.

- ◆ The Jewish people’s most extensive dispersion still lay ahead. Their scattering after the Romans scourged the land would take them farther from their ancient soil than ever before. For nearly 2,000 years, they would wander among the Gentile nations and suffer such severe persecution that it would defy parallel in the chronology of humanity.
- ◆ Israel as a nation has never been fully reconciled to Jehovah spiritually. There has never been a time when all the Jewish people have had “one heart and one way” in adherence to Jehovah’s person and program. The final fulfillment of this promise awaits a future day. However, as we survey world events, we can recognize that the final realization of these aspirations is drawing near, and the quickening surge of prophetic movement should make us rejoice and give us confidence that God keeps His Word.

Many other prophecies in Scripture speak of Israel’s divine regathering and promise the nation peaceful and blessed living conditions that will endure “forever”—something that clearly has not yet occurred. The fulfillment obviously is still future. One passage in particular is Ezekiel 37:25–26:

Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.

The detail and scope of these declarations are astonishing. God told us thousands of years ago the nation would be dispossessed and scattered. But it would also be preserved through centuries of dispersion, returned to its ancient soil, and be reestablished as a nation. What other ancient nation has accomplished the same feat? Given all the attempts to assimilate or exterminate the Jewish people, they should not even exist today. Yet here they are. Why? Because God ordained it. He made a promise, and He’s a promising-keeping God.

The very existence of the Jewish people and the rebirth of the nation of Israel



tell us we are living in the presence of a miracle—one as surely wrought by God as any from the days of the prophets and apostles. In the Bible, we possess a book unlike any other. We cannot casually lay it aside. Among other things, it reveals God's plan for the ages and accurately tells us the future—something only He can do. And He tells us so in Isaiah 46:9–11:

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure," calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.

Prominent scholar and historian Alfred Edersheim commented appropriately,

Israel as a nation was born of God; redeemed by God; brought forth by God victorious on the other side the flood; taught of God; trained by God; and separated for the service of God. And this God was to be known to them as Jehovah, the living and the true God....God is the God of the present as well as of the future, and that even here on earth He reigneth, dispensing good and evil.<sup>1</sup>