

2010 Winter Newsletter
Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia
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"As Jehovah liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries whither he had driven them. And I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." Jeremiah 15:15



ISRAEL'S SCRIPTURAL CLAIMS

Once again the tiny nation of Israel has fallen under condemnation from an international body—this time the Catholic Church. Recently Pope Benedict XVI charged Israel with responsibility for the trouble in the middle east and the sufferings of the Palestinian population. It is ironic that he should single out Israel as the culprit in a conference meeting to consider the condition of Christians in Muslim lands. Israel is the only country in the middle east in which Christians are welcomed and have actually increased in number over the last couple of decades. He further denied that Israel had any Biblical support for their occupation of their land.

This last claim is worthy of investigation. Bible Students accept the Bible as the revealed Word of God, given by God "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16) Without this standard, religion can be whatever man is able to imagine. The many disparate religions of the world are proof of the fact that, although man has an innate desire to worship God, beliefs and practices vary depending on upon what their *rule of faith* is based. For the Jews, the standard is the Old Testament scriptures. The early Christian church was based upon both the Old Testament scriptures and the writings of

the Apostles which made up the body of the New Testament. Reliance on the Scriptures as the only acceptable authority has been a Protestant hallmark since the time of the Reformation. However, for Catholics the immediate or direct *rule of faith* is the teaching of the Church.

Agreement on the basis of faith is necessary in order to establish any level of understanding. Without that there can be no agreement and religion becomes whatever man's imagination can conjure up. One must ask themselves, do I want a faith based upon the whims of man or upon "the more sure word of prophecy?" The truth of the Bible has been attested by history, archeology and science. This book that was written over a period of 4,000 years or more has stood up to the test of time like no other ancient writing. The proven validity of the Bible bears strongly upon what the true Christian's attitude should be in connection with the nation of Israel and its place in the world today.

What do the Scriptures say regarding Israel and the Jewish claim to the land? To begin, the Apostle Paul when writing to the Romans declared, "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And **so all Israel will be saved**, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:25-27)

The prophets of the Old Testament were very explicit about the casting off and re-gathering of Israel into its historic homeland. Jeremiah speaks of a day when God will establish a new covenant with Israel to replace the one He made with them in Sinai. "Behold the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--not according to the

covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their hearts and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (Jeremiah 31:31-33) Although God scattered them amongst the Gentiles where they have suffered great persecution for their unfaithfulness and failure to recognize their Messiah when he was sent to them, God has promised to bring them once again into his favor.

Ezekiel 20:33-37 says, "'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,' says the Lord GOD. 'I will make you pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant[the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31].'"

Zechariah 8 assures Israel, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.' Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.' ... 'And it shall come to pass that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.' ... 'Yes many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.'" vss.2,3,13,22.

The Prophet Isaiah adds, "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:2-4)

The Scriptures are full of God's promises to the people of Israel. This is just a small sampling. However, the world's predilection toward anti-semitism has caused many churches to adopt a "replacement theology" which declares that all the promises to Israel in the Old Testament really apply to the Christians. If this be the case, one would ask how the scripture in Zechariah 12:10 would apply to the Christian. It states that these same people who God will bring back into their land "will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." If the blessings apply to the Christian, so do the rebukes and curses!

The world is filled with fear from the intimidation of Islamic terrorism. The question of Israel is described in the same context of Zechariah 10 which says that Jerusalem will be "a very heavy stone for all peoples;" but the true peril is that "all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. ... It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy

all the nations that come against Jerusalem." vss 3,9.

The Jews have a 2000 year history in the land of Israel. By contrast, what is the Palestinian claim to the land? In the late 1800's Jewish settlers began buying land in Palestine. Jewish labor made the land attractive as agriculture flourished. An influx of Jewish financial investments created industry, built hospitals and set up a complete socio-economic infrastructure. The Arabs poured into Palestine to profit from the higher standard of living now available.

As job opportunities increased so did Arab immigration. With the exception of a few families, the Arabs had no attachment to the land. They drifted in from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq.

Before 1964 the Arabs spoke of Palestine as a part of "Greater Syria," now split up into mandated territories. Then in 1964, President Yassir Arafat proclaimed that the Palestinian people sustained a thriving culture for centuries and it was the Jews who began their invasion in 1881.

The term Arab Palestinian was an invention of Arafat and the PLO. The modern Palestinian people have no unique language, no unique culture, no unique history, and cannot be found identified anywhere in any historical records that date earlier than the mid 1960's.

For all those who seek to be guided by the word of God rather than by the Pope, the Scriptures are clear:

"Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins."
Isaiah 40:2

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- Israel in History and Prophecy
- God's Grand Plan of the Ages

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