

Fall 2021 Newsletter  
**Detroit Bible Students**  
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biblenewsletter.org



## WHY ISRAEL?

*“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, 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 when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” ~Hebrews 8:8-10*

One of the smallest independent nations of the earth, Israel is roughly the size of our state of New Jersey with a population, as of June 2020, of 9,022,700. This also makes Israel one of the most densely populated countries of the world.

Israel's re-establishment as a nation took place in 1948 by a United Nations vote which granted the stateless Jewish people a place in what had been part of the British mandate in the middle east. This was a modern miracle! Never before in the history of the world had a country that had been overthrown and its people scattered to all parts of the globe for two thousand years been reestablished as a nation. Although the land they were given was their historic homeland, the surrounding Arab nations launched a massive offensive to oust Israel. Israel had no modern armament, no trained army, no air force, while the Arabs had all of these, yet with a rag-tag army of conscripted immigrants lately released from Hitler's concentration camps and outdated arms, they held back the might of the Arabs and survived.

With the success of the 1948 war, has all disputing of Israel's existence been settled? Not at all! Since the war for its survival, Israel has had to defend itself repeatedly. The demand is that Israel should give up land to the Arabs, but every concession they have made leads to more demands. Under international pressure to cede Gaza to the Palestinians, Israel has merely provided their antagonists with a closer launch site for rockets to be fired at Israeli

cities. In July of 2021, more than 4,000 missiles were fired from Gaza into Israeli cities Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Tel Aviv. But for Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile defenses, those cities would now be rubble. When Israel tried to wipe out the missile launch sites, the world loudly condemned Israel and charged them with the responsibility for the Arab attacks.

### Why Israel?

Why is it that despite its relatively minuscule size, the attention of the world is focused on Israel's affairs? There are things that should commend Israel to us. It is the only democracy in the Middle East. The world has benefited from the technology and the medical and scientific breakthroughs that have come out of Israel. Jews have won twenty percent (20) of the of the Nobel Prizes awarded since 1905 for peace, economics, literature, medicine, and the sciences. What accounts for the fact that there is hardly a person that is neutral concerning Israel?

Is Israel a condemned or a favored nation? The Jewish people have been the target of the world's animosity for centuries. During the dark ages the Catholic church labeled the Jews, "Christ killers," and hatred was stirred up against them on that score. However, consider the words of the Apostle Peter [considered by Catholics to be the first Pope] on the day of Pentecost, "But you denied the Holy and Just One and desired a murderer to be given to you. And

you killed the Prince of Life, whom God has raised from the dead, ... And now, brothers, I know that **you did it through ignorance**, as also your rulers did.” (Acts 3:14,15,17)

The fact is that Jesus’ death was the focal point of God’s plan. God hinted in Eden that Satan would be crushed (Gen. 3:15). God called Abraham “friend” because he found in him a faith so great that he was willing to sacrifice his beloved son just as God would one day sacrifice Jesus. (James 2:23; Heb. 11:8,17-19)

Our salvation has been secured because Jesus came to die. (John 6:51; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 5:12-21; John 15:13) “For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead.” (1Cor. 15:21) “But we see Jesus, who was made ...for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Heb. 2:9)

The Jewish nation was the tool that would accomplish God’s plan. Jesus told his disciples many times that he would be killed. At his last supper with them he again told them, “...indeed the Son of Man doth go according to what hath been determined; but woe to that man through whom he is being delivered up.” (Luke 22:22) While Jesus spoke specifically of Judas, the prediction was true also of the whole nation that rejected him.

The Jewish religious leaders were jealous of Jesus’ popularity with the common people, and afraid of losing their privileged positions. They were therefore willing agents in calling for Jesus’ death (Matt. 26:3,4; Mark 15:10,11; Luke 22:1-6; John 11:45-53). On the other hand, the common people flocked to Jesus. All the Apostles and all the first Christians were Jews—3,000 being baptized on the day of Pentecost alone, (Acts 2:41) and Stephen, a Jew, was the first Christian martyr. (Acts 7)

### To Whom Does the Land Belong?



Centuries before Israel ever became a nation, God made a promise to Abraham, “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. And **I will give the land to you** in which you are a stranger, and to your seed after you, all the land of Canaan, **for an everlasting possession**. And I will be their God.” (Gen 17:7,8) “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 22:18; Gal 3:8) Furthermore God declared, “The land shall not be sold

forever; for **the land is Mine**. For you are strangers and pilgrims with Me.” (Lev.25:23)

As each succeeding generation came, God renewed his covenant, first with Isaac and then Jacob and then with the twelve sons of Jacob which became the twelve tribes of Israel. (Gen.17:19; Lev.26:42) God told Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) After leading the Jewish people out of Egypt and giving them his Law through Moses, God said, “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for **all the earth is mine**: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” (Exod. 19:5,6)



Of course, their history, recorded for good or for ill in the Bible, shows that Israel often failed to keep God’s Law faithfully, straying into idolatry and the ways of the other nations around them (1 Sam. 8:4-7). Nevertheless, God faithfully honored his covenant by revealing his Word (2 Tim. 3:16,17) through the prophets and finally by sending them his Son Jesus, their Messiah.

Jesus said, “**I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**” (Matt. 15:24) When Jesus sent forth his disciples to preach, he commanded them, saying, “**Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**” (Matt. 10:6)

But Amos 3:2 also says that the receipt of such favor brought responsibility; “therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Throughout their history, when Israel disobeyed God’s laws or took up the idolatries of the heathen nations that surrounded them, God removed his protection from them and allowed them to suffer crop failure or famine or attacks from their enemies and ultimately to be taken into captivity. (Deut.28:15-68), Israel’s rejection of their Messiah resulted in nineteen centuries of Diaspora during which the Jews were ostracized, hated, persecuted, and killed in all the nations of the world.

Yet they were miraculously preserved as a people by God. “And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I hate them, to destroy them utterly and to break My covenant with them. For I am Jehovah their God.” (Lev 26:44)

### What is a Christian’s interest?

Israel is God’s prophetic time clock. By a study of Israel’s experiences, we can see the progress of God’s plan for man. The

Apostle stated the matter clearly when he wrote, "Has God rejected his people? By no means! ...if some of the branches be broken off...boast not against the branches...Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear...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 be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." (Rom. 11:1-32)

Jesus said that one sign that he would be present again in the earth was the re-establishment of Israel. He told his disciples, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree [Israel]; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." (Matt. 24:32,33) Of all the "signs" Jesus gave of his return, the re-establishment of Israel to their land is the most singular, since the return of their polity is unique in world history.

"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)

This promise was not fulfilled in the past. Israel was pulled up out of the land many times and scattered throughout the nations of earth. We believe the time has come for this promise to be fulfilled. The modern nation of Israel is not more righteous than any other nation of the earth nor are their decisions always right. It is not for its politics that we watch Israel, but in acknowledgement that God has put them there. We are watching for the fulfillment of Bible prophecies. For example, are the Abraham Accords significant? God is **not** favoring the Jewish people because of their holiness, but **because of His own faithfulness to his promises**. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom 11:29) Through his blessings to Israel, God will reveal himself to the world as the Almighty living God of the Scriptures. "I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations and they shall know that I am Jehovah." (Ezek.38:18-23)

Israel has been kept separate from all the nations by God's providence. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did **not** set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all

people: But because the LORD loved you, and **because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers.**" (Deut. 7:6-8) "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, ... in which it was **impossible for God to lie.**" (Heb 6:13-18)

### Isaac or Ishmael?

God said, "... Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him." (Gen. 17:19)



But Abraham was also concerned about Ishmael whom he also loved. So God told him, "As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall father twelve chiefs, and I will make him a **great nation.**" (Gen.17:20) This promise of God has been amply fulfilled. The Arab nations, in green, fill the Middle East and stretch across the whole of north Africa.

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, [earth's kingdoms] and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." (Isa.2:2,3)

### The restoration of Israel is tangible evidence of the coming of God's promised Kingdom. (Matt. 6:10)

*Great is His Faithfulness!*

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