

A Fresh Look At The SECOND COMING?

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Ezekiel 29:21 "And the day will come when I will cause the ancient glory of Israel to revive, and then at last your words will be respected. Then they will know that I am the LORD." NLT

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CHAPTER ONE

AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE

Millions of Christians around the world believe that one day Jesus will return to the clouds and that all Christians will rise to meet Him in the air to return with Him to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Although this is a very popular and convenient doctrine credit for its origin generally goes to John Nelson Darby, a 19th-century theologian. The rapture is widely taught and believed in Christianity today. Popular books and movies spin themes around this doctrine that essentially teaches Christ will come back twice, first coming only into the atmosphere to snatch believers away to heaven for several years; then actually returning to set foot on the earth. The special attraction to this possibility is that Jesus will supernaturally withdraw the Church to heaven from its earthly scene just before the Great Tribulation thus affording a convenient absence from the horrific tribulation outlined in Revelation. In complete contrast the Jews are left to experience another holocaust that covers the earth. What if Christ's return to earth will happen in a very different manner and how might that transpire?

A serious gap has occurred in the understanding of many Christians concerning the return of Christ to earth. The main cause of the gap is the fact that so many have presumed that God has forsaken Israel and adopted the Church in stead of Israel. Actually nothing could be further from the truth. God has certainly not abandoned Israel though for a period of time He had put them to one side. God's love and care for Israel is everlasting (without end) Jeremiah 31:3). The history and prophetic future of Israel runs through the whole Bible from Genesis 12 to Revelation 22). Precisely because of a deliberate denial of Israel's future importance, many scriptures throughout the Old Testament that predict Israel's restoration and consequent glory have been wilfully ignored and the overall picture has been compromised. The full prophetic picture of the End Times of this present age and the everlasting future is essentially incomplete without the many references to Israel. Paul makes clear reference to both their laying aside and their ultimate regrafting together with the Gentile members of the redeemed community.

Romans 11:18-21

18 But you must be careful not to brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. Remember, you are just a branch, not the root.

19 "Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me."

20 Yes, but remember — those branches, the Jews, were broken off because they didn't believe God, and you are there because you do believe. Don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen.

21 For if God did not spare the branches he put there in the first place, he won't spare you either. NLT

Romans 11:24 For if God was willing to take you who were, by nature, branches from a wild olive tree and graft you into his own good tree — a very unusual thing to do — he will be far more eager to graft the Jews back into the tree where they belong. NLT

According to Islamic intention Israel will soon be totally annihilated and subdued under Shariah law. The only possible way that this disaster can be averted will be through direct divine intervention. Will this be when the Messiah will return to earth? A predicted

imminent attack on Israel will attract Messiah's intervention and the subsequent revelation of His true identity. At just the right moment (Zechariah 12:8-10) the Angel of the LORD will lead Israel to an astounding victory after which Israel will recognize her deliverer. Surely this possibility deserves close scrutiny in the Bible.

The question the disciples began to persistently ask of Jesus following His resurrection was Acts 1:6 *When the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, are you going to free Israel now and restore our kingdom?"* NLT

This was the mission they had expected Him to fulfill. His death had cast doubt on this particular possibility but now, following His glorious resurrection, their hopes had been revived. Jesus did not deny that one day He would free Israel and restore the kingdom. He intimated that the matter was on hold and would be accomplished in the prophetic future.

Acts 1:7-8

7 "The Father sets those dates," he replied, "and they are not for you to know.

8 But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere — in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." NLT

A Promised Visible Appearance

Acts 1:9-11 (AMP)

⁹ And when He had said this, even as they were looking [at Him], He was caught up, and a cloud received and carried Him away out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they were gazing intently into heaven as He went, behold, two men [dressed] in white robes suddenly stood beside them,

¹¹ Who said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, Who was caught away and lifted up from among you into heaven, will return in [just] the same way in which you saw Him go into heaven.

His ascent was clearly visible to His (Jewish) followers.

He ascended from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

He will come again to them in the same manner, i.e. visibly to Jerusalem.

The return trip will be from heaven to earth.

These words were spoken to a group of new Messianic Jews in Jerusalem. Could it be that the last people to see Jesus ascend to God will be the first people to see Him return? The angel had said that Jesus would return "in the same manner" (in just the same way) as He had left them. Jesus also said, when speaking to a group of Pharisees in Jerusalem, that they would not see Him again until they welcome Him with a typical Hebraic greeting of welcome: "Blessed are you who comes in the name of the Lord." This is a further indication that Jesus would return to Jews in Jerusalem.

Matthew 23:37-39

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

38 See! Your house is left to you desolate;

39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name

of the LORD!" NKJV

Jesus predicted a visible appearance. He said "You will not SEE ME again UNTIL you will say, "Blessed are you who come in the name of the Lord." In fact the appearance of the "Angel of the LORD" who is actually the Messiah, will be not only visible but literal and tangible. At the time and place of Christ's ascension and return to His Father the angels declared: *This same Jesus, Who was caught away and lifted up from among you into heaven, will return in [just] the same way in which you saw Him go into heaven.* (Acts 1:11).

Jesus did not say you will never see Me again. On the contrary He was basically saying they would see Him again when they cried out Blessed are You who come in the name of the Lord. Jesus was speaking to a group of Jewish men in the city of Jerusalem a city He had just wept over with bitter tears. He clearly intimated four vital things.

1. The house (descendants) of David would suffer a time of desolation. (The Diaspora)
2. This would last until a certain time.
3. When that time period concluded they would see Him again
4. They would greet Him with "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

THE MESSIAH IN THE MIDST OF ISRAEL

*8 On that day the LORD will defend the people of Jerusalem; the weakest among them will be as mighty as King David! And the royal descendants will be like God, **like the angel of the LORD who goes before them!***

When Israel's enemies mount a massive attack from her very borders, the Messiah as the Angel of the Lord will position Himself in the midst (centre) of Israel. In my pursuit of the implications of Zechariah 12:8 in which Zechariah says that the "Angel of the Lord" will go before Israel to lead them to victory. One of the unique features of the Israeli army that is different from every other army is that officers always lead their men. The slogan echoed by an officer is "Follow me!" I have been personally confirmed in my belief that the Angel of the Lord is truly the Messiah. I have also observed several scriptures that speak of the Lord "returning to" and being "in the midst of Israel" Does this imply that the Lord (Messiah) will literally return to Israel, lead Israel to victory and then dwell in their midst? Is this the predicted "Second Coming" to earth of Messiah? Zechariah 12:8

Zechariah predicts: The Angel of the Lord will "go before" Israelis against their enemies. This Angel of the Lord who leads Israel to victory is obviously the long promised Messiah who has returned to Israel once again. The descendants of David will (then) be like the Angel of the Lord. There are Old and New Testament references to "angels of the Lord," - "an angel of the Lord," and - "the Angel of the Lord." When the definite article "the" is used, it is specifying a unique being, distinct from all other angels. The Angel of the Lord speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and exercises the responsibilities of God. In several of these appearances, those who saw the Angel of the Lord feared for their lives because they had "seen the Lord." Therefore, it is very clear that in at least some instances, the Angel of the Lord is definitely a theophany, which is an appearance of God in physical form.

The appearances of the Angel of the Lord cease after the incarnation of Christ. Angels are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, but "the Angel of the Lord" is never mentioned in the New Testament. This confirms that appearances of the Angel of the Lord were manifestations of Jesus before His incarnation. Whatever the case, the phrase "the Angel of the Lord" identifies a

physical appearance of the Messiah.

Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament says of Zechariah 12:8

The Lord will endow the inhabitants of Jerusalem with marvellous strength with which to overcome all their foes. The population of Jerusalem is divided into two classes, the weak and the strong. The weak are designated as hannikhshâl, the stumbling one, who cannot stand firmly upon his feet (1 Samuel 2:4). These are to become like David, the bravest hero of Israel (cf. 1 Samuel 17:34., 2 Samuel 17:8). The strong ones, designated as the house, i.e., the household or family of David, are to be like Elohim, i.e., not angels, but God, the Deity, i.e., a superhuman being (cf. Psalm 8:6), yea, like the angel of Jehovah, who goes before Israel (לפנייהוה), or the revealer of the invisible God, who is essentially the equal of Jehovah (see at Zechariah 1:8). The point of comparison lies in the power and strength, not in moral resemblance to God, as Kliefoth supposes, who takes Elohim as equivalent to Jehovah, and identifies it with the angel of Jehovah, as some of the earlier commentators have done, and places the gradation of Elohim into the angel of Jehovah in the appearance of God in human form.

"The Angel of the LORD" was a divine person, and "He is to be regarded as a pre-incarnation of the Messiah." The identity of "the Angel of the LORD" with *Yahweh* is fully established in Genesis 16:13, when it is said of Hagar "Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'; for she said, 'Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?'"

Interestingly and perhaps ironically it is Hagar the mother of Ishmael whose encounter with the Angel of the LORD convincingly confirms that the Angel of the Lord is truly *Yaweh* in human form.

Genesis 16:9 *Then the angel of the LORD said, "Return to your mistress and submit to her authority." NLT*

Genesis 16:13 *Thereafter, Hagar referred to the LORD, who had spoken to her, as "the God who sees me," for she said, "I have seen the One who sees me!" NLT*

Notice in verse 9 it was the Angel of the LORD who spoke to Hagar and in verse 13 we read *Hagar referred to the LORD, (Yaweh) who had spoken to her, as "the God who sees me,"*

The Angel of the LORD is not a created being, but the divine being Himself. He is recognized as a superior being by the writers of the Old Testament.

The prophecy of Joel, which in some places refers to the Church, is primarily a prophecy concerning Israel and her End Times restoration. This fact is particularly clear in Joel 2:18-27. The evidences in all of these verses are summarised by the clear statement that I AM is located in the very centre (midst) of Israel. God affirms that His people (Israel) will clearly recognize this amazing fact by all the great things that the LORD has accomplished in Israel.

Joel 2:27 *Then you shall know that I am in the midst (Hebrew # H 7130 Qereb) of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. NKJV*

In the "Last Days" context of these verses God is going to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh

but this will not occur until after the Messiah is in the midst of Israel.

Joel 2:28-29

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. NKJV

Many commentators claim that this prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost according to Acts 2. However it was definitely not completely fulfilled then because the further signs that Joel gave (Joel 2:30-31) were not fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

Joel 2:30-32

30 "I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth — blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and terrible day of the LORD arrives.

32 And anyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. There will be people on Mount Zion in Jerusalem who escape, just as the LORD has said. These will be among the survivors whom the LORD has called. NLT

In addition to there not being blood and fire and pillars of smoke in Acts 2, there is also a specific mention of Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Notice the ultra important time frame for this spectacular outpouring. It will only occur "afterwards". After what? After God has manifestly blessed Israel in their land and the Messiah is positioned in the midst (centre) of Israel.

Many other scriptures speak of the Lord (Messiah) living in the midst of Jerusalem. His presence there will be the source of great blessings and much rejoicing. There is no indication within the context of these verses that their fulfillment awaits the Millennial age.

Zechariah 8:3 "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.' NKJV

Zechariah 2:10-11

10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.

11 "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. NKJV

At least some of the Old Testament verses that speak of God "in the midst" of His people Israel clearly refer to His presence among them in the Last days. This is true for example in Psalm 46:6 where the psalmist speaks of the rage of the nations and earthly kingdoms linking it with Psalm 2.

Psalms 46:6-7

6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. NKJV

Psalms 2:1-3

1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." NKJV

Zephaniah takes up the same refrain when he refers to the LORD Yaweh, the King of Israel being in the midst of His people having taken away her judgments. Although God has always been the King of Israel He is not presently in the midst of Israel as their King but He will be in the prophetic future.

Zephaniah 3:15

*15 The LORD has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. **The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;** You shall see disaster no more. NKJV*

Zephaniah 3:17

*17 **The LORD your God in your midst,** The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." NKJV*

Once again Zechariah is complicit with Zephaniah placing Yaweh in the midst of His people Israel at a time when many nations will be joined to the LORD.

Zechariah 2:10-12

*10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, **I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,**" says the LORD.*

*11 "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. **And I will dwell in your midst.** Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. NKJV*

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR ISRAEL?

So many Christian expositors and commentators see nothing positive for Israel in the prophetic future except in the Millennium. Prior to that, they relegate Israel to the horrific experiences of the Great tribulation. Ironically and sadly in so many places where positive promises for Israel's future occur there is no direct intimation that the promises await fulfilment in the Millennium. Personally I find great comfort for Israel in so many promises God has made which I believe will find their fulfilment in the period that ensues following the astounding victory and glorious transformation that occurs following Zechariah 12:8-11.

Revelation, the last book in the Bible details the End Times of our present era. Many Christian commentators claim that there is no mention of the Church after Revelation 4:1, which they claim is proof that the words 'come up here' indicate the rapture of the Church for which John becomes a type.

1 Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me with the sound of a mighty trumpet blast. The voice said, "Come up here,

and I will show you what must happen after these things."

However, John did NOT say 'instantly I was in heaven' - but instantly I was in the Spirit. John was evidently in the Spirit and seeing a vision of things to come.

Revelation 4:2 And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it! NLT

This was not the first time in Revelation that John had been in the Spirit. The first occasion recorded in Revelation was:

Revelation 1:10-11

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." NKJV

The theory of those who maintain that John had actually gone to heaven in Revelation 4:1, is that his entrance into heaven is a type of the Church being taken to heaven prior to the Great Tribulation. They further assert that after Revelation 4:1, there is no further mention of the Church being on earth. However, it is clear that John did not go to heaven but remained on earth where he saw several visions of heaven and also on several occasions heard voices coming FROM HEAVEN.

*Revelation 10:4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; **but I heard a voice from heaven** saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them." NKJV*

*Revelation 14:2 **And I heard a voice from heaven**, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. NKJV*

Revelation 14:13 **Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me**, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" NKJV

*Revelation 18:1 After these things **I saw another angel coming down from heaven**, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. NKJV*

*Revelation 18:4 **And I heard another voice from heaven** saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. NKJV*

From these scriptures it is obvious that John was not in heaven but still on earth. Surely this fact spoils the theory that John was caught up into heaven and is a type of the Church being caught up in the rapture. Although it is true that the word church is not mentioned in Revelation after chapter 4, there are numerous references to saints. Since members of the Church are frequently called saints what might be the difference between saints in the epistles and saints in the Tribulation?

Although there is much reference in Revelation to the horrors of the Great Tribulation which is also called the time of Jacob's trouble, there are also numerous indications of a tremendous harvest of souls entering the kingdom of God. One place where such a harvest is mentioned is in revelation chapter 7. In the earlier verses of this chapter there is a

fascinating reference to a unique company of Jews.

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL?

Revelation 7:4 *And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God. There were 144,000 who were sealed from all the tribes of Israel:* NLT

I do not believe that the number 144,000 is meant to be one of precise mathematical accuracy. This is not the exact number of Jews who are involved. It is rather a symbolic number representing the twelve tribes of Israel and a considerable number from each tribe. Twelve is also the number of divine government indicating that these emissaries will have the delegated authority of the kingdom upon them. This company may well be the remnant (Rom 9:27) of Israel as distinct from the ALL Israel that will be saved (Rom 11:26-27) Let's take a brief look at the 144,000.

1. They are sealed by God in their foreheads. The seal is visible and indicates ownership and protection. A seal often signifies something or someone that the owner has purchased and fully intends to protect.
2. They are servants of God. Rev 7:3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* KJV *How will they serve the Lord? They are a part of the harvesting company reaping not only fellow Jews but a great multitude of Gentiles too.*
3. They are bona fide believers in Yaweh and Yeshua. They are called bondservants of God. They serve the Lord and do His will.
4. They are limited in number. 144,000 represents a particular part of the Jewish community. This certainly does not include the far greater number of Jews who will become believers prior to and during the Great Tribulation.
5. They are Jews, not Gentiles. However, they are also part of the One New man that is neither Jew nor Gentile. (Ephesians 2:15)
6. They are a remnant (Part) of Israel not the whole company of Jewish redeemed. Romans 9:27 *Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved.* NKJV

Romans 11:26-27

26 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;

27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." NKJV

The remnant are the first company of Jews who recognize and accept Yeshua, the Messiah and are evidently instrumental in reaching the ALL of Israel.

A MULTITUDE FROM THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Having viewed the 144,000 from the viewpoint of earth there is no indication that John is suddenly taken to heaven. Rather he appears to shift his gaze looking in a somewhat different direction where he sees a crowd too large to visually estimate the number. I believe this is the company who have come to know the Messiah through the ministry of

the One New Man body.

Revelation 7:9-17

9 After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white and held palm branches in their hands.

10 And they were shouting with a mighty shout, "Salvation comes from our God on the throne and from the Lamb!"

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living beings. And they fell face down before the throne and worshiped God.

12 They said, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength belong to our God forever and forever. Amen!"

13 Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, "Who are these who are clothed in white? Where do they come from?"

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows." Then he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white.

15 That is why they are standing in front of the throne of God, serving him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will live among them and shelter them.

16 They will never again be hungry or thirsty, and they will be fully protected from the scorching noontime heat.

17 For the Lamb who stands in front of the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe away all their tears." NLT

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THIS COMPANY

1. This is an innumerable company that cannot be visually estimated.
2. It is made up of Gentiles believers from every nation on earth.
3. They are clothed in white garments and holding palm branches.
4. They boldly announce that salvation comes from Yaweh and also from The Lamb.
5. They have come out of the great tribulation
6. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
7. The Lord shepherds and leads them.

A FURTHER LOOK AT THE 144,000

Revelation 14:1-2

1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. NKJV

The description of this company is too similar to be a different company. Like the former 144,000 this company has God's mark on their foreheads. John says he "heard a voice from heaven" intimating that he was still on earth.

1. They sang a new (unique) song that no one else could learn. It is a song of redemption sung unto the Lamb.
2. They are virgins. This does not mean that they have never had sexual relationship or marriage . It means that they honor God and their service to Him to be more important than their normal physical rights. This relates to what Paul had to say about virgins. 1 Corinthians 7:34-35

34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin . The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world — how she may please her husband. NKJV

3. They are blameless before God. Revelation 14:5 They were faultless in God's eyes. *Revelation 14: 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. NKJV*
4. They are the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. They are largely the first fruits of the whole Jewish nation that will ultimately respond to their Messiah – Yeshua. Eventually a much larger group will be joined with them.
5. Revelation 14:6-7 *Then I saw another angel (Messenger) flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people —
7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." NKJV*

WHAT WILL BE THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME?

The glorious events depicted in Zechariah 12, i.e. Israel's amazing victory and the outpouring of the Spirit upon the nation will be the beginning of a new era in the national life of Israel. Their geographic foot print will be greatly enlarged probably as far East as the Euphrates river. God's presence in the land will be magnified before all the world. The land will be invested with great glory mainly because of the tangible presence of God in the midst but also because of many renovations and restorations that God will accomplish there. Jerusalem will be recognized as the city of the great King and the Lord will be worshipped there by representative of all nations. Zechariah 14:16

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. NKJV

The land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem will become places of outstanding beauty. All the amazing prophecies that God has made concerning them will begin to be fulfilled. The final crowning fulfilment of these will take place in the Millennium but before that time the land will begin to display many of the royal beauties of which the prophets have spoken throughout the centuries. Israel is predicted to become like the Garden of Eden and Jerusalem the city of the Great King. Jerusalem will become a centre of world attention and renown which is precisely the reason why Islamist forces are currently dedicating their

efforts to the Muslim conquest and subjugation of the city.

ISRAEL - A NATION UNDER IMMINENT THREAT

Millions of Christians around the world believe that Jesus will return to the clouds and that all Christians will rise to meet Him in the air to return with Him to heaven. What if His coming will happen in a very different manner and how will that transpire? According to Islamic intention Israel will soon be totally annihilated and subdued under Shariah law. Possibly the only way that this disaster can be averted will be through the direct divine intervention. Will this be when the Messiah will return to earth? A predicted imminent attack on Israel will attract Messiah's intervention and the subsequent revelation of His true identity. At just the right moment (Zechariah 12:8-10) the Angel of the LORD will lead Israel to an astounding victory after which Israel will recognize her deliverer. Surely this possibility deserves close scrutiny in the Bible.

The ancient city of Jerusalem is presently taking centre stage of world attention because of its apparently uncertain future. So fierce is the dispute concerning Jerusalem's destiny that many people can only visualize a violent war and ultimate destruction for the city the name of which ironically means "City of peace." But Almighty God does not concur with this possibility. Not only does He intend to supernaturally rescue the city from a violent attack, He also intends to renew Jerusalem to a glory it has never yet experienced. God intends to manifest His glory through the splendour He has planned to display there. He also fully intends to make the magnificent city the capital of the earthly kingdom He will establish.

From a purely military perspective Israel currently faces the possibility of total destruction. Extreme Islamic fanaticism plus an arsenal of missiles and weapons of mass destruction could equal a massive elimination of the tiny nation. Islamic prophecy demands the eradication of all infidels (Jews and Christians) from the land they call Palestine. Before Islam can subdue the whole world which it ultimately aims to do it must first conquer Israel. These are the words of Muhammad himself and his true followers are completely dedicated to attaining this goal (Psalm 83:4). Current voices of radical Islam are fervently calling for the complete destruction of Israel that even the very memory of its existence will be forever eliminated.

Most nations on earth are now in favour of an Islamic Palestinian State through a program engineered and supported by the United Nations Organisation under pressure from Islamic nations. Such a State would be a gigantic step towards the possible imminent annihilation of Israel. The perverted power of UNO may well create the Palestinian State in the very near future. An unthinkable victory for Islam that would eradicate Israel would render the Bible completely unreliable. The prophecies and promises of God that guarantee Israel's future safety would become null and void. Thus His character would be irrevocably flawed. And with that the whole Bible would be considered unreliable.

Meanwhile, the Church for the most part, seems completely oblivious of the universal havoc that the planned attack on Israel could produce. The Church like the rest of the world seems to be blissfully ignorant of how serious a situation the world is in. Everyone,

including the Church is acting as though nothing serious is amiss. Despite the blatant signs of unrest the Church is engaged in its business as usual mentality. It is also willingly ignorant of the essential role of Israel in the prophetic purposes of God. It is also completely unaware of what the negative impact of such an Islamic victory would have on Christianity, the Bible and the God of the Bible. Thankfully such a victory will never happen, but defeat will only be averted by a direct, supernatural intervention of God. (Zechariah 12:9).

The challenge to stand with and pray passionately for Israel has never been greater than at this present moment. The battle lines are currently drawn between Yaweh and the anti-Christ. There is no neutral ground. If we are not fervently and practically standing with Israel and the Holy One of Israel then we are standing in opposition to God Himself. This great battle which is currently taking place in the heavens will soon be enacted on the earth. The attack that is launched on Israel will have universal repercussions. No nation or individual will be exempt from the aftermath. Now is the imperative moment to take a stand on the side of God and righteousness. It must be a strong determined action involving total commitment. The prophetic future is invading the present hour. The outcome of this present hour will have eternal effects. The decision that this current situation demands is the most important matter that all Christians currently face. Nothing on our Christian agenda is more important than our attitude and actions regarding the tremendous threats that Israel currently faces. The words of scripture echo once again. Joshua 24:15

Some of you reading the title of this book may question the suitability of using the word magnificent (i.e. brilliant, splendid, superlative, stunning, impressive, amazing, fantastic, fabulous, extravagant, glorious) in the title, but events that will happen when Messiah conquers Israel's enemies and then reveals His authentic identity to Israel will be all of this and more. The word magnificent will fail completely to describe the magnitude of full splendor and awe of this magnificent event. The victory that God achieves for Israel will be truly supernatural (above and beyond the natural) but the subsequent unveiling of Messiah's true identity and its effect on all Israel will defy description. The ongoing results of both of these phenomena's and the magnificent transformation of Israel will be inexpressible.

One of the most sensational of all Bible prophecies may be fulfilled in the very near future. Certainly this will transpire within months from now rather than years and the impact of it will severely shake the whole world. I refer to the attack that will inevitably be launched upon Israel by all her nearest neighbor states. But the event that will happen immediately after the conclusion of this attack will be even more sensational because the person who wins an astounding supernatural victory for Israel will subsequently be identified as the long awaited Jewish Messiah. Of all the dramatic things that could possibly happen in the very near future, the war on Israel is the likeliest event. Since the bible accurately foretells this war the subsequent transformation of Israel as a direct result of this ominous war, is also a most certain event to occur. I am bold to make this claim firstly because the Muslim assailants will never renege on their determination to conquer Israel and claim it as an integral part of the house of Islam. My second reason for making such a claim is the transparently clear prophecies in the Bible that describe the attack, the astounding Israeli victory and the subsequent mourning over the victorious Messiah. Be willing to momentarily lay aside your preconceived ideas about the prophetic future and seriously consider the following scenario. God has made so many positive promises to defend and

deliver Israel that if He does not do so His promises will be proved to be totally unreliable.

The essential need to be vitally aware of the serious nature of this prophetic event is all the more important because the conquest of Israel will be the first step in a much larger plan that includes the attempted Islamic conquest of all nations on earth. This determined plan includes the conquest of the USA, Great Britain, the whole of Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The jihadist warriors who are behind this plan possess the fanatical zeal, the modern weaponry and the prophetic purpose to fulfill this monstrous ambition. The earliest stages of the plan are already in motion. The ambitious consortium is constantly declaring to all who will listen, their fanatical determination to enact this strategy. It is high time for the world to awake to the grim reality that lies ahead. It is particularly imperative for Israel and the Church to wake up and surrender afresh to God that His purposes might be fulfilled. This visitation and its magnificent ultimate result would happen prior to the rapture, the Tribulation or the war predicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39. In fact it would constitute the very next event on God's prophetic calendar.

The modern State of Israel is currently living under the very real and imminent possibility of total annihilation. The President of Iran, through his agents and in fulfilment of a prediction in Psalm 83:4, is threatening to "Wipe Israel off the map that even the memory of its existence will be no more." For several years now, incurring tremendous effort and expense, Iran has worked feverishly to obtain the weapons of mass destruction that could make this threat a terrible reality. Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are being obtained with the fanatical purpose of totally eradicating the Jewish State. The threat is ominously serious and in the natural very attainable. The immediate future of Israel according to Islamic intention is very dark indeed. It will require a supernatural intervention to rescue Israel from destruction, but such an intervention is exactly what the Bible predicts. At the very time that this serious threat appears to be absolutely inevitable and unavoidable, Almighty God the self proclaimed Holy One of Israel, will not only rescue Israel, He will positively transform the whole nation.

One thing that seems very certain to most observers of world events today is that an attack on Israel, launched by all her near neighbours will happen very soon. The indications of such an attack become more obvious with every passing day as destructive weapons are being moved into strategic places in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and Iran. What is not so obvious to these same people is what is going to happen in the immediate aftermath of this war. But God knows the answer. The ultimate result is certain, imminent and will fulfil predictions made some two and a half thousand years ago.

When this war is eventually launched it will produce a more dramatic result than any war in human history. Initially because it will be a war waged directly against Almighty God. It will be the powers of darkness versus Almighty God. Secondly because if it were successful, it would nullify every promise in the Bible, for if God does not save Israel from destruction His Word would be recognized as totally unreliable. So God will never allow the possibility of such a defeat. However, it will require His direct and dynamic miraculous intervention to save Israel from such a devastating possibility.

The Bible predicts that at the very moment that Israel's annihilation seems to be absolutely inevitable, deliverance will come in the form of an astonishing appearance of the "Angel of the Lord" (Zechariah 12:8). He will appear first as the commander in chief of heaven's

armies leading Israel's defence forces to a supernatural victory. Immediately after this victory, when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon Israel, He will reveal Himself as none other than the promised Jewish Messiah. The whole nation will welcome His sudden appearance with deep relief and cries of "Blessed are You who comes in the name of the Lord!" This will signal the beginning of a totally new era for Israel as the nation adjusts to the realisation that the Messianic redeemer of Israel has finally arrived. The dark clouds that threatened annihilation will prove to be filled with the former and latter rain that God has promised to send upon Israel in the Last Days (Joel 2:23). An era of desperate darkness will descend on the whole world. The only illumination available will come from the spotlight of God's Shekinah glory that will shine upon Israel.

Isaiah 60:1-3 (NLT)

- 1 "Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all the nations to see! For the glory of the LORD is shining upon you.*
- 2 Darkness as black as night will cover all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the LORD will shine over you.*
- 3 All nations will come to your light. Mighty kings will come to see your radiance.*

A devastating war in the Middle East now appears to be both imminent and unavoidable. The threats against Israel, made by all her near neighbors supported and incited by Iran, have been announced to the whole world on numerous occasions. Iran's oft stated intention is to totally eradicate the Jewish presence in Israel. Several attempts have already been made to do this, but Israel's fanatical enemies have finally gained the confidence that they can now succeed in their evil intention. For several years Iran has been feverishly preparing and acquiring the necessary armaments and supplying them to her agents who sit like vultures on Israel's borders. Most nations are finally realising and acknowledging the inevitability of such a war but few people have any idea what the ultimate result of the war will be. Only God knows the real answer to this vital question and He has given His prediction to His ancient prophets. That final result will surprise everyone, even those who claim to be experts in the subject of Bible prophecy. I invite you to read those predictions and determine in your heart how relevant they may be?

Such a war and an amazing victory is foretold in Psalm 83, Joel 3 and Zechariah 12. In Zechariah's account he also describes an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel that will surely change the essential nature of the nation. This outpouring culminates with a vivid revelation of the identity of the One who wins a supernatural victory for Israel. It is none other than the long awaited Messiah. As inevitable as this war now appears, just as certain will be this amazing climax when all Israel will gaze on the person of their redeemer who is Yeshua Ha MaShiach!

Most Christian commentators today predict only doom and gloom for Israel in the prophetic future. However I firmly believe that God has a very different agenda for Israel and it is thrilling and exciting. In fact God has made many magnificent prophetic pledges to Israel promising peace, prosperity, exaltation and great spiritual blessings in the future. Sadly the Church has taken most of these to herself leaving Israel with only predictions of gloom and judgment to be experienced during the Great Tribulation. The Church has also assigned many of the positive promises for Israel to a fulfilment in the Millennium, but I personally believe that many of these prophecies will actually be fulfilled long before the

Tribulation or the Millennium. I also believe that the Bible predicts a dynamic event to happen very soon in Israel that is filled with truly positive and sensational results. It will be a magnificent event that will transcend everything that has ever blessed Israel, the land and people. A considerable number of these predictions were made through the writings of Isaiah. However, I believe the fulfilment of these will transpire following the imminent fulfilment of

Zechariah 12: 10 *And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.*
New American Standard Bible

The Hebrew reads: they will look (*vehibbiytu*) unto Me (*elay*) whom they pierced (*et asher-daqaru*). The first verb, *vehibbiytu*, occurs some 69 times in the Hebrew Bible, and twice in this exact same form. Another occurrence in this exact form is in Exodus 33:8, translated "and gaze with intense scrutiny". Israel will not merely see the Messiah but will closely examine the clear evidence of His true identity. The second word *elay*, occurs very frequently and means "unto me". The connecting word, *et*, occurs thousands of times in Scripture. The word *asher* is also a frequently used word in biblical Hebrew meaning "which" or "whom". The final word, *daqaru*, is less common, but is by no means a rare word in Hebrew. It is used 11 times in the Hebrew Bible. The verb is a third person plural, meaning "they pierced".

This present book is written as a sequel or appendix to my book entitled THE MESSIAH COMES TO ISRAEL. It is a collation of some of the many positive predictions and prophetic promises that God has made to Israel concerning the Last Days. I sincerely believe that many of them will be fulfilled long before the Millennium in a period of time that will dawn for Israel immediately following her tremendous God given victory described in Psalm 83, Joel 3:1, 2 and Zechariah 12.

When studying End Time prophecies there is inevitably an element of "wait and see." Nobody yet knows with absolute certainty that future events will happen exactly according to their particular anticipated view of prophetic events. There are numerous perspectives and views about what will eventually transpire, all of which await actual fulfilment before they can be proven totally accurate. "**The Messiah Comes To Israel**" examines a particular possibility that few prophecy students seem to have considered. I refer to the scripture that clearly suggest that the Messiah will initially visit the nation of Israel to win for them an amazing supernatural victory before revealing His true identity to the whole nation (Zechariah 12:9, 10).

I have looked at numerous predictions concerning Israel's prophetic future that do not have within their biblical context any evidence that they await a fulfilment in the Millennium. In fact many of these exciting predictions appear much more likely to eventuate during the period that will occur in the imminent future, immediately after the war described in Psalm 83 Joel 3 and Zechariah 12. The kind of worldwide reaction to the events of Zechariah 12, when Israel is supernaturally delivered from threatened annihilation and exalted by God to remarkable prominence, provides an ideal environment for the fulfilment of these exciting predictions. I am not absolutely certain that this will be

the manner in which the End Days will arrive, but I firmly believe that the possibility certainly warrants our earnest and unbiased examination. The prophecies I have quoted do not begin to exhaust the many scriptures that relate to this exciting possibility. They are merely a brief sample of them. It may seem to be a laborious task to read through so many scriptures which I have quoted but I suggest that the reward for doing so will make it well worth the effort.

All the preachers who refrain from preaching and teaching on End Time events and particularly the unique, intrinsic and indispensable role of Israel in such events, are doing their congregations a grave disservice by withholding such truth. Every congregation that favours a replacement theology in which they believe that the Church has completely replaced Israel in God's prophetic purposes is heading for a time that will thoroughly rock their self centred composure. There are many churches and denominations that call themselves "Full Gospel" that are not even half Gospel in that they only preach about the present here and now. A true full Gospel has to include and emphasize the prophetic scriptures and the ultimate climax of the ages.

I believe that something amazing and magnificent beyond description is about to happen very soon in Israel. Although this event was predicted many years ago, the full implication of it has been largely overlooked and ignored by the majority of Bible students and teachers. The astounding impact of this major fulfilment of prophecy will utterly transform the nation and land of Israel and ultimately the whole world.

Although the predicted scenario will commence with a massive attack on Israel it will not only conclude with their gaining an amazing victory beyond human belief, it will also include a magnificent spiritual re-birth for the entire nation. The stage is already set for it with Israel's enemies sitting like vultures on her borders.

Zechariah 12:8-9 (AMP)

- ⁸ In that day will the Lord guard and defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he who is [spiritually] feeble and stumbles among them in that day [of persecution] shall become [strong and noble] like David; and the house of David [shall maintain its supremacy] like God, like the Angel of the Lord Who is before them.*
- ⁹ And it shall be in that day that I will make it My aim to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.*

The prophecy in Zechariah 12:10, involves a private appearance of the Messiah to the nation of Israel and their subsequent recognition and acceptance of Him with deep mourning and intense grief. The Messiah will appear initially in the role of Commander in Chief of heaven's armies (v 8) who has led their nation to victory against overwhelming odds. The Holy Spirit will then be poured out on the descendants of King David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Grace will spill copiously on the citizens of Israel and fervent supplications will fill the hearts and mouths of the recipients.

The book of Isaiah is like a miniature Bible with 66 chapters just as our Bible has 66 books. The first 39 chapters seem to relate to the Old Covenant, the last 27 are similar to the New Covenant. It is an interesting exercise to read Isaiah with that thought in mind. The prophetic truths in Isaiah are largely ignored by most preachers today except for occasional verses that are usually wrenched from their contexts and applied to the Church

or individual believers rather than to the nation and people of Israel.

The many prophecies of Isaiah are not presented in a strictly chronological order stringently adhering to the developing course of human history. His writings are interspersed with predictions and prophecies concerning numerous episodes in the long saga of Israel's history. For example very early in the prophecy of Isaiah, we find the details of the international kingdom of God on earth in the Last Days (Isaiah 2:1-5). This reference is made long before the prediction of Messiah's actual birth which is recorded in Isaiah (7:14 Isaiah 9:6, 7).

The manner in which the prophecies are given therefore requires diligent prayerful study, guided by the Holy Spirit who originally gave the prophecy, in order for us to discern to which specific era of history a particular prediction relates. This style of presentation is not used in order to bewilder us but rather to require of us a diligent prayerful and careful searching of the prophetic words. The prospect of a devastating war currently hangs over Israel, but God has an amazing agenda that will culminate in a magnificent deliverance, revelation and restoration.

Let me to preface my comments on the words of Isaiah with a prediction made by Asaph the musician, seer and prophet in Psalm 83. He predicts an End Time war in the Middle East that is intended to bring a full end to Israel as a nation. But God will answer Asaph's prayer, delivering Israel and positively transforming the whole nation.

Psalm 83:1-8

- 1 God, don't sit idly by, silent and inactive!*
- 2 Don't you hear the tumult of your enemies? Don't you see what your arrogant enemies are doing?*
- 3 They devise crafty schemes against your people, laying plans against your precious ones.*
- 4 "Come," they say, "let us wipe out Israel as a nation. We will destroy the very memory of its existence."*
- 5 This was their unanimous decision. They signed a treaty as allies against you —*
- 6 these Edomites and Ishmaelites, Moabites and Hagrites,*
- 7 Gebalites, Ammonites, and Amalekites, and people from Philistia and Tyre.*
- 8 Assyria has joined them, too, and is allied with the descendants of Lot. NLT*

In these verses Asaph, a prophet of the Lord, predicted a massive attack to be made on Israel by all her nearest neighbors in the Last Days (Psalm 83:4). The Psalm reveals that the plans would be made in secret; they are to be hidden from Israel and the rest of the non Muslim world (V3). This precise union of enemies has never existed before the formation of the Arabic Alliance. After many centuries of bitter disunity finally these nations have formed a consortium. The major issue that has finally brought them together in unity and cooperation is their vicious common desire to completely annihilate the Jewish presence in the Middle East. It is the one thing that they have ever unitedly agreed on. The common fanatical urge to destroy Israel is something that these nations will never relinquish. The main reason they share is brutal desire to "liberate" the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and to cleanse the Dome Of The Rock from "infidel control".

It is an attack against Jehovah as well as against the nation of Israel. It is not only anti-

Semitic, it is also anti-Yahweh. The clear, absolute intention is to completely “wipe Israel off the map so that even the memory of it will cease to exist” (Psalm 83:4). This would thus render all of God’s promises to Israel null and void.

I am sure that you are aware that President Amadinejad of Iran has spoken these words openly and loudly to whoever will listen on many occasions. I am not sure whether he has read these words in the Bible or is even aware that these words are recorded in the Bible, but he is basically saying the same thing almost precisely that Asaph predicted. These armies form a coalition and an alliance with a secret project the intention of which is the complete destruction and annihilation of Israel. Initially, according to verse 1, it will appear that God is totally disinterested, silent and idle. But Isaiah provides the true thoughts and attitudes of God.

GOD’S RESPONSE TO THE PSALM 83 PETITION

We are not looking at prophecies that may be fulfilled hundreds of years or even several years from now. We are looking at prophecies that will probably be fulfilled in the next short while, introducing a new era in the Last Days of which we must be vitally aware. We must be awake and alert, and we must pray for the peace of Jerusalem, intentionally, intensely and diligently.

In the remaining verses of the Psalm, Asaph prophetically predicts what God’s response will be to the prayer and the conclusion of the war.

Psalms 83:9-18

- ⁹ Do to them as you did to the Midianites or as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River.*
- ¹⁰ They were destroyed at Endor, and their decaying corpses fertilized the soil.*
- ¹¹ Let their mighty nobles die as Oreb and Zeeb did. Let all their princes die like Zebah and Zalmunna,*
- ¹² for they said, "Let us seize for our own use these pasturelands of God!"*
- ¹³ O my God, blow them away like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind!*
- ¹⁴ As a fire roars through a forest and as a flame sets mountains ablaze,*
- ¹⁵ chase them with your fierce storms; terrify them with your tempests.*
- ¹⁶ Utterly disgrace them until they submit to your name, O LORD.*
- ¹⁷ Let them be ashamed and terrified forever. Make them failures in everything they do,*
- ¹⁸ until they learn that you alone are called the LORD, that you alone are the Most High, supreme over all the earth. NLT*

The response to the prayer of Asaph is clearly outlined in the last few verses of the psalm. It is quite obvious from the tenor of the psalm that God will chase the enemies from Israel as a blazing fire would cause people to flee before it. He will judge and punish the enemy bringing shame and terror on them until they submit to the name of Yahweh. This will produce a complete reversal to their previous worship of Allah.

The enemies mentioned by Asaph are not only enemies of Israel, they are vehement enemies of Jehovah. When addressing god, Asaph says “your enemies.” These enemies are not atheists as the communist nations are. They are religious and their agenda is a religious one. Their attack is upon the God of the bible who is, according

to his own declaration, "the Holy One of Israel." Although Islam has a place in their theology for Isa (Jesus) they are at odds with almost everything that the bible teaches about Jesus. They fervently deny His divinity, His death and resurrection and the fact that His blood has atoned for the sins of mankind. They demean and belittle the role of Christ in the plan of salvation demoting him to a mere prophet like Moses. In fact it would not be an exaggeration to say that their faith is actually anti-Christ in as much as they are aggressively antagonistic to the whole biblical agenda of Christ and the kingdom of God.

Asaph's prayer was that Israel's current enemies will be just as soundly defeated as were the Midianites and the Canaanites, when their armies were scattered and their leaders executed. When this prayer is answered, Israel will become much larger geographically, with the contention over the ownership of Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights brought to an end. Israel will become stronger, not weaker, its military reputation will be restored and enhanced. The divided land will be divided no more, and Jerusalem will remain a unified city. The controversial security fence will come down, since the borders on all three sides will be safe and the threat of terrorist attacks eliminated. Sixty years of war will have temporarily ended. It will be the perfect opportunity for the enemy to bring about a false sense of security and turn Israel into a peaceful and unsuspecting people living in a land of un-walled villages as predicted in Ezekiel 38:11.

In prayerfully seeking the Lord about what His response might be to the situation described in Psalm 83, my attention was immediately drawn to Isaiah 8:11-15. I would like to suggest to you what God's response is to the kind of statement made by Israel's enemies. I further believe that this is what God would say today to every Jew and every Christian.

Isaiah 8:11-15

- 11 The LORD has said to me in the strongest terms: "Do not think like everyone else does.*
- 12 Do not be afraid that some plan conceived behind closed doors will be the end of you.*
- 13 Do not fear anything except the LORD Almighty. He alone is the Holy One. If you fear him, you need fear nothing else.*
- 14 He will keep you safe. But to Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap that entangles them.*
- 15 Many of them will stumble and fall, never to rise again. Many will be captured."*

In Isaiah 8:11-15, God predicts that He will speak into the situation in a dynamic and powerful manner. In this declaration, God shows that He is far from disinterested in Israel's safety, security and prophetic future. In fact He is totally, passionately and eternally interested. When this predicted time arrives, He will speak into the situation in the most powerful and convincing manner. God's words precipitate His actions so powerfully that the whole world will witness God's displayed intention and thoroughly grasp His clear purpose. In verse 11, He says "Do not think like everyone else thinks." He is telling us not to have the mindset of the world but to have a mind that is renewed by the Holy Spirit and in accord with what the Bible declares, that we might prove (understand)

what is the perfect will of God (Romans 11:25-27, 12:1,2).

The apostle Paul addresses this issue;

Romans 12:1-2

- ¹ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*
- ² *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
NKJV

Paul uses the word “therefore” which immediately directs our attention back to what he has just said. This includes all the preceding chapters of Romans, but particularly the preceding chapter. i.e. Romans 11

Romans 11:25-27 NLT

- ²⁵ *I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ.*
- ²⁶ *And so all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this? "A Deliverer will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel from all ungodliness.*
- ²⁷ *And then I will keep my covenant with them and take away their sins."*

When our minds are truly renewed by the Holy Spirit one of the things that will happen is that we will begin to understand the proper place of Israel in the unfolding End Time purposes of God. Many people around the world and many political and religious organisations are speaking out loudly against Israel at the present time. For example, the so-called United Nations Organisation has consistently behaved in a completely treacherous manner towards Israel. They have betrayed Israel's position over and over again.

The U.S.A. having been a long time faithful friend to Israel, has recently under pressure from President Obama's administration, now turned against Israel relentlessly pushing her towards an agreement to divide Jerusalem in favour of Palestinian pressure. Such a move would prove to be catastrophic for Israel and also for the USA. Who would ever have believed that the USA, a long time and highly valued friend and ally of Israel, would ever become responsible for training and equipping her enemies as a news item recently revealed?

IDF PREPARES FOR POTENTIAL ATTACK FROM US-TRAINED PA MILITARY.

Avi Yellin - Arutz-7, May 24th, 2010 (Israelnationalnews.com)

During a military exercise with the IDF's elite Kfir Brigade last week at the Tze'elim base in Israel's south, GOC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Avi Mizrahi warned soldiers of potential challenges they may face in the near future. The Kfir brigade, created in December 2005 to deal with unrest in Israel's Judea and Samaria regions, trained extensively in urban warfare and simulated a scenario in which IDF soldiers were pitted against the Fatah-led

Palestinian Authority's new American-trained military. Mizrahi told soldiers that the PA security forces, trained in Jordan by United States Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton, is a formidable potential enemy and that the IDF needs to know how to fight them if the situation should arise. "This is a trained, equipped, American-educated force," Mizrahi said. "This means that at the beginning of a battle, we will pay a higher price. A force like that can shut down an urban area with four snipers. It is a proper infantry force facing us and we need to take that into account. They have attack capabilities and we do not expect them to give up easily."

Keith Dayton himself has expressed belief that his PA army would likely attack the Jewish state in the event that Israel does not give in to the demands of the Middle East Quartet, comprising America, Russia, the United Nations and European Union. At a May 2009 lecture in Washington, Dayton indicated that if Israel does not surrender Judea and Samaria to the PA within two years, the Fatah forces he and his fellow American officers are currently training, could easily turn their guns on the Israelis. "With big expectations, come big risks," Dayton said. "There is perhaps a two-year shelf life on being told that you're creating a state, when you're not." Following these remarks, United States Defense Secretary Robert Gates extended Dayton's tour of duty for an additional two years and gave him the added responsibility of serving as deputy to President Barack Obama's Middle East Envoy George Mitchell. The United States has already poured over \$300 million into the new PA army and the acknowledged prospect of that army attacking the State of Israel has not deterred Washington from continuing to arm, train and finance it. *Tags: Palestinian Terror State Security and Defense. This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 26th, 2010 at 12:00 am and is filed under Global Radical Islam . You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed.*

Yediot Aharonot reported that at a recent lecture in Washington, US Lt.-Gen. Keith Dayton, who is responsible for training Palestinian military forces in Jordan, indicated that ***if Israel does not surrender Judea and Samaria within two years, the Palestinian forces he and his fellow American officers are now training at a cost of more than \$300 million could begin killing Israelis.***

Assuming the veracity of Yediot's report, even more unsettling than Dayton's certainty that within a short period of time these US-trained forces could commence murdering Israelis, is his seeming equanimity in the face of the known consequences of his actions. The prospect of US-trained Palestinian military forces slaughtering Jews does not cause Dayton to have a second thought about the wisdom of the US's commitment to building and training a Palestinian army. (*Technorati Tag Keith Dayton and Palestinians*).

The European Union is also manifestly anti Israel and pro Palestinian. International media continuously distorts news from the Middle East in favour of Palestinian interests (V11)

A RECENT STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

"Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Without this, there will be little chance of solving other problems in the Middle East. The EU's objective is a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbors. The EU wants to see progress, not just process. The EU considers that peace in the Middle East requires a comprehensive, regional solution. In this regard the EU supports peace talks between Israel and Syria, also between Israel and Lebanon.

The EU has praised the Arab Peace Initiative, as a major step forward for the Middle East Peace Process, since it offers peaceful and normalized relations between all 22 members of the Arab League and Israel”.

Notice how the final paragraph is plainly biased in favour of the “Arab Peace Initiative” which is really a plan to totally eradicate Israel.

WHAT THE NATIONS ARE THINKING AND SAYING ABOUT ISRAEL

Most nations today are saying that Israel is the main obstacle to world peace. Under the pretence of seeking for world peace the nations of the world are becoming more and more anti Semetic. They firmly demand that Israel and Jerusalem MUST be divided. They further demand that the whole land must be developed separately between the Jews and the Palestinians. Their next demand will be that a Palestinian (Muslim) State must be created on Israeli territory and that East Jerusalem must be the capital of Palestinian State. The final ultimate proposition will be absolute Islamic control over the whole area. By taking such a stance the nations are ensuring the fulfilment of Joel 3:1,2).

WHAT IS THE MUSLIM WORLD THINKING AND SAYING?

Many Muslim nations are claiming that the land where Israel currently resides really belongs to Islam. They claim that any territory that has ever at any time been under Muslim rule must be restored to Islamic rule. They are also pronouncing that Islam will soon conquer the Jewish State as a prelude to subduing and conquering the whole world. Many radical Muslims believe that this era is the prophetic time for the Islamic conquest of the world. Many Muslim nations are demanding that a new Jewish State should be established outside the Middle East. They are seriously suggesting that such a site should be founded somewhere in Europe.

IRANIAN FIGHTER TURNED US SPY: TEHRAN WILL ATTACK ISRAEL

Dudi Cohen - YNet News, July 10th, 2010

A former fighter in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) turned US spy offered a rare glance into one of the most complex countries in the Middle East.

During a conference held at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy on Friday, Reza Kahlili (pseudonym) estimated that Iran will eventually attack Israel, Europe and the Persian Gulf states. He called for a preemptive strike on the regime in Tehran, but not on the Iranian people or the country's infrastructure.

Kahlili accused the Obama Administration of being naïve. According to him, the American overtures are viewed by the Iranian regime as a sign of weakness, while the Iranian people consider the efforts to engage the regime an act of betrayal against their struggle for freedom.

“This is a messianic regime. There should be no doubt – they are going to commit the most horrendous suicide bombing in human history. They will attack Israel, European capitals, and (the) Persian Gulf region at the same time,” said Kahlili in one of his first public appearances to promote his new book “A Time To Betray: The Astonishing Double Life of a CIA Agent inside the Revolutionary Guards of Iran”.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH THINKING AND SAYING?

What are those who claim some form of allegiance to Christ saying? Unfortunately contrary to what the Bible teaches many of them are saying that God has dispensed with Israel's prophetic role, replacing it with the Church. These people insist that Palestinian's claims to the land must be respected. (It is estimated by some that 90% of historic churches in the USA support Palestine's cause). These so-called Bible believers are saying that the Church must be politically correct rather than Biblically truthful. They claim that the Bible is obsolete and unrealistic in its claims. They are also saying that Israel is an oppressive, racist nation practising a form of apartheid. They loudly demand that Israel must give away her God given inheritance. The church's attitude generally with regard to Palestinian claims is manifestly contrary to the Word of God, believing that God has replaced Israel with the church in His eternal purposes. God will ultimately judge every nation (and church) that favours the division of Israel.

Here is a clear example of the unbiblical attitude that is being taken by many mainline churches in the USA. (PCUSA) June 22nd 2010

The Presbyterian Church USA is asking its members to approve a statement next month calling for Israel to withdraw from the "illegal occupation" of the West Bank and Gaza...and for the United States to halt all military and economic assistance to Israel. This move is not surprising given the past track record of the PCUSA, but it represents a startling willingness on the part of American Christians to ignore the clear teaching of Scripture regarding God's prophetic plan for Israel and the Holy Land. The land in question is part of the land that God promised to Abraham for Isaac and his children forever. The land is not an occupied territory in God's eyes, it is Israel.

"If there were no occupation, there would be no Palestinian resistance," says the report. The Israeli occupation is "the major obstacle to regional stability" and is "an evil that must be resisted and removed." The authors show they understand "resistance" is a euphemism for terrorism, but say it is the Israelis' own fault for inflicting so much suffering on the Palestinians.

The 172-page PCUSA report says the "primary" cause of the Middle East conflict is "the ongoing Israeli occupation...and American complicity in this unjust enterprise." This blinding level of contempt for Israel leads to people who claim to be Christians justifying terrorist attacks against innocent men, women and children. The report ignores the repeated attacks against Israel by both organized armies and terrorist groups. It seeks to delegitimize Jewish claims to the land.

It says: "The phrase 'the right of Israel to exist' is a source of pain" for authors of the report, "who are in solidarity with Palestinians who feel that the State of Israel has denied them their inalienable human rights."

WHAT IS GOD THINKING AND SAYING?

In Joel 3:1-2, the prophet clearly outlines what God will do to those nations who demand the division of Israel and Jerusalem. The context of this chapter is clearly End Times and Last Days.

Joel 3:1 *The LORD says, "At that time I will restore the prosperity of Judah and Jerusalem.*

This process has been taking place since 1948 when Israel was officially recognized as a bone fide nation. Since that time the State of Israel has been growing and prospering in a remarkable manner. God now declares that at such a time He will bring all the nations to judgment.

Joel 3:2 *I will gather all the nations and bring them to the Valley of Judgment. There I will judge them for all they have done to my people. They have scattered the Israelites in foreign countries and divided Israel, my land.*

The nations involved in this incident have been making secret plans, away from the eyes of the Western world for many years now. They have constantly tried to keep their plans secret from the non Muslim world but God says,

Isaiah 8:12 *Do not be afraid that some plan conceived behind closed doors will be the end of you.*

The desire to take over the land of Israel has been going on for centuries now. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire the land came under British control until 1948 when the war of independence was won for Israel. God is saying that in the Last Days, when Israel is being re-established again and her prosperity is being restored, God will gather together all the nations that have mistreated Israel and bring them before His Court of justice and judgment. The premise upon which God will judge them will firstly be the manner in which the nations have mistreated His people down through the centuries. These nations have scattered God's people to foreign countries throughout the whole earth and have despised and persecuted them even to the point of mass destruction. Secondly, they have sought to divide the land of Israel which God calls "His Land". This plan and program is certainly engaging the thoughts of God's enemies today. There is today a renewed determined purpose among almost all the nations on earth except perhaps Israel, to divide the land that God has promised to Israel.

Isaiah 8:13 *Do not fear anything except the LORD Almighty. He alone is the Holy One. If you fear him, you need fear nothing else.*

God's word to Israel is "Don't fear anyone or anything EXCEPT the LORD of heaven's armies, the Holy One of Israel" (V13). We Christians must earnestly and fervently pray that the eyes of all Israel will be turned upon the LORD their God. We must pray as those in a desperate situation. Pray for Israel as our elder brother. Pray as though the threatened attack on Israel is being made upon us instead of them.

Solomon also said in **Proverbs 9:10-12**

¹⁰ *Fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in understanding.*

¹¹ *Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life.*

¹² *If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit. If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer. NLT*

Isaiah 8:14 *He will keep you safe. But to Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of*

Jerusalem he will be a trap that entangles them.

God will definitely preserve and keep safe His ancient chosen people. From the very beginning of their history He has always had an ultimate prophetic plan for the people of Israel in the land that He has graciously ceded to them. He has never withdrawn or altered that plan and fully intends to fulfil every detail of it.

God will make Jerusalem an immovable rock that will rupture all who try to move it (Isaiah 8:14). This statement coincides with

Zechariah 12:3 (AMP) *And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all who lift it or burden themselves with it shall be sorely wounded. And all the nations of the earth shall come and gather together against it.*

The enemies of Israel will stumble and fall, never to rise to wholeness again (V15). These will be their final days as a nation. The self confident enemies of God and Israel will stumble right into the ambush that God will prepare for them. His intention is to finally silence and nullify them. Many of them will be captured (V15). Apparently a large number of troops may survive the actual battle and be taken prisoner by Israel.

AT THE PRECISELY APPROPRIATE MOMENT

Isaiah 49:8 *This is what the LORD says: "At just the right time, I will respond to you. On the day of salvation, I will help you. I will give you as a token and pledge to Israel. This will prove that I will re-establish the land of Israel and reassign it to its own people again.*

God has a strategically appropriate time in His mind to intervene on behalf of Israel (V 8). The creator of the universe is an excellent time keeper. He is a God of precision and exact meticulous timing. The whole astrophysical universe confirms this fact. He will never be late. He will always be precisely on time. It will be a magnificent day of salvation. (V8). Israel's salvation will be infinitely greater than the salvation of any individual, family, or nation. It will embody every positive aspect of God's redemptive ability guaranteeing safety, security, peace and prosperity. These blessings will be experienced by the whole nation.

Isaiah 49:9 *Through you I am saying to the prisoners of darkness, 'Come out! I am giving you your freedom!' They will be my sheep, grazing in green pastures and on hills that were previously bare.*

Eretz Israel would be re assigned to Israel's occupancy and rule (V 8). After some 2,000 years God has miraculously made a way for the people of Israel to return to their ancient land from every part of the earth.

Isaiah 49:10 *They will neither hunger nor thirst. The searing sun and scorching desert winds will not reach them anymore. For the LORD in his mercy will lead them beside cool waters.*

Favourable climatic changes will prevail (V10). A land that has been largely infertile for most of Israel's exile has begun to flourish again since the arrival of the many Jewish migrants who have returned to their land. Through their brilliant agricultural and scientific strategies they have managed to change the climate in their favour and become one of the

most fruitful nations on earth. The God who controls all the global elements will do so in favour of His ancient covenant people and land.

There will be no more poverty or need for food or drink (V10). At the present time there is considerable unemployment and financial hardship in Israel largely because of economic sanctions that have been unfairly put upon them. Also because of the huge influx of migrants that Israel has absorbed. This financial hardship about to change in a remarkable fashion.

Isaiah 8:11 *And I will make my mountains into level paths for them. NLT*

In the Bible mountains often symbolise nations. Israel will enjoy a new greatly improved situation in international relationships (V10). Although presently ostracised by many nations, Israel will enjoy a new era of successful international links and associations.

GOD'S STRATEGY FOR FACING GREAT ODDS – Deuteronomy 20:1-4

Jehovah indicated the strategy that His people should adopt in face of overwhelming enemy attacks.

Deuteronomy 20:1

¹"When you go out to fight your enemies and you face horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid. The LORD your God, who brought you safely out of Egypt, is with you!"

When confronted by enemy armies much larger than Israel's army and much better equipped, Israel is not to retreat but to advance in faith. "Go out to battle against them" is God's explicit instruction. Take the initiative! Go forward with faith in the ability of the God of the universe for whom nothing is impossible is His word of instruction.

Deuteronomy 20:2, 3

² Before you go into battle, the priest will come forward to speak with the troops.

³ He will say, 'Listen to me, all you men of Israel! Do not be afraid as you go out to fight today! Do not lose heart or panic.'

On the verge of the battle, the priests (spiritual leaders) are to speak to the people. God's exhortation will be "don't be afraid, tremble, or be terrified, for Jehovah your God goes with you to fight against your enemies." The military leaders (Alluphim = Generals) of Israel will transfer their confidence from the Israel Defense Force to the LORD of heaven's armies. Do not be afraid of your enemies, for Jehovah, the very same God who delivered you from an impossible situation in Egypt, is with you with the same authority and power as He exercised then. History is about to be repeated. Just as God released His people from their bondage in Egypt with a "Strong and mighty arm" He will soon release them again from the bondage that the world has imposed upon her.

Deuteronomy 20:4 *For the LORD your God is going with you! He will fight for you against your enemies, and he will give you victory!' NLT*

The sole determined intention of Jehovah is to give victory to Israel and to save them from their

enemies. If Israel obeys His exhortations, He implicitly guarantees them victory and safety! God speaks about the Assyrians in Psalm 83 and ancient Assyria included Persia or Elam which is modern Iran. The Assyrians were consistent ancient enemies from the beginning of Israel's history. The many centuries that have passed have not decreased the intensity of hatred that is held against Israel. On the contrary that hatred has constantly fuelled the determination to conquer and subjugate modern Israel. The story of this ancient hatred runs right through the bible from Genesis to Revelation. Many fierce battles have been fought between these ancient enemies. Now, in the 21st century that battles are about to reach their conclusion. Fanatical Islamic forces armed to the proverbial teeth are ready to finally pounce on tiny Israel and bring a total end to what they see as the evil Zionist nation.

However, Almighty God has a very different agenda. He has foreseen this climatic moment and prepared His conclusion. Israel's enemies will descend upon her like a fiery plague but God is prepared for their onslaught. He will powerfully repel the attempted conquest and in the process will reveal His supreme authority as the Holy One of Israel and the creator of the universe. The ferocious battle will end in abject defeat and utter humiliation for the enemies of Israel. The whole world will witness the astonishing victory and the fear of the Lord will come on every nation.

All of these things are about to happen in the very near future and every God fearing person and nation needs to hastily prepare for the apocalyptic events that will fill the whole earth. Lovers of God need to earnestly search the scriptures afresh to discover what God has predicted and to align our hearts and lives to His purposes in every respect.

ISRAEL'S IMPENDING TRANSFORMATION (A brief commentary on Zechariah 12)

In a world of tense uncertainty the most definite thing that will certainly happen in the very near future is a devastating attack on Israel launched by all her Muslim neighbors. (Psalm 83, Joel 3:2, Zechariah 12). This attack is predicted in the Bible and in Islamic prophecy. Only the Bible predicts its true amazing result.

In a direct response to this attack, several things are also certain to happen.

1. God will personally intervene to give Israel a supernatural victory.
2. God will then pour out His Holy Spirit on Israel and the Jews will recognize the identity of their Messiah (Zechariah 12:9, 10).
3. The nation will be dramatically transformed through its new perception of the Messiah.
4. A period of peace and prosperity will ensue for Israel.
5. Many magnificent promises for Israel's well being will be fulfilled.

Israel is currently living under a very serious threat of total annihilation. The warning has been announced numerous times by Iran and has the full support of Israel's closest neighbors. It is a threat that definitely should not be ignored or underestimated. A senior member of the Palestinian Authority parliament broadcasted a very ominous message regarding Arab sentiments concerning Israel.

THE PALESTINIAN PARLIAMENT'S ULTIMATE AIM

19th May 2011. Yunis al Astal, a member of the Palestinian Authority parliament, recently spelled out his organization's vision for the **genocidal annihilation of the Jewish people** in a television interview. The interview was broadcast on Hamas AL AQSA TV and monitored by incitement watchdog group MEMRI.

Al Astal described the ingathering of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel in terms of a divine plan that would give the Arabs "the honor" of annihilating "the evil of this gang." **In a few years' time, he predicted, the Zionists will understand that they were brought here for the purpose of being slaughtered in "a great massacre."** Using Hitler-like language, he said that the Jews are more dangerous than all of the world's lethal birds of prey, dangerous reptiles and lethal bacteria combined. israelmatzav.blogspot.com/.../abumazens-partners-discuss-their-plans.html

AN IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY

In the scenario under consideration in Zechariah 12 the moral integrity of the God of the

Bible is on trial. He has made so many solemn prophecies concerning Israel's future safety, their return to the land He promised them and their ultimate spiritual restoration. If He failed to keep these promises His reliability and trustworthiness would be thrown into in serious doubt. If God failed to honour His promises to Israel, what guarantee would Christians have that He would ultimately keep the promises He has made to us? The Bible would be proved to be unreliable and God's faithfulness would be thoroughly suspect. Such a prospect is utterly impossible.

In the event that the major attack could succeed in its ultimate aim, the religious/political power of Islam would plan to eventually take over the whole world. Allah would be worshipped (under Islamic duress) by the peoples of every nation on earth. Strict Islamic law would constitute the statute in every nation on earth. The ferocity and power of the attack that will be launched against Israel is made clear by the fact that it will take the direct supernatural intervention of Almighty God to successfully defend Israel. During the years since 1948 when Israel was first established, several serious attacks have been launched against her by her neighbors. Each of these attacks were made with the aim of conquering and subjugating the Jewish State. On every occasion there has been evidence of divine intervention on Israel's behalf but never yet have these interventions been as obvious as the devastating result described in Psalm 83 and Zechariah 12. The fact that in this future war God deems it necessary to personally take direct action underlines the ultra serious nature of this predicted war.

THE THREAT IS INCREASING

With every passing day the noose is tightening around Israel's neck. Her enemies are sitting impatiently on her borders waiting for the psychological moment when they are convinced that the attack they launch will achieve its objective which is the total conquest and overthrow of the Jewish State. This is their unrelenting aim from which they will never relinquish their long determined purpose. The world watches on but none of the nations really understand the seriousness of the situation. When this long predicted event transpires every nation on earth will be powerfully shaken. The world will never be the same again. Instead of suffering a devastating defeat, Israel will be granted an amazing, supernatural victory closely followed by a further astounding event which will culminate in the recognition of the one who delivered the victory who is the long awaited Messiah. One can understand the ignorance of the nations concerning these amazing events. They have completely ignored the Bible prophecies that predicted this dramatic series of events. What is difficult to understand is the obvious ignorance of the Church. The prophecy of Zechariah was made roughly 2,500 years ago. However, Daniel did predict that the mysteries of the End Times would be sealed until those days arrived. Now we are actually living in those very days. The prophetic announcement of Zechariah is now happening before our very eyes. The armies on Israel's borders are obviously determined to launch a savage attack against Israel that is intended to conquer and vanquish their bitterly hated enemy. Once they have launched this fierce attack, God's amazing response to it will shock the whole world. God will directly intervene on Israel's behalf to achieve a supernatural victory that will astound every nation. However His next action will be even more surprising and will lead to the startling spiritual transformation of both Israel and the Church. It is surely high time to seriously examine the prophecy of Zechariah and to prepare ourselves for the fulfillment of the next event on God's prophetic agenda.

This chapter will present an assertion that the prophecy in Zechariah 12 is an alarming warning of an event that will happen in the very near future. It could happen within months, not years from now. When it does happen it will capture the attention of every nation on earth so powerful and wide spread will be the repercussions. Immediately following the predicted war on Israel launched by all of Israel's closest neighbors and the inevitable victory procured for Israel, will come the revelation of the Messiah to His kinsmen.

It is absolutely essential that everyone becomes closely acquainted with this predicted event. Firstly because of its wide spread impact upon all nations and the ensuing results. Secondly because so many signs all around us today indicate that it will all happen in the very near future. Certainly every Bible believer should give the strictest attention to this prophecy because its greatest impact will be upon the Church of Yeshua the Jewish Messiah who is the Savior for all mankind. I therefore, earnestly encourage every believer to pay urgent and close attention to this particular chapter in the Bible. Read and study it with an open mind. It suggests a different description of End Time events to that which has been presented as the traditional view of Messiah's coming. This prophecy is very clear and must be given the closest possible attention.

I firmly believe that Zechariah 12 is currently the most important chapter in the Bible. I say this because I believe it contains a vivid and accurate description of an amazing event in Bible prophecy that will soon have its fulfillment in our day in the very near future. I stress that this chapter relates to Israel's imminent future and not to what transpires following this huge transformational episode. For this reason it is imperative and urgent that everyone should read, study and seriously consider its plain implications. This will be a world shaking event that will powerfully affect every nation on earth. It will have a special application to the Church of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The reason why Zechariah 12 is currently the most important chapter in the Bible is because it predicts the prophetic events that will happen in our immediate future. There are many other prophecies that will be fulfilled after the conclusion of Zechariah 12 including the Gog and Magog war, the Great Tribulation and the war of Armageddon, but none of these will happen until after the war predicted by Zechariah. Once the events described by Zechariah have happened, our understanding and perception of the End Times will change dramatically. We will then have a very different comprehension of what is going to transpire according to Bible predictions.

The main reason why most Christians have virtually ignored Zechariah 12 and its clear implications is because the Church has demoted Israel in terms of prophetic importance. The popular Christian interpretation of the future has regarded Israel as inconsequential to purposes of God in the End Times scenario. The Church is so self centered that it willfully ignores the great number of prophecies that speak so positively about Israel's role in God's End Times purposes.

THE MAJOR THEME OF ZECHARIAH IS CONTAINED IN ZECHARIAH 1:3 (AMP)

³ Therefore say to them [the Jews of this day], Thus says the Lord of hosts: Return to Me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you; it is the utterance of the Lord of hosts.

Chapter 12 is particularly articulate to convey the crux of this intention. **The Lord of hosts** is a phrase frequently used in Isaiah, Haggai, Hosea and Zechariah, implying God's boundless resources and universal power, so as to inspire the Jews with utter confidence. From beginning to end (Zech 1:1, - Zech 14:21) the whole message is concerning Israel and its prophetic future.

A HEAVY WORD OF PROPHECY

Zechariah 12:1-3 (AMP)

¹ THE BURDEN or oracle (the thing to be lifted up) of the word of the Lord concerning Israel: Thus says the Lord, Who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him:

² Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup or bowl of reeling to all the peoples round about, and in the siege against Jerusalem will there also be a siege against and upon Judah.

³ And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all who lift it or burden themselves with it shall be sorely wounded. And all the nations of the earth shall come and gather together against it.

THE MAJOR THEME OF ZECHARIAH 12

Why is Zechariah 12 currently the most important chapter in the whole Bible? Of all the major issues that immediately face our world and its future security, the one most likely to happen next is a massive attack on Israel by all Israel's nearby neighbors backed by Iran. The clear indications of such an attack have been proclaimed and demonstrated by feverish activities on the part of Iran together with Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon. The attack, although made directly on Israel, will have devastating worldwide repercussions powerfully affecting every nation on earth. In many ways our world will be changed forever. If this proposed attack were to succeed and the State of Israel was annihilated, the whole plan of redemption as revealed in the Bible would be derailed. Jehovah's plan to rule the world from David's throne in Jerusalem would immediately be made defunct. How strange that so few people seem to be vitally aware of this impending drama and the apparent proximity of it.

In the Church in the Western world very few people and churches seem aware of prophetic developments that are happening around us. Little reference is made to the signs of the times and the prophetic future. Most Christians seem to be basically ignorant when and how the predicted future will actually come to pass. Among those Christians who do have an interest in these matters most believe that the Rapture (Catching away) of the Church to heaven is the next event on the prophetic calendar. The popular view of this is that the Church will be spirited away to the marriage supper of the lamb while Israel and the Jews will be left to suffer unimaginable experiences during the Great Tribulation. This is a very popular belief among Christians who are looking forward to escaping all the tribulation that will come upon the earth. Such a view is a self centred perspective that promotes a magnificent triumph of the Church and an in magnificent future for Israel. It completely and willfully ignores all the positive prophecies in the Bible that predict and illustrious role for Israel in the End Times. This view relegates Israel to a very secondary position and role in the earth Kingdom of God. Such a position is definitely described in the Bible in fact the opposite view is proposed.

ISRAEL WILL BE THE CENTRE PIECE OF GOD'S PLAN

The Biblical view of End Times and the emergence of the Kingdom rule of God over the nations gives Israel a central role in Kingdom affairs. The proposed capital of the Kingdom will be solidly based in Jerusalem and all of the world's future affairs are heading in that direction. The main reason why this plan is being vociferously rejected by the nations is because of the satanic program that is endeavoring to destroy and undermine the very place on earth where God's kingdom will be finally established.

Isaiah 11:10-12 (AMP)

¹⁰ And it shall be in that day that the Root of Jesse shall stand as a signal for the peoples; of Him shall the nations inquire and seek knowledge, and His dwelling shall be glory [His rest magnificent]!

¹¹ And in that day the Lord shall again lift up His hand a second time to recover (acquire and deliver) the remnant of His people which is left, from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam [in Persia], from Shinar [Babylonia], from Hamath [in Upper Syria], and from the countries bordering on the [Mediterranean] Sea.

¹² And He will raise up a signal for the nations and will assemble the outcasts of Israel and will gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

The root of Jesse is an obvious reference to the Messiah who will take His place in Jerusalem the city of David where His dwelling shall be magnificent. The outcasts of Israel will come to Him there from all the nations to which they had been previously driven.

In addition to the outcasts of Israel returning from the great dispersion the Gentiles will become joined to their Jewish brethren.

Romans 11:25-27

25 I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number (fullness) of Gentiles comes to Christ.

26 And so all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this? "A Deliverer will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel from all ungodliness.

27 And then I will keep my covenant with them and take away their sins." NLT

The Greek word *pleroma* which is translated "complete number or fullness" has a qualitative significance as well as a numerical one. The End Time period of the Church will not only be great in numbers, it will also be highly enriched in quality. An essential elements of this richness will be the fact that Jewish and Gentiles believers will become united as one body when the deliverer from Jerusalem turns Israel away from all ungodliness. When this fullness, (richness, completeness, comprehensiveness) of the redeemed company is manifested it will release into the world a magnificent era of world evangelism.

A GREAT DRAMA WILL UNFOLD VERY SOON

Every intelligent person must surely realize that something sinister and dramatic is happening in the Middle East. A small revolt that began in Tunisia has quickly spread to Egypt, Libya and many nations throughout the Middle East. It is spreading like a prairie

fire. The world looks on but does not understand what is really happening or what the ultimate results of these events will be. Many people appear to be crying out for democracy, but the real power behind the movement will be seen to be an intention to establish radical Islamic rule. The sight on TV of “protestors” in Libya chanting “Allahu Akbar” – “Allah is the greatest” whilst launching rockets against Gaddafi forces is surely a clue about what is actually behind their plans. This re shuffling of power will eventually result in a massive attack against Israel with the intention of totally annihilating the Jewish State. When the inevitable does happen it will not only affect Israel. Every nation on earth will experience the consequence of it. What in particular will happen to Israel and Jerusalem as a result of these changes? These events will also have a startling effect on the Church and we need to be ready for dramatic changes. I would humbly challenge every Bible believer to carefully and prayerfully read the following verses, giving particular attention to the End Times context of the whole chapter. Read and study it with an open mind, free from any pre conceived concepts. Seek to understand what the prophet actually predicts from the very clear description he is given from God. What does Zechariah 12 actually predict and what will be the amazing ultimate result? If you study this chapter prayerfully I feel sure that you will reach the same conclusion that I propose.

THIS WAR IS NOT THE WAR WITH GOG AND MAGOG

Contrary to what many commentators predict, the war for which Iran and her cohorts are currently preparing that is predicted in Psalm 83 and Zechariah 12 is not the one forecast in Ezekiel 38 and 39. It is a radically different war. The alliances and strategies mentioned are distinctly different from each other.

It will definitely precede the Gog and Magog war by a number of years.

It will have a different alliance of nations from the one in Psalm 83.

The strategy of the attack will be different.

GOD TELLS MAGOG

Ezekiel 38:8

8 In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel, which will be lying in peace after her recovery from war and after the return of her people from many lands. NLT

This “recovery” will be from the war described in Psalm 83 Zechariah 12 and following a dramatically increased return of Jews to their ancient homeland

Ezekiel 38:11

11 You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates' NKJV

This verse does not describe the Israel of today. They are certainly not a peaceful country dwelling in safety. However, this will be the case after the victory predicted in Zechariah 12, Isaiah 60:1-3.

Ezekiel 38:12 *I will capture vast amounts of plunder and take many slaves, for the people are*

rich with cattle now, and they think the whole world revolves around them!' NLT

Israel is not yet the ultra rich nation with the kind of “booty” that would incite such an attack. This will pertain following the victory of Zechariah 12 when Israel will gain a period of peace and much more territory and far greater wealth.

HOW GOD WILL RESPOND TO THIS ATTACK?

Ezekiel 38:18-23

18 But when Gog invades the land of Israel, says the Sovereign LORD, my fury will rise!

19 For in my jealousy and blazing anger, I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day.

20 All living things — all the fish, birds, animals, and people — will quake in terror at my presence. Mountains will be thrown down; cliffs will crumble; walls will fall to the earth.

21 I will summon the sword against you throughout Israel, says the Sovereign LORD. Your men will turn against each other in mortal combat.

22 I will punish you and your hordes with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur!

23 Thus will I show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the LORD! NLT

Ezekiel 39:3-6

3 I will knock your weapons from your hands and leave you helpless.

4 You and all your vast hordes will die on the mountains. I will give you as food to the vultures and wild animals.

5 You will fall in the open fields, for I have spoken, says the Sovereign LORD.

6 And I will rain down fire on Magog and on all your allies who live safely on the coasts. Then they will know that I am the LORD. NLT

Ezekiel 39:7-8

7 "Thus, I will make known my holy name among my people of Israel. I will not let it be desecrated anymore. And the nations, too, will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

8 That day of judgment will come, says the Sovereign LORD. Everything will happen just as I have declared it. NLT

AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PROPHECY

Zechariah is a minor prophet with a major prophetic message, part of which is likely to be fulfilled in the very near future as the next event on God's prophetic agenda. After this happens Israel will emerge as an extremely prominent nation with great respect and will be recognized and esteemed by all the nations on earth. It will be a truly amazing and astounding time when Israel will arise as though from the dead! (Romans 11:15). Its fulfillment will take the world and most of the Church by complete surprise!

At the time of writing the Middle East and North Africa is still filled with unresolved tension caused by a series of protests against the ruling powers. Although the protests are said to be calling for democratic changes the underlying desire is actually for stricter Islamic rule.

Although the end results of the protests are not yet clearly evident it is obvious that these apparently socio-political events are really orchestrated by religious influences. When the dust finally settles the immediate result will be that each of the nations that have been affected will be stronger in their desire for the establishment of Shariah Law. The determination of these nations to overthrow the Jewish government of Israel and to claim "Palestine" for Islam will be fanatically augmented.

It is a massive End Time prophecy whose time for fulfillment will soon arrive. It describes a huge attack upon Israel launched by all her surrounding neighbors. This would constitute for Israel a war on five fronts involving rockets and missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction. In the natural it may have the potential to completely destroy Israel. This attack designed to eliminate Israel from the world scene has been attempted several times before without success. The proposed conquest of Israel by her Islamic enemies is not an objective that will be finally relinquished. While ever Israel exists these attacks will definitely continue until this ultimate effort of which we are now speaking. When this final attempt is launched it will change the world scene forever.

The stage is already set. The players are in the wings waiting to begin the world shaking scenario which is the intended total annihilation of Israel. Islamic history and prophecy predicts that the fulfillment will definitely happen. According to Muslim prophecy the Mahdi will come to transform the whole world to the worship of Allah. (According to Jewish and Christian prophecy the Jewish Messiah will come to establish His reign on earth).

The historic instances of fulfillment of Bible prophecies assure us that this prediction will be totally fulfilled. If Israel's enemies were able to succeed in their venture, the Bible would become obsolete and completely invalid. Its major prophecies would become futile and totally unreliable.

Zechariah 12:1. Opens with the words "*The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel.*" The message that God delivers is an extremely heavy burdensome one. It is heavy on the heart of God and on the hearts of His people in Israel.

THE BURDEN: (Hebrew *Massa*) Chapter 12 begins the final oracle of the book of Zechariah. The first burden covers chapters 9 through 11, dealing mainly with the first coming of Messiah who was initially rejected, by the nation. The second prophetic *burden* deals with the return and the reign of the Messiah as King reigning from Jerusalem.

The Word Of The Lord The *Dabar* i.e. - speech or communication from *Yahweh* to Zechariah, regarding Israel. The reference here is to the Word, which is also the title given to Jesus (the Logos) who is the chief focus here as the suffering Messiah, pierced, rejected and finally accepted by the nation. (John 1:1, Revelation 19:13) The Word in Revelation returns with power and great authority (Revelation 19:13).

Concerning Israel: Israel as a nation ceased to exist in the Assyrian captivity. Judah however remained until the Babylonian captivity (605-586 B.C). Scripture speaks of a united kingdom of Judah and Israel prior to the coming of the Messiah (Ezekiel 37: 15 - 22). The name chosen for the nation in 1948 was prophetic. The name Zechariah referred to was Israel, not Judah. Israel as a nation had disappeared almost 200 years before

Zechariah was a prophet. The nation has been resurrected after more than 2,000 years of exile. In a miraculous manner a nation has been reborn in our day and generation. Now God is about to complete His miraculous plan for the nation as He restores it to a living relationship with Himself.

JEHOVAH IS THE ALMIGHTY ONE

Almighty God, Jehovah is the creator and supreme ruler of the universe and the creator of all mankind. He formed the spirit of man. This gives us an insight into man's creation. When man was created from the dust of the earth, the Lord then formed the spirit inside the newly formed human earthly body. Man's human spirit was formed directly by God's Spirit. It was the very breath of God that fashioned the spirit of man within the body of clay (Genesis 2:7).

During the attack that is predicted against Israel the whole world will be made aware that Jehovah is the **ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD**. This will be a war between Jehovah and all the false gods of the universe and Jehovah will clearly demonstrate that He is the supreme ruler of the universe.

AN INTOXICATING CUP - Zechariah 12:2 (AMP)

² Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup or bowl of reeling to all the peoples round about, and in the siege against Jerusalem will there also be a siege against and upon Judah.

The imagery of a *cup of trembling* (from drunkenness) is translated from the Hebrew (*Ra'al*), meaning to reel or stumble as if drunk. The enemies that attack Israel will begin to behave like a drunken mob, totally irresponsibly and in an uncoordinated manner. God says that in a coming day Jerusalem will intoxicate and stupefy the surrounding peoples who attack Israel.

TEN NATIONS WILL ATTACK ISRAEL

The Siege Against Jerusalem: Very soon all the surrounding nations adjacent to Israel will attack the city of Jerusalem. This alliance of nations is described in

Psalm 83:5-8 (AMP)

⁵ For they have consulted together with one accord and one heart; against You they make a covenant—

⁶ The tents of Edom (Palestinians) and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, (Egyptians)

⁷ Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines, (Hamas) with the inhabitants of Tyre. (Hizbollah)

⁸ Assyria (Iran) also has joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot [the Ammonites and the Moabites] and have been an arm to them. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]! (Emphasis added)

The two main factors that unite all of these nations are the Arab Alliance and the determination to annihilate Israel that even its name and history will be permanently erased. This latter objective will never be surrendered. It could only ever cease through an emphatic indisputable military defeat and the destruction of these nations. In the mind of these Islamic nations the Palestine they are determined to "liberate" can only be achieved by the eradication of any State named Israel. Therefore, every mention of Palestine

assumes the complete demise of Israel. This determined ambition is a permanent ambition of Palestinian Liberation Organization charter.

Article 9 of this charter states, "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase. The Palestinian Arab people assert their absolute determination and firm resolution to continue their armed struggle and to work for an armed popular struggle for the liberation of their country and their return to it. They also assert their right to normal life in Palestine and to exercise their right to self-determination and sovereignty over it."

Article 15 states in part "The liberation of Palestine from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty and its attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination (liquidation) of the Zionist presence. (i.e. The State of Israel).

AN EXCERPT FROM THE HAMAS CHARTER

Although Hamas is a known active terrorist organization it continues to seek political recognition. Its charter plainly states the heart of its purpose. *"Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it... Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious. It needs all sincere efforts ... The day of judgment will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews)... Allah is its target, the prophet is its model, the Koran is its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes."*

Today, we see Jerusalem as the center of world attention, because Islamic and the Western nations are all focused on the city. Islam with over 20% of the Earth's population, views the city as Islamic territory, rejecting Jewish claims to the city. The Jews in the land today, look back to their past, claiming a historical right to the city.

ARAB NATIONS WILL LEAD THE ATTACK

The Arab nations surrounding Israel have a passion for possessing the city of Jerusalem that is not justified by history. Their ultimate aim is to completely destroy the world centre of Judaism and Christianity to which the Messiah will return and replace the Jewish government with Islamic and Shariah rule.

Psalm 83:4-8 (AMP)

⁴ They have said, Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be in remembrance no more.

There has never previously been such a specific alliance formed to attack and subjugate Israel in all history. The ten nations who are here enumerated as being combined against Israel, are never mentioned elsewhere as enemies united at the same time and for the purpose of annihilating Israel. Several commentaries make the same point. This must be an end-time prophecy!

The West (Europe, UK and USA) have a cultural attachment to the city, because of their

Christian heritage, and Israel's Western world outlook. Islamic populations in Europe and the Islamic world wide harbor bitter hatred for the Jewish state, which also places the capital Jerusalem in the center of world attention.

THE STONE WHICH IS THE MESSIAH - Zechariah 12:3 (AMP)

³And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all who lift it or burden themselves with it shall be sorely wounded. And all the nations of the earth shall come and gather together against it.

According to Jerome an early Church father, the reference here is to a contest in which young men measured their strength by lifting heavy stones. In the same way the world will try to lift Jerusalem, into Islamic control. The stone will be too heavy, pitting the armies of God against the armies of men. Jesus uses this same picture of a heavy stone in Matthew 21:44, Isaiah refers to the stone as Messiah in Isaiah 8:14. Isaiah also refers to the cornerstone of Jerusalem, as Messiah the precious stone of Zion (Isaiah 28:16).

Isaiah 8:11-15

11 The LORD has said to me in the strongest terms: "Do not think like everyone else does.

12 Do not be afraid that some plan conceived behind closed doors will be the end of you.

13 Do not fear anything except the LORD Almighty. He alone is the Holy One. If you fear him, you need fear nothing else.

14 He will keep you safe. But to Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap that entangles them.

15 Many of them will stumble and fall, never to rise again. Many will be captured." NLT

Isaiah 8:12 obviously relates to Psalm 83:2-8 and the "crafty secret conspiracy" that the Arabic nations form that are united in one purpose to destroy the Jewish State of Israel.

In Isaiah 28:16 the prophet obviously likens the Messiah to a stone. Could this be the same stone mentioned in Isaiah 8:14? I believe so.

Isaiah 28:16 *Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.*

SOME GENTILE NATIONS WILL SUPPORT ISLAM

This refers to all nations other than Israel. At this present time the USA, UN and EU plus several other nations support a two state solution. They claim that this is the only way that peace can be achieved in the Middle East. However, dividing Israel will only bring about the destruction of the nations that seek to divide what God claims is His Land.

Joel 3:1-2 (AMP)

¹FOR BEHOLD, in those days and at that time when I shall reverse the captivity and restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,

²I will gather all nations and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there will I deal with and execute judgment upon them for [their treatment of] My people and of My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and [because] they have divided

My land.

In the end, the Muslim nations which come against Jerusalem to destroy the Jewish people and Jerusalem will be cut to pieces. Throughout history even leading up to these End Times events, Jerusalem has caused problems for the world. In A.D. 638, the Muslims conquered Jerusalem from the Byzantine Romans. This was followed by the Crusades (A.D.1099-1187, 1229-39, 1240-44) when the nations of the West defeated Islamic powers to take back control of Jerusalem.

At a later date the Muslim nations rallied again and drove the Crusaders from Jerusalem. In World War I, Islamic powers, (The Ottoman Empire) were defeated after they allied themselves with Germany. The West was again in control of Jerusalem, the lands of the Ottoman Turks were divided, creating new nations, many of which were given the names of their historical past, including Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan. Jerusalem and Palestine (Judah) were under the control of the British, who because of Arab threats withdrew their promise to establish a Jewish State.

ISLAMIC CLAIMS OVER JERUSALEM

Muslims today claim Jerusalem as their third-holiest city. However, Jerusalem is not mentioned once in their holy book the Koran. In addition, throughout the centuries when Jerusalem was under complete Arab control, no Arab ruler or Islamic leader ever made Jerusalem the object of a religious pilgrimage. This fact displays a strange indifference toward a city which is now considered to be the third-holiest religious site in Islam after Mecca and Medina.

A new Jewish State only came into existence after World War II, after the nations voted it into existence at the United Nations. In a war immediately following the establishment of a Jewish State (May 1948), Jerusalem was conquered by the Jewish nation. Jerusalem was then a divided city in the hands of Jews and Muslims. In 1967, following the Six-Day War, Jerusalem was completely in the hands of the Jewish people, for the first time in over 2000-years. The conflict for Jerusalem continues to this very day, fulfilling the words of Zechariah who wrote in 520 B.C., when Jerusalem future seemed bleak. History is a living testimony to the words of Zechariah.

THE BATTLE FOR JERUSALEM - Zechariah 12:4-9 (Amp)

⁴In that day, says the Lord, I will smite every horse [of the armies that contend against Jerusalem] with terror and panic and his rider with madness; and I will open My eyes and regard with favor the house of Judah and will smite every horse of the opposing nations with blindness.

⁵And the chiefs of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.

⁶In that day will I make the chiefs of Judah like a big, blazing pot among [sticks of] wood and like a flaming torch among sheaves [of grain], and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left; and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell and sit securely in their own place, in Jerusalem.

⁷And the Lord shall save and give victory to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified and exalted above Judah.

⁸ In that day will the Lord guard and defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he who is [spiritually] feeble and stumbles among them in that day [of persecution] shall become [strong and noble] like David; and the house of David [shall maintain its supremacy] like God, like the Angel of the Lord Who is before them.

⁹ And it shall be in that day that I will make it My aim to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

IN THAT DAY

This term refers to a Day of Judgment, when the nations are gathered against Jerusalem. The term is used throughout scripture. That day, appears twenty times in the book of Zechariah alone, referring to a special period when God will judge the nations for their despicable treatment of His people. Although the Hebrew word for day (Yom) is used, this phrase obviously does not mean a day of twenty four hours. It clearly alludes to a brief time period rather than a literal day. It is sometimes described as “at that time.”

JUDGMENT FOR DIVIDING GOD’S LAND

Joel 3:1-2

1 "At that time, when I restore the prosperity of Judah and Jerusalem," says the LORD,

2 "I will gather the armies of the world into the valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will judge them for harming my people, for scattering my inheritance among the nations, and for dividing up my land. NLT

This period, also referred to as, the *Day of the Lord* is the transition period between the rule of the nations, to the rule of God. Zechariah and Joel both show the before and after affects of “That day”. After “that day” day there will peace for Israel as the nations come under the rule of their Messiah (Christ).

THE LORD WILL ROAR FROM ZION

Joel 3:16-17 (AMP)

¹⁶ The Lord will thunder and roar from Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the children of Israel.

¹⁷ So shall you know, understand, and realize that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and strangers and foreigners [not born into the family of God] shall no more pass through it.

The prophet Joel clearly indicates that Jehovah God who will be dwelling in Zion will roar on the nations **from His place in Jerusalem.**

THE MESSIAH IN THE MIDST OF ISRAEL

The Messiah, as the Angel of the Lord will position Himself in the midst (centre) of Israel. In my pursuit of the implications of Zechariah 12:8 in which Zechariah says that the “Angel of the Lord” will go before Israel to lead them to victory I have been personally confirmed in my belief that the Angel of the Lord is truly the Messiah. I have also observed several scriptures that speak of the Lord “returning to” and being “in the midst of Israel” Does this imply that the Lord (Messiah) will literally return to Israel, lead Israel to victory and then dwell in their midst?

Is this the predicted “Second Coming” to earth of Messiah? Zechariah 12:8

8 On that day the LORD will defend the people of Jerusalem; the weakest among them will be as mighty as King David! And the royal descendants will be like God, like the angel of the LORD who goes before them!

Zechariah predicts: The Angel of the Lord will “go before” Israelis against their enemies. This Angel of the Lord who leads Israel to victory is obviously the long promised Messiah who has returned to Israel once again. The descendants of David will (then) be like the Angel of the Lord.

There are Old and New Testament references to “angels of the Lord,” - “an angel of the Lord,” and - “the Angel of the Lord.” When the definite article “the” is used, it is specifying a unique being, distinct from all other angels. The Angel of the Lord speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and exercises the responsibilities of God. In several of these appearances, those who saw the Angel of the Lord feared for their lives because they had “seen the Lord.” Therefore, it is very clear that in at least some instances, the Angel of the Lord is definitely a theophany, which is an appearance of God in physical form.

The appearances of the Angel of the Lord cease after the incarnation of Christ. Angels are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, but “the Angel of the Lord” is never mentioned in the New Testament. This confirms that appearances of the Angel of the Lord were manifestations of Jesus before His incarnation. Whatever the case, the phrase “the Angel of the Lord” identifies a physical appearance of the Messiah.

"The Angel of the LORD" was a divine person, and "He is to be regarded as a kind of pre-incarnation of the Messiah." The identity of "the Angel of the LORD" with *Yahweh* is fully established in Genesis 16:13, when it is said of Hagar "Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'; for she said, 'Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?'"

Interestingly and perhaps ironically it is Hagar the mother of Ishmael whose encounter with the Angel of the LORD convincingly confirms that the Angel of the Lord is truly Yaweh in human form.

Genesis 16:9 *Then the angel of the LORD said, "Return to your mistress and submit to her authority."*

10 The angel added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count." NLT

Genesis 16:13

13 Thereafter, Hagar referred to the LORD, who had spoken to her, as "the God who sees me," for she said, "I have seen the One who sees me!" NLT

The Angel of the LORD is not a created being, but the divine being Himself. He is recognized as a superior being by the writers of the Old Testament.

The prophecy of Joel, which in some places refers to the Church, is primarily a prophecy concerning Israel and her End Times restoration. This fact is particularly clear in chapter two and the verses leading up to verse 27. The evidences in all of these verses are summarised by the clear statement that I AM is located in the very centre (midst) of Israel. God affirms that His

people (Israel) will clearly recognize this amazing fact by all the great things that the LORD has accomplished in Israel.

Joel 2:27 *Then you shall know that I am in the midst (Hebrew # H 7130 Qereb) of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. NKJV*

Zechariah 8:3 *"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.'* NKJV

Zechariah 2:10-11

10 *"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.*

11 *"Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. NKJV*

At least some of the Old Testament verses that speak of God "in the midst" of His people Israel clearly refer to His presence among them the Last days. This is true for example in Psalm 46:6 where the psalmist the rage of the nations and earthly kingdoms.

Zephaniah takes up the same refrain when he refers to the LORD Yaweh, the King of Israel being in the midst of His people having taken away her judgments.

Zephaniah 3:15

15 The LORD has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. **The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;** You shall see disaster no more. NKJV

Zephaniah 3:17

17 **The LORD your God in your midst,** The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." NKJV

Once again Zechariah is complicit with Zephaniah placing Yaweh in the midst of His people Israel at a time when many nations will be joined to the LORD.

Zechariah 2:10-12

10 *"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, **I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.***

11 *"Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. **And I will dwell in your midst.** Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. NKJV*

GOD'S EYES WILL BE INTENTLY UPON ISRAEL

Zechariah 12:4 (AMP)

*⁴In that day, says the Lord, I will smite every horse [of the armies that contend against Jerusalem] with terror and panic and his rider with madness; **and I will open My eyes and regard with favor the house of Judah** and will smite every horse of the opposing nations with blindness.*

The Lord's eyes are opened in a more focused and intentional manner over His people, He becomes directly involved in the conflict between the nations and Israel. God declares that His eyes are always on His people Israel. Further He says that Israel is the apple (pupil) of His eye. The eye is the most sensitive part of the body. It is instinctively protected by reflex actions. Zechariah 2:8

God will supernaturally intervene for the nation. He will cause the enemies horses and their riders (their armed forces) to go blind, mad and confused. It is important to notice, that God is doing the talking throughout the chapter. God is personally and supernaturally aiding his people. Though the nations come against Jerusalem with great fury, God will fully protect her. This will find an ultimate fulfillment in the Battle of Armageddon, but we will see an earlier fulfillment any day now as predicted in Zechariah 12 and Psalm 83.

MILITARY LEADERS WILL TRUST IN THE LORD

The Governors of Judah: The rulers (*Alluphim = Generals*) of Israel who will see the supernatural deliverance taking place will be emboldened by the heroics of the Messiah and the utter failure of Israel's enemies.

Zechariah 12:5 (AMP)

⁵ And the chiefs of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.

They will understand that the strength of the people comes from the LORD of heaven's armies. The Generals of the Israeli army will transfer their confidence from the Israeli Defense Force to the LORD of heaven's armies.

LIKE A BLAZING FIRE

At this point Israel will fight off their enemies which surround the city. The Israeli defense forces empowered by the Angel of the Lord will become like a prairie fire sweeping through the ranks of their enemy.

Zechariah 12:6 "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a brazier that sets a woodpile ablaze or like a burning torch among sheaves of grain. They will burn up all the neighboring nations right and left, while the people living in Jerusalem remain secure. NLT

Asaph says (Psalms 83:14-15)

*14 As a fire roars through a forest and as a flame sets mountains ablaze,
15 chase them with your fierce storms; terrify them with your tempests. NLT*

THE LORD WILL SAVE JERUSALEM

Here the Lord, particularly assures Jerusalem's position, the city will be saved and rescued regardless of the plans of the nations.

Zechariah 12:6 *while the people living in Jerusalem remain secure. NLT*

This verse looks forward to the future salvation of the people of Israel after their amazing deliverance. So Jerusalem and its citizens do not get greater glory than the rest of Judah. The land of Judah, (Israel) and its inhabitants will be the first to supernaturally throw off

their enemies.

THE HOUSE OF DAVID

This refers to the Jews the literal descendents of David, who are in Jerusalem in the End Times. This does not mean that every descendent of David knows they are such. God however, knows who is who in the whole process of redemption. The Hebrew word house i.e.- *bayith* clearly signifies all the descendants of David.

THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM

This signifies all who are living in Jerusalem at the time that Israel's enemies launch their devastating attack upon Israel and Jerusalem. This will include some Christians and many Muslims. Such people will be close witnesses to the amazing victory of Israel and the fact that the Messiah has accomplished this victory. They will be included in the company of those who are rescued from potential death by the Messiah. Their beliefs and perspective about Messiah will be radically transformed as too will be their relationship with Him.

THE FEEBLE AMONG THEM

At this point, the weak, (*Kashal*) or those who totter and stumble will become empowered to be like King David. (The word feeble in Hebrew means, to stumble, stagger, totter through frailty in the lower legs. This description sounds remarkably like peripheral neuropathy that affects the balance). These remarkable events will precede the national conversion of Israel. When the attack is first launched Israel will be initially caught off balance. Once the battle is enjoined by the Angel of the Lord, Israel will recover her balance and equilibrium.

ISRAEL WILL BE LIKE GOD HIMSELF

The descendents of David, will be supernaturally empowered in that day. Physically their exploits will be supernatural in power. The army of Israel will literally be like (similar to) God. They will exercise supernatural power under the capable leadership of the Angel of the LORD (The Messiah). Like Moses of old, they will see God face to face (Exodus 34:11, 24:29, Deuteronomy 34:10)

ISLAMIC ARMIES AGAINST JERUSALEM

The nations of the earth will tacitly support the armies that are gathered against Jerusalem which is the immediate target of the Islamic armies. The enemy nations fiercely believe it is their prophetic destiny to rid what they call Palestine from its Jewish presence. Sadly they presently have the political support of almost every nation on earth. Their fanatical determination will never be surrendered willingly. It can only be eradicated by the unquestioned absolute defeat of Islamic forces. They will never willingly surrender their ambition.

GOD WILL DESTROY ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

The LORD plans to destroy the enemy armies of all the nations which attack Israel. The nations on every border of Israel today are Islamic nations each of which harbors a bitter determined purpose to rid the area of its Jewish presence. Their cruel aim will rebound

upon their own heads. They will be destroyed instead of Israel.

GOD WILL SUCCESSFULLY DEFEND JERUSALEM

Psalms 69:35-36

35 For God will save Jerusalem and rebuild the towns of Judah. His people will live there and take possession of the land.

36 The descendants of those who obey him will inherit the land, and those who love him will live there in safety. NLT

Here the Lord God is speaking in the first person. God Himself will make Jerusalem the central focus of the nations in the last days. The positive prophetic role of Jerusalem, as the focal point of the nations is clearly established throughout scripture. The interaction of God with Jerusalem is clearly an eternal issue. (Isaiah 60:1-3) Who could possibly have imagined at the time when this prophecy was made, when Jerusalem was like a small insignificant village, it would one day become a city attracting international interest. Jerusalem is mentioned more than 2,000 times in the Bible and its glory increases enormously and excels in the Last days.

Psalms 76:1-2

1 God is well known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

2 Jerusalem is where he lives; Mount Zion is his home. NLT

This verse cannot possibly be justifiably spiritualized. It so clearly and obviously pertains to the literal physical earthly city of Jerusalem in which God is going to “live.” His earthly headquarters will be in Jerusalem the city of David and of the great King Messiah. The focal point and centre of God’s earthly kingdom will not be in Rome or any other European city. Without question it will be in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem according to scripture will be the capital city of the King Messiah, from where He will rule the nations. (Zechariah 9:9-10, 14:16-17). Jerusalem, along with the Jewish people, according to Daniel’s 70 Weeks (Daniel 9; 24-27) is the focus of God’s prophetic program. Jerusalem will be in the front page media headlines in the End Times as the nations around Israel lay siege to the city. Most Christian commentators draw a very negative picture for Jerusalem in the prophetic future. This is in complete contrast to the view of the future for the Church. The predicted Bible truth about Israel’s prophetic future however is an extremely positive one. Among many passages that present this view is -

Zephaniah 3:14-17 (AMP)

14 Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice, be in high spirits and glory with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem [in that day].

15 [For then it will be that] the Lord has taken away the judgments against you; He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, even the Lord [Himself], is in the midst of you; [and after He has come to you] you shall not experience or fear evil any more.

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not, O Zion. Let not your hands sink down or be slow and listless.

17 The Lord your God is in the midst of you, a Mighty One, a Savior [Who saves]! He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest [in silent satisfaction] and in His love He will be silent and make

no mention [of past sins, or even recall them]; He will exult over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:14-17 Presents Numerous Positive Promises For Israel Including

A strong reason for singing and shouting with rejoicing. Verse 14

God's Judgments against Israel are ended. Verse 15

Israel's enemies are defeated and cast away. Verse 15

The King of Israel will be in the midst of Israel. Verse 15

Israel will experience fear or evil any more Verse 15

Jehovah will be a mighty savior for Israel. Verse 17

He will rejoice over Israel. Verse 17

God will exult (glory, revel) over Israel with singing. Verse 17

One of the many things that thrills me about this wonderful prediction is the promise that the King of Israel will be "in the midst of Israel." I believe this refers to God's presence in Israel's very midst during the intense time that Israel is under attack from her nearby enemies. This is surely the time when God reveals Himself to Israel as their Messiah. (Zech 12:10)

THIS IS NOT THE RAPTURE

Although God clearly declares to Israel (Zechariah 3:15) that He has returned and is "in the midst of them" this is not the rapture. It is a return to earth that is made specifically to Jerusalem and its citizens.

Zechariah 8:1 - 3

1 The LORD of Armies spoke his word.

2 This is what the LORD of Armies says: I am very jealous about Zion. I am fiercely possessive of it.

3 This is what the LORD says: I will return to Zion and live in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth. The mountain of the LORD of Armies will be called the holy mountain.

1. The LORD's love for Jerusalem remains passionate and strong.
2. He will return to Jerusalem to those to whom He said: Matthew 23:39 For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, 'Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' " NLT
3. God will then live in Jerusalem which will be called: "The Faithful city."
4. The mountain of the Lord (Zion) will be known as the Holy Mountain.

In direct contrast the Rapture teaching that many Christians believe states that;

1 Christ would come to the clouds. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

2 He comes for the Gentile Church which has (supposedly) replaced Israel.

3 He takes the Church to heaven to celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

4 Israel is left on earth to endure the Great Tribulation.

THE SPIRITUAL SALVATION OF ISRAEL

God's ultimate purpose is not only to restore the people of Israel to their ancient and ancestral home land. It is finally to restore them to Himself in their original vital living relationship. In order to facilitate and achieve this prophetic purpose He will pour out His Holy Spirit upon all the descendants of David in Israel.

Zechariah 12:10-12 (AMP)

¹⁰ And I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace or unmerited favor and supplication. And they shall look [earnestly] upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one who is in bitterness for his firstborn.

¹¹ In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of [the city of] Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddo [over beloved King Josiah].

¹² And the land shall mourn, every family apart: the [kingly] family of the house of David apart and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan [David's son] apart and their wives apart;

GOD WILL POUR OUT HIS HOLY SPIRIT

Again, we see the LORD is the source of the Spiritual outpouring. Jehovah clearly identifies Himself in this verse, as "Me whom they pierced". There is no doubt about God's prophetic intention. When God says "I will" - it will definitely happen. All the powers of hell cannot defuse the intention of God. Nothing can alter His determined purpose. He will clearly demonstrate His unquestionable, ultimate authority and power. All the nations on earth will witness the defeat of every false religion and the absolute supreme authority of Yaweh the God of the universe. This outpouring of God's Spirit will eclipse all previous visitations. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on 120 disciples. In this fresh predicted out pouring He will be poured out on the whole nation.

THE HOUSE OF DAVID

Everyone of Davidic descent would be considered part of the house of David. God knows the family line of every human ever to live. He has a meticulous record of every person's DNA. Here the descendents of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are referred to.

The House of David, in particular will be targeted to demonstrate God's faithfulness to David and the vital linkage to the Messiah, who is a "Son of David" (Luke 20:41).

THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM

Although the present population of Jerusalem is mainly Jewish, people of other religions are also living in Jerusalem. There are many Muslims and a relatively small number of "Christians" living in Jerusalem all of whom will be vividly conscious of the amazing preservation of Jerusalem and all its inhabitants. They will also be confronted by the dynamic revelation that their deliverer is in fact the long promised Messiah of Israel.

THE SPIRIT OF GRACE

The Hebrew word for grace is *chen* (Strong's 2580) which signifies grace, favor, kindness and affectionate regard. It describes the heart of God towards Israel particularly at this critical moment in her prophetic destiny. As a result of God's Spirit of grace which is poured out on the whole nation, the citizens will call out to God and repent over Jesus the Messiah. This whole exercise of deliverance and salvation is a manifestation of the boundless grace of God. What God accomplishes for Israel will be purely the result of His grace and graciousness. The word (*Ruach*) which means wind, breath, mind, and spirit, also refers to the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews 10:29 the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace. Only through the Holy Spirit and the grace of God can anybody find Jesus. This is true in both the Old and New Testament period for both Jew and Gentile.

AND SUPPLICATIONS

Supplications is another way of saying intense and intentional prayer, but particularly the prayer of request. At this point, Israel will cry out in repentance, calling on the LORD to get involved against the nations that were arrayed against their nation. I personally believe that this prayer will definitely include the words of Jesus when Israel welcomes their Messiah and cries out "Blessed are you who comes in the name of the LORD" (Matthew 23:39).

Matthew 23:37-39 (AMP)

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, murdering the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a mother fowl gathers her brood under her wings, and you refused!

³⁸ Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate (abandoned and left destitute of God's help).

³⁹ For I declare to you, you will not see Me again until you say, Blessed (magnified in worship, adored, and exalted) is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!

This was a message for calamitous times that would come upon a certain generation. It also predicted that the forecast desolation would continue until a specific moment in time.

It Was Addressed Directly To Citizens Of Jerusalem

The passage began with a specific reference to Jerusalem to which city and people Jesus emphasized His deep concern. He had longed to draw its population to the safety of His wings but sadly they had refused His welcome. As a result of their refusal to come to Him He predicted that the city would experience a prolonged period of desolation.

It Contained A Time Frame

Contrary to the opinion of many today Jesus did not say that this people would never see Him again. In fact He clearly implied that they would, but only when a certain thing happened. He predicted that He would be sought at a time that He specifically forecast. The critical moment for His return will coincide with the willing readiness of His people to cry out the prophetic welcome. This will happen immediately after the resounding defeat of the armies that have attacked Jerusalem. As soon as the Israeli citizens realize that their victory has been accomplished by their promised Messiah they will loudly express this welcome.

It Predicted A Welcome

Jesus said they would never see Him again UNTIL the citizens of Jerusalem would cry out “Blessed are you who come in the name of the Lord.” That predicted moment will come very soon when Israel, being deserted by many nations, will cry to God out for His help. The Amplified Bible helps us to understand what is strongly implied by this greeting, - (*magnified in worship, adored, and exalted*). This will be the kind of welcome that Jerusalem (and Israel) will give to their Messiah when He appears to them.

It Promised A Visible Appearance

Jesus predicted a visible appearance. He said “You will not SEE ME again UNTIL you will say, “Blessed are you who come in the name of the Lord.” In fact the appearance of the “Angel of the LORD” who is actually the Messiah, will be not only visible but literal and tangible. At the time and place of Christ’s ascension and return to His Father the angels declared:

Acts 1:9-11 (AMP)

⁹ *And when He had said this, even as they were looking [at Him], He was caught up, and a cloud received and carried Him away out of their sight.*

¹⁰ *And while they were gazing intently into heaven as He went, behold, two men [dressed] in white robes suddenly stood beside them,*

¹¹ *Who said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, Who was caught away and lifted up from among you into heaven, will return in [just] the same way in which you saw Him go into heaven.*

It Implied A Restoration

Jesus vividly described the desolation that would happen to Jerusalem because its citizens had rejected Him. Since this predicted desolation would happen because of His rejection, it is clearly implied that His return would bring an end to the desolation.

In Acts 3:17-21, Luke presents a further factor that would delay the return of the Lord. He states that Jesus would remain in heaven until a “final restoration of all things spoken by the prophets” occurred.

Acts 3:17 "Friends, I realize that what you did to Jesus was done in ignorance; and the same can be said of your leaders.

18 But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had declared about the Messiah beforehand — that he must suffer all these things.

19 Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins. 20 Then wonderful times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will send Jesus your Messiah to you again.

21 For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his prophets. NLT

I believe that this predicted restoration will involve the Church as well as the Jews. I also believe that the fulfillment of this promise will happen when the awakening forecast by Joel occurs.

Joel 2:27-32

27 Then you will know that I am here among my people of Israel and that I alone am the

LORD your God. My people will never again be disgraced like this.

28 "Then after I have poured out my rains again, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions.

29 In those days, I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, men and women alike. 30 "I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth — blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and terrible day of the LORD arrives.

32 And anyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. There will be people on Mount Zion in Jerusalem who escape, just as the LORD has said. These will be among the survivors whom the LORD has called. NLT

In the midst of these events, the spiritual blindness will be removed from the nation's eyes and as a nation they will look upon their Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel.

Isaiah 59:19 (AMP)

¹⁹ So [as the result of the Messiah's intervention] they shall [reverently] fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him and put him to flight [for He will come like a rushing stream which the breath of the Lord drives].

THEY WILL LOOK UPON ME

The one who is speaking is obviously the **LORD** of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel, the great I AM. It is therefore Him that Israel will look upon. Following the prayer and supplication, the nation will see their God and their Messiah. Christ will descend upon and into the midst of a nation calling out to their God. Comparing Zechariah 12:10 with Zechariah 12:1 and 12:3 (*Thus says the LORD*) makes it clear that the Me they look upon is the LORD God - Yahweh - Himself. This is astounding and wonderful evidence that Jesus the previously pierced One, is actually God, the Holy One of Israel.

WHOM THEY PIERCED

Here Yeshua is clearly identified as Jehovah. If you correctly recognize Yaweh as the person speaking, who tells the reader "they shall look on ME whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son" one must conclude that the one pierced is none other than the **LORD (Yaweh)** in the person of Yeshua. The distinguishing features that identify Him are the marks (scars) of His piercing. Although Roman soldiers actually drove the nails into His body, it was Jewish leaders who had cried out for Him to be crucified (Mk 15:4, Lk 23:21, John 19:6, 15). From the whole context of this chapter it is clear that God implicated the Jews in the death of the Lamb of God. They became the Hebrew priests who offered the very lamb whose sacrificial death atoned for the sins of all humanity.

MOURNING FOR HIM...THE ONLY SON

The Jewish nation will mourn their initial rejection of the *First Born*, who was crucified. In the Hebraic culture the first born son has a special place of honor in the family structure. The time will be a period of national examination, mourning and repentance as the whole nation finally recognizes the true identity of the one who was crucified.

IN THAT DAY

In that day, when Messiah comes to Israel in power and authority the whole nation will mourn over Him. Each family will mourn, and men and women apart will mourn. The Day of the LORD is a special term in the Bible used to refer to a period of time when God directly intervenes in human affairs---in judgment or in blessing. The Day of the Lord we are presently waiting for in our time frame, will begin with the coming of the Messiah to Jerusalem (Zechariah 12) and will continue through the tribulation period (seven years), and on through the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth until the time of the "new heavens and new earth." (Rev. 21)

THE LAND ITSELF SHALL MOURN

The nation will mourn their historic rejection of the Messiah, who died for the sins of the nation. The actual land of Israel will mourn the lost years of the relationship the nation could have had, if they were obedient. During the Diaspora the land of Israel became like a desolate wilderness as though in mourning because of the absence of the people of Israel. With the return of the outcasts the land has begun to blossom once again. (Isaiah 35:1-2) The nation will mourn the death and destruction which came upon the land, by Israel not knowing their Messiah at His coming. According to Paul not only will the land of Israel mourn, all creation will mourn waiting expectantly for the manifestation of the Kingdom and the children of the kingdom.

Romans 8:19-22 (AMP)

¹⁹ For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship].

²⁰ For the creation (nature) was subjected to frailty (to futility, condemned to frustration), not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him Who so subjected it—[yet] with the hope

²¹ That nature (creation) itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption [and gain an entrance] into the magnificent freedom of God's children.

²² We know that the whole creation [of irrational creatures] has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now.

All nature will rejoice to welcome the appearance of the great creator.

EVERY FAMILY WILL MOURN

The mourning will be intensely personal as each family will recount their own hardness of heart in rejecting the Messiah. Leading the national mourning will be the leaders of the house of Levi, i.e. the extended priesthood of Israel.

Zechariah 12: 13-14

¹³ The [priestly] family of the house of Levi apart and their wives apart; the family of Shimei [grandson of Levi] apart and their wives apart;

¹⁴ All the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves [each with an overwhelming individual sorrow over having blindly rejected their unrecognized Messiah].

WIVES BY THEMSELVES

This will be a time of personal self-reflection, the women and the men will be separated as the nation mourns in holiness. This is not a time to be distracted with sexual desire, but a time of intense examination. This description of the national practice of mourning clearly displays the Hebraic manner of mourning.

ALL THE FAMILIES THAT REMAIN WILL MOURN

Zechariah cites two of them are sacred families (Zechariah 12:13), *the family of the house of Levi*, which was God's tribe, and in it particularly the family of Shimei, which was a branch of the tribe of Levi (1Chronicles 6:17). However, he also indicates that all the families of Israel that remain will engage in the national mourning in respect of the Messiah.

THE MESSIANIC TRANSFORMATION OF ISRAEL

The fulfillment of this amazing prophecy in Zechariah will initiate tremendous changes throughout the whole world. The transformation will initially be a spiritual one but the immediate repercussions will be religious, social and political. Israel will become a Messianic nation symbolized by the 144,000 in Revelation 7:3-8. They will comprise an army of servants of God that together with Messianic Gentile believers will bear faithful witness of the kingdom (Revelation 7:9-17). The number 144,000 is meant to be a symbolic number rather than a literal one. It symbolizes people from every tribe of Israel.

Twelve is also the number symbolizing government.

There will be a transformed spiritual atmosphere of reverence for God around the world. It will be an international atmosphere of awe and wonder toward God through a new realization of His sovereignty. The change in the heavens will transmit to the earth changing the conscious awareness of the nations. Every nation will become conscious of the reality of the God of the universe.

The Transformation Of The Church

God's presence in the midst (centre) of Israel (Joel 2:27) will precede and coincide with the promised outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh. Joel 2:28 The two events are clearly linked. During this time the proclamation and harvesting of the kingdom of God will increase exponentially. The Church universal, much of which sees no prophetic future for the nation Israel will undergo a powerful transformation as it becomes re-grafted into the original Olive tree of Israel.

Romans 11:23-24

23 And if the Jews turn from their unbelief, God will graft them back into the tree again. He has the power to do it.

24 For if God was willing to take you who were, by nature, branches from a wild olive tree and graft you into his own good tree — a very unusual thing to do — he will be far more eager to graft the Jews back into the tree where they belong. NLT

The Transition Of Church Into Kingdom Mode Luke 12:32

32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom NKJV

The universal Church will be transformed inwardly and outwardly. It will be almost

unrecognizable to the traditional Church of this present era. The true Church will become a spiritual army who is also a bride without spot, wrinkle or any such blemish (Eph 5:27).

A World Wide Influx Of Muslim, Hindu Etc, - Converts Into Messiah

Powerful shockwaves will reverberate around the religious world as multitudes of former adherents from all false religions surrender to a new revelation of Jehovah God and His Messiah. The “converts” will not be added to the traditional ranks of the Church but rather to the population of God’s Kingdom.

A Kingdom Witness Around The World

The Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14) will be proclaimed powerfully around the entire earth with amazing supernatural results. This program will be carried out by a company of servants comprised of Messianic Jews and Gentiles that will be seen as the One New Man company. (Ephesians 2:15).

The promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit on ALL flesh will only happen after the Messiah is “in the midst of Israel.”

Joel 2:27-29 (AMP)

27 And you shall know, understand, and realize that I am in the midst of Israel and that I the Lord am your God and there is none else. My people shall never be put to shame.

28 And afterward I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

29 Even upon the menservants and upon the maidservants in those days will I pour out My Spirit.

The opening phrase of verse 28 has very clear reference and application to the preceding verse. The Spirit will not be poured out on all flesh until after God (in the person of the Messiah) is in the midst of His people in Israel. “In the midst” (Hebrew *qereb*) means to be in the centre of. Not hovering over, but in the very heart of Israel. God is going to take centre stage with His ancient covenant people in the geographic centre of Israel. This amazing prophecy will (Joel 2:27 - 28) be fulfilled in the very near future. Zechariah 9:9 refers to the first coming of the Messiah whereas verse 10 speaks of His second appearance.

Zechariah 9:9-10 (AMP)

9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O Daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you; He is [uncompromisingly] just and having salvation [triumphant and victorious], patient, meek, lowly, and riding on a donkey, upon a colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 And I will cut off and exterminate the war chariot from Ephraim and the [war] horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak the word and peace shall come to the nations, and His dominion shall be from the [Mediterranean] Sea to [any other] sea, and from the River [Euphrates] to the ends of the earth!

Zechariah 9:14-17 (AMP)

14 And the Lord shall be seen over them and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning, and the Lord God will blow the trumpet and will go forth in the windstorms of the south.

15 The Lord of hosts shall defend and protect them; and they shall devour and they shall tread on [their fallen enemies] as on sling-stones [that have missed their aim], and they shall drink [of victory] and be noisy and turbulent as from wine and become full like bowls [used to catch the sacrificial blood], like the corners of the [sacrificial] altar.

16 And the Lord their God will save them on that day as the flock of His people, for they shall be as the [precious] jewels of a crown, lifted high over and shining glitteringly upon His land.

17 For how great is God's goodness and how great is His beauty! And how great [He will make Israel's] goodliness and [Israel's] beauty! Grain shall make the young men thrive and fresh wine the maidens.

Zechariah 10:9-12 (AMP)

9 And though I sow them among the nations, yet they shall [earnestly] remember Me in far countries, and with their children they shall live and shall return [to God and the land He gave them].

10 I will bring them [all Israel] home again from the land of Egypt and gather them out of Assyria, and I will bring them into the land [on the east and on the west of the Jordan, into] Gilead and Lebanon, and room enough shall not be found for them.

11 And [the Lord] will pass through the sea of distress and affliction [at the head of His people, as He did at the Red Sea]; and He will smite down the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the [river] Nile shall be dried up and put to shame; and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down and the scepter or rod [of the taskmasters of Egypt] shall pass away.

12 And I will strengthen [Israel] in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down and glory in His name, says the Lord.

A BRIEF RESUME OF WHAT ZECHARIAH 12 PREDICTS

A massive attack will soon be launched by all the nations on Israel's borders supported by Iran. The attack will be launched with such force that initially it will appear capable of attaining its objective which is the annihilation of Israel. But God will look with special favour upon Israel.

Israel's enemies will be given an intoxicating, stupefying drink. God will sow madness and confusion into the enemy ranks. Israel will place their trust in the Lord of heavens armies. Even the feeblest Israeli citizens will become mighty warriors like King David.

God will personally destroy all the attacking armies. He will supernaturally defend Israel and Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit will be poured out upon Israel. Her citizens will look on the face of Messiah who was once pierced. The whole nation will recognize and mourn for the Messiah. Jerusalem will be exalted above all cities. (Isa 60:1). All nations will view Israel's exaltation.

All of the predictions in Zechariah 12 relate to the presently imminent return of Messiah to His kinsmen in Israel. This appearance of the Messiah will precede all other Bible references to the End Times. It will introduce a period of time predicted in Isaiah 60 and numerous of chapters of the Bible. E.g

Isaiah 60:1-3

"Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all the nations to see! For the glory of the LORD is shining upon you.

2 Darkness as black as night will cover all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the LORD will shine over you.

3 All nations will come to your light. Mighty kings will come to see your radiance. NLT

The remainder of this prophetic chapter describes the remarkable things that will happen in respect of Israel's amazing future. This will be a period of peace and prosperity for Israel that precedes Ezekiel 38-39 probably by several years. In this peaceful and prosperous period Israel will gain possession of much more territory that it presently occupied by her Arab neighbors. I am not sure how long this peaceful period will last but it will certainly continue until Ezekiel 38:11 when Israel will be living in peace.

Ezekiel 38:11

11 You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates' NKJV

The fact that Israel at that time will be a nation that is not constantly on military alert and has become a very prosperous nation with immense oil, gas and chemical reserves attracts the attention of Gog and Magog. This will incite these nations to launch another attack upon Israel. However, this attack will not succeed because once again the LORD will come to the defense of His land and people. God's response to the attack is graphically predicted.

Ezekiel 38:18-23

18 "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "that My fury will show in My face.

19 For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel,

20 so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.'

21 I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother.

22 And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

23 Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.'" NKJV

Through an amazing victory over Gog and Magog and all their allies, Jehovah God will be magnified (exalted, uplifted) before the eyes of all the nations on the earth. God will magnificently and emphatically demonstrate His superior and supreme authority to the whole world. This amazing revelation will change and transform the way that Yaweh is perceived throughout the world. A new sense of awe will invade the hearts of all mankind that will powerfully affect the attitude of all the nations. After this God's emphatic authority will be recognized and acknowledged universally. The time period until these surprising and astounding events happen will be very brief indeed. When it all transpires the whole

world will be forever changed. It would surely behoove every person to find out as much as possible about these events and discover how they might affect them. It would also be wise to discover what we need to do in order to prepare for these amazing events and the aftermath they will initiate. Certainly every church should investigate how to adjust to the prophetic future and be relevant to the situations that will occur as a direct result. The first step in such a process will be to recognize the seriousness and implications of all that is beginning to transpire right now. In this set of circumstances we need to *Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.* Isaiah 55:6 NKJV

UPROOTING EVIL NATIONS

Deuteronomy 17:12-13

- ¹² *Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest who represents the LORD your God must be put to death. Such evil must be purged from Israel.*
- ¹³ *Then everyone will hear about it and be afraid to act so arrogantly. NLT*

The number of nations that have a deep aversion and even brutal hatred against Israel seems to be increasing exponentially. Anti Semitism is on the rise all over the world. Why is this? In most respects Israel is like every other nation with its quota of good and bad, yet there is a continual declaration of evil words and threats against her. There is no natural or logical reason why this should be so. The hatred is completely unnatural and inhumane. In fact it is actually essentially and specifically evil, springing forth from a dark and malevolent source. Deep in the heart of so many people and nations, the truth of what lies in the hidden recesses of the unredeemed human heart is rising to the surface and spewing forth all manner of ugliness, prejudice and hatred. Through continual acts of barbaric terrorism the hidden secret heart of man is being accessed by a wicked and evil power that is contrary to everything that Christ ever taught. It is in fact the evil spirit of the Anti Christ. Almighty God is getting ready to uproot the evil nations and manifest His justice in the emergence of His kingdom of righteousness. Evil is about to be overturned and righteousness revealed.

Jeremiah 12:14-17

- ¹⁴ *Now this is what the LORD says: "As for all the evil nations reaching out for the inheritance I gave my people Israel, I will uproot them from their lands just as Judah will be uprooted from hers.*
- ¹⁵ *But afterward I will return and have compassion on all of them. I will bring them home to their own lands again, each nation to its own inheritance.*
- ¹⁶ *And if these nations quickly learn the ways of my people, and if they learn to swear by my name, saying, 'As surely as the LORD lives' (just as they taught my people to swear by the name of Baal), then they will be given a place among my people.*
- ¹⁷ *But any nation who refuses to obey me will be uprooted and destroyed. I, the LORD, have spoken!" NLT*

Micah 4:11-12

- ¹¹ *True, many nations have gathered together against you, calling for your blood, eager to gloat over your destruction.*
- ¹² *But they do not know the LORD's thoughts or understand his plan. These nations don't know that he is gathering them together to be beaten and trampled like bundles of grain on a threshing floor. NLT*

These scriptures refer to “evil nations seeking to conquer and capture the inheritance that God had given to Israel.” The evil mentioned in these verses obviously refers to evil intentions with regard to Israel. It is an evil that has persisted since the genesis of Israel. Whoever these prophecies originally applied to they also fit the situation today in which numerous nations are determined to conquer Israel and disinherit the Jews from their God given land. Jeremiah and Micah loudly warn those nations that God will ultimately uproot them from their own lands and destroy them. Micah further states that these nations do not yet know God’s thoughts nor understand His (prophetic) plans in which He plans to bring them out of their hiding places and trample upon them like bundles of grain on a threshing floor.

THE DEFEAT OF THE ASSYRIANS FORETOLD

The Assyrians were consistent historic enemies of Israel from the very beginning of Israel’s origins. Assyria was a large ancient kingdom between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers that dominated the ancient world from the ninth to the seventh century B.C. After defeating the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, the Assyrians carried away thousands of Israelites and resettled them in other parts of the Assyrian Empire. This was a blow from which the nation of Israel never recovered. The religion of the Assyrians, much like that of the Babylonians, emphasized the worship of nature particularly the sun god. The chief god was Asshur a god of war, conquest, and military strength. The pagan worship of the Assyrians was soundly condemned by several prophets of the Old Testament. (Isaiah 10:5; Ezekiel 16:28; Hosea 8:9)

Ancient Assyria included large areas of Turkey, Iraq, Syria **and Iran.**

***Psalms 83:8** Assyria has joined them, too, and is allied with the descendants of Lot.
NLT*

The fact that Asaph states that Assyria (which includes Iran) has “joined them too” indicates some initial degree of (geographic, ideological and political) separation from the immediate group. Since ancient Assyria included a large portion of modern Iran, this may well indicate the nature of Iran’s proxy participation in the plan of attack.

GOD'S WARNING TO ASSYRIA

Isaiah 10:16-19

- ¹⁶ Listen now, king of Assyria! Because of all your evil boasting, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a plague among your proud troops, and a flaming fire will ignite your glory.
- ¹⁷ The LORD, the Light of Israel and the Holy One, will be a flaming fire that will destroy them. In a single night he will burn those thorns and briars, the Assyrians.
- ¹⁸ Assyria's vast army is like a magnificent forest, yet it will be destroyed. The LORD will completely destroy Assyria's warriors, and they will waste away like sick people in a plague.
- ¹⁹ Only a few from all that mighty army will survive — so few that a child could count them! NLT

Jehovah, the Light and the Holy One of Israel, will like a flaming fire completely destroy Assyria in a single night (V17). He will totally devastate and destroy their armies. The Assyrians will be like a great forest, burnt to the ground. (Psalm 83:14, 15). In the process of burning down the Assyrian army God will destroy all the thorns and briars that have constantly pricked and injured Israel. The Assyrians will ultimately come to know and understand that Jehovah alone is the sovereign Lord of the universe. Thorns and briars are often used as symbols of the destructive treatment meted out by enemies of Israel. God likens the Assyrians to thorns and briars and predicts how He will eventually destroy them by fire.

Ezekiel 28:23-24

- ²³ "Then everyone will know that **I AM** the LORD.
- ²⁴ No longer will Israel's scornful neighbors prick and tear at her like thorns and briars. For then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD. NLT

Isaiah 27:3-5

- ⁴ My anger against Israel will be gone. If I find briars and thorns bothering her, I will burn them up.
- ⁵ These enemies will be spared only if they surrender and beg for peace and protection." NLT

Isaiah 10:24-27

- ²⁴ So this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: "My people in Jerusalem, do not be afraid of the Assyrians when they oppress you just as the Egyptians did long ago.

These scriptures affirm that the citizens of Jerusalem are uniquely MY people, says Jehovah Sabaoth. It also reiterates that God will arise in anger to destroy the Assyrian armies whenever they rise up against Israel.

Isaiah 10:25,26

- ²⁵ It will not last very long. In a little while my anger against you will end, and then my anger will rise up to destroy them."

²⁶ *The LORD Almighty will beat them with his whip, as he did when Gideon triumphed over the Midianites at the rock of Oreb, or when the LORD's staff was raised to drown the Egyptian army in the sea.*

The war waged against them will not last very long. Once the predicted battle is enjoined God will swiftly bring defeat to Israel's enemies as He did against Midian. (Judges 8) The anger that God once held against Israel will end and will be re-directed against her enemies.

***Isaiah 10:27** In that day the LORD will end the bondage of his people. He will break the yoke of slavery and lift it from their shoulders. NLT*

In ancient times thousands of Jews had fled to the East to seek refuge in nations that have ultimately become Muslim countries. In such circumstances because they would not become Muslims, they were treated as kafirs (un-believers) and came under the Dhimmi laws of Islam that virtually rendered them as slaves and liable to heavy taxation. God is going to deliver His people from every nation in which they have been mistreated. He will bring them back to Jerusalem not to be decimated again as they were in the holocaust but so that they may live in safety and security.

In such circumstances Jews were treated as "Dhimmis." This term denotes several severe restrictions (imposed by Islam upon Non Muslims in their midst), such as a poll tax known as the jizya, which complemented the Islamic tax paid by the Muslim subjects, or Zakat, - also a restricted freedom of religion and worship, requiring political loyalty to the ruling empire This status was originally imposed upon on non-Muslims who were People of the book (i.e. Jews and Christians),but was later extended to include Hindus and Buddhists. (Wikipedia Encyclopedia).

In the Last Days the descendants of those refugees will be brought back to Israel to witness an enormous, supernatural victory and to experience a remarkable moment when the Messiah reveals His true identity. The circumstances in Israel at this current time are ready for such a divine intervention. Israel's enemies are threatening them with an attack which, if God did not intervene would be capable an annihilating the nation. World shaking events are about to take place and we who profess to belong to the LORD must be awake and alert taking our place on the watch tower and cry out to God on behalf of His chosen people Israel. We are presently living in the Last Days. God is ready to act on behalf of His people and we must stand with them spiritually in the great battle that is taking place.

GOD'S MERCY ON JACOB'S DESCENDANTS

Isaiah 14:1-5

¹ *But the LORD will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. Israel will be his special people once again. He will bring them back to settle once again in their own land. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and become a part of the people of Israel.*

God will have mercy on His special people once again (V1). Although the sons of Ishmael are also of the seed of Abraham, and God has prophetically reserved for them special unique blessings, it is upon the descendants of Jacob (Israel) that He will bestow the

promised fruit of the Abrahamic promise.

Isaiah 14:2

The nations of the world will help the LORD's people to return, and those who come to live in their land will serve them. Those who captured Israel will be captured, and Israel will rule over its enemies.

God will settle (thoroughly and permanently establish) His people in their land once again (V1). Redeemed Gentiles (Goyim) from many different nations will join them to become part of the people of Israel (V1). Numerous nations of the world will help the Jews to return to their land again and will serve them there (V2).

Isaiah 14:3 - 5

- 3 In that wonderful day when the LORD gives his people rest from sorrow and fear, from slavery and chains,*
4 you will taunt the king of Babylon. You will say, "The mighty man has been destroyed. Yes, your insolence is ended.
5 For the LORD has crushed your wicked power and broken your evil rule. NLT

Israel will gain ascendancy over all her previous enemies (V 2b). Those who have historically taken Israel prisoner will become the prisoners of Israel. The LORD gives his people rest from sorrow and fear, from slavery and chains (V3). The king of Babylon will be destroyed. His insolence will end (V4)

(The king of Babylon is the Prince of Persia the spiritual principality that still rules that region. Daniel 10:13, and 10:20).

Jeremiah 31:6-9

- 6 For there shall be a day When the watchmen (Natsarim*) will cry on Mount Ephraim, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the LORD our God.'"*
7 For thus says the LORD: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save (Yasha H3467) Your people, The remnant of Israel!'
8 Behold, I will bring them from the North Country, And gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame,
The woman with child and the one who labors with child, together;
A great throng shall return there.
*9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn. NKJV (Emphasis added) (*Natsarim is the Modern Hebrew word for "Christians").*

Jeremiah predicts that there will come a day when Christian watchmen (Zionists) will turn their faces towards Jerusalem and urge their brothers with the cry "*Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the LORD our God.*" These "Gentile Zionists" will travel to Jerusalem to worship the

Lord of Hosts there. For the Lord Himself will dwell there.

ISRAEL WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

Isaiah 44:21-23

²¹ *"Pay attention, O Israel, for you are my servant. I, the LORD, made you, and I will not forget to help you.*

Israel is God's servant whom He will never forget (V 21). He will surely help them in their greatest hour of need (V 21). Those Christians who believe that God has finished with Israel will have to think again when they see God beginning to honour and exalt Israel above all nations.

Psalms 137:5-6

⁵ *If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill upon the harp.*

⁶ *May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I fail to remember you, if I don't make Jerusalem my highest joy. NLT*

Isaiah 49:15-16

¹⁵ *"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for a child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!*

¹⁶ *See, I have written your name on my hand. NLT*

Isaiah 44:22 *I have swept away your sins like the morning mists. I have scattered your offenses like the clouds. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free."*

God has paid the price to set Israel free when they return to Him. He has swept away their sins like the morning mist (V 22). God will sweep away the sins of Israel at the fountain He will open for cleansing sin and iniquity - Zechariah 13:1.

Isaiah 44:23 *Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done this wondrous thing. Shout, O earth! Break forth into song, O mountains and forests and every tree! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob and is glorified in Israel. NLT*

God will be glorified in Israel (V 23). How amazing that Israel that has often been considered the off scouring of humanity will then become a uniquely blessed nation because of the great evidence of the glory of God that rests on them. God reiterates His promise that as surely as He lives, at the appointed time, all His children will return to their land Him and to Him.

Isaiah 44:19 - 21

¹⁹ *"Even the most desolate parts of your abandoned land will soon be crowded with your people. Your enemies who enslaved you will be far away.*

²⁰ *The generations born in exile will return and say, 'We need more room! It's crowded here!'*

²¹ *Then you will think to yourself, 'Who has given me all these descendants? For most of my children were killed, and the rest were carried away into exile. I*

was left here all alone. Who bore these children? Who raised them for me?' "

Even the most desolate parts of their land that have been abandoned and denuded for centuries will become crowded by a greatly enlarged population. Many generations that have been born in exile in the Diaspora will return from exile. So great will be their numbers that they will comment, "We need more room. It is too crowded here!"

Isaiah 44:22, 23

- ²² *This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will give a signal to the godless nations. They will carry your little sons back to you in their arms; they will bring your daughters on their shoulders.*
- ²³ *Kings and queens will serve you. They will care for all your needs. They will bow to the earth before you and lick the dust from your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD. Those who wait for me will never be put to shame."*

Gentiles from many nations will bring Jews back to their homeland in their arms and upon their shoulders. They will care for all their needs. Israel's enemies will bow before those they previously abhorred them and lick the dust from their feet. Israel will be honoured by God before all the nations on earth.

Isaiah 44:24 – 26

- ²⁴ *Who can snatch the plunder of war from the hands of a warrior? Who can demand that a tyrant let his captives go?*
- ²⁵ *But the LORD says, "The captives of warriors will be released, and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved. For I will fight those who fight you, and I will save your children.*
- ²⁶ *I will feed your enemies with their own flesh. They will be drunk with rivers of their own blood. All the world will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel." NLT*

GOD'S ANGER UPON ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

Isaiah 30:27-32

- ²⁷ *Look! The LORD is coming from far away, burning with anger, surrounded by a thick, rising smoke. His lips are filled with fury; his words consume like fire.*
- ²⁸ *His anger pours out like a flood on his enemies, sweeping them all away. He will sift out the proud nations. He will bridle them and lead them off to their destruction.*
- ²⁹ *But the people of God will sing a song of joy, like the songs at the holy festivals. You will be filled with joy, as when a flautist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem — the mountain of the LORD — to the Rock of Israel.*
- ³⁰ *And the LORD will make his majestic voice heard. With angry indignation he will bring down his mighty arm on his enemies. It will descend with devouring flames, with cloudbursts, thunderstorms, and huge hailstones, bringing their destruction.*
- ³¹ *At the LORD's command, the Assyrians will be shattered. He will strike them down with his rod.*

- ³² *And as the LORD strikes them, his people will keep time with the music of tambourines and harps. NLT*

Ezekiel 36:1-5

- ¹ *1 "Son of man, prophesy to Israel's mountains. Give them this message: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD!*
- ² *This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Your enemies have taunted you, saying, 'Aha! Now the ancient heights belong to us!'*
- ³ *Therefore, son of man, give the mountains of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: Your enemies have attacked you from all directions, and now you are possessed by many nations. You are the object of much mocking and slander.*
- ⁴ *Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. He speaks to the hills and mountains, ravines and valleys, and to ruined wastes and long-deserted cities that have been destroyed and mocked by foreign nations everywhere.*
- ⁵ *This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My jealous anger is on fire against these nations, especially Edom, because they have shown utter contempt for me by gleefully taking my land for themselves as plunder. NLT*

Isaiah 30:27,28

- ²⁷ *Look! The LORD is coming from far away, burning with anger, surrounded by a thick, rising smoke. His lips are filled with fury; his words consume like fire.*
- ²⁸ *His anger pours out like a flood on his enemies, sweeping them all away. He will sift out the proud nations. He will bridle them and lead them off to their destruction.*

The LORD is so often pictured as a God of love, mercy and compassion that we often forget that He is also at times a God of anger. The sins of humanity frequently stir him to anger and one day the world will witness such outbursts. The LORD will descend with great anger and fury upon Israel's enemies to accomplish their destruction (V27) God's anger is especially fierce towards Edom the descendants of Esau, because of the long history of their hatred towards His covenant people. He will bridle and lead Israel's enemies off to devastation. (Vs 27, 28). God's arm will fall with indignation upon all His enemies with fire, thunder and hailstorms. (V 30).

Isaiah 30:29 - 32

- ²⁹ *But the people of God will sing a song of joy, like the songs at the holy festivals. You will be filled with joy, as when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem — the mountain of the LORD — to the Rock of Israel.*
- ³⁰ *And the LORD will make his majestic voice heard. With angry indignation he will bring down his mighty arm on his enemies. It will descend with devouring flames, with cloudbursts, thunderstorms, and huge hailstones, bringing their destruction.*
- ³¹ *At the LORD's command, the Assyrians will be shattered. He will strike them down with his rod.*
- ³² *And as the LORD strikes them, his people will keep time with the music of tambourines and harps. NLT*

The people of God will sing songs of joy as at a Holy festival. (Israel frequently refers to the

Feasts of Jehovah as the “Seasons of our joy” and so they will be to redeemed Israel). Israel will rejoice with tambourines and harps (V32) In the Bible tambourines and harps are typical worship instruments with which to glorify the Lord. These instruments, particularly tambourines, typify extreme joy and great merriment. They also symbolise marriage celebrations.

A NEW SHARP THRESHING INSTRUMENT

Isaiah 41:11-16

- ¹¹ *"See, all your angry enemies lie there, confused and ashamed. Anyone who opposes you will die.*
¹² *You will look for them in vain. They will all be gone!*
¹³ *I am holding you by your right hand — I, the LORD your God. And I say to you, 'Do not be afraid. I am here to help you.*
¹⁴ *Despised though you are, O Israel, don't be afraid, for I will help you. I am the LORD, your Redeemer. I am the Holy One of Israel.'*

Israel's enemies will all be confused and ashamed. (Psalm 83:16-18, Zech 12:4). Israel will no longer be despised or afraid of anyone. God will deliver them from all fear. (Vs 13, 14).

Isaiah 41:15, 16

- ¹⁵ *You will be a new threshing instrument with many sharp teeth. You will tear all your enemies apart, making chaff of mountains.*
¹⁶ *You will toss them in the air, and the wind will blow them all away; a whirlwind will scatter them. And the joy of the LORD will fill you to overflowing. You will glory in the Holy One of Israel. NLT*

Israel will tear their enemies apart like a new sharp threshing instrument. (V 15). Since the inception of Israel in 1948, the nation has produced a remarkable Defence Force which is renowned and feared throughout the world. It has succeeded in defeating many coalitions of enemy nations that have had much larger armies. However, in the war predicted by Asaph and Zechariah, this remarkable military force will be endued by the supernatural power of God to achieve a victory far greater than flesh and blood could ever win. Israel will rejoice and glory in the Holy One of Israel. The whole nation will ascribe honour and glory to God for the miraculous victory He has achieved for them.

One of the most remarkable things that has transpired in Israel during its brief modern history has been the formation of one of the most effective armies in the world. Ezekiel prophesied about the birth of this army and we have seen the prophecy partially fulfilled. Though numerically small compared to the armed forces of many other nations Israel's defence force has proved itself to be powerfully effective beyond its size.

Ezekiel 37:10

- ¹⁰ *So I spoke as he commanded me, and the wind entered the bodies, and they began to breathe. They all came to life and stood up on their feet — a great army of them. NLT*

However, in the battle predicted in Psalm 83 and Zechariah 12 this already amazing army

will be strengthened as never before through the direct help of Yaweh Sabaoth who is the Commander of heaven's armies. The whole world will witness the supernatural empowering of this already remarkable army and the astounding victory that will be attributed to them.

Isaiah 41:20 *Everyone (Every nation) will see this miracle and understand that it is the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, who did it. NLT*

The prophecy of Zechariah is in fact one of the most powerful in all the Scriptures. It contains remarkable prophecy concerning both the first and second coming of Messiah. Those concerning the first appearance have already been faithfully fulfilled and the ones concerning the End Times will also be fulfilled. When considered through the lens of the prophetic future, Zechariah has many powerful predictions concerning God's End Time plans for Israel.

THE MIGHTY LORD OF ARMIES

One of the very interesting features of Zechariah's prophecy is the number of times he refers to God as Yaweh Sabaoth which is often translated Lord of Hosts which some say refers to His rule over the astrophysical heavens. However, another translation is the "Lord of Armies", a name that has special application to His military style role in End Time events when He reveals Himself graphically in great power and awesome authority. The translation of the Bible called "God's Word" uses this name very frequently. E.g.

Zechariah 8:1 - 3

- ⁴ *1 The LORD of Armies spoke his word.*
- ⁵ *This is what the LORD of Armies says: I am very jealous about Zion. I am fiercely possessive of it.*
- ⁶ *This is what the LORD says: I will return to Zion and live in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth. The mountain of the LORD of Armies will be called the holy mountain.*

GOD REVEALS SEVERAL IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT HIMSELF

We learn again that one aspect of God's being is that of a commander in chief of a heavenly based army. In such a role He will effectively defend His people and their land. He will also attack and destroy Israel's enemies. We also see that God has a very special and unique eternal love relationship with Jerusalem (Zion) a place about which He is both jealous and possessive. God has a very definite determined plan to return to Jerusalem to live there. The land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem will become the general headquarters of the mighty ruler of the nations. Jerusalem will become known as the City of truth and the mountain of the Lord there will become well known as the Holy Mountain.

Jeremiah 31:3, 4

- ³ *The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.*
- ⁴ *Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, And shall go forth in the dances of those who*

rejoice. NKJV (A symbol of a marriage feast).

All of these statements strongly contradict the idea that God has finished with Israel and that she has been demoted from the role God first envisaged for her. On the contrary they reinforce these statements which declare His everlasting love and eternal plans for Israel. Numerous other verses in Zechariah confirm God's loving care for Israel and will be demonstrated and brought to pass through His military style interventions.

Zechariah 8:6 - 9

- 6 This is what the LORD of Armies says: It may seem impossible to the few remaining people in those days, but will it seem impossible to me? declares the LORD of Armies.*
- 7 This is what the LORD of Armies says: I am going to save my people from the land where the sun rises and from the land where the sun sets.*
- 8 I will bring them back, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God, who is faithful and just.*
- 9 This is what the LORD of Armies says: Be strong so that the temple might be rebuilt, you people who are presently listening to the words from the mouths of the prophets who spoke when the foundation for the house of the LORD of Armies was laid.*

Zechariah 8:13-19

- 13 Just as you, people of Judah and people of Israel, have been a curse among the nations, so I will now save you, and you will become a blessing. Don't be afraid. Let your hands work hard.*
- 14 This is what the LORD of Armies says: When your ancestors made me angry, I made plans to destroy you, declares the LORD of Armies, and I didn't change my plans.*
- 15 So now I have again made plans, but this time to do good to Jerusalem and the people of Judah. Don't be afraid.*
- 16 You must do these things: Speak the truth to each other. Give correct and fair verdicts for peace in your courts.*
- 17 Don't even think of doing evil to each other. Don't enjoy false testimony. I hate all these things, declares the LORD.*
- 18 The LORD of Armies spoke his word to me again.*
- 19 This is what the LORD of Armies says: The fast in the fourth month, the fast in the fifth month, the fast in the seventh month, and the fast in the tenth month will become joyful and glad occasions as well as happy festivals for the nation of Judah. So love truth and peace.*

DEATH WILL NOT BE YOUR FATE

Isaiah 51:14 - 16

- 14 Soon all you captives will be released! Imprisonment, starvation, and death will not be your fate!*
- 15 For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea, causing its waves to roar. My name is the LORD Almighty.*

¹⁶ *And I have put my words in your mouth and hidden you safely within my hand. I set all the stars in space and established the earth. I am the one who says to Israel, 'You are mine!'" NLT*

Initially Israel will appear to be staring death and defeat in the face but God will snatch victory for Israel from the jaws of apparent defeat. He will magnificently and powerfully achieve a miraculous breath-taking triumph on their behalf. The fate of Israel at this time will not be death or defeat, but an abundant life the like of which they have never previously experienced. The One whose name is the Lord Almighty, who established the earth and set all the stars in space, will say to Israel "You are Mine."

THE VALLEY OF ACHOR TO THE DOOR OF HOPE

God often describes Israel as His own personal vineyard. The Bible often depicts a vineyard as a prized possession. The husbandman lavishes great care on it anticipating a fruitful reward. He cares for and tends his vineyard with great diligence and care. In the prophetic story of Hosea, God depicts Israel dwelling in a valley of Achor, which name means trouble and disaster, but God promises that He will deliver them from that valley and bring her to a door of hope where He will cause her to pass through and dwell in a fruitful land.

Hosea 2:15 *I will give her vineyards there. I will make the valley of Achor [Disaster] a door of hope.[Tiqvah] Then she will respond as she did when she was young, as she did when she came out of Egypt.*

Israel's National Hope

The national anthem of Israel Ha Tikvah describes the yearning in every Jewish heart for the land that God has promised them.

As long as in the Jewish spirit is yearning deep in the heart,
With eyes turned towards the East, looking toward Zion,
Then our hope – the two thousand year hope – will not be lost:
To be a free people in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

God promises Israel that He will turn the valley of Achor (Trouble and distress) into a fruitful place of hope. It will be a place ideal for the pasture of flocks.

Isaiah 65:9 – 10

⁹ *I will preserve a remnant of the people of Israel and of Judah to possess my land. Those I choose will inherit it and serve me there.*

¹⁰ *For my people who have searched for me, the plain of Sharon will again be filled with flocks, and the valley of Achor will be a place to pasture herds. NLT*

Jews will be released from the valley of Achor (Trouble). (V10) They will enter into a land of peace and prosperity through the door of hope (Tikvah) (Isaiah 35:2) God says, Hosea 2:15 *I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope. She will give herself to me there, as she did long ago when she was young, when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt. NLT*

Israel's youth will be restored and she will once again be as she was when God delivered her from Egypt filled with the thrill of divine deliverance. They will serve the Lord (V9). They will be fruitful and prosperous, their fields filled with flocks (V10). Israel in the near future will become like those captives who returned from Babylon.

Psalms 126:1-3

- 1 *When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream.*
- 2 *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."*
- 3 *The LORD has done great things for us, And we are glad. NKJV*

Israel's miraculous deliverance and subsequent exaltation by God before all her former enemies will be like a dream come true. After the many nightmares that have marked her long history this magnificent reversal of their fate will cause delirious national rejoicing in their great God and redeemer.

REVEALING HIS LOVE AND COMPASSION

Isaiah 30:18 – 21 God says to Israel

- 18 *But the LORD still waits for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the LORD is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for him to help them.*
- 19 *O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He will be gracious if you ask for help. He will respond instantly to the sound of your cries.*

God eagerly waits for His people to return to Him to in order to show to them His love and compassion on their behalf (V.18). He will reveal the validity of His faithfulness and mercy (V18).

Isaiah 30:20 – 21

- 20 *Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and affliction for drink, he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes,*
- 21 *and you will hear a voice say, "This is the way; turn around and walk here." NLT*

God will guide their every step.

Isaiah 30:21 *Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. NKJV*

GOD IS ALWAYS ON TIME

Isaiah 49:8-26

- 8 *This is what the LORD says: "At just the right time, I will respond to you. On the day of salvation, I will help you. I will give you as a token and pledge to Israel. This will prove that I will re-establish the land of Israel and reassign it to its own people again.*
- 9 *Through you I am saying to the prisoners of darkness, 'Come out! I am giving you your freedom!' They will be my sheep, grazing in green pastures and on hills that were previously bare.*
- 10 *They will neither hunger nor thirst. The searing sun and scorching desert winds will not reach them anymore. For the LORD in his mercy will lead them beside cool waters.*
- 11 *And I will make my mountains into level paths for them. The highways will be raised above the valleys.*

- ¹² *See, my people will return from far away, from lands to the north and west, and from as far south as Egypt."*
- ¹³ *Sing for joy, O heavens! Rejoice, O earth! Burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on them in their sorrow.*

God promises Israel that at the precisely correct and decisive moment (Isaiah 49:8) - the very moment of destiny, He will step into Israel's circumstance to save and deliver them. Just when Israel thinks that God has forgotten and deserted them, He will prove that it would be impossible for Him to forget them since their name is engraved on the palms of His hands.

In verse 9, God promises the "prisoners of darkness, Come out I will give you freedom." Further that He will give them "green pastures on hills that were previously bare." I believe that the prison in which these people were kept was a prison of religion. The thing that will deliver them from a prison of darkness is light and this light will be Messianic illumination which will bring them into live green pastures.

Isaiah 49:14 - 18

- ¹⁴ *Yet Jerusalem says, "The LORD has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us."*
- ¹⁵ *"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for a child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!"*
- ¹⁶ *See, I have written your name on my hand. Ever before me is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins.*
- ¹⁷ *Soon your descendants will come back, and all who are trying to destroy you will go away.*
- ¹⁸ *Look and see, for all your children will come back to you. As surely as I live," says the LORD, "they will be like jewels or bridal ornaments for you to display.*

STANDING UP FOR ISRAEL WITH POWER AND MIGHT

Isaiah 33:10-13

- ¹⁰ *But the LORD says: "I will stand up and show my power and might.*

God will "stand up and demonstrate His supreme power and might" on Israel's behalf. God is often depicted as being seated on a throne but there are special occasions when He is said to stand up as when Jesus stood to receive Stephen's spirit Acts 7:55. Here we see God standing up to demonstrate His great power and might on behalf of His people Israel.

Isaiah 33:11

- ¹¹ *You Assyrians will gain nothing by all your efforts. Your own breath will turn to fire and kill you.*

The Assyrian will destroy themselves with their own fire (V 11). Does this verse depict what has come to be known as "friendly fire" when people are killed by the fire from their own comrades? Or does it foretell a confused disunity in which weapons are turned on the members of the same army?

Isaiah 33:12, 13

- ¹² *Your people will be burned up completely, like thorns cut down and tossed in a fire.*
¹³ *Listen to what I have done, you nations far away! And you that are near, acknowledge my might!" NLT*

All nations, far and near, will acknowledge God's supreme might, power and authority (V13). The powerful intervention that occurs on behalf of Israel will be so overwhelming that it could never be mistaken as being mere human effort and accomplishment. It will be very clear and obvious that a supernatural source of power has intervened.

THE REDEEMER WILL COME TO JERUSALEM

Isaiah 59:20 - 21

- ²⁰ *"The Redeemer will come to Jerusalem," says the LORD, "to buy back those in Israel who have turned from their sins.*
²¹ *And this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit will not leave them, and neither will these words I have given you. They will be on your lips and on the lips of your children and your children's children forever. I, the LORD, have spoken!*

The Redeemer will come to Jerusalem. (V20) This reinforces the centrality and supreme importance of Jerusalem to the prophetic plan and purpose of Jehovah. God has certainly not abandoned Jerusalem. Just the opposite is true. The redeemer will first come to Zion and afterwards His voice will come forth from Zion (Joel 3:16). Jerusalem will become the centre of the earth, geographically, politically and spiritually. The Messiah's presence there will make it so.

God's Spirit and words will never leave Israel. The impact that this encounter will have upon Israel will not be a momentary or fleeting thing, it will continue throughout all their future generations. God's Words will be on the lips of their children and grandchildren throughout all succeeding generations (V21).

At this point let me remind you that the Bible clearly teaches that when the Messiah comes again it will be to Jerusalem that He returns. The Church has embraced such a Western World mindset that it often forgets or ignores this very important fact. They speak about Christ's return to the earth without emphasising the important point that His return will not be to New York, London or Paris, but specifically to Jerusalem. There is so much truth regarding His return that the Church consciously or sub-consciously ignores or dismisses.

THE DAY AND THE HOUR

In recent times I have been made aware again of important statements that Jesus made concerning the details of His return. In each of them He made very clear the fact that many of His disciples would be caught unprepared by the time and manner of His coming. When He said that they would not know either the day nor the hour of His return, He intimated that many would be caught totally unprepared for it. The time and perhaps the manner of His return would take them by surprise! I am sure that this is true of the church in this hour. Certainly we do not know the precise time that Messiah will appear but neither do we know the manner of His coming. It is clearly obvious that very few believers expect Him to appear first, personally and privately to Israel as in the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10 when

Israel will gaze on the face (and scars?) of Him who was once pierced.

Matthew 24:36 *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. NKJV*

Matthew 24:42-43 *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. NKJV*

Matthew 24:44 *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. NKJV*

Matthew 24:50 *the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of. NKJV*

Matthew 25:13 *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. NKJV*

The oft repeated admonition of scripture regarding the return of the Messiah is WATCH. Be awake, alert and prepared for His return. Read the scriptures that specifically refer to His return. Search the scriptures diligently and prayerfully. Watch for the signs in the earth around that the Bridegroom is about to return for His Bride. Many sincere Christians today are so absorbed with the things of this present life that they spend little time in consideration of eternal matters.

The parable of the ten virgins emphasises the same thought. All ten virgins knew that there was to be a wedding, but five of them lived in self imposed ignorance and did not know precisely when the bridegroom would appear. The lack of sufficient oil represents their lack of sufficient knowledge of exactly when and how the Bridegroom would actually appear. As a direct result the Bridegroom appeared at a time that they did not actually expect Him. Consequently they were caught unprepared. I believe that this will happen again. The Bridegroom - Messiah will appear at a time and in a manner that many of His disciples will not expect Him to come. That appearance may be privately to the nation of Israel as indicated in Zechariah 12:10.

Matthew 25:1-10

- 1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.*
- 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*
- 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,*
- 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*
- 5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.*
- 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'*
- 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.*
- 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'*
- 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'*
- 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went*

in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. NKJV

I personally believe that Isaiah 60 refers to this subsequent time frame presently within our discussion. This amazing prophecy is not about the Millennium, it may well be about the period immediately after the amazing event predicted in Zechariah 12:10. As certain as this war now is, so certain according to Zechariah is the predicted aftermath, when the Messiah will make His appearance to the nation of Israel. Many people including Christians are becoming aware that war on Israel is inevitable, unavoidable and imminent. But very few are linking the ensuing result of this war to a literal appearance of the Messiah to Israel. I personally believe that it will begin to be fulfilled immediately after Zechariah 12:10.

Isaiah 60:11 "Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all the nations to see! For the glory of the LORD is shining upon you.

This rousing cry to arise is not made to the Gentile Church but directly to Israel. It follows immediately after Isaiah 59:20-21 which reinforces the fact that the Redeemer/Messiah will initially come back to Zion which is Jerusalem.

Isaiah 59:20 - 21

²⁰ "The Redeemer will come to Zion, (Jerusalem) And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD.

²¹ "As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore." NKJV

The Shekinah glory of God will focus upon Israel, drawing the attention of the entire world to that city. Picture the whole world enveloped in spiritual darkness experiencing the fear and confusion that would inevitably ensue. The only light in the world will be the brilliant rays of God's glory that focus directly upon Israel. All the nations on earth will direct their steadfast gaze and attention upon Israel and Jerusalem. Gross darkness will cover all nations on earth except Israel.

Isaiah 60:2, 3

² *Darkness as black as night will cover all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the LORD will shine over you.*

³ *All nations will come to your light. Mighty kings will come to see your radiance.*

The nations around the world will be attracted to Israel. Jerusalem will be like a giant beacon magnet drawing the attention of all mankind to the centre on which it is directed and focussed. Israel will be exalted in the eyes of all nations. This magnificent light will radiate from the Messiah's presence in Zion.

Isaiah 60:4, 5

⁴ *"Look and see, for everyone is coming home! Your sons are coming from distant lands; your little daughters will be carried home.*

⁵ *Your eyes will shine, and your hearts will thrill with joy, for merchants from around*

the world will come to you. They will bring you the wealth of many lands.

Jewish migrants will arrive in Israel with eyes shining and hearts filled with joy. The new citizens will greet merchants from around the world who will bring their skills and wealth to the land in order to restore the cities and the nation to a new magnificent condition.

Isaiah 60:6, 7

- 6 Vast caravans of camels will converge on you, the camels of Midian and Ephah. From Sheba they will bring gold and incense for the worship of the LORD.*
- 7 The flocks of Kedar will be given to you, and the rams of Nebaioth will be brought for my altars. In that day I will make my Temple magnificent.*

The camels of Midian and Ephah are symbolic of Arab nations that are also currently Muslim countries. Offerings will be brought to Jehovah from Arabian desert nations. This is a remarkable prophecy concerning the sons of Ishmael who were previously Muslims, who have been blessed by the revelation of the Jewish Messiah. They will stream into Israel and Jerusalem not with intentions to wreck and destroy them with terrorist activities. They will now come with the good intention to bless and enrich the city of the great King with an even greater commitment than they previously gave to Allah.

Isaiah 60:8, 9

- 8 "And what do I see flying like clouds to Israel, like doves to their nests?*
- 9 They are the ships of Tarshish, reserved to bring the people of Israel home.*
- 9 They will bring their wealth with them, and it will bring great honor to the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he will fill you with splendor.*

Doves are well known as homing birds that can find their way home from wherever they are as will Jewish migrants from every part of the earth. Arab merchants likewise will find their way to Israel to bring their wealth to Jerusalem. They will be joined by many artisans from many other Gentile nations whose skills will also be used for the building up of Jerusalem. The ships of Tarshish may refer to large cargo boats or perhaps even to camels which are often known as the "ships of the desert." They can glide across desert sands with ease, and still provide one of the most important modes of transportation for people in desert areas.

Isaiah 60:10 - 12

- 10 "Foreigners will come to rebuild your cities. Kings and rulers will send you aid. For though I have destroyed you in my anger, I will have mercy on you through my grace.*
- 11 Your gates will stay open around the clock to receive the wealth of many lands. The kings of the world will be led as captives in a victory procession.*
- 12 For the nations that refuse to be your allies will be destroyed.*

In contrast to the nations who send trade and business people to enrich Israel, many rebellious non compliant nations will be brought to financial ruin. These might well be nations that could have helped and assisted Israel in her great time of need but for political reasons deliberately chose not to do so. Many historic nations in Europe will be among them, but so too will be younger nations like the once proud USA. These may be the nations

alluded to in

Zechariah 10:3 *"My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, The house of Judah, And will make them as His royal horse in the battle. NKJV*

I believe this refers to national leaders (shepherds) and their nations who made false predictions and statements concerning Israel. They led their nations against the nation of Israel instead of being for her, and thus invited the judgment of God upon themselves and their nations. God will make The House of Judah as His royal horse in the battle against those guilty nations.

Isaiah 60:13, 14

¹³ *The glory of Lebanon will be yours — the forests of cypress, fir, and pine — to beautify my sanctuary. My Temple will be magnificent!*

¹⁴ *"The children of your tormentors will come and bow before you. Those who despised you will kiss your feet. They will call you the City of the LORD, and Zion of the Holy One of Israel. NLT*

Israel will inherit the glories of Lebanon as God expands their territory. The descendants of Israel's former enemies will bow before Jehovah. The sad current situation in Lebanon today is that under severe duress from Syria, the country has given free rein to Hezbollah the terrorist group operating in Lebanon which is fervently preparing for a major onslaught upon Israel. Such an action which now appears inevitable will prove to be a major disaster for Lebanon. Splendid timbers from Lebanon will be used to beautify God's restored Temple in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 60:15 *"Though you were once despised and hated and rebuffed by all, you will be beautiful forever. You will be a joy to all generations, for I will make you so.*

The Jewish people who have been so often been downtrodden and despised for many centuries, will be beautiful forever. The world has ascribed a pathetic and wretched Shylock image to Jews throughout the world. It has fostered discrimination, hatred and persecution that has been blatantly and savagely anti Semetic. But all of that is about to change dramatically and Jews and Israel will be ascribed esteem and admiration instead of discrimination. The once despised Jews will be greatly envied because of all the blessings that God has given to them.

Isaiah 60:16 *Powerful kings and mighty nations will bring the best of their goods to satisfy your every need. You will know at last that I, the LORD, am your Savior and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.*

Powerful nations and their leaders will bring the best of their products and commodities to Jehovah in Jerusalem. The whole world will finally recognize that the Creator of the universe is also the Holy One of Israel. He is Israel's God and they are His people. In the light of such a relationship the nations will finally realise that to honour God they must also honour Israel.

Isaiah 60:17,18

- ¹⁷ *I will exchange your bronze for gold, your iron for silver, your wood for bronze, and your stones for iron. Peace and righteousness will be your leaders!*
- ¹⁸ *Violence will disappear from your land; the desolation and destruction of war will end. Salvation will surround you like city walls, and praise will be on the lips of all who enter there. NLT*

Prosperity and wealth will be the portion of Israel as God changes their bronze into gold and their iron into silver. There are many untapped riches in Israel that will provide great future prosperity. The people themselves have great intellectual and scientific potential that will increase enormously when the nation obtains the peace and protection of God. Peace and righteousness will displace violence throughout the land. God's salvation will surround Israel like city walls, and praise will be on the lips of all who enter those walls. The wonderful list of blessings that God will bestow continues into later chapters of Isaiah.

Isaiah 61:3-7

- ³ *To all who mourn in Israel, he will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair. For the LORD has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory.*
- ⁴ *They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities long ago destroyed. They will revive them, though they have been empty for many generations.*

All who have previously mourned over the destitute condition of Israel will be filled with joy as ancient cities are re-built and restored to their former glory. Cities and towns that have been long abandoned and are presently in ruins will be rebuilt in a more magnificent manner than previously. The poignant phrase "beauty for ashes" could well refer to the blessing that came upon Israel following their horrific treatment in the furnaces of the Nazi death camps.

Isaiah 61:5 *Foreigners will be your servants. They will feed your flocks and plow your fields and tend your vineyards.*

Foreigners (Gentiles) will feed flocks and plow the fields. This scene has been evidenced already in the many kibbutz's throughout Israel but it will be evidenced in a much greater and grander scale when Jerusalem arises to be manifestly blessed of their God.

Isaiah 61:6 - 9

- ⁶ *You will be called priests of the LORD, ministers of our God. You will be fed with the treasures of the nations and will boast in their riches.*
- ⁷ *Instead of shame and dishonor, you will inherit a double portion of prosperity and everlasting joy.*
- ⁸ *"For I, the LORD, love justice. I hate robbery and wrongdoing. I will faithfully reward my people for their suffering and make an everlasting covenant with them.*
- ⁹ *Their descendants will be known and honored among the nations. Everyone will realize that they are a people the LORD has blessed." NLT*

Israel's sufferings, ostracism, despising and death have been cruelly caused solely by their identification with Israel and the God of Israel. God will repay and reward them for their sufferings and fulfil an everlasting covenant with them. Israelis will be called priests of the

Lord and ministers of God (Exodus 19:6).

Their descendants will be highly honoured among the nations (V9). Israelis will come to the forefront on the world stage as entrepreneurs and business magnates.

RAISING THE ISRAELI FLAG

In the prophecy of Isaiah there are many wonderful predictions concerning God's eternal love for Israel and His determination in the Last days to re-gather them in their promised land and to restore them to Himself. One of the truly remarkable predictions is found in

Isaiah 11:12-14

- ¹² *He will raise a flag among the nations for Israel to rally around. He will gather the scattered people of Judah from the ends of the earth.*
- ¹³ *Then at last the jealousy between Israel and Judah will end. They will not fight against each other anymore.*
- ¹⁴ *They will join forces to swoop down on Philistia to the west. Together they will attack and plunder the nations to the east. They will occupy all the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. NLT*

THREE REMARKABLE PREDICTIONS

1. Israel will be united in victory as never before (V13). 2. They will swoop down on Philistia (Gaza) to the West. (V14). God will give them a manifest victory over the Palestinians who have been a major enemy for many generations which antagonism has increased in the Last days through the reign of terror imposed by Hamas. 3. They will also occupy *all the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon.* (V14)

Since 1948 when the State of Israel was officially founded, a unique flag has flown over the land. It is a flag that has given hope to millions of Jews who had been scattered across the earth. A unique and distinctive flag has been raised for Israel to rally around (V12). The adopted flag of the modern State of Israel includes two blue stripes on a white background with a blue Star in the centre. (Star of David in Hebrew: Magen David) This design was first displayed in Rishon-LeZion in 1885 and was also used at the First Zionist Congress in 1897 (Encyclopedia Judaica, 1971).

Its creation was inspired by the Tallith (the Jewish prayer shawl with blue stripes worn by Jews during prayer) as a symbol. The Star of David is a common symbol of the People of Israel from Biblical times. The flag was adopted officially on October 28, 1948 (25 Tishre, 5709) by the Speaker of the Provisional Council of State. The flag symbolizes the covering and protection of God over the nation.

ISRAEL'S SAVIOUR IS COMING!

Isaiah 62:10-12

- ¹⁰ *Go out! Prepare the highway for my people to return! Smooth out the road; pull out*

the boulders; raise a flag for all the nations to see.

- ¹¹ The LORD has sent this message to every land: "Tell the people of Israel, 'Look, your Savior is coming. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.' "
- ¹² *They will be called the Holy People and the People Redeemed by the LORD. And Jerusalem will be known as the Desirable Place and the City No Longer Forsaken.*
NLT

The prophet predicted that a national flag would be raised for all nations to see (V10). The Saviour/Redeemer will come to Jerusalem bringing His reward with Him (V11). The Hebrew word translated Saviour and in other versions LORD, or salvation, etc is Yesha H3468, from which the word Yeshua is derived. The Jews will be called a holy people (V12). Jerusalem will be a desirable place in which to live, no longer despised or forsaken (V12). Hence Yeshua is the promised Saviour of Israel!

YAWEH IS THE ONLY SAVIOUR

Isaiah 45:21-25

- ²¹ *For there is no other God but me — a just God and a Savior — no, not one!*
- ²² *Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other.*
- ²³ *I have sworn by my own name, and I will never go back on my word: Every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will confess allegiance to my name."*
- ²⁴ *The people will declare, "The LORD is the source of all my righteousness and strength." And all who were angry with him will come to him and be ashamed.*
- ²⁵ *In the LORD all the generations of Israel will be justified, and in him they will boast.*
NLT

Isaiah 45:21 says that Jehovah is the ONLY source of salvation for all peoples and nations. Since the previous verse quoted clearly intimates that Yeshua is Israel's Saviour - Isaiah 62:11. Then Isaiah 45: 21-22 clearly suggests that Yaweh and Yeshua are One (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Every knee and tongue will one day confess His Lordship. This is the original scripture from which the New Testament references arise.

Romans 14:11

- ¹¹ *For the Scriptures say, " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess allegiance to God.' "* NLT

Philippians 2:9-11

- ⁹ *God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name,*
- ¹⁰ *so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*
- ¹¹ *and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the*

Father. NLT

Isaiah 45:23, is closely tied to Isaiah 46 which predicts the ultimate downfall of Islam.

Isaiah 46:1-4

- ¹ *1 The idols of Babylon, Bel and Nebo, are being hauled away on ox carts. But look! The beasts are staggering under the weight!*
- ² *Both the idols and the ones carrying them are bowed down. The gods cannot protect the people, and the people cannot protect the gods. They go off into captivity together.*
- ³ *"Listen to me, all you who are left in Israel. I created you and have cared for you since before you were born.*
- ⁴ *I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you. NLT*

Isaiah 46:1 *I will punish Bel in Babylon and make him spew out what he has swallowed. The nations will no longer stream to him. And the wall of Babylon will fall. (New International Version)*

Bel in Babylon represents the origin of all false Eastern religions including Islam Buddhism and Hinduism. Bel will spew out all that he has swallowed and the nations will no longer swallow what he has spewed out. All generations of Israel and the Gentile nations will be justified and will boast in Jehovah.

Isaiah 46:3-4

- ³ *"Listen to me, all you who are left in Israel. I created you and have cared for you since before you were born.*
- ⁴ *I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you. NLT*

Isaiah 46:8-13

- ⁸ *"Do not forget this, you guilty ones.*
- ⁹ *And do not forget the things I have done throughout history. For I am God — I alone! I am God, and there is no one else like me.*
- ¹⁰ *Only I can tell you what is going to happen even before it happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.*
- ¹¹ *I will call a swift bird of prey from the east — a leader from a distant land who will come and do my bidding. I have said I would do it, and I will.*
- ¹² *Listen to me, you stubborn, evil people!*
- ¹³ *For I am ready to set things right, not in the distant future, but right now! I am ready to save Jerusalem and give my glory to Israel. NLT*

There is a critical prophetic moment in time when God will intervene to save Jerusalem and give His glory to Israel. There is a prophetic moment when God will be ready to set all things straight. That time is now imminent. God is speaking to Israel's enemies warning them to remember the things He has done for Israel down through their history which things prove that He alone is the true and mighty God. He also reminds those enemies that He knows everything that is going to happen before it comes to pass. Every plan of His, says

God will surely come to pass because he is able to do whatever He wishes. He also warns the enemies that in the End Times He will summon towards Israel a swift bird of prey from the East. This enemy will come against Israel like a bird of prey to devour the nation, but that leader from a distant land (Amadinejad?) will fly right into a trap that God has laid for it. This will herald the very moment that God will step in to save Israel and give to them His glory.

Isaiah 47:4 *Our Redeemer, whose name is the LORD Almighty,(Yaweh Sabaoth) is the Holy One of Israel. NLT*

The Lord of heavens armies Yaweh Sabaoth, is the Holy One of Israel. His holiness (righteousness and truthfulness) of nature and character is predicated in some degree on His ultimate unfailing faithfulness to His word concerning Israel. If it became possible for Israel to be “wiped off the map” as her enemies declare, God would no longer be the faithful God who eternally keeps covenant and mercy (Deuteronomy 7:9). The appearance of Yaweh to Israel will be initially as Yaweh Sabaoth, the LORD of heaven’s armies. He will then reveal Himself as the lamb that was slain and as the lion of Judah.

Isaiah 12:1-3

¹ *And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.*

² *Behold, God is my salvation*, I will trust and not be afraid;*

'For YAH, the LORD, (Jehovah my Father) is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'"*

³ *Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation*.*

Israel will truly Praise the LORD because His anger towards them has turned to comfort and salvation.* (The Hebrew word for salvation in each case in these verses is Y'Shuah H3444). (Try reading these verses substituting the word Yeshua for salvation!).

The anger which God has often felt towards Israel will evaporate like the morning mist and be replaced by God’s wonderful comfort. The LORD GOD will be their strength and their song because He has become their well of salvation.

THE ORIGINAL COMMISSION OF THE MESSIAH

Isaiah 49:3-11

³ *He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, and you will bring me glory."*

The Messiah is referred to as “Israel” signifying His close identification to Israel (Verse 3)

Isaiah 49:4 *I replied, "But my work all seems so useless! I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose at all. Yet I leave it all in the LORD's hand; I will trust God for my reward."*

His apparent frustration obviously relates to the self imposed limitations of His temporary humanity (Verse 4)

Isaiah 49:5 *And now the LORD speaks — he who formed me in my mother's womb to be his servant, who commissioned me to bring his people of Israel back to him. The LORD has honoured me, and my God has given me strength.*

Messiah's initial, primary commission with which the Lord has honoured Him was to restore Israel to Jehovah. (Verse 5). However, God states that Messiah's role is not restricted to that.

Isaiah 49:6 *He says, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation- (Hebrew: Yeshua H4333) to the ends of the earth."*

Matthew 15:24 *Then he said to the woman, "I was (initially) sent only to help the people of Israel — God's lost sheep — not the Gentiles." NLT*

This initial primary task of bringing back the descendants of Jacob to God, was in God's estimation too small in itself for the Messiah (V 6). He would also be a light for the Gentiles.

Isaiah 49:7 *The LORD, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel, says to the one who is despised and rejected by a nation, to the one who is the servant of rulers: "Kings will stand at attention when you pass by. Princes will bow low because the LORD has chosen you. He, the faithful LORD, the Holy One of Israel, chooses you."*

He would be initially despised and rejected by Israel (V 7) But ultimately kings and princes would bow before Him (V 7) and He would bring salvation (Yeshua) to the ends of the earth (V 7).

The Apostle Peter recognised the true identity of Yeshua when he received a divine revelation. In identifying Him as the promised Messiah he also acknowledged the many prophecies that had heralded his coming.

The first mention of the "Church" in the New Testament is found in Mathew 16:16. The principle of first mention requires that special attention should be given to this subject. Most English versions read:

Yeshua and His disciples were at Caesarea Philippi - a city on the southwestern slope of Mount Hermon. It was a city renowned for the worship of a pantheon of false gods, a centre of religious controversy. Yeshua asked His disciples a leading question. The initial vital question was "Who do people say that I AM?" His second question was "Who do YOU say that I AM?"

Matthew 16:15-16

¹⁵ *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"*

¹⁶ *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." NKJV*

Jesus gave them the strongest clue, - He said "I AM". He is actually the Great I AM. The response to this question from the average Christian today would be "You are the "CHRIST" the Son of the living God!" But Peter did not say that. Peter's response was "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God". There is actually a world of difference between saying "You are the CHRIST" and "You are the MESSIAH". Saying "You are the Christ" tends to divorce Yeshua from His Hebraic roots. Those who know Him as "Christ" usually attribute

little importance to His Hebraic ancestry and roots. They tend to ignore or dismiss the importance of His unique links to Israel and His God given mission to Israel. (Isaiah 49:6, Matthew 10:6, 15:24)

When Yeshua said "Blessed are you Simon Bar Jonah" He was commending and congratulating Peter for recognising, accepting and confessing that He was truly the Messiah promised by the Jewish prophets with all that this emphasises and implies. This recognition came to Peter as a revelation direct from Jehovah. Jesus said "Flesh and blood (human logic or perception) did not reveal this to you. My Father who is in heaven revealed it to you".

This revelation emphasises the divinity of Messiah and His mission as the Messiah of Israel. Upon this confession of the "Messiahship of Yeshua" He would build His Church. This confession is still the foundation stone of the Church. Without the understanding of the significance of Yeshua's Messiahship we cannot comprehend the true origins or destiny of the church.

During the early earthly life of Jesus the Messiah there was much confusion and controversy about His true identity. The question came up over and over, who is He? (John. 7:40-44).

John 7:40-43 (NKJV)

- ⁴⁰ *Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet."*
- ⁴¹ *41 Others said, "This is the Messiah." But some said, "Will the Messiah come out of Galilee?"*
- ⁴² *Has not the Scripture said that the Messiah comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"*
- ⁴³ *So there was a division among the people because of Him.*

Yeshua was aware of this, and He was especially concerned that His disciples might know who He truly was. The time had now arrived for that revelation. He had gone with His disciples to the area of Caesarea Philippi. It was here that He asked them two questions. The first had to do with what impressions the public had: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Then the Lord asked His disciples to speak for themselves, and Peter spoke up. What he actually declared was,

Matthew 16:16-18

- ¹⁶ *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."*
- ¹⁷ *Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being."*
- ¹⁸ *Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. NLT*

Peter clearly proclaimed what we must also recognize and declare, that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah the Son of the living God. It is this very declaration alone that became the foundation stone of the New Covenant Church.

MESSIAH WILL BE HIGHLY EXALTED

Isaiah 52:13 *See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted.*

Immediately after a horrific time of suffering, The Messiah will prosper and be highly exalted (V13). He will ascend from the very depths of hell to the very highest heights of heaven.

Isaiah 52:14 *Many were amazed when they saw him — beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person.*

Many will be amazed at Messiah's magnificent transformation (V14). The transformation of the Messiah will be from the Lamb of God, to the Lion of Judah

Isaiah 52:15 *And he will again startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not previously been told about; they will understand what they had not heard about. NLT*

The Jewish nation had been looking and hoping for a lion to deliver them from the bondage of Roman occupation. When Messiah appeared as the Lamb of God, they failed to recognize that this could be their Messiah. As John fell with His face to the ground in Revelation 1, so Kings will stand startled and speechless in His presence (V15). They will see what they had not previously had revealed to them about Him. They will see the One who was once revealed as the Lamb of God revealed as the King over all kings.

Isaiah 53:10-11

¹⁰ *But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and fill him with grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have a multitude of children, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's plan will prosper in his hands.*

¹¹ *When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. NLT*

The Messiah will see the amazing* result of all His anguish and suffering and will be eminently rewarded. (V11)

*The word amazing is too mild for the result He will achieve. It will be amazing, astonishing, astounding, wonderful, startling, marvelous, miraculous, and incredible. In fact it will be beyond all comprehension or description. One of the amazing results that will afford Him such great pleasure will be the full and complete restoration of the Sons of Jacob to their God.

RABBINIC JUDAISM ILLUMINATED

Jehovah's great light is about to penetrate and illuminate the spiritual darkness of Rabbinic Judaism. When this happens all the hidden mysteries embedded in this centuries old religion will suddenly take on new meaning. Symbolism will be translated into living reality and redeemed relationship through Yeshua who is the light of the Word and of the world. Although orthodox Jewish people are for the most part extremely sincere and faithfully discharge what they deem to be their required service to God and the torah they are actually walking in spiritual darkness and religious ritual.

Isaiah 9:2-4

- ¹ *The people who walk in darkness will see a great light — a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow.*
- ² *Israel will again be great, and its people will rejoice as people rejoice at harvest time. They will shout with joy like warriors dividing the plunder.*
- ³ *For God will break the chains that bind his people and the whip that scourges them, just as he did when he destroyed the army of Midian with Gideon's little band. NLT*

Following the amazing revelation that Israel will receive when they recognise their Messiah the Jewish nation will be flooded with divine light that will brightly illuminate their relationship with God.

2 Samuel 22:29

29 O LORD, you are my light; yes, LORD, you light up my darkness. NLT

Psalms 13:3

3 Turn and answer me, O LORD my God! Restore the light to my eyes, or I will die. NLT

Psalms 18:28

28 LORD, you have brought light to my life; my God, you light up my darkness. NLT

Psalms 56:13

13 For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence, O God, in your life-giving light. NLT

FROM RITUALISTIC RELIGION TO RENEWED RELATIONSHIP

Following the appearance and recognition of Messiah in Zechariah 12:10, the darkness of Rabbinic Judaism will become flooded with Messianic enlightenment (Isaiah 9:2). Suddenly all the prophetic symbolism of Israel's history will be fully illuminated as they finally recognise the fulfilment of so many prophetic events in their history. When Israel left Egypt following the shedding of the blood of innocent lambs, they had a living relationship with

God that lasted for many years throughout their wilderness wanderings and into the Promised Land. However over many later years the relationship devolved into a largely systematic and humanistic religion. Rabbinic Judaism grew from the heritage of the past, the Law of Moses and the Messianic hope for the future. It was formed by a numerous rabbis who believed that when God gave Moses the Law at Mount Sinai he also received an oral tradition of knowledge that gave more details about the written traditions of the Hebrew Bible and how it should be personalized. The rabbis' first writings are called the Mishnah, which is a record of the oral tradition designed so that Jews might understand how to prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

Judaism is a monotheistic religion which believes that the world was created by a single, all-knowing divinity, and that all things within that world were designed to have meaning and purpose as part of a divine order. According to the teachings of Judaism, God's will for human behavior was revealed to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The Torah, or commandments, which regulate how humans are to live their lives, was a gift from God so that they might live in according to His will.

Moses Maimonides, a Spanish Jew who lived in the 12th century, tried to condense the basic beliefs of Judaism into the form of a creed containing 13 statements. This statement is still retained by the traditional forms of Judaism. The 12th of these statements says: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and, though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming".

God will break the chains that bind His people, just as He overthrew the Midianites (Judges 8). The roots of Christianity can clearly be found in Judaism; therefore it is not surprising that the two great religions share many similarities in their basic beliefs. Some of these similarities include the belief of the existence of only one God, the coming of the Messiah, and the belief of some sort of afterlife. However these beliefs are also what sets the two religions apart, the most obvious of which is the Christian's acceptance of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. The Christian's divergence from Judaism led to many changes that affected different aspects of the religion. When the Messiah reveals Himself again to Israel (Zechariah 12:10) they will recognize Him as the one they have always longed for.

Israel will be great and will rejoice as when in harvest time (V3). Israel will be restored to a greatness that exceeds anything they have ever known in their long history. The fulfilment of all their feasts which are types and shadows that are being fulfilled in the life and ministry of Yeshua the promised Messiah, that will cause new light to dawn upon Judaism.

They will shout for joy like warriors dividing the spoils of victory. After centuries of frustrated searching, Jewish people will finally rejoice when they recognize the fulfilment of all the prophecies that God has made over them.

Isaiah 29:13-14

¹³ *And so the Lord says, "These people say they are mine. They honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far away. And their worship of me amounts to nothing more than human laws learned by rote.*

¹⁴ *Because of this, I will do wonders among these hypocrites. I will show that human wisdom is foolish and even the most brilliant people lack understanding." NLT*

Isaiah 29:18-19

¹⁸ *In that day deaf people will hear words read from a book, and blind people will see*

through the gloom and darkness.

¹⁹ The humble will be filled with fresh joy from the LORD. Those who are poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. NLT

The formerly slumbering people will suddenly see through the darkness and shadows of their blind religious rituals. (V18) (Romans 11:8, God had given them a spirit of temporary stupor that they should not see). Previously deaf ears will hear and understand that of which their prophets have spoken.

Israel's blindness which is partial and temporary will ultimately be healed. I personally believe that this will happen when according to Zechariah 12:10, after the outpouring of God's Spirit, "They will look on Him who was pierced. How thrilling to realize that when their blindness is finally healed the first face they will look upon will be that of their divine redeemer!

Isaiah 19:19

The humble will be filled with fresh joy from the LORD. Those who are poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

The humble will be filled with fresh (superlative) joy from the Lord. So much of Israel's history has been awash with tears as they have suffered discrimination, rejection, shame and despair. All of these sufferings have been kept in God's tear bottle. One day He will grant them double joy for all that they have suffered for the sake of His Name.

Isaiah 61:7

Instead of shame and dishonour, you will inherit a double portion of prosperity and everlasting joy. NLT

The (once) spiritually poor will rejoice exceedingly in the Holy One of Israel (V19). Although rich in historic religious traditions and culture the Jewish people have failed for the most part to recognize the amazing manner in which Yeshua has fulfilled ancient prophecies concerning His advents.

Isaiah 29:20 - 22

²⁰ Those who intimidate and harass will be gone, and all those who plot evil will be killed.

²¹ Those who make the innocent guilty by their false testimony will disappear. And those who use trickery to pervert justice and tell lies to tear down the innocent will be no more.

²² That is why the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the people of Israel, "My people will no longer pale with fear or be ashamed.

Throughout Jewish history, especially in the Diaspora, the dispersed Jews have been continually belittled, intimidated, threatened and harassed. They have very rarely been received with kindness and consideration in the nations in which they have sought refuge and safety. Almost every population amongst whom they have sought to settle have acted in a callous unwarranted manner towards them. No other race on the earth has received as much vilification and hatred as have the Jews. But God promises that Jews will never again be ashamed nor grow pale with fear (V22).

Throughout their long history the Jews have experienced so many things that have caused unrelieved fear and dread. But those days are almost over. The Messiah for whom they

have patiently waited for so long will finally be recognized and received by the whole nation.

Isaiah 29:23 – 24

²³ *For when they see their many children and material blessings, they will recognize the holiness of the Holy One of Israel. They will stand in awe of the God of Israel.*

²⁴ *Those in error will then believe the truth, and those who constantly complain will accept instruction. NLT*

Their descendants who perceive and recognize the holiness of God will be abundantly blessed materially (V23). Those that come to believe in the truth will humbly and gratefully accept instruction (V24)

LEADING THE BLIND DOWN A NEW PATH

Isaiah 42:16 *The Sovereign LORD says,*

¹⁶ *I will lead blind Israel down a new path, guiding them along an unfamiliar way. I will make the darkness bright before them and smooth out the road ahead of them. Yes, I will indeed do these things; I will not forsake them. NLT*

The Apostle Paul records that a partial and temporary blindness has befallen Israel, even as one is “blind and deaf” whilst sleeping. Paul says that God has put them into a “deep sleep” or a spirit of slumber. For centuries pious Jews have struggled along a frustrating pathway of religious darkness searching for the One who is actually the Light of the world. Isaiah predicts that in the days that are surely coming soon God Himself will guide Israel down a new (covenant) path which will be to Rabbinic Judaism, a previously unfamiliar way.

Romans 11:7 – 8

⁷ *So this is the situation: Most of the Jews have not found the favour of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have — the ones God has chosen — but the rest were made unresponsive.*

⁸ *As the Scriptures say, "God has put them into a deep sleep. To this very day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear." NLT*

Romans 9:30 – 32

³⁰ *Well then, what shall we say about these things? Just this: The Gentiles have been made right with God by faith, even though they were not seeking him.*

³¹ *But the Jews, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded.*

³² *Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law and being good instead of by depending on faith. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. NLT*

Modern Israelis are constantly looking for new esoteric paths that may afford them peace of mind regarding their personal lives and their national future. So many of them search for spiritual reality in mystical, humanistic religions but the day is coming soon when Israel's partial, temporary blindness and deafness will be magnificently healed (Romans 11:25-27).

Romans 11:25 – 27

- ²⁵ *I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ.*
- ²⁶ *And so all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this? "A Deliverer will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel from all ungodliness.*
- ²⁷ *And then I will keep my covenant with them and take away their sins." NLT*

DESERTING THE ASHERAH POLES

Isaiah 17:7-8

- ⁷ *Then at last the people will think of their Creator and have respect for the Holy One of Israel.*
- ⁸ *They will no longer ask their idols for help or worship what their own hands have made. They will never again bow down to their Asherah poles or burn incense on the altars they built. NLT*

Asherah is the Hebrew word translated into English as "groves" in the Old Testament. It relates to the Babylonian - Canaanite (Ashtoroth or Ashtoreth depending on which area) goddess of fortune, fertility and happiness, the supposed consort of Baal. It also implies the sacred trees or poles set up near an altar for "her" worship. The modern counterparts may be found in numerous false religions that worship the creation but not the creator.

When Moses went back to Sinai to receive the replacement tablets regarding the Canaanites (and others), God told him (Exodus 34:13) " But you shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their **groves**".

Israel will soon have a new sense of reverence for their creator the true and living God. They will no longer worship Asherah poles or burn incense to false gods (V8). New Age people worship creation, not the Creator. Many Israelis and Jewish people have adopted New Age teachings but the promised light that God will soon shine upon them will deliver them from their frustrating search.

Romans 1:25 *Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they worshiped the things God made but not the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. Amen. NLT*

Isaiah 26:12 *LORD, you will grant us peace, for all we have accomplished is really from you. NLT*

Israel will gladly recognize and acknowledge that every new found blessing including their much prized shalom is from Jehovah. They will gladly acknowledge that the restoration and redevelopment of Israel has come by reason of the mercy of God alone

ISRAEL IS GOD'S SPECIAL VINEYARD

Isaiah 5:1 *Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. NKJV*

Isaiah 5:7 *For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. NKJV*

God likens Israel to a choice vineyard which He brought (transplanted) out of Egypt and He cast out nations to make room for it in Canaan.

Psalms 80:8-11

- 8 You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it.
9 You prepared room for it, and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land.
10 The hills were covered with its shadow, and the mighty cedars with its boughs.
11 She sent out her boughs to the Sea, and her branches to the River. NKJV*

Psalms 80:14-15

- 14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine
15 And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch that You made strong for Yourself. NKJV*

Sadly that vineyard deteriorated and was burnt down but not totally destroyed. God promised to thoroughly restore it when His people would call upon Him for restoration through the son of His right hand.

Psalms 80:17-19

- 17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.
18 Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.
19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved! NKJV*

Israel's prayer to God in the soon coming day will be "That the Son of your right hand will be upon the nation. Messiah is the son of His right hand. As a direct consequence they will turn back to God, be revived and call upon His Name. God will cause His face to shine on His restored people and they will be saved.

GUARDING THE FRUITFUL VINES

Isaiah 27:2-6

- 2 "In that day we will sing of the pleasant vineyard.
3 I, the LORD, will watch over it and tend its fruitful vines. Each day I will water them; day and night I will watch to keep enemies away.
4 My anger against Israel will be gone. If I find briers and thorns bothering her, I will burn them up.*

God's anger towards Israel will cease forever (V4). God guarantees to burn up any thorns and briers that might bother them in the future.

Isaiah 27:5, 6

- 5 These enemies will be spared only if they surrender and beg for peace and protection."
6 The time is coming when my people will take root. Israel will bud and blossom and*

fill the whole earth with her fruit! NLT

The thorns and briars (enemies of Israel) will be burnt up and destroyed (V4). Those enemies who beg for peace will be spared (V5) Israel will fill the whole earth with her fruit. I believe that Isaiah 27:6 refers to both natural and spiritual fruit.

Israel will sing and (rightfully) boast about their pleasant vineyard. (The presence of vineyards indicates no Shariah law, hence no Muslim authority). (V1)

Vines were cultivated mainly to produce the wine that would be offered to God in thanksgiving for His bountiful provision. If we study the Levitical priesthood, we will see that the primary offerings were animals, birds, grains such as wheat or flour, wine and olive oil. God ordained with each sacrificial offering, there should also be a drink offering. It had to be wine, poured out together with the offering.

Leviticus 23:13-14

¹³ *A grain offering must accompany it consisting of three quarts of choice flour mixed with olive oil. It will be an offering given to the LORD by fire, and it will be very pleasing to him.*

¹⁴ *Along with this sacrifice, you must also offer one quart of wine as a drink offering.*
NLT

Psalms 104:14-15

¹⁴ *He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food from the earth,*

¹⁵ *And wine that makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make his face shine, and bread
which strengthens man's heart. NKJV*

MAKING GOD'S PRAISE KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD

Restored and renewed Israel will make God's praises known around the whole earth. They will be joined together with the Gentile members of the "One New Man" to tell the (whole) world what Yaweh has done. Their message will be a grave yet joyful one as they share from experience what great magnificent things Yaweh has done and how mighty He is.

Isaiah 12:4-6

⁴ *In that wonderful day you will sing: "Thank the LORD! Praise his name! Tell the world what he has done. Oh, how mighty he is!*

⁵ *Sing to the LORD, for he has done wonderful things. Make known his praise around the world.*

⁶ *Let all the people of Jerusalem shout his praise with joy! For great is the Holy One of Israel who lives among you." NLT*

Israel will sing together to thank and praise God because He has shown His great might on their behalf (V4). They will make known His praises around the world (V5). All the people of Jerusalem will shout God's praises with joy because He lives among them (V6).

Some Christian commentators have argued against the idea that Israel will be used of God to proclaim His Word to the nations but Micah says

Micah 5:7-9

- 7 *Then the remnant of Jacob Shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the LORD, Like showers on the grass, That tarry for no man Nor wait for the sons of men.*
- 8 *And the remnant of Jacob Shall be among the Gentiles, In the midst of many peoples, Like a lion among the beasts of the forest, Like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, Both treads down and tears in pieces, And none can deliver.*
- 9 *Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, And all your enemies shall be cut off. NKJV*

Deuteronomy 32:2 *“Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb.*

JEHOVAH WILL BECOME ISRAEL’S CROWNING GLORY

Isaiah 28:5-6

- 5 *Then at last the LORD Almighty will himself be Israel's crowning glory. He will be the pride and joy of the remnant of his people.*
- 6 *He will give a longing for justice to their judges. He will give great courage to their warriors who stand at the gates. NLT*

Israel has achieved many remarkable things of which they could rightly boast but the LORD Almighty will be Israel’s crowning glory, their ultimate pride and joy (V5). Of all the things of which Israel might boast, their greatest boast will be in the LORD Himself. He will endow Israel’s judges with a longing for justice (V6). One meaning of remnant is a surviving trace or vestige: *a remnant of his past glory.*

SEEING THE KING IN HIS SPLENDOUR

Isaiah 33:17-24

- 17 *Your eyes will see the king in all his splendour, and you will see a land that stretches into the distance.*

The Israeli’s will be privileged to “see the King in all His splendour.” Of all the great pleasures that Israel will enjoy the greatest will be that they will ultimately see their King in ALL His splendour (V 17). This will happen at the time they will view the newly acquired Promised Land that stretches to the Euphrates River (V 17).

The threats from the violent enemies will be over forever. Jerusalem will be safe as a city of worship and celebration (V 20). It will remain quiet and secure

Isaiah 33:21 - 23

- 21 *The LORD will be our Mighty One. He will be like a wide river of protection that no enemy can cross.*
- 22 *For the LORD is our judge, our lawgiver, and our king. He will care for us and save us.*
- 23 *The enemies' sails hang loose on broken masts with useless tackle. Their treasure will be divided by the people of God. Even the lame will win their share!*

The Lord will be like a moat that protects a castle. It will be so wide that no enemy will be able to cross it. Like a wide ocean that separates from one's enemies. The treasures and spoils of their enemies will be divided among God's people (v 23).

HATRED AND VIOLENCE WILL BE AN ERASED MEMORY

Isaiah 33:18 *You will think back to this time of terror when the Assyrian officers outside your walls counted your towers and estimated how much plunder they would get from your fallen city.*

Hamas (The violent people) will forever disappear (V 19). The Hebrew and Aramaic word for violence is hamas. (Obadiah 1:10). Israel will look back on the time that her enemies unleashed their attack on her and remember what their intentions were and how wonderfully the Lord delivered them from potential annihilation (Zechariah 12:8-9).

Isaiah 33:19

¹⁹ *But soon they will all be gone. These fierce, violent people with a strange, unknown language will disappear.*

²⁰ *Instead, you will see Zion as a place of worship and celebration. You will see Jerusalem, a city quiet and secure.*

Isaiah 33:24

The people of Israel will no longer say, "We are sick and helpless," for the LORD will forgive their sins. NLT

Israel will no longer feel "sick and helpless." Their sins will be forgiven (V24). Their original wholeness will be restored. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt they were wealthy and well. There was not one feeble person among all their tribes.

Psalms 105:37 *But he brought his people safely out of Egypt, loaded with silver and gold; there were no sick or feeble people among them. NLT*

A SPECIAL SONG OF PRAISE TO THE LORD

Isaiah 42:8-12

⁸ *"I am the LORD; (Yaweh) that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else. I will not share my praise with carved idols.*

Jehovah's Name will be exalted above all false gods of the earth. The names of every false god will be despised and diminished. Their followers will be severely disillusioned and diminished. Their power and influence will be over.

Isaiah 42:9

⁹ *Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens."*

Everything God prophesied regarding Israel's magnificent future will be magnificently fulfilled. (V 9) So many of the promises that God has made to Israel will begin to be

fulfilled.

Isaiah 42:10 – 12

- ¹⁰ Sing a new song to the LORD! Sing his praises from the ends of the earth! Sing, all you who sail the seas, all you who live in distant coastlands.
¹¹ Join in the chorus, you desert towns; let the villages of Kedar rejoice! Let the people of Sela sing for joy; shout praises from the mountaintops!
¹² Let the coastlands glorify the LORD; let them sing his praise. NLT

Even the desert towns of Arabia will join in the rejoicing. (v 11). They will join their voices in triumphal harmony shouting and singing God's praises from the mountain tops.

ISRAEL HONOURED AND LOVED BY GOD

Isaiah 43:1-2

- ¹ *1 But now, O Israel, the LORD who created you says: "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine.*
² *When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. NLT*

The Lord who created Israel says "Do not be afraid. You ARE Mine (V 1) When any person or people know that they truly belong to God and He to them, there is no need for fear or anxiety.

The flames will not consume you. You will NOT be burned up.

God's love and compassion for Israel is everlasting.

Isaiah 54:8.

In a moment of anger I turned my face away for a little while. But with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. NLT

The Lord will say "You are precious, honoured and I love you."

ISRAEL, IS MADE FOR GOD'S GLORY

Isaiah 43:5-7

- ⁵ *"Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will gather you and your children from east and west*
⁶ *and from north and south. I will bring my sons and daughters back to Israel from the distant corners of the earth.*
⁷ *All who claim me as their God will come, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them."* NLT

God will guard and protect all He has gathered from distant corners of the earth. All who claim Him as their God will come to Israel.

Psalms 28:9

- ⁹ *Save your people! Bless Israel, your special possession! Lead them like a shepherd, and carry them forever in your arms. NLT*

Psalms 14:7

- ⁷ *Oh, that salvation would come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel! For when the LORD restores his people, Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice. NLT*

Psalms 68:34-35

- ³⁴ *Tell everyone about God's power. His majesty shines down on Israel; his strength is mighty in the heavens.*
³⁵ *God is awesome in his sanctuary. The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. NLT*

ISRAEL WILL BE GOD'S WITNESSES IN THE EARTH

Isaiah 43:10-13

- ¹⁰ *"But you are my witnesses, O Israel!" says the LORD. "And you are my servant. You have been chosen to know me, believe in me, and understand that I alone am God. There is no other God; there never has been and never will be.*
¹¹ *I am the LORD, and there is no other Savior.*
¹² *First I predicted your deliverance; I declared what I would do, and then I did it — I saved you. No foreign god has ever done this before. You are witnesses that I am the only God," says the LORD.*
¹³ *"From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can oppose what I do. No one can reverse my actions." NLT*

Isaiah 44:8 *Do not tremble; do not be afraid. Have I not proclaimed from ages past what my purposes are for you? You are my witnesses — is there any other God? No! There is no other Rock — not one!" NLT*

Israel is God's witness and servant in the earth. They are His Litmus paper! They are the standard by which every nation will be judged. As the nations have done unto Israel, so it shall be done unto them. Israel is the one nation on earth that stands as a witness to His complete sovereignty, supremacy and power. This has been true historically and it will be into the eternal future.

One day very soon this fact will be openly demonstrated throughout the whole world as God summonses the nations to stand before Him in His judgment hall. The charges to which the nations will have to answer will be their wilful evil treatment of Israel. He will call the sheep nations, churches and individuals to His right hand but the goat nations and people will be confined to His left hand. The Messiah will sit on the throne of His glory saying to the sheep on His right hand "Enter in to the Kingdom of the great God and Saviour."

Matthew 25:31, 32

- ³¹ *He will sit on the throne of His glory.*
³² *All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from*

another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. NKJV

Matthew 25:40 *And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' NKJV*

Isaiah 41:8-10

- ⁸ *"But as for you, Israel my servant, Jacob my chosen one, descended from my friend Abraham.*
⁹ *I have called you back from the ends of the earth so you can serve me. For I have chosen you and will not throw you away.*
¹⁰ *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.*
NLT

Isaiah 44:1-2

- ¹ *1 "But now, listen to me, Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one.*
² *The LORD who made you and helps you says: O Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid. O Israel, my chosen one, do not fear. NLT*

Isaiah 44:21 *"Pay attention, O Israel, for you are my servant. I, the LORD, made you, and I will not forget to help you. NLT*

Israel is God's servant. He will never forget to help her. Israel will be seen by all nations to be the servant of Jehovah and the role she has played will be observed and finally recognised by them all. Israel will bring honour to the Lord in the eyes of all nations on earth.

Isaiah 43:21 *I have made Israel for myself, and they will someday honour me before the whole world. NLT*

Israel is uniquely God's chosen possession. He has never and will never forsake her. Israel will one day bring honour to God before the whole world.

THE GOD OF MYSTERY

Whatever knowledge we may gain of God, whether from the Bible or from experience we will never in this present life plumb the depths of understanding of Him because God is infinite and we are merely finite beings. Only when we eventually see Him face to face will we even begin to properly know Him as He is. So many former mysteries will be made clear as we begin to see everything from a new perspective.

Isaiah 45:15-16

- ¹⁵ *Truly, O God of Israel, our Savior, you work in strange and mysterious ways.*
¹⁶ *All who make idols will be humiliated and disgraced.*

Yaweh, the God of Israel is Israel's eternal Savior, though His ways are often strange and mysterious (V15). So much of God's dealings with Israel throughout the centuries have been mysterious causing wonder and awe. It has been so difficult to fathom out why so many difficult and even injurious things have happened to the Jewish people. But one day

soon, God will reveal the reasons why.

Isaiah 45:17 *But the LORD will save the people of Israel with eternal salvation. They will never again be humiliated and disgraced throughout everlasting ages.*

God will save Israel with ETERNAL SALVATION. (v 17) God's salvation will soon be manifest on behalf of Israel as He delivers them from the vicious attack launched on them by her near neighbors. But His salvation will be so much more than that deliverance. The prophet says so clearly here that God will save Israel with ETERNAL SALVATION. Israel has an eternal role in the purposes of God.

Isaiah 45: 18, 19

¹⁸ *For the LORD is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos."I am the LORD," he says, "and there is no other.*

¹⁹ *I publicly proclaim bold promises. I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner so no one can understand what I mean. And I did not tell the people of Israel to ask me for something I did not plan to give. I, the LORD, speak only what is true and right.* NLT

God publicly proclaims bold promises concerning Israel. (V 19) *And I did not tell the people of Israel to ask me for something I did not plan to give. I, the LORD, speak only what is true and right.*

His words and predictions are true and right (V19). Every word and promise that God has spoken over Israel will come to pass. Not one word that He has spoken will fall to the ground empty. The whole earth including man and nature will magnify and glorify the Lord. He will reign supreme.

THERE IS NO OTHER GOD

Isaiah 45:4-8

⁴ *"And why have I called you for this work? It is for the sake of Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one. I called you by name when you did not know me.*

⁵ *I am the LORD; there is no other God. I have prepared you, even though you do not know me,*

⁶ *so all the world from east to west will know there is no other God. I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

⁷ *I am the one who creates the light and makes the darkness. I am the one who sends good times and bad times. I, the LORD, am the one who does these things.*

⁸ *Open up, O heavens, and pour out your righteousness. Let the earth open wide so salvation and righteousness can sprout up together. I, the LORD, created them.*
NLT

In this scripture God spoke to Cyrus who symbolises the Messiah. Cyrus was a powerful king of Persia (559 BC - 530 BC), sometimes called "Cyrus the Great" who allowed the Jewish captives to return to their homeland in Jerusalem after he led the Persians to become the dominant nation in the ancient world. He is praised most highly, in the Old Testament, in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1, where he is called God's "shepherd" and His "anointed." (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson

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Only the true Messiah could fulfil all these promises.

An open heaven will be over Israel with salvation and righteousness. God is here addressing Israel (Isaiah 45:4) predicting for them an open heaven so that salvation and righteousness might be poured abundantly on them. Such an outpouring will precede the promised outpouring on all flesh (Joel 2:28).

ISRAEL IS INSCRIBED UPON GOD'S HANDS

Isaiah 49:13 *Sing for joy, O heavens! Rejoice, O earth! Burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on them in their sorrow.*

Isaiah 49:16 – 18

¹⁶ *See, I have written your name on my hand. Ever before me is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins.*

¹⁷ *Soon your descendants will come back, and all who are trying to destroy you will go away.*

¹⁸ *Look and see, for all your children will come back to you. As surely as I live," says the LORD, "they will be like jewels or bridal ornaments for you to display. NLT*

There will be great rejoicing for God's comfort and compassion towards them. (V13) Even the very heavens will rejoice when God comforts His people and restores them to their ancient homeland for this will be a high peak in the grand program of redemption. Paul tell us in Romans 8:21-22 that the whole creation groans with birthing pains waiting for the restoration that God will ultimately bring to pass. The restoration of Israel is a giant step towards that ultimate event.

Isaiah 49:14 – 16

¹⁴ *Yet Jerusalem says, "The LORD has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us."*

¹⁵ *"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for a child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!"*

¹⁶ *See, I have written your name on my hand. Ever before me is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins.*

Jerusalem is ever before God's eyes and in His heart (V16). God's sentiments towards Israel are like that of a nursing mother to the child at her breast. His love is expelled to his child even as the milk from a mother's breasts. As a mother cannot forget the child that is so vitally dependent upon its mother, neither can God forget Israel His firstborn son.

Isaiah 49:17 *Soon your descendants will come back, and all who are trying to destroy you will go away.*

A multitude of descendants and children will return to Israel from the very extremities of the earth (V18). Israel's citizens will be finally released from even the memory of their tortured imprisonment, {e.g. the Holocaust} starvation and death. (V14)

Isaiah 49:18 *Look and see, for all your children will come back to you. As surely as I live," says the LORD, "they will be like jewels or bridal ornaments for you to display.*

NLT

One day in the near prophetic future, Israel will be magnificently arrayed in fine bridal garments with accompanying ornaments. A beautiful and splendid bride adorned for her Bridegroom, Israel will be arrayed in bridal costume, jewels and ornaments prepared for a Bridegroom (V18). The Bride of Christ will not be truly ready for the Bridegroom until Jew and Gentile are one in their Messiah.

THINK ABOUT ABRAHAM AND SARAH

In the context of the End Times the whole world will be made aware of Abraham and Sarah and their intrinsic involvement in the outworking of God's plans for all nations. Those who are the "Seed of Abraham" i.e. Israel, the Messiah, the Church and the people who evolve from the loins of Ishmael. These will certainly all become acutely aware of their ancient ancestors Abraham and Sarah. But every other nation on earth will also become suddenly aware of this man Abraham to whom God promised the destiny of the redeemed from all nations.(Genesis 12:1-3)

Isaiah 51:1-6

- 1 "Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance — all who seek the LORD! Consider the quarry from which you were mined, the rock from which you were cut!*
- 2 Yes, think about your ancestors Abraham and Sarah, from whom you came. Abraham was alone when I called him. But when I blessed him, he became a great nation.*
- 3 The LORD will comfort Israel again and make her deserts blossom. Her barren wilderness will become as beautiful as Eden — the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found there. Lovely songs of thanksgiving will fill the air.*

The people of Israel are direct descendants and blood relatives of Abraham and Sarah. Their lineage continues through Isaac and Jacob. It is to these very descendants that God had promised the land of Israel of which land they will be His eternal custodians. In the days ahead they will be again linked to their original ancestors in close relationship. God promises hope and deliverance for all who seek the Lord Yaweh (V1). The land of Israel which became a wilderness during her peoples exile, will once again flourish and become like the Garden of Eden in its original splendour and fruitfulness. The regathered and reinstated people of Israel will inherit the blessing of Abraham and Sarah (V2). The wilderness will become a Garden of Eden with joy and gladness (V3).

Isaiah 51:11

Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return to Jerusalem, singing songs of everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be overcome with joy and gladness. NLT

The prophet Isaiah emphasises the fullness of Israel's joy when all her people are restored not only to the land of Israel, but essentially to the God of Israel. The promise of Israel's rebirth (Isaiah 66:8) will not happen until their return to God through the auspices of their Messiah. The redeemed of the Lord will return to Jerusalem overcome with joy and gladness. This promise obviously refers specifically to the children of Israel.

ARISING TO NEW LIFE

Isaiah 52:1 *Wake up, wake up, O Zion! Clothe yourselves with strength. Put on your beautiful clothes, O holy city of Jerusalem, for unclean and godless people will no longer enter your gates.*

Jerusalem will arise from dust and decay to spontaneous new life. The beautiful clothes referred to are the splendid marriage garments. Israel will be married to her true God. The symbolism of the Bible is uniform to a remarkable degree. Themes commenced in the Old Testament are continued or amplified in the New Testament with the same symbols. An example of this is to be found in the description of Israel as the wife of Jehovah and the bride of Christ. In Jeremiah there is a particularly striking statement:

ISRAEL IS JEHOVAH'S WIFE

Jeremiah 3:14-15

- ¹⁴ *"Return home, you wayward children," says the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will bring you again to the land of Israel — one from here and two from there, from wherever you are scattered.*
- ¹⁵ *And I will give you leaders after my own heart, who will guide you with knowledge and understanding. NLT*

Isaiah 54:5, 6

- ⁵ *for your Creator will be your husband. The LORD Almighty is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth.*
- ⁶ *For the LORD has called you back from your grief — as though you were a young wife abandoned by her husband," says your God.*

Hosea 2:16 *"In that coming day," says the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband' instead of 'my master.' NLT*

Hosea 2:19 – 20

- ¹⁹ *I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion.*
- ²⁰ *I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as LORD. NLT*

ISRAEL WILL NO LONGER LIVE IN SHAME

Isaiah 54:4 *"Fear not; you will no longer live in shame. (Humiliation, indignity) The shame of your youth and the sorrows of widowhood will be remembered no more,*

Throughout long centuries the Jews have been subjected to cruel unwarranted discrimination and humiliation, but one day soon they will be abundantly compensated. God will give them beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. The emotional trauma of Israel's youth will be expunged (V4). The shame and humiliation they have experienced at the hands of their many historic adversaries will be erased from their national memory by the excess of joy and peace that floods their soul.

Isaiah 52:7-10

- ⁷ *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!*
- ⁸ *The watchmen shout and sing with joy, for before their very eyes they see the LORD bringing his people home to Jerusalem.*
- ⁹ *Let the ruins of Jerusalem break into joyful song, for the LORD has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem.*
- ¹⁰ *The LORD will demonstrate his holy power before the eyes of all the nations. The ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. NLT*

Verse 7, has usually been regarded in Christian circles as a missionary message to the nations proclaiming the Gospel. It is actually a specific message of restoration to Israel. The immediate context of the verses very clearly concerns Israel and Jerusalem (V7). Isaiah says the ruins of Jerusalem will break forth into joyful songs. This promise is figurative and allegorical yet it refers to the actual walls of Jerusalem.

The whole earth will witness the salvation of God through the redemption of Jerusalem. All mankind will learn about the true greatness of God. They will understand through the marvellous things He has done for Israel, what a truly great God of compassion He is. They will also understand more about His exceedingly great power and strength. His unfailing grace and mercy towards Israel will clearly demonstrate His magnificent character and fidelity. This momentous act on behalf of Israel will reveal to the world more about the character and nature of God than any event since the death and resurrection of the Messiah

Israel will be released from the marks and memory of slavery and injustice. The long painful history of her exile will be flushed from her bruised memory. Every wound and scar will be forgotten in the excitement of her new exalted station in life.

Isaiah 54:7 *"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will take you back.*

God's anger will give way to compassion (V7). In the ultimate light of eternity, Israel's apparent abandonment by God will seem like a very brief moment. Centuries of exile will seem like a passing cloud when the joys of restoration eclipse the memory a dark and painful exile. The supreme greatness of His wonderful compassion will completely erase every painful recollection.

Isaiah 54:8 *In a moment of anger I turned my face away for a little while. But with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. NLT*

GOD'S BLESSING UPON THE GENTILES

Isaiah 56:6-8

- ⁶ *"I will also bless the Gentiles who commit themselves to the LORD (Jehovah) and serve him and love his name, who worship him and do not desecrate the Sabbath day of rest, and who have accepted his covenant.*

Those Gentile nations that are especially blessed of God during this new era will be the ones who recognize their God as Yaweh the Holy One of Israel. In other words they will recognize and acknowledge the Hebraic culture of God, particularly that He is truly the Holy One of Israel and that His kingdom on earth is a direct fulfilment of His promises to King David and the throne of David. Gentile nations will also be blessed under the terms of His covenant as they commit themselves to love, serve and worship God and do not

desecrate the Sabbath. These nations will have to serve God, love Him, worship Him, observe God's Sabbath and accept His covenant.

Isaiah 56:7, 8

- ⁷ *I will bring them also to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.*
- ⁸ *For the Sovereign LORD, who brings back the outcasts of Israel, says: I will bring others, too, besides my people Israel." NLT*

This will include some of the sons of Ishmael. The Temple will be a house of prayer not only for Jews but for all nations. (V7). In the Last Days many descendants of Ishmael will recognise that Jehovah, the God of the Bible and the Holy One of Israel as the one and only true God. The God who redeems Israel will bring to Himself others too beside Israel. (V8).

THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH WILL RULE THE NATIONS

Jeremiah 23:5-8

- ⁵ *"For the time is coming," says the LORD, "when I will place a righteous Branch on King David's throne. (Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5, Zechariah 3:8, 6:12) He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land.*

God will establish Messiah, the prophesied "Branch" on the throne of David. (V5)

Jeremiah 23:6, 7

- ⁶ *And this is his name: 'The LORD Is Our Righteousness.' In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.*
- ⁷ *"In that day," says the LORD, "when people are taking an oath, they will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who rescued the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.'*

There will be a new Passover memorial to celebrate! (V8) Whereas for centuries the Jews have annually remembered their historic deliverance from Egypt, in future years they will recall their deliverance from the enemies that sought to so thoroughly destroy and annihilate her.

He will rule the nations with divine wisdom (V5). Israel will live in the safety of God's protection (V6).

JERUSALEM, - THE THRONE OF THE LORD

Jeremiah 3:17 *In that day Jerusalem will be known as The Throne of the LORD. All nations will come there to honour the LORD. They will no longer stubbornly follow their own evil desires.*

All nations will come to honour the Lord on His throne at Jerusalem. They will no longer follow their stubborn and evil ways. Their various cultures will become aligned to the

culture of the Kingdom of God.

Jeremiah 3:18 *In those days the people of Judah and Israel will return together from exile in the north. They will return to the land I gave their ancestors as an inheritance forever. NLT*

Jeremiah 30:10 *"So do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel, says the LORD. For I will bring you home again from distant lands, and your children will return from their exile. Israel will return and will have peace and quiet in their own land and no one will make them afraid.*

Israel should neither fear nor be dismayed. (V10) God was with the scattered (Diaspora) tribes of Israel. (V11) Even though the Jews were scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth, God was still with them. He has blessed them in so many wonderful ways.

God will judge the nations that mistreated Israel's refugees. (V11)

HEALING FOR YOUR WOUNDS

Jeremiah 30:17 *I'll restore your health and heal your wounds," declares the LORD. "People call you an outcast: Zion, no one cares for you.*

God will heal all the wounds of formerly outcast Israeli's (17).

Jeremiah 30:18 *"This is what the LORD says: I'm going to bring the captives back to Jacob's tents and show compassion on their homes. Cities will be built on the ruins, and fortified palaces will be built in their rightful place.*

God will bring outcasts back to the place of Jacob's tents (V18). Cities will be rebuilt over ruins (V18).

Jeremiah 30:19 *The people who live there will sing songs of praise, and the sound of laughter will be heard from there. I'll make them numerous, and their number won't decrease. I'll bring them honor, and they won't be considered unimportant.*

There will be a dramatic increase in population (V19). This people from whose mouths will sound forth songs of praise to God and whose mouths will be filled with laughter will be greatly honoured by the Lord. They will no longer be deemed unimportant because God's favour and blessing will be manifestly upon them.

Jeremiah 30:20

²⁰ *Their children will be like they were long ago. Their community will be established in my presence, and I will punish everyone who oppresses them.*

²¹ *Their leader will be someone from their own people. Their ruler will come from among them. I'll bring him near, and he will come close to me. Who would dare to come near me?" asks the LORD.*

Israel's leader will come from their own people (V21). They will never again be lorded over or forced to bow to foreign conquerors. They will be happy and free to love and serve Jehovah their God. He will be their God and they will be uniquely His own people.

Jeremiah 30:22 You will be my people, and I will be your God.

THE GOD OF ALL ISRAEL'S FAMILIES

Jeremiah 31:1 "In that day," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be my people."

On many occasions in their long history the various tribes of "Israel" have been divided and separated one from another but in the prophetic future they will all be united forever. ALL the families, clans and tribes of Israel mourned and wept for the Messiah when He appeared to them in Jerusalem. (Zechariah 12:11)

Jeremiah 31:2 I will care for the survivors as they travel through the wilderness. I will again come to give rest to the people of Israel."

3 Long ago the LORD said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself."

God's love for Israel is an everlasting, never ending love. Because of this love He will ultimately grant them magnificent rest that will be eternal throughout all generations.

Jeremiah 31:4, 5

4 I will rebuild you, my virgin Israel. You will again be happy and dance merrily with tambourines.

5 Again you will plant your vineyards on the mountains of Samaria and eat from your own gardens there.

They will plant fruitful vineyards in Samaria. (On the West Bank!). A time of magnificent national rejoicing is coming soon for Israel. The experience of such stupendous joy will eliminate every sad and mournful memory within their national psyche. Their history of sadness and sorrow will be forever forgotten, eclipsed by the wondrous glory of their new found joy.

Jeremiah 31:6 The day will come when watchmen* will shout from the hill country of Ephraim, 'Come, let us go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD our God.' "

*Believers in Yeshua (Hebrew: natsarim) will answer the call to worship Jehovah in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 31:7 - 10

7 Now this is what the LORD says: "Sing with joy for Israel! Shout for the greatest of nations! Shout out with praise and joy: 'Save your people, the remnant of Israel!'"

8 For I will bring them from the north and from the distant corners of the earth. I will not forget the blind and lame, the expectant mothers and women about to give birth. A great company will return!

9 Tears of joy will stream down their faces, and I will lead them home with great care. They will walk beside quiet streams and not stumble. For I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is my oldest child.

10 "Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his people, will gather them together

and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock.

All the nations on earth will acknowledge that God has gathered His people to Israel and Jerusalem. This will be the time when the “Christian watchmen” will cry out to their brethren ‘*Come, let us go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD our God.*’ (*Jeremiah 33: 16*) The redeemed people of God both Jew and Gentile now manifestly recognised as ONE NEW MAN. will go up to Zion to worship the LORD together.

Jeremiah 31:11 *For the LORD has redeemed Israel from those too strong for them.*

God has personally delivered Israel from enemies too strong for them to defeat. This will be a good time for Israel to sing joyfully.

Jeremiah 31:12 *They will come home and sing songs of joy on the heights of Jerusalem. They will be radiant because of the many gifts the LORD has given them the good crops of wheat, wine, and oil, and the healthy flocks and herds. Their life will be like a watered garden, and all their sorrows will be gone.*

ISRAEL'S MAGNIFICENT RESTORATION

There are many positive scriptures that clearly indicate a magnificent spiritual restoration of Israel in the context of the End Times. One of the tragic mistakes that many Christian scholars and commentators have made is to assign every positive promise that God has made to Israel to the Millennium. This action is grossly misleading because from the context of so many of these positive promises; there are no direct indications that they will await fulfillment in the millennium. Israel is soon going to enter into and enjoy the fulfillment of so many wonderful promises that God has pronounced. I believe that this magnificent period of blessing will occur long before the Millennium. It will begin to transpire immediately after the predicted outpouring of God's Spirit (Zechariah 12:10).

MESSIAH IN THE MIDST OF ISRAEL

Zechariah makes it clear that when the enemy armies launch their attack on Israel, the "Angel of the Lord" (Zechariah 12:8) will be leading (going before) the army of Israel leading them to astounding victory. He is therefore in the middle (midst) of Israel.

Joel also refers to God being "in the midst" of His people in the time preceding the period when He will pour out His Spirit on all flesh.

Joel 2:27-29

27 Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God And there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. NKJV

There are numerous scriptures that speak of God being in the "midst of Jerusalem" and actually living there that obviously are not referring to the Millennium. I personally believe they are referring to the time period when God will return to Jerusalem to take control of the situation that faces Israel, winning an amazing victory and then pouring out His Spirit on the descendants of David and the house of Israel. It is surely God's presence that will make Jerusalem such a marvelous place. The glory of His presence will saturate the city. This will constitute the true glory of Zion.

Some examples of God's positive purposes for Jerusalem are found in the following verses;

Jeremiah 31:11-13

¹¹ *"Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his people, will gather them together*

and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock.

¹² *For the LORD has redeemed Israel from those too strong for them.*

¹³ *They will come home and sing songs of joy on the heights of Jerusalem. They will be radiant because of the many gifts the LORD has given them — the good crops of wheat, wine, and oil, and the healthy flocks and herds. Their life will be like a watered garden, and all their sorrows will be gone. NLT*

Many Christians believe that all references to Zion and Jerusalem in respect of the End Times refer to the heavenly Mount Zion and Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). However, so many of these references such as Jeremiah 1:11-13 identify features that definitely link the prophecy to earthly scene and sights. These scriptures make it abundantly clear that the prophetic purposes of God will be fulfilled on earth rather than in heaven. The Scriptural track document of Jerusalem (acknowledged then as "Salem"), begins when Abraham meets "Melchizedek" (King of Justice) about 2000 BC. During its long history it has been known by a number of names: e.g. Urusalim, Salem, Mount Moriah, Adonai Urah, Jebus, Jerusalem, Zion, the Town of David, Ariel (Lion of God) God has declared that this is the location He will set up His Title and will dwell there.

Isaiah 52:8-9

⁸ *Let the ruins of Jerusalem break into joyful song, for the LORD has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem.*

⁹ *The LORD will demonstrate his holy power before the eyes of all the nations. The ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. NLT*

Isaiah's reference to Jerusalem refers to the "ruins of Jerusalem." This could not possibly be the heavenly Jerusalem. It is without doubt the earthly city. Isaiah also declares that the "redeemed Jerusalem" will demonstrate God's power before the eyes of all nations and that even the ends of the earth will see the salvation of God as demonstrated in the magnificent restoration of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 54:11-14

¹¹ *"O storm-battered city, troubled and desolate! I will rebuild you on a foundation of sapphires and make the walls of your houses from precious jewels.*

¹² *I will make your towers of sparkling rubies and your gates and walls of shining gems.*

¹³ *I will teach all your citizens, and their prosperity will be great.*

¹⁴ *You will live under a government that is just and fair. Your enemies will stay far away; you will live in peace. Terror will not come near. NLT*

Isaiah 54:17 *But in that coming day, no weapon turned against you will succeed. And everyone who tells lies in court will be brought to justice. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the LORD; their vindication will come from me. I, the LORD, have spoken! NLT*

Once again the “storm battered city, troubled and desolate” even though to be restored with sapphires, precious jewels and sparkling rubies does not in any way describe the heavenly Jerusalem. This is obviously a reference to the earthly Jerusalem that will be renovated and re-built a magnificent manner. Although the city is rendered magnificent with all the precious stones; the real glory of the city will emanate from the glory emitted by the presence of the Messiah who will have made Jerusalem His new address. He has also established His government there from which His enemies will stay far away.

IN THE DIVINE SPOTLIGHT

Isaiah 60:1-3

1 "Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all the nations to see! For the glory of the LORD is shining upon you.

2 Darkness as black as night will cover all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the LORD will shine over you.

3 All nations will come to your light. Mighty kings will come to see your radiance. NLT

Jerusalem will be dramatically and brilliantly illuminated when the shekinah light of God penetrates the gross darkness that engulfs the world. What a magnificent sight and sound show that will make! It will be utterly magnificent and breath taking. The whole world will have a new perception of God founded upon the marvelous things that He will have accomplished for Israel. All nations, including their leaders (Kings) will travel to Jerusalem to see the awesome radiance. Such promises occur not only in the Tanaach (Old Testament) but in the New Testament too. One of these occurs in the writings of Paul to the Gentile church in Rome. He likens Israel's restoration to a dramatic resurrection from the dead. A whole nation will at one time be raised from the grave of a religious system to be eternally energized by the Spirit of the living God.

Romans 11:12 - 15

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more (will their) their fullness (pleroma)

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? NKJV (Emphasis added).

Paul here refers to the “fullness” of Israel. The word translated fullness is ***pleroma*** which Paul uses in several other places. He also intimates that one of the God given tasks of the Gentiles is to provoke the Jews to jealousy to the extent that they would desire a unity with the Gentiles in the Messiah. (V 14) This is a task which the Gentiles have so far dismally failed to recognize, address or achieve. The predicted fullness of the Gentiles will never be complete without the addition of the Jews.

Ephesians 1:10 states that in the *pleroma* of times God would *gather together in one all*

things in Messiah.

The dramatic scene enacted at Calvary when Jesus died serves as an illustration of what will happen spiritually when Israel is brought back from the dead.

Matthew 27:51-53

51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked and the rocks were split,

52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. NKJV

ALL THINGS BROUGHT UNDER MESSIAH'S AUTHORITY

Ephesians 1:10

10 And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ — everything in heaven and on earth. NLT

This statement conclusively includes Jew and Gentile being brought into unity in Messiah as in Ephesians 2:16-18

16 By his death he ended the whole system of Jewish law that excluded the Gentiles. His purpose was to make peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new person from the two groups.

17 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

18 He has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and to us Jews who were near. NLT

Ephesians 4:13 refers to a (prophetic) time when the Body of Messiah comes together in the unity of the Faith which equates to ***the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah.***

Ephesians 4:13 till we all (Jew and Gentile) come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness (pleroma) of Messiah; NKJV

Pleroma is Greek for 'fullness', and used in Ephesians 1:10, 1:23 and Col. 1:24; it can have either an active or a passive sense 'that which fills up' or 'that which is filled up'; therefore the meaning is either that the Church (Eph. 1:22) completes the Messiah, or that the Ecclesia is filled by Messiah.

This will be the prophetic moment when Jew and Gentile combine to manifest the One New Man. In the consistent context of Ephesians, Paul emphasizes that through the death of Messiah, God has broken down forever the wall that once separated Jew from Gentile and has caused them to be one. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, does not want any of the Gentiles to be ignorant of this mystery, i.e. that Jew and Gentile have been reconciled to each other through the death of Messiah. This prophecy

now God sees them as one redeemed company.

Paul also wants the Gentiles to understand another mystery, that the spiritual blindness of Israel is both partial and it is temporary. Their blindness and hardness of heart will be instantly healed when the Deliverer turns Israel from all ungodliness, and keeps His covenant promise to take away all their sins.

We should note that Paul speaks of two “pleromas” one of the Jews and another of the Gentiles. These two references are in the same chapter. Surely this refers to one and the same time! Therefore the fullness of which Paul speaks is the prophetic moment in time when the redeemed community is manifested as THE ONE NEW MAN! (Ephesians 2:15). The fullness refers to the completion of the redeemed community when comprised of both Israel and the Ecclesia.

Romans 11:12 *Now if their (Israel's) fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more (will their) their fullness (pleroma) be?*

Romans 11:25 *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 fullness (pleroma) of the Gentiles (Greek ethnos-non Jewish nations G1484) be come in.*

Be come in to what? - Into the commonwealth of Israel. Ephesians 2:12. Before we were “In Christ” Paul says that we were strangers and foreigners, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. But in Christ we have also been inducted into the commonwealth of Israel.

Romans 11:26-28

²⁶ *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:
27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

There are numerous other Biblical passages concerning Israel's future that do not seem to fit into either the immediate present era, nor into the Millennium. There are many passages of prophetic scripture that foretell amazing things that God will accomplish for Israel to redeem the honor of His Name. None of these scriptures contain any specific intimation that they will not happen until the Millennium. In fact, many of these scriptures clearly show that the newly displayed unity between Jew and Gentiles contribute to the surrender of many lives to the Lord. Do these passages suggest that there may be a period of time in God's prophetic purpose that is largely unaccounted for in the popular End Times scenarios? Is it an era which is better than the present one, but not as good as the ultimate one? Is it an interval in time when Israel will experience and manifest the magnificent blessings that God has reserved for His ancient covenant people? And could that time be the same period that Zechariah 12:10 predicts which will immediately follow the amazing victory that the Messiah achieves for Israel? Too many Christian theologians and commentators have been too hasty to ascribe all positive promises of blessing and glory upon Israel to the Millennial period. Many such scriptures do not fit well into the Millennial period. Several of them mention “ruling the nations with a rod of iron” etc and God destroying nations, which may not suggest that they happen in the atmosphere of peace

achieved by the Millennial reign of Messiah. These passages probably indicate some future period between the present time and the ultimate eternal purpose, when Israel and the Church will be blessed in a far greater measure than is presently the case, but is yet still far short of what God has promised will ultimately happen.

All too frequently Israel's future has been painted in dark somber colours of tragedy and grief. Too many Christian commentators have assumed that God's intended and promised magnificent future for Israel has been completely cancelled out because the whole nation did not embrace Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. The reality however is very different. The Bible portrays a magnificent future of hope for Israel that will definitely occur, not because Israel is somehow deserving of it, but because God intends to demonstrate the limitless extent of His grace, mercy and faithfulness through His treatment of Israel. Israel will be God's witness and proof to the nations of His everlasting mercy.

Jeremiah 31:17 - 20

- ¹⁷ *There is hope*(Tikvah) for your future," says the LORD. "Your children will come again to their own land.*
- ¹⁸ *I have heard Israel saying, 'You disciplined me severely, but I deserved it. I was like a calf that needed to be trained for the yoke and plow. Turn me again to you and restore me, for you alone are the LORD my God.*
- ¹⁹ *I turned away from God, but then I was sorry. I kicked myself for my stupidity! I was thoroughly ashamed of all I did in my younger days.'*
- ²⁰ *"Is not Israel still my son, my darling child?" asks the LORD. "I had to punish him, but I still love him. I long for him and surely will have mercy on him. NLT*

The hope that God predicts for Israel is expressed in the Hebrew word ***tikvah**** which basically means, "The hopeful expectation of the thing that I long for." Throughout the long years of Israel's scattering in the Diaspora, God's chosen people have been severely disciplined. However, those years of discipline are almost over now and God is about to restore Israel to the experience of His favour. The long years of Israel's difficult history have all constituted a training program for Israel. God has been preparing them for the years when they, with their king David and the Messiah, will rule and reign from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 24:6 - 7

- ⁶ *I have sent them into captivity for their own good. I will see that they are well treated, and I will bring them back here again. I will build them up and not tear them down. I will plant them and not uproot them.*
- ⁷ *I will give them hearts that will recognize me as the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me wholeheartedly. NLT*

Everything that God has allowed Israel to experience, even in the darkest moments of her long history has been for "their own good." It has often been difficult for Israel to recognize this but in the near future the people of Israel will understand. God has constantly watched over them with the eyes of a devoted father.

Hebrews 12:11-13

- ¹⁴ *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless,*

afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹⁵ *Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,*

¹⁶ *and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. NKJV*

Isaiah 40:2

2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; she has received from the LORD's hand Double for all her sins." NKJV

Isaiah 61:7

⁸ *Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs. NKJV*

Israel's long history of suffering at the hands of the nations to which they had been driven will finally come to an end. The shame and ignominy that Jews have suffered too often in the Diaspora will finally be over. Their long winter will give way to magnificent spring and summer. God promises them a double portion of honor.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE NATION'S YEARNING

For approximately 2,000 years since the dispersion in AD 70, devout Jews have continually prayed "Next year in Jerusalem." Whenever they conclude the celebration of one of the biblical feasts they faithfully reiterate this prayer. Throughout the long years of exile they have never lost their yearning to return to their land and its eternal capital, the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Once the door of Israel was opened again in 1948 as a homeland for Jews, they have flocked to the land from more than 100 nations. They have been drawn as if by a giant magnet. That magnet is the yearning for the land implanted by their creator. Many of the migrants do not even realize that it is the hand and the Spirit of God that has so drawn them. They have come mainly for political and social reasons to a land where one can be a Jew without discrimination and denial. God has predicted that He would draw them to the land in the Last Days.

Jeremiah 32:41 - 42

- ⁴¹ *I will rejoice in doing good to them and will faithfully and wholeheartedly replant them in this land.*
- ⁴² *Just as I have sent all these calamities upon them, so I will do all the good I have promised them. I, the LORD, have spoken! NLT*

Isaiah 51:4, 5

- ¹ *"Listen to me, my people. Hear me, Israel, for my law will be proclaimed, and my justice will become a light to the nations.*
- ² *My mercy and justice are coming soon. Your salvation is on the way. I will rule the nations. They will wait for me and long for my power.*

God's law and justice will be proclaimed by Israel to the nations. All nations will see these characteristics of God mirrored in restored Israel. God's law and justice will rule the nations (V5).

Jehovah's expectation for Israel's future is obviously very positive and essentially good. He predicts that He will rejoice to do Israel good as He faithfully and wholeheartedly replants them in their land. God has certainly not brought the Jewish people back to their land to see them decimated or destroyed. He has brought them back with one purpose in mind, to do them good and to vindicate the honor of His Name. As certain as curses and calamities have historically overtaken Israel, so it is also absolutely certain that the blessings of God will finally come upon them. My desire and purpose is to bring to your attention some of the prophetic passages that predict magnificent things predicted upon Israel. Most commentators have pushed these promises into the distant Millennial future but please consider the very real possibility that just as many of God's prophecies have been fulfilled since 1948, many more breathtaking prophecies will be fulfilled in the very near future after the Messiah reveals Himself afresh to Israel as in Zechariah 12:10.

ISRAEL'S RESTORATION PREDICTED IN DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy 30:1 – 10

- 1 "Suppose all these things happen to you — the blessings and the curses I have listed — and you meditate on them as you are living among the nations to which the LORD your God has exiled you.*
- 2 If at that time you return to the LORD your God, and you and your children begin wholeheartedly to obey all the commands I have given you today,*
- 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and gather you back from all the nations where he has scattered you.*
- 4 Though you are at the ends of the earth, the LORD your God will go and find you and bring you back again.*
- 5 He will return you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will possess that land again. He will make you even more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors!*
- 6 "The LORD your God will cleanse your heart and the hearts of all your descendants so that you will love him with all your heart and soul, and so you may live!*
- 7 The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and persecutors.*
- 8 Then you will again obey the LORD and keep all the commands I am giving you today.*
- 9 The LORD your God will make you successful in everything you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock, and your fields will produce abundant harvests, for the LORD will delight in being good to you as he was to your ancestors.*
- 10 The LORD your God will delight in you if you obey his voice and keep the commands and laws written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.NLT*

This scripture passage predicts the restoration of Israel to Jehovah. It will be a brand new era in the life of the whole nation who will obey Him with all their heart, mind and soul. The promises contained in it were given to Israel immediately prior to their entry into their Promised Land. I believe they are also very relevant to Israel now as God prepares to bring Israel into their predicted restoration and new beginning.

SOME RESULTS OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION IN DEUTERONOMY 30

1. Re-gathering from the Diaspora. Deut 30:3-5
2. Judgment upon her enemies. Verse 7
3. Whole hearted love for God. Verse 6
4. Whole hearted obedience to God. Verse 2
5. The restoration to their ancient homeland with restored fortunes. Verse 3-5
6. Success and prosperity. Verse 9
7. Curses on those who have cursed Israel. V7

Jeremiah confirms this restoration in glowing terminology. He portrays for Israel redemption, joyful singing and dancing, prosperity, radiance, rejoicing, and a future that will be "like a well watered garden." This might suggest a restoration of an Edenic kind of shalom. Jeremiah makes several wonderful predictions concerning Israel's future e.g.

Jeremiah 3:17, 18

- 17 In that day Jerusalem will be known as The Throne of the LORD. All nations will come there to honor the LORD. They will no longer stubbornly follow their own evil desires.*
- 18 In those days the people of Judah and Israel will return together from exile in the north. They will return to the land I gave their ancestors as an inheritance forever. NLT*

Jeremiah 3:22, 23

- 22 "Yes, we will come," the people reply, "for you are the LORD our God.*
- 23 Our worship of idols and our religious orgies on the hills and mountains are completely false. Only in the LORD our God will Israel ever find salvation. NLT*

Jeremiah 31:10 - 14

- 10 "Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his people, will gather them together and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock.*
- 11 For the LORD has redeemed Israel from those too strong for them.*
- 12 They will come home and sing songs of joy on the heights of Jerusalem. They will be radiant because of the many gifts the LORD has given them - the good crops of wheat, wine, and oil, and the healthy flocks and herds. Their life will be like a watered garden, and all their sorrows will be gone.*
- 13 The young women will dance for joy, and the men - old and young - will join in the celebration. I will turn their mourning into joy. I will comfort them and exchange their sorrow for rejoicing.*
- 14 I will supply the priests with an abundance of offerings. I will satisfy my people with my bounty. I, the LORD, have spoken!" NLT*

Second Coming of Messiah

In the days following His resurrection His disciples kept asking Jesus the same question. What followed this particular questioning provides some very interesting thoughts. Very few Christians have envisaged that Jesus would return to the Jews first. They have deliberately ignored the fact He is a Jew by direct human descent. They also overlook the fact that He had declared that they would only see Him again when they announced "Blessed are you who comes in the name of the Lord".

Acts 1:6-11

6 When the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, are you going to free Israel now and

restore our kingdom?"

7 "The Father sets those dates," he replied, "and they are not for you to know.

8 But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere — in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9 It was not long after he said this that he was taken up into the sky while they were watching, and he disappeared into a cloud.

10 As they were straining their eyes to see him, two white-robed men suddenly stood there among them.

11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. And someday, just as you saw him go, he will return!" NLT

The imperative question: Lord, are you going to free Israel now and restore our kingdom?"

Jesus' response was not a denial that He would restore the kingdom to Israel but that this was not the time to do so.

The Message Of The Angels:

He will come back to earth again in like manner as you have seen Him go.

To Jerusalem

To a company of Jews

In a visible, physical, tangible, recognizable form

THIS IS NOT A PREDICTION OF THE RAPTURE

So many Christian commentators have ignored or overlooked vital references in the Old Testament regarding the return of the Lord to earth. Many have created fanciful agendas for His return that willfully ignore plain statements about this vital issue. For example, when did you last hear a preacher expound this portion of scripture from Zechariah? An understanding of the imminent magnificent future of Israel includes the possibility that several popular doctrines of the Church may not be correct. These doctrines include the truth about an imminent rapture which states that:

1 Christ comes to the clouds. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

2 He comes for the Church which has (supposedly) replaced Israel

3 He takes the Church to heaven for the marriage supper of the Lamb

4 Israel is left to go through the Tribulation

All these concepts ignore Zechariah 7: 13-14 and 8:1-3 which states

Zechariah 7:13

13 "Since they refused to listen when I called to them, I would not listen when they called to me, says the LORD Almighty.

14 I scattered them as with a whirlwind among the distant nations, where they lived as strangers. Their land became so desolate that no one even traveled through it. The land that had been so pleasant became a desert."

Zechariah 7:13-14 refers to the Diaspora when Israel was scattered among the nations. During that whole period the land of Israel that had been so pleasant became utterly desolate. This prophecy was graphically fulfilled through approximately 2,000 years when the people were banished from their land. Chapter 8 details the blessings that will apply

when God brings them back to their land and ultimately returns to live in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 8

8:1 Then another message came to me from the LORD Almighty:

2 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: My love for Mount Zion is passionate and strong; I am consumed with passion for Jerusalem!

3 And now the LORD says: I am returning to Mount Zion, and I will live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City; the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain. NLT

1 The Lord's love for Jerusalem remains constantly strong and passionate

2 He is returning to Mount Zion (Jerusalem) Matthew 23:39 to those to whom He said, "You will not see Me again until you shall say blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord".

3 He will live in Jerusalem

4 Jerusalem will be called the faithful city

5 The Mountain of the Lord Almighty will be known as the Holy Mountain

God is filled with passionate strong love for Mount Zion in Jerusalem where He will make His abode. It was precisely here at Mount Zion where God provided the promised sacrifice that procured salvation for all mankind. It is also the place where the Temple and the holy of holies stood. It is the LORD Almighty, - El Shaddai who makes this positive declaration.

Jeremiah 30:10 - 11

10 "So do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel, says the LORD. For I will bring you home again from distant lands, and your children will return from their exile. Israel will return and will have peace and quiet in their own land, and no one will make them afraid.

11 For I am with you and will save you, says the LORD. I will completely destroy the nations where I have scattered you, but I will not destroy you. But I must discipline you; I cannot let you go unpunished. NLT

In verse 11, the Hebrew word for save is *Yasha* (H3467) meaning to open wide, to free and to succor. It is a very potent word having the connotations of rescue, deliverance, avenge, defense, help, preservation, to make safe. i.e To bring salvation, to save, achieve victory. All of these implications are exceedingly positive for Israel's future well being. (Strong's Bible Dictionary).

Isaiah 30:27 - 30

27 Look! The LORD is coming from far away, burning with anger, surrounded by a thick, rising smoke. His lips are filled with fury; his words consume like fire.

28 His anger pours out like a flood on his enemies, sweeping them all away. He will sift out the proud nations. He will bridle them and lead them off to their destruction.

29 But the people of God will sing a song of joy, like the songs at the holy festivals. You will be filled with joy, as when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem - the mountain of the LORD - to the Rock of Israel. NLT

In verses 27-28 Jehovah will appear seeking vengeance for Israel with burning anger and words that consume like a blazing fire. His anger is poured forth on His enemies as He leads

them to destruction. At the same time period, the people of God (Israel) will sing a song of joy as at the (ancient) holy festivals when a flautist would lead groups of pilgrims to Jerusalem, to the mountain of the LORD,- to “the Rock of Israel.”

The Apostle Paul refers to the rock from which the Israelites drank in the wilderness and he tells us that amazingly that rock was Messiah. Does Isaiah predict that once again Israel will come with music and singing to the mountain of the LORD, even the Rock of Israel?

1 Corinthians 10:3 – 5

- ³ *And all of them ate the same miraculous food,*
⁴ *and all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was the Messiah. NLT*

Ezekiel 36:28 – 38

- ²⁵ *"And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God.*
²⁶ *I will cleanse you of your filthy behavior. I will give you good crops, and I will abolish famine in the land.*
²⁷ *I will give you great harvests from your fruit trees and fields, and never again will the surrounding nations be able to scoff at your land for its famines.*
²⁸ *Then you will remember your past sins and hate yourselves for all the evil things you did.*
²⁹ *But remember, says the Sovereign LORD, I am not doing this because you deserve it. O my people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have done!*
³⁰ *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I cleanse you from your sins, I will bring people to live in your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt.*
³¹ *The fields that used to lie empty and desolate - a shock to all who passed by - will again be farmed.*
³² *And when I bring you back, people will say, 'This godforsaken land is now like Eden's garden! The ruined cities now have strong walls, and they are filled with people!'*
³³ *Then the nations all around - all those still left - will know that I, the LORD, rebuilt the ruins and planted lush crops in the wilderness. For I, the LORD, have promised this, and I will do it.*
³⁴ *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am ready to hear Israel's prayers for these blessings, and I am ready to grant them their requests.*
³⁵ *I will multiply them like the sacred flocks that fill Jerusalem's streets at the time of her festivals. The ruined cities will be crowded with people once more, and everyone will know that I am the LORD." NLT*

Jeremiah 33:16 – 18

- ¹⁶ *In that day Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And their motto will be 'The LORD (Jehovah) is our righteousness!'*
¹⁷ *For this is what the LORD says: David will forever have a descendant sitting on the throne of Israel.*
¹⁸ *And there will always be Levitical priests to offer burnt offerings and grain*

offerings and sacrifices to me." NLT

THE MESSIAH'S REIGN OVER ALL NATIONS

The Bible is absolutely clear about the fact that the Messiah will ultimately rule and reign over all the nations of the earth. He will be a great King descended from the royal line of Israel, sitting upon the throne of David. A Jewish King will become the ruler of all nations. He will reign from the throne of David in Jerusalem, the city of the great king.

1 Timothy 6:15

15 For at the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. NLT

Revelation 17:14

10 Together they will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord over all lords and King over all kings, and his people are the called and chosen and faithful ones." NLT

Revelation 15:3-4

*3 And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your actions, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations.
4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed." NLT*

The covenant under which Messiah will rule will be the everlasting covenant of peace that God made with Israel. God will make His home and live among His people in Jerusalem, the city of the great king.

Ezekiel 36:26 – 28

*27 And I will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant. I will give them their land and multiply them, and I will put my Temple among them forever.
28 I will make my home among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
29 And since my Temple will remain among them forever, the nations will know that I, the LORD, have set Israel apart for myself to be holy." NLT*

Isaiah 9:6-7

*6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with*

fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the LORD Almighty will guarantee this! NLT

Jeremiah 3:17-18

- 17 In that day Jerusalem will be known as The Throne of the LORD. All nations will come there to honor the LORD. They will no longer stubbornly follow their own evil desires.*
- 18 In those days the people of Judah and Israel will return together from exile in the north. They will return to the land I gave their ancestors as an inheritance forever. NLT (See Jeremiah 3:17,18, 23:5-6, Ezekiel 37:26-28. NLT)*

GOD PROMISES TO ISRAEL:

- 1 An eternal covenant of peace.*
- 2 The original Promised Land of expanded and extended Israel.*
- 3 A great multiplication of the population.*
- 4 A Temple in their midst.*
- 5 God will dwell among them.*
- 6 He will be their God and they shall be His people.*
- 7 All the nations will recognize that Israel is God's holy nation.*

Amos 9:14-15

- 14 I will bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands, and they will rebuild their ruined cities and live in them again. They will plant vineyards and gardens; they will eat their crops and drink their wine.*
- 15 I will firmly plant them there in the land I have given them," says the LORD your God. "Then they will never be uprooted again." NLT*

Exiles will return to Israel from distant lands. They will re-build (ancient) ruined cities. They will plant, harvest and enjoy vineyards and gardens. They will never be uprooted from Israel again.

THE KING IS COMING TO ISRAEL

Zechariah 9:9-11, 14

- 9 Rejoice greatly, O people of Zion!¹ Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!² Look, your king is coming to you³. He is righteous and victorious*, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey — even on a donkey's colt.*
- 10 I will remove the battle chariots from Israel and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and I will destroy all the weapons used in battle. Your king will bring peace to the nations⁴(Goyim). His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth⁵.*
- 11 Because of the covenant I made with you, sealed with blood⁶, (Jeremiah 31:31) I will free your prisoners from death in a waterless dungeon.*

Zechariah 9:14

- 14 The LORD will appear above (over) his people; his arrows will fly like lightning! (Missiles) The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will go out against his*

enemies like a whirlwind from the southern desert.

- 1 A positive word specifically to “the people of Zion.”
- 2 A Shout of triumph for the people of Jerusalem.
- 3 “Your King” is coming. The One who is later revealed as THE King of kings and THE Lord of lords will manifest Himself in this specific role to Israel.
- 4 He will bring peace to the nations.
- 5 His realm (rule) will stretch from sea to sea. From Euphrates to the ends of the earth.
- 6 Because of the covenant I made with YOU, Sealed with blood. (Jeremiah 31:31)
- 7 Come to the place of safety you prisoners of hope.
- 8 I will free you from death.
- 9 I will give you double (blessing) for all your trouble.
- 10 Judah is My bow. Israel is my arrow.
- 11 Jerusalem is My sword.
- 12 I will brandish My sword against the Greeks. (Javan)

Zechariah 9:15 - 17

- 15 *The LORD Almighty will protect his people*, and they will subdue their enemies with sling stones*. They will shout in battle as though drunk with wine, (Zech 12:2) shedding the blood of their enemies. They will be filled with blood like a bowl, drenched with blood like the corners of the altar.*
- 16 *When that day arrives, the LORD their God will rescue his people, just as a shepherd rescues his sheep. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown.*
- 17 *How wonderful and beautiful they will be! The young men and women will thrive on the abundance of grain and new wine. NLT*

The Lord (Messiah) will appear above (over) His people.
His arrows (Missiles) will fly like lightning

V 15. Lord Almighty will protect His people.
Their enemies will be “as though drunk with wine.” (Zech 12:2)

Israel will sparkle like jewels in a crown.

One of the reasons why so many Christian authors and commentators have ignored this particular prophecy is because it clearly and unmistakably refers to Israel and not to the church. In the minds and theologies of so many Christians, God has replaced Israel with the church and therefore His original prophetic plans for Israel have been discarded and have become obsolete. If this were truly the case then the whole of the Old Testament should also be discarded because the innumerable predictions that God made concerning Israel which are sprinkled generously throughout the Old Testament would have become invalid and useless. Of course this is not the case. All the prophecies in the Old Testament are still valid and will be fulfilled in meticulous detail, including those made specifically to Israel.

Zechariah 10:9-10

- 9 *“I will sow them among the peoples, And they shall remember Me in far countries;*

They shall live, together with their children, And they shall return.

- ¹⁰ *I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, And gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, Until no more room is found for them. NKJV*

GOD'S CONCERN FOR HIS HOLY NAME

Everything that God accomplishes for Israel will rebound to the honor of His sacred Name. His name infers His reputation for which He is extremely concerned. He deeply resents the fact that around the world His Name has been dishonoured, His reputation besmirched. He plans to fully restore the honour of His everlasting name.

Ezekiel 36:21-24

- ²⁰ *Then I was concerned for my holy name, which had been dishonored by my people throughout the world.*
- ²¹ *"Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: I am bringing you back again but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, which you dishonored while you were scattered among the nations.*
- ²² *I will show how holy my great name is - the name you dishonored among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the nations will know that I am the LORD.*
- ²³ *For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. NLT (See Ezekiel 20:9, Ezekiel 36:32, Isaiah 43:25, Ezekiel 20:14.NLT)*

ISRAEL, - A SWEET AROMA TO GOD

As the Levitical priesthood offered among their many sacrifices a sweet incense to the LORD, so Israel, as a newly sanctified nation, will become a sweet aroma in the nostrils of the LORD.

Ezekiel 20:41-44

- ⁴¹ *41 I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles.*
- ⁴² *Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers.*
- ⁴³ *And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed.*
- ⁴⁴ *Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel," says the Lord GOD.'" NKJV*

MORE PROSPEROUS THAN THEIR ANCESTORS

Deuteronomy 30:1-5

- ¹ *1 "Suppose all these things happen to you - the blessings and the curses I have*

listed - and you meditate on them as you are living among the nations to which the LORD your God has exiled you.

- 2 If at that time you return to the LORD your God, and you and your children begin wholeheartedly to obey all the commands I have given you today,*
- 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and gather you back from all the nations where he has scattered you.*
- 4 Though you are at the ends of the earth, the LORD your God will go and find you and bring you back again.*
- 5 He will return you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will possess that land again. He will make you even more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors! NLT*

Under the reign of King Solomon the nation enjoyed enormous wealth and prosperity but when King David is restored to his throne Israel will inherit greater wealth and prosperity than ever before. King Solomon's reign was not only a time of great material prosperity and amazing wealth, it was also a renaissance of intellectual activity particularly in the arts and sciences. The fame of Solomon's brilliant wisdom spread far and wide throughout the world. Among his great admirers was the queen of Sheba who visited Solomon in Jerusalem to imbibe his wisdom and knowledge. She was filled with amazement by all she saw and heard: "there was no more spirit in her." After an interchange of presents she returned to her native land.

MIRACLES MIGHTIER THAN THE EXODUS

Micah 7:14-20

- 14. O LORD, come and rule your people; lead your flock in green pastures. Help them to live in peace and prosperity. Let them enjoy the fertile pastures of Bashan and Gilead as they did long ago.*
- 15. "Yes," says the LORD, "I will do mighty miracles for you, like those I did when I rescued you from slavery in Egypt."*
- 16. All the nations of the world will stand amazed at what the LORD will do for you. They will be embarrassed that their power is so insignificant. They will stand in silent awe, deaf to everything around them.*
- 17. They will come to realize what lowly creatures they really are. Like snakes crawling from their holes, they will come out to meet the LORD our God. They will fear him greatly, trembling in terror at his presence.*

Possibly the greatest miracle that God ever performed for Israel was the miracle of their deliverance from Egypt, a miracle they have celebrated every year ever since. But a new and greater miracle is now at hand. It will not only be a supernatural victory, over a powerful enemy and a potentially devastating defeat. It will also include a magnificent revelation of the Messiah to the nation and the subsequent spiritual transformation of Israel.

KINGS AND RULERS WILL SERVE ISRAEL

Isaiah 49:22-23

- 16 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will give a signal to the godless*

nations. They will carry your little sons back to you in their arms; they will bring your daughters on their shoulders.

- ¹⁷ *Kings and queens will serve you. They will care for all your needs. They will bow to the earth before you and lick the dust from your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD. Those who wait for me will never be put to shame." NLT*

(See Isaiah 60:10-13, Isaiah 60:14-18. NLT)

GOD'S GRACE, MERCY AND COMPASSION ON ISRAEL

The response of Israel towards God will be encouraged and occasioned by the Spirit (Ruach) of grace that He pours upon them.

Isaiah 14:1-2

- ¹ *1 But the LORD will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. Israel will be his special people once again. He will bring them back to settle once again in their own land. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and become a part of the people of Israel.*
- ² *2 The nations of the world will help the LORD's people to return, and those who come to live in their land will serve them. Those who captured Israel will be captured, and Israel will rule over its enemies. NLT*

THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

God will gather His sheep together in their ancient homeland and demonstrate His great Shepherd heart for all the world to see. The Messiah will be manifest as the King of kings and the Lord of lords but He will still maintain His characteristics as a great shepherd. He is eternally the shepherd of Israel but He will also be a shepherd to all the nations.

Psalms 80:1 *Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Israel like a flock. NLT*

What a wonderful combination! A king with the heart and disposition of a caring shepherd.

Jeremiah 31:10-11

- ¹⁰ *"Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his people, will gather them together and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock.*
- ¹¹ *For the LORD has redeemed Israel from those too strong for them. NLT*

(See Ezekiel 34:11-16, Ezekiel 34:23-24. NLT)

JERUSALEM -A CITY OF REFUGE

Jerusalem, a city that has been attacked, conquered and destroyed so many times. A place where wars have been waged on so many occasions and where millions have died, will become known as a city of peace. As the cities of refuge were built to provide shelter and safety for those guilty of manslaughter, so Jerusalem will provide a refuge for all who seek solace and safety.

Obadiah also predicts that Israel will destroy Edom with a roaring fire (V18) but will afterwards occupy the mountains of Edom and dwell in the Negev. Deliverers will go up to

Jerusalem to rule over the mountains of Edom. The exiles will also occupy the Phoenician coast.

Obadiah 17-21

- ¹⁷ *"But Jerusalem will become a refuge for those who escape; it will be a holy place. And the people of Israel will come back to reclaim their inheritance.*
- ¹⁸ *At that time Israel will be a raging fire, and Edom, a field of dry stubble. The fire will roar across the field, devouring everything and leaving no survivors in Edom. I, the LORD, have spoken!*
- ¹⁹ *"Then my people living in the Negev will occupy the mountains of Edom. Those living in the foothills of Judah will possess the Philistine plains and take over the fields of Ephraim and Samaria. And the people of Benjamin will occupy the land of Gilead.*
- ²⁰ *The exiles of Israel will return to their land and occupy the Phoenician coast as far north as Zarephath. The captives from Jerusalem exiled in the north will return to their homeland and resettle the villages of the Negev.*
- ²¹ *Deliverers will go up to Mount Zion in Jerusalem to rule over the mountains of Edom. And the LORD himself will be king!" NLT*

THE RADIANT CITY (Contemporary English Version)

Isaiah 60:1 - 3

- ¹ *Jerusalem, stand up! Shine! Your new day is dawning. The glory of the LORD shines brightly on you.*
- ² *The earth and its people are covered with darkness, but the glory of the LORD is shining upon you*
- ³ *All nations will come to your light. Mighty kings will come to see your radiance.*

(See Isaiah 60:12, Isaiah 60:16-17, Isaiah 54:1-3)

GODLY LEADERSHIP RESTORED

Although the modern State of Israel has been blessed with some of the most remarkable leaders of the current era it has also had its share of corruption and deceit amongst its leadership. In this new era into which God is going to bring the nation they will have good and Godly leaders again.

Isaiah 1:26 *Afterward I will give you good judges and wise counselors like the ones you used to have. Then Jerusalem will again be called the Home of Justice and the Faithful City." NLT*

Jeremiah 30:21-22

- ²¹ *They will have their own ruler again, and he will not be a foreigner. I will invite him to approach me, says the LORD, for who would dare to come unless invited?*
- ²² *You will be my people, and I will be your God." NLT*

(See Obadiah 21, Jeremiah 23:2-4, Jeremiah 3:15-18. NLT)

PEACE AND SAFETY REIGNS

Micah 4:4 - 8

- ⁴ Everyone will live quietly in their own homes in peace and prosperity, for there will be nothing to fear. The LORD Almighty has promised this!
- ⁵ Even though the nations around us worship idols, we will follow the LORD our God forever and ever.
- ⁵ "In that coming day," says the LORD, "I will gather together my people who are lame, who have been exiles, filled with grief.
- ⁷ They are weak and far from home, but I will make them strong again, a mighty nation. Then I, the LORD, will rule from Jerusalem as their king forever."
- ⁸ As for you, O Jerusalem, the citadel of God's people, your royal might and power will come back to you again. The kingship will be restored to my precious Jerusalem. NLT

(See Isaiah 51:3, Isaiah 55:10-13, Joel 3:18-19, Isaiah 4:2, Isaiah 51:11, Isaiah 29:17, Isaiah 30:23-26, Hosea 2:21-23, Joel 2:27, Joel 3:18, Amos 9:13-15. NLT)

BEAUTY FOR ASHES, - JOY FOR MOURNING

Israel and the city of Jerusalem will live in safety and peace with great joy.

Isaiah 61:3 *To all who mourn in Israel, he will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair. For the LORD has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory. NLT*

Jerusalem will be renowned as a city in which righteousness, peace and joy abound. Paul tells us that these are the characteristics of the Kingdom of God and they will be the hallmarks of Israel and Jerusalem.

Romans 14:18 *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. NKJV*

Jeremiah 31:16-20

- ¹⁶ But now the LORD says, "Do not weep any longer, for I will reward you. Your children will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy.
- ¹⁷ There is hope for your future," says the LORD. "Your children will come again to their own land.
- ¹⁸ I have heard Israel saying, 'You disciplined me severely, but I deserved it. I was like a calf that needed to be trained for the yoke and plow. Turn me again to you and restore me, for you alone are the LORD my God.
- ¹⁹ I turned away from God, but then I was sorry. I kicked myself for my stupidity! I was thoroughly ashamed of all I did in my younger days.'
- ²⁰ "Is not Israel still my son, my darling child?" asks the LORD. "I had to punish him, but I still love him. I long for him and surely will have mercy on him. NLT

RIGHTEOUS AND JOYFUL CITIZENS

Isaiah 60:21-22

- ²¹ All your people will be righteous. They will possess their land forever, for I will plant them there with my own hands in order to bring myself glory.

- ²² *The smallest family will multiply into a large clan. The tiniest group will become a mighty nation. I, the LORD, will bring it all to pass at the right time." NLT*

(See Jeremiah 31:13-14, Isaiah 33:24, Jeremiah 30:21-24. NLT)

A GREATLY INCREASED POPULATION

Ezekiel 36:33-36

- ³³ *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I cleanse you from your sins, I will bring people to live in your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt.*
- ³⁴ *The fields that used to lie empty and desolate - a shock to all who passed by - will again be farmed.*
- ³⁵ *And when I bring you back, people will say, 'This godforsaken land is now like Eden's garden! The ruined cities now have strong walls, and they are filled with people!'*
- ³⁶ *Then the nations all around - all those still left - will know that I, the LORD, rebuilt the ruins and planted lush crops in the wilderness. For I, the LORD, have promised this, and I will do it. NLT*

(See Micah 4:6-12, Isaiah 66:21-23. NLT)

A WORLDWIDE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Joel declares in the most clear and emphatic manner that in the Last days God will pour out His Holy on all humanity. However it is also very clear that this will not happen until after God has supremely blessed Israel and has come to dwell in the midst of her.

Joel 2:20-24

- 20 Surely the LORD has done great things!*
- 21 Don't be afraid, my people! Be glad now and rejoice because the LORD has done great things.*
- 22 Don't be afraid, you animals of the field! The pastures will soon be green. The trees will again be filled with luscious fruit; fig trees and grapevines will flourish once more.*
- 23 Rejoice, you people of Jerusalem! Rejoice in the LORD your God! For the rains he sends are an expression of his grace. Once more the autumn rains will come, as well as the rains of spring.*
- 24 The threshing floors will again be piled high with grain, and the presses will overflow with wine and olive oil. NLT*

Joel 2:26-29

- ²⁴ *Once again you will have all the food you want, and you will praise the LORD your God, who does these miracles for you. Never again will my people be disgraced like this.*
- 27 Then you will know that I am here among my people of Israel and that I alone am the LORD your God. My people will never again be disgraced like this.*
- 28 "Then after I have poured out my rains again, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions.*
- 29 In those days, I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, men and women alike.*

NLT

Immediately following the restoration of Israel as previously detailed, God will then pour out copiously of His Spirit upon ALL flesh which will cause the greatest ever spiritual harvest. The harvest will be reaped by the One New Man comprised of Jewish Messianic believers and Gentile believers many of whom will have come to faith in Yeshua from all false religions and particularly from Islam because God has a special relationship to the seed of Abraham through Ishmael as well as through Isaac. Every Christian and every church needs to be wide awake and thoroughly alert with regard to the many predictions concerning the Last Days. Bible prophecy is no longer related to the distant future.

Gerald Rowlands, the author of this article has also written a book entitled ***THE MESSIAH COMES TO ISRAEL***. These notes should be read as a sequel to the book to give a fuller understanding of what the author sees as Israel's prophetic future.

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