

Israel

God's Timepiece

Rev. Hector MacLeod

About the Author

Rev. Hector C. MacLeod loved the Scriptures and found much joy in studying and teaching from the Word of God. As a young man, he graduated from Bible college and later lived in Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip. He led several tours to Israel. Rev. MacLeod also served for a number of years as Camp Chaplain with Gideons International in Canada, pastored churches, and taught in Bible school. Rev. MacLeod passed away in 2010.

Ezra International is grateful to the family of Rev. Hector MacLeod for his gift of the following work to the ministry. We trust it will be both helpful and a blessing for every reader.

About Ezra International

Since its founding in 1995, Ezra International has assisted more than 70,000 Jewish people from across the globe return to Israel, the land of their forefathers. Ezra International representatives work in Ukraine, Russia, and other countries of the former Soviet Union, South America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Ezra International remains committed to assisting the Jewish people in agreement with the promises and prophecies of the Scriptures (Isaiah 49:22, Jeremiah 30:3, Isaiah 14:1, Jeremiah 3:18, Ezekiel 28:25, Ezekiel 37:21).

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The Origin of Arab Nations

Shortly after man's attempt to build the tower of Babel c. 2347 BC in rebellion against his Creator, the whole world was plunged into idolatry. Man "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man, and birds, and reptiles" (Rom. 1:23). Since the whole world had gone into idolatry, God in His great wisdom chose to deal with a family from that point on in time. He chose Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, today in the country of Iraq, in 2136 BC and began to deal specifically with him. God's purpose in choosing Abram was to rescue the fallen human race through Abram's seed, Jesus the Messiah.

- God promised a land as a permanent possession for Abram's offspring.
- Through Abram's seed, all of the nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

A blessing or a curse would come upon all those who came in contact with Abram's offspring. "And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you" (Gen. 12:3). A blessing for those who treat Abram's seed well. A curse upon those who ill treat Abram's seed. The same revelation was reiterated to Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel. "May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed" (Gen. 27:29).

The revelation was repeated again to the nation on their way back to the Promised Land following their miraculous deliverance from the land of Egypt. The Spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he declared to the sons of Israel: "May those who bless you be blessed, and those who curse you be cursed" (Num. 24:9). It is especially noteworthy that Balaam's Spirit-directed message was the same revelation God gave to Abraham several centuries before, indicating that it is as valid today as when it was first given. It is also a demonstration of the fact that "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable--He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace

or to whom He sends His call” (Rom.11:29, Amplified Version).

After living for several years in the land of promise, Abram still had no children because his wife Sarai was barren. When he complained to God (Gen. 15:3-4), he was reassured that his seed would be as the stars of heaven for number (verse 5). After remaining in the land for 11 years, Abram at age 86 could evidently wait no longer for the promised offspring. He bowed to his wife Sarai’s scheme to have children from the Egyptian handmaid Hagar (Gen. 16:1-3), a common practice at this time in such circumstances in order to provide an heir. In c.1913 BC, a male child was born as a result of that union, and his name was Ishmael (Gen. 16:15). Ishmael is considered to be the main progenitor of the Arab nations.

A number of Arabs today, particularly in relationship to Arab-Israeli conflict, like to emphasize that they stem from their forefather Ishmael. For that reason some of their sons are named Ishmael (in Arabic, Ismael).

It should be realized that the terms “Arab” and “Muslim” do not in all cases mean the same thing, although today Islam and particular in its militant form is mostly represented in the Arab nations. Traditionally and historically, the Arabs were a largely semi-nomadic people who lived and moved in what today we would term the North Arabian Peninsula.

In the Biblical account, the Arabic peoples find their roots in Ishmael as indicated above and Isaac’s son Esau, also known as Edom (see Gen. 28). It may be considered the beginning of the animosity when Hagar conceived and then mocked Sarah, treating her with contempt. The term “Arab” has its origin in the Hebrew word “Arav,” meaning “one who lives in the desert.” Whereas God promised that Ishmael would become a great nation, He pointed out that it would be through Isaac He would establish His covenant (Gen 17:20-21).

The Lord revealed that that there would be great enmity between the descendants of the two sons, each representing one nation: a nation of promise (Gal. 4:28) and a nation raised from human wisdom (Gen. 25:23; see also Mal. 1:3, Rom. 9:13, Gal. 4:29).

The words of the Lord concerning Ishmael have proven to be true concerning not only the Arab people's inability to live alongside their cousins who returned home in 1948 but also amongst their brother nations.

“Ishmael is a wild kicking donkey of a man: his hand will be against everyone and everybody's hand will be against him and he will live in hostility against all his brothers” (Gen. 16:12).

The circumstances related to the birth of Ishmael are a typical example of two glaring sins that are often committed today:

1. Unbelief on Abram and Sarai's part. They demonstrated the fact that they were not prepared to wait for the seed God had promised them. They decided to take action on their own to provide a substitute seed.
2. Man's notion that he can plan and scheme to bring about the fulfillment of God's promises is one of the greatest delusions we encounter in life.

Abram's lapse into unbelief and his scheme with Sarai to take matters into their own hands has produced a tragedy beyond description. The amount of bloodshed and suffering of both nations is beyond human comprehension. No two nations have ever been at enmity for so long a period of time. Their situation in this respect is unique among the nations of the world.

The Origin of the Nation of Israel

Israel's history starts by a most extraordinary miracle. Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, God appeared to Abraham when he was 99 years of age. His wife Sarah was 90. They were both long past the age when they could produce children. However, God worked a tremendous and unprecedented miracle in both of their lives. The miraculous change is revealed in the account given in Genesis 20. When Sarah was 90 years old, King Abimelech of Gerar took Sarah to be his wife where Abraham took the way of human wisdom for what today we might term political expediency. God, however, quickly intervened and Sarah was immediately released. Not only so, but Sarah, who had been barren during her whole adult

life, became fertile at the age of 90 and bore the miracle seed that God had promised 25 years previously.

This supernaturally born baby was Isaac, the progenitor of the Israelite nation. The Jewish people are proud of their miracle-born forefather and Yitzhak (Isaac) is a popular first name for Jewish boys. Two presidents of modern Israel, Ben-Zvi and Navon, along with two prime ministers, Shamir and Rabin, bore that name.

God Established His Covenant with Isaac

After Abraham asked God if a 100-year-old man could father a child with a 90-year-old woman, God responded: “Your wife will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him” (Gen. 17:19).

A fact to note is that when Isaac, the miraculously born child of promise arrived, Ishmael could not accept him, and subsequently mocked him and persecuted him. God Himself reinforced Sarah’s decision that Hagar the bond-woman and Ishmael had to be cast out. The Bible record is very clear: “Get rid of that slave woman and her son [Ishmael], for that slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac” (Gen. 21:10b)

The Land of Israel Is God’s Covenant Promise to Jacob’s Seed

The Bible contains at least 150 promises giving the land of Israel to the offspring of Jacob. One of the promises was written in stone, contained in the Ten Commandments, “Honour you father and your mother, that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (Ex. 20:12)

The land of Israel is the only land in the world that God specifically calls “my land” (Lev. 25:23, Ezek. 38:16, Joel 3:2). The city of Jerusalem is the only city in the world that God specifically calls “His city” (Is. 45:13, 66:20).

Israel is the only nation in the world that has a title deed from the

creator for the land it now occupies. The title deed given by God is for a much, much greater area than that now in their possession. One of the many promises given by God to Abram states, “To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates” (Gen.15:18). The Euphrates divides east from west in today’s Middle East.

Inevitable Judgment for Those Who Divide Israel

At this point it should be noticed particularly that God has reserved a very terrible judgment upon those who ignore His gift of the land to Jacob’s seed. Worthy of note is the severe warning, “I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people amongst the nations and divided up my land” (Joel 3:2). It is a dangerous thing to interfere with God’s plans for the land of Israel. The fact that it is the only country in the world deeded to a particular people should be sufficient warning to everyone. However, the world does not recognize that God has given that land to the sons of Jacob alone; therefore, men and nations who meddle await the inevitable judgment of God. The coming judgment was seen and expressed clearly by the prophet Joel.

That Israel will yet occupy and control the entire land mass deeded to them by their God and the creator of the Universe is as certain as the rising of the sun tomorrow morning. We need to be reminded again that “God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable. He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace, or to whom He sends his call” (Rom. 11:12, Amplified Version).

Current Events

The leaders of modern Israel have given away land for a pseudo-peace. Sad to say, many are not aware of the significance of this during these times. However, the prophetic scriptures clearly portray that Israel and the nations will experience a false peace before the great tribulation comes upon the whole world. The apostle Paul

was shown that there would be talk of peace just before the great tribulation comes upon the earth. “While people are saying ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape you” (1 Thess. 5:3).

There is abundant evidence that Israel and the rest of the world are inevitably moving toward that fulfillment. The prophet Ezekiel points out that when Israel is finally at rest, enjoying a false peace (Ezek. 38:11-12), the greatest invasion in the history of the world will be directed against her with a view to her total destruction. God Almighty Himself will move against that colossal force. The scope of its destruction will be without precedence. Israel’s enemies will fall on the mountains of Israel, and God’s great name will be made known amongst the nations of the world (Ezek. 38:18-23).

Anyone who cares to investigate can definitely see the stage-setting for that battle in the Middle East unfolding today.

End-Time Prophecies Are Being Fulfilled Now

The disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (Matt. 24:3). His description of end-time events matches what we see happening on the world scene today. The occurrence of wars, earthquakes, diseases, and plagues has intensified. Furthermore, one of the most significant signs of all is the return of the Jewish people to their land after 2,000 years in exile.

The fact should not be missed that Israel is the focal point of all latter-day prophecies of both Old and New Testaments

1. Every prophet of the Old Testament saw the nation of Israel in center stage when they prophesied of end time events.

2. Our Lord made it clear that the Jewish people would be scattered worldwide after His crucifixion. Particular attention should be given to His words: “They will fall by the sword and be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). The prophecy predicting the scattering of Israel was fulfilled in AD

70 when Jerusalem was destroyed to the ground, and the nation of Israel was scattered around the entire world.

However, we should take special note that our Lord also revealed that the Jewish people would be back in the land in the latter days, at His second coming. Of significance is this particular part of his reply to his disciples when they asked Him: “When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matt 24:3). His answer to their question proves that the Jewish people would be back in the land to hear the warning he sounds. “So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation spoken through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. . . For then there will be great distress, unequaled since the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect they will be shortened” (Matt. 24:15-18, 21-22).

There was only **one holy place** recognized by our Lord at that time. That holy place was the Temple located on the Temple Mount (Mount Moriah) in Jerusalem. This particular prophecy of our Lord could not be fulfilled until the Jewish people returned from their 2,000-year dispersion. Since they are now back in the land, we can expect these prophecies to be fulfilled very soon.

The Jewish people are ready and waiting for the right moment to erect a new holy place on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Several different organizations in Jerusalem are working to supply the necessary artifacts and train the appropriate functionaries to restore Temple worship once again as in days of old. Our Lord indicated that this new Temple would be in place in the latter days. The Apostle Paul declared that the man of sin (the anti-Christ) will sit “in the Temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thess. 2:4). The prophecy has not been fulfilled as of yet. However, it will be when the proposed Temple is in place. It goes without saying that Israel had to be back in the land of promise before end-time events could take place.

May we not be like the religious leaders of old, whom our Lord

called hypocrites. They could discern the face of the sky and predict weather patterns, but they refused to accept signs of the times that were plainly revealed by Bible prophets.

Boaters are taught to watch weather conditions before leaving on sea journeys. Their instruction contains an old adage, “Red sky at night, sailors delight; but red skies in the morning, sailors take warning.” That note of warning originates from the Lord’s word back in AD 32: “You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times” (Matt. 16:3). The Word of God in the Old Testament contains multiple prophecies of His first coming. The Pharisees and Sadducees failed to discern any of them. We cannot sidestep the fact that our Lord wants us to be alert and sensitive to the signs of the times.

If the Church does not alert the world that the second coming of Christ is very near, who will? Believers are the only ones on earth who can truly discern the signs of the times. We have His sure word of promise that the Holy Spirit will take the things of Christ and show them to us. Our Lord also revealed that “He will tell you what is yet to come” (Jn. 16:13). We are accountable to make known the things He is showing us.

The supreme importance of His second coming can be observed by the fact that there are many more prophecies proclaiming His second coming than there are for His first coming. Believers are constantly reminded in scripture to be ready and watching for the return of our blessed Lord.

Israel Is God’s Great Timepiece

The fact that the nation of Israel is back in the land of promise is one of the greatest signs of our time that heralds the soon return of Christ. Jesus said, “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door” (Mark 13:28-29). The fig tree is portrayed as a symbol of Israel. God spoke to Israel by the prophet Hosea and said: “When I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree” (Hosea 9:10).

Jeremiah the prophet was shown two baskets of figs when Israel was about to be cast out of the land that God had given them as an inheritance. Jeremiah was told that the figs represented Israel (Jer 24:1-5). When the disciples of Jesus asked him, “When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3), He told them of the fearful things that we see coming upon the world today. He concluded His description of end-time events by giving His disciples the parable of the fig tree. It should be obvious that the nation that was symbolized as a fig tree when they were cast out of the land the first time is now restored to the land bearing the same symbol. God never changes. Jesus is therefore alerting us to watch the nation of Israel, back in the land after nearly 2,000 years of exile.

Multiple Promises of Restoration to the Land

The Old Testament scriptures contain multiple promises to Israel regarding their restoration to the land of their fathers in the latter days. Here are a few: “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart” (Jer. 24:5-7). This part of the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.

The prophets were shown over and over again that the nation of Israel would be restored to the land that God gave to their fathers.

Hear what the prophet David, the man after God’s heart, was given regarding Israel’s restoration: “He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit” (Ps. 105:7-11).

The above promise is in perfect keeping with the word spoken to Abram. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18).

Israel a Nation Before God Forever

Whether in the land or exiled from it, Israel ever remained a nation in God's eye since the day He called them. God uses outstanding illustrations in His word to establish the permanence of the nation of Israel before Him.

Worthy of note are the extraordinary illustrations He gave the prophet Jeremiah: "This is what the LORD says, He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar--the LORD Almighty is his name: 'Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,' declares the LORD, 'will Israel ever cease being a nation before me'" (Jer. 31:35-36). That positive word from the Lord unmistakably indicates that, as long as the sun, moon, and stars remain in the skies, God regards Israel as a nation before Him forever. Whether they remained in the land or were exiled from it because of their disobedience, Israel's status as a nation before God never changed. Furthermore, Israel's conduct cannot alter God's ultimate promises: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done, declares the Lord" (Jer. 31:37).

God declared that in the day that man can either provide a definitive measurement of the heavens or search the depths of the earth beneath him, then, and only then, will he cast off Israel for what they have done. The earth is 7,926 miles in diameter at the equator. If man could probe 4,000 miles into the earth's core and succeed in searching out the bowels of the earth, then God would cast off Israel for all that they have done. It is very evident that God used these extraordinary illustrations in order to show up the ignorance of men who declare that God is finished with the seed of Israel as a nation today.

Israel's Restoration to the Land Was Inevitable

Note the straightforward and positive promises of restoration to the land as revealed to the prophet Ezekiel: “And say to them, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms....They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever” (Ezek. 37:21-22, 25-28).

The words of the prophet could not be expressed more clearly. Now that Israel is back in the land according to God’s promise, we can rest assured that all the superpowers of the world can never remove her from it again.

Israel’s return to the land was inevitable in order that the many promises of that return be fulfilled. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled before our very eyes since Israel became a nation in 1948.

A very interesting and significant prophecy of Israel’s return to the land was given to the prophet Jeremiah: “See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return” (Jer. 31:8). Israel has no restrictions attached to the return of the Jewish people to the land that was promised to them by God. Multitudes have come from near and far. Some arrived on stretchers, some blind or lame, having received their injuries as a result of torture and medi-

cal experiments performed upon them without anesthetics by the infamous Nazi doctors. Amongst the number have been pregnant women and those who even gave birth during the journey. Jeremiah's prophecy is being fulfilled! The fulfillment of this prophecy continues today.

Isaiah the prophet declared: "They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations" (Is. 61:4). The devastation of many generations undoubtedly has reference to Israel's exile for nearly 2,000 years. The fulfillment of this prophecy can be seen throughout the land, in the cities, towns, and settlements. There are many examples, including Beer-Sheva, Bet Shemesh, Bet Shean, Rehovot, Lod, Arad, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, Lakish, and Ein Gedi. All these have been rebuilt, either on the ruins or alongside them.

The city of Ashkelon is a marvelous example of fulfilled prophecy. More than 1,600 years ago the prophet Zephaniah proclaimed: "That land will belong to the remnant of the people of Judah; there they will find pasture. In the evening they will lie down in the houses of Ashkelon. The Lord their God will care for them, he will restore their fortunes" (Zeph. 2:7).

Ashkelon was one of the fortified cities of the Philistines for many centuries. The Philistines, referenced many times in the Old Testament scriptures, are long gone as a nation, but Zephaniah's prophecy regarding the remnant of Judah has been literally fulfilled to the letter in our day. Ashkelon was given city status in 1955. Since then it has grown enormously, numbering at the time of this writing around 112,000.

In the city square the words of Zephaniah's prophecy are found engraved in Hebrew on a piece of stone. In the public park nearby the same scripture is written in English. In both places those very scriptures bear irrefutable testimony to the fact that God's promises are as sure and as certain as the rising of tomorrow morning's sun.

Israel's Phenomenal War Victories

Israel's phenomenal war victories over her enemies since she became a state in 1948 are unparalleled in history. When David Ben-

Gurion declared Israel a state on May 14, 1948, there were fewer than 650,000 Jewish people in the country.

The next day, May 15, they were attacked by six surrounding Arab nations. Troops from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt vowed to drive the Jews into the Mediterranean Sea in one week. The odds were so stacked against the tiny nation that Israel's victory defies human explanation.

Israel has had to defend itself in three major wars since that time. The odds against them have always been overwhelming. Their constant victories have saved them from total annihilation. Their deliverance in every case can only be understood by taking into account supernatural protection from the hand of God, who promised them the land to which they have now returned.

War of Independence 1948

Lance Lambert pointed out that it was not only the creation of the Jewish state that was a miracle but its survival. Israel's many wars against incredible odds and the reports of how impossible situation were overcome is now legend.

In 1948 the Jewish population numbered 650,000, and it faced five regular Arab armies, all fully mobilized and actively aided by what today are known as Palestinian Arabs (although there was no such term at the time) who outnumbered the Jewish population. It is important to recognize that the vast majority of these Arabs were illegal immigrants in the inter-war years who came to Israel to enjoy the benefits of the Jewish settlers such as public hygiene, hospitals, schooling, and employment at fair wages.

One should note that Israel faced that colossal onslaught with only a few thousand rifles, a few hundred machine guns, along with an assortment of other firearms. They had not a single artillery piece or tank. Of their nine airplanes, only one of them had twin engines. Of the 650,000 men and women only 48,000 were trained in any way to fight. Yet they not only survived; they triumphed. It was God's doing. The story of miraculous deliverance and triumph has continued throughout modern Israel's short history. (F. Wright, *Words From the Scroll of Fire*, Jerusalem 1994).

The Six Day War

Arthur W. Kac, commenting on Israel's Six Day war June 5-10, 1967, relates that "Israel struck on Monday morning 5 June 1967. In four hours [Egyptian General] Gamal Nasser's air force was smashed and twenty-five of the most vital Arab air bases were wrecked. In sixty hours Israel destroyed the Jordanian, Syrian and Iraqi air forces. In six days hostilities were brought to a halt."

The war cost Israel 679 dead; the Egyptians suffered around 20,000 deaths, the Jordanians around 8,000 deaths, and around 2,000 Syrian deaths. Israel captured over 100 Patton and Centurion tanks, along with over 700 Russian tanks, many in good working condition, along with hundreds of intact artillery pieces and thousands of tons of munitions.

When hostilities ceased, Israel had reached the Suez Canal in Egypt, occupied the straits of Tiran, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian-held Golan Heights from which artillery had frequently been deployed against the Israeli border villages, the Old City of Jerusalem, and the west bank of the River Jordan.

The Yom Kippur War 1973

Israel's last major war occurred in 1973 on their holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, otherwise known as the Day of Atonement. The Arab nations chose to attack on that particular day because they knew Israel would be fully occupied with their religious exercises.

On the Day of Atonement in 1973, everything in Israel as was standard practice--everything came to a halt. From two hours before sunset until two hours after the succeeding sunset to this day most things come to a stop. There was no transport; no taxis, cars, buses, planes, trains or ships that travelled on Shabbat generally and in particular on Yom Kippur. The nation's airports are closed, the ports are closed, and the stations are closed. No shops are open and no entertainment can be had anywhere. In addition there were no radio programs, no television, almost no communication with the outside and very little within Israel. Even the telephone exchanges were not staffed during the Day of Atonement. It was and is a day of prayer and fasting, spent either in the synagogue or at home.

There can be very little doubt that the Yom Kippur War should have caused the total annihilation of the state of Israel and Jewish hope. Egypt and Syria should have beat Israel, but they were inexplicably prevented. The Egyptian high command gave the first Egyptian division that crossed the Suez Canal 15 hours to take the bar-Lev line. They took it in just five hours and then halted their advance. If they had swept on, the whole of central Israel would have been at their mercy. One Egyptian commander said later, "I was only half an hour's drive from the Mitla Pass, and there was nothing to stop me." Yet the fact is that he stopped and did not show any initiative or question the time frame.

An Israeli captain who held no religious beliefs related that at the height of the firing on the Golan Heights he saw a great hand in the sky pressing downwards as if it were holding something back. Without the intervention of God, Israel would have been doomed.

Abba Eban, former foreign minister of Israel, said in a statement to the United Nations on October 8, 1973, "Egypt attacked with 3,000 tanks, 2,000 heavy guns, 1,000 aircraft, and 600,000 men." Ten days later, when the ceasefire was ordered by the UN, Israeli forces had broken through the Egyptian defenses and were within 50 miles of Cairo, Egypt's capital. On the northern front, Syria was pushed back within 15 miles of Damascus, their capital.

An Incredible Comparison

The Arab states that border Israel cover an area of 497,026 square miles. The land area of the entire Arab world is 5.1 million square miles. If we include Iran with its 636,000 square miles and a population nearing 60 million, then add the Islamic states that oppose Israel, the figures are of course much higher. Israel, less Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Golan Heights is a mere 7,993 square miles. Another comparison is that Israel is around 64 percent of Vancouver Island, or roughly the size of Wales.

At the time of this writing, the Arab nations continue to stockpile weapons while Iran's nuclear ambitions are well known. The odds against Israel in terms of weaponry and manpower are almost beyond our imagination,

Consider and compare the aforementioned facts with the following statistics. There are thought to be 13.3 million Jewish people living in the world today, or 0.25% of the world population. This statistic means that approximately 1 out of every 457 people in the world population is Jewish. Of this number, approximately 5.7 million (42%) live in Israel. Around 5.3 million Jewish people live in the United States, while France, Canada and the United Kingdom host the next largest communities.

Statistics such as these naturally raise the following questions: Why should there be such universal hatred directed against such a tiny minority? Why are so many nations today declaring a vowed intent to destroy this tiny nation that occupies such a minute portion of world real estate? Why have there been so many deliberate attempts to completely exterminate these people?

There is only one place we can find the answer, and that is in the word of God. Hear what God declared to them when He chose them as a nation: “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deut. 7:6-8).

Anti-Semitism Originates with Satan

All anti-Semitism, the refusal to recognize Israel’s chosen status coupled with a hatred and desire to destroy this miniature nation, originates in Satan, the Devil. Satan knows only too well that Israel was specially chosen as a nation by God. Moreover, he is fully aware that “God’s gifts and calling are irrevocable.” The Amplified Bible expands thus: “He never withdraws them when once they are given, and he does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom he sends His call” (Rom. 11:29).

Satan also knows that Israel’s destiny by divine decree is to become the head nation of the world (Deut. 28:13).

Miracle Victories

We have witnessed miraculous war victories on Israel's behalf since they became a nation again in 1948. Their survival against such incredible odds thus far can only be understood by taking into account a supernatural deliverance by God.

The Bible records instances where satanically motivated people and nations tried to destroy Israel from the face of the earth.

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, tried to wipe out the Israelites. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live" (Exodus 1:22).

Haman the Agagite almost succeeded in eliminating the entire Jewish population by establishing an order to destroy the Jews throughout the Persian Empire. The Persian Empire dominated most of the known world in this period. Scripture records that dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar in the Hebrew calendar, and to plunder their goods (Esther 3:13).

Adolph Hitler tortured and destroyed over six million Jews during his reign of terror. Some are still alive who lived through those dark days. Hitler's overwhelming ambition was to destroy every Jewish person in the world, no matter where they lived.

Those Who Try to Destroy Israel Are Soon Destroyed

We should be aware of the fate of those who tried to destroy this chosen nation of God:

1. Pharaoh and his entire army were destroyed by drowning in the waters of the Red Sea (Ps.136:15).
2. Haman died on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai the Jew (Esther 7:10).

3. Hitler went down in shameful defeat. He committed suicide in the special bunker he had prepared for his own protection.

4. The prophet Zechariah saw the nations that will come up against Israel in the near future. He describes their horrible defeat: “This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day people will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. They will seize each other by the hand and attack one another. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected—great quantities of gold and silver and clothing” (Zech. 14:12-14).

The greatest miracle of Israel’s deliverance in the history of the world, therefore, is yet to be seen when the nations of the world come against her. God Almighty declares: “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:2-3, 9).

The Middle East Is Ready to Explode

The entire Middle East is a virtual powder keg that is ready to explode at any moment. All reports indicate that every horrible weapon of warfare (chemical, biological, and nuclear) is being stockpiled on an ongoing basis in anticipation of the final showdown. Old Testament prophets and the New Testament book of Revelation accurately describe the horrors that will occur when that showdown takes place. Intelligence services who monitor the Middle East predict the same potential scenario as described by the prophets in the Bible.

When that war breaks out in the Middle East, many portions of the prophetic scriptures will be fulfilled. The Bible indicates that all of the Gentile nations of the world will eventually be in a state of terrible frenzy. “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in

vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ‘Let us break their chains,’ they say, ‘and throw off their fetters.’ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ‘I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill’” (Ps. 2:1-6).

Jesus described the same terrible events when he declared: “For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened” (Matt. 24:21-22).

Extraordinary Signs of Jesus’ Return

We are living in an unprecedented time in history. The stage setting of many prophecies is observable before our very eyes. Jesus is coming soon. “You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Luke 12:40).

The cold, hard facts revealed by various statistics indicate that we are experiencing extraordinary worldwide convulsions in our time as never before. Earthquakes are increasing at phenomenal rates and with much greater magnitude. Devastating storms are occurring more often with property damage in the billions of dollars. In spite of the extraordinary medical technology of our day, new diseases baffle the medical profession.

Jesus never told His followers that He would return to London, Paris, New York, Rome, or Munich. Instead, He will return to the Mount of Olives in Israel to keep His appointment with His people.

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