ISRAEL MY PROMISED



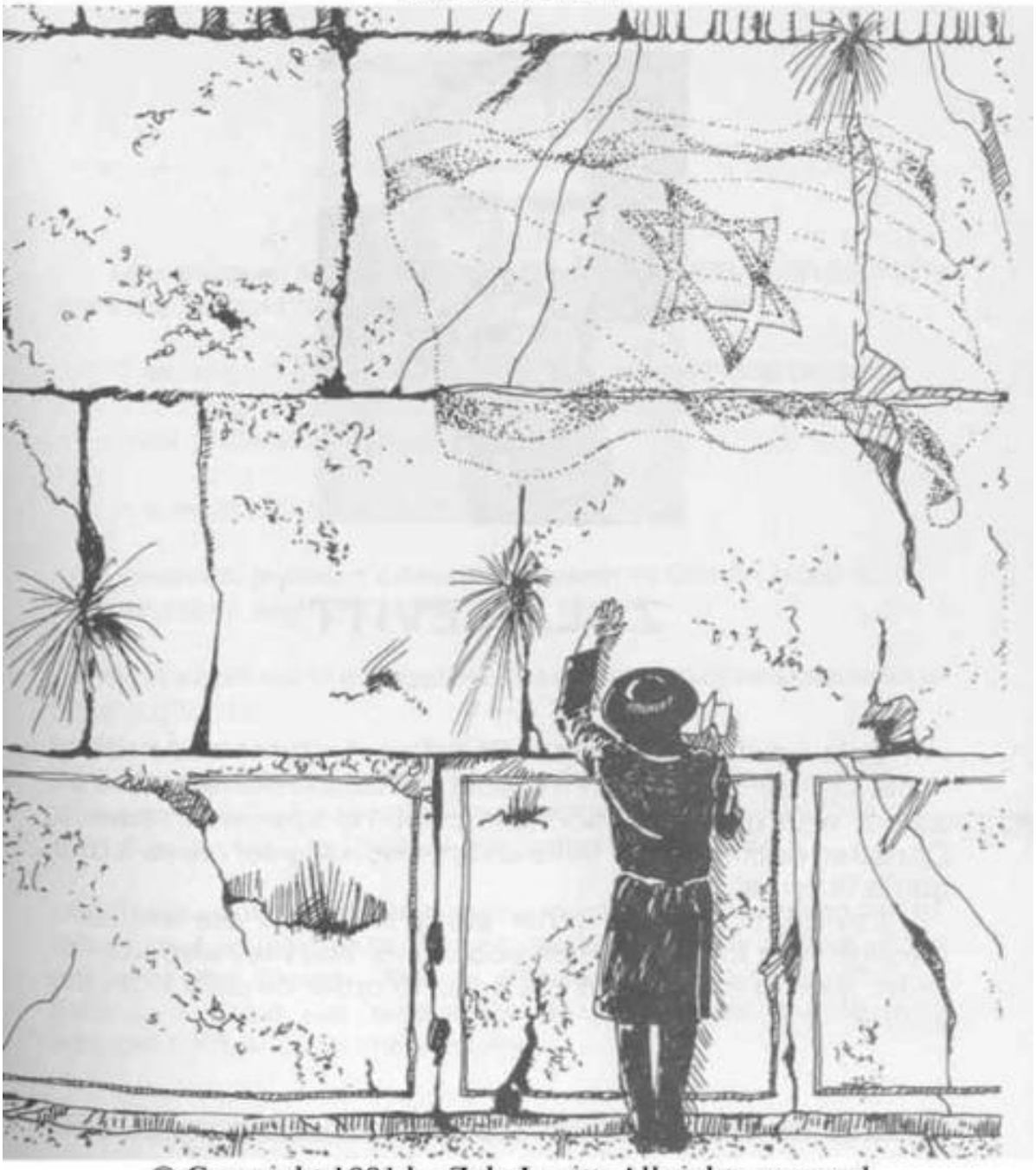
BY
ZOLA LEVITT

"...to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."
Gen. 13:15

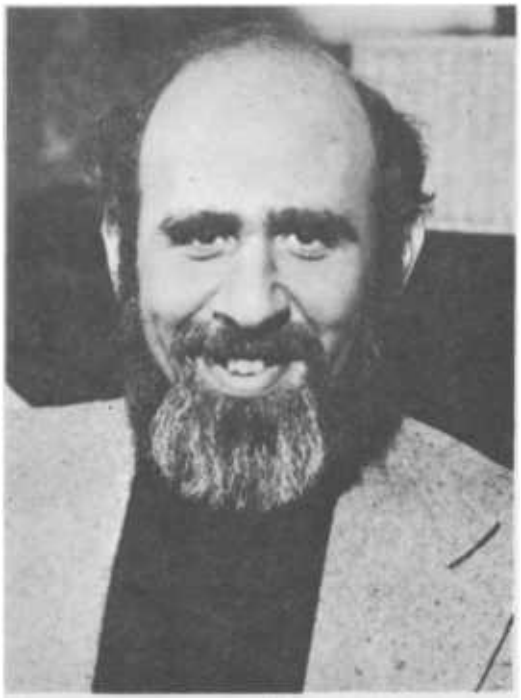
Zola Levitt

ISRAEL MY PROMISED

BY
ZOLA LEVITT



® Copyright 1981 by Zola Levitt. All rights reserved.



ZOLA LEVITT

Zola Levitt is a Hebrew Christian, lecturer and host of "Zola Levitt Presents" on national Christian television and an author with over forty books in print. He appears in several Christian documentary films and periodically serves as a tour guide in Israel.

Levitt's books and other study materials are available through your local Christian bookstore. You may also use the order form in the back of this book to order directly from the author.

Israel, My Promised

I get annoyed with people who say that God has given up on the Jews. Paul would have felt the same way. He wrote:

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1).

In a more emotional moment he cried out:

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved (Rom. 10:1).

Paul's concept of evangelism was the reverse of what we seem to be doing today:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; *to the Jew first,* and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

I have made these same points in other of my writings but in this book I would like to discuss the status of my people in the minds of the Church. Are we still chosen? Did God reject us because we did not accept the Kingdom when the Messiah brought It? Are we damned forever?

Or is there some truth to those friendlier ways of excluding the Jew from the church? Do we have an Old Testament covenant to depend on and therefore don't need salvation through Jesus Christ? Do we already have an adequate Jehovah, and was Jesus sent exclusively to the gentiles? Are we supposed to stay out of the gentile church (and the gentile country clubs) just **because** we are "chosen"? Were we chosen to be excluded in this age?

There are those who teach that Israel is not Israel. What we see over there in the Middle East, a land restored to its original owners in answer to dozens of prophecies, is not really the biblical Israel at all. In reality, it is taught, the Church is now Israel, and the fact that people with Jewish names and Bibles have turned up in what used to be the Promised Land is a remarkable coincidence.

Well, as far as I'm concerned you might as well teach that Texas is not Texas (and that would certainly meet with much righteous indignation). I would have thought that in 1948 when Israel was reclaimed by the Chosen People, those who had been teaching that they would never return would stop it. What's the point of teaching against something that can be seen with one's eyes? What's the sense of insisting that a prophecy plainly fulfilled does not actually exist or has been misinterpreted? But amazingly enough, some people still go on with this

hopelessly outmoded doctrine, even in the face of further and further prophecy fulfillments where Israel is concerned. I assume it's by sheer momentum that they continue, but in any case it's high time to call foolishness foolishness.

Once I wrote a book about witnessing to the Jews for a publisher who held that the Church was really Israel. I didn't know at the time I undertook the project that that was the position of this publisher nor that they would not accept my chapter called "Israel My Love". I was utterly astounded when they sent it back, explaining that it "wasn't quite what we wanted." Evidently it was okay to witness to the Jews, in their minds, but it wasn't okay to allow them the Holy Land. I still have that chapter and I'm going to publish it in this book. I never wrote for that publisher again, of course, but I was grateful that they distributed a great many copies of that half-way witness to my people.

Those who are being nice to the Jews by not annoying them with the Gospel are condemning them to hell. Those being respectful of the Jewish law and the Old Testament by not witnessing to their Jewish neighbors are setting them up for the second death. This is a most serious matter. It would have grieved Peter and Paul, those indefatigable Jews who suffered their lifetimes for gentile salvation, and it certainly grieves any other Jewish Christian.

Most importantly it must deeply grieve our King, the King of the Jews.

Jews Need Not Apply

I'd like to discuss first the point about God's supposed rejection of the Jews. This is a far graver and more devastating philosophy than the mere rejection of Israel as a prophecy fulfillment. If the Church comes to believe that God has rejected all Jews everywhere then obviously all will remain untouched by the Gospel. Christians in America, Russia, Europe, China, etc., would simply forgo any Jewish witness if they thought God has no interest in it.

We will go into more technical biblical reasoning below but it should be immediately obvious from the activities of Jesus Christ that God is very deeply interested in Jewish evangelism. If the Jews were already saved under some other covenant then Jesus witnessed in the one country where He could completely waste His time. If all the Jews were already saved simply because they descended from Abraham, then Jesus shouldn't have told Nicodemus, "**Ye must be born again.**" John the Baptist shouldn't have called Jesus "**the Lamb of God**" since the Jewish people, already saved, would have had no need of further sacrifice. The message of the gospel is entirely savaged by the idea that the Jews were already saved and Jesus' work in the Holy Land was for nothing. Rather, of course, the mission of the Messiah (and Peter and Paul after Him) was to witness to the Jews **first.** Even well after the Messiah's rejection, crucifixion, resurrection,

and ascension the apostles continued to go to the Jews first. Peter began his ministry at Pentecost and 3,000 Jews were saved. Paul, called to witness to the gentiles, began his ministry in outlying synagogues in the Empire.

Gentile salvation was hard going in those days. Did people think, "Let's not annoy the gentiles with the Gospel of the Jewish Messiah. Surely God will bring them to salvation under some other covenant?" Now that the shoe is on the other foot, Jewish salvation seems to be hard going.

Technically speaking there are five kinds of evidence that God has not rejected the Jewish people. The evidence is covenantal, biographical, theological, historical and eschatological. I will explain each of the five kinds of evidence individually below. Interestingly enough, although we could find our passages through the scriptures we needn't look further than Romans 11 for all of it. Paul followed up his "**I also am an Israelite**" protestation with a most brilliant exposition of this very point. God, through Paul, had not then and will never reject His Chosen People.

First the **covenantal evidence.** We must realize that when God makes a covenant He does not later change it. There would be no example of God changing His mind about any agreement, it stands to reason. Man's behavior is sometimes an issue, as with the Palestinian covenant (Deut. 30) in which God gave different alternatives depending on how men would act. In that case the Jews were dispersed out of the land because of disobedience, but those were the terms of the covenant as originally presented. God did not change His mind. He merely exercised an option He had clearly given in the first place. Likewise with the Mosaic Law, God was to replace it with the superior New Covenant (Jer. 31: 31-34) but again, this was due to man's disobedience (see vs. 32), and the option had been announced in advance.

The difference with the Abrahamic Covenant, in which God arbitrarily chose to create the Jewish people as His own people, is that He made His choice "forever". The covenant did not depend upon the behavior of the Jews, the moods of God, historical turns of events or any other optional feature. It was made once and for all, immutable. The very idea of the restoration of 1948 is a breath-taking demonstration of how long God's memory is. He brought back His people after 19 centuries and placed them in their own land. This has no parallel in history. There is no restoration situation even close to it. Paul was more concise than this writer concerning the covenantal evidence:

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29.)

We should realize that the Abrahamic Covenant is not only still in force but has quite a future as well. We are somewhere in the middle of it, living in the Age of Grace. Its true fruition will be realized in the Kingdom to come. When

the Messiah returns, all surviving Israelites will be saved:

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins (Rom. 11:26-27).

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn (Zech. 12:10).

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1).

Thus the Abrahamic Covenant has eternal implications. The Israelites that will be saved in the Second Coming will live on in the Kingdom with the Church, and from there into eternity with God. We should hasten to say that all that won't help today's unsaved Jew if we don't witness to him. His alternative would be to make it through the Antichrist, the Tribulation Period and Armageddon in order to see the Lord come into His Kingdom. Surely we should witness to him now rather than making him face all that.

The **biographical evidence** of the Jewish people retaining their special calling with God should be obvious. Paul himself specifies that his is **"of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin"** as if this should make it perfectly apparent that he is a valid chosen person. Many cults today try to claim "chosen people" status, taking it away from the Jews and simply appropriating it for their own. The idea of "British Israel" is almost funny but there are those who sincerely think that the ten lost tribes wandered through Europe and England, finally settling here in America. This makes the Americans the Chosen People and the "Worldwide Church of God" of Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong very special indeed. The preposterous theory falls apart on many grounds but none stronger than the fact that the ten tribes never were lost. The book of James is addressed to them (James 1:1) and they come up again in Rev. 7 in our own future. God will choose the 144,000 from the **"twelve tribes"** showing that He certainly has not lost ten of them anywhere. It is extremely doubtful that He will choose exclusively from America, as much as that might thrill us in our patriotism.

Rev. Moon's folks are also the chosen people and casually dismiss modern Israel as a mere political phenomenon. Another cult, in Jamaica, selects Ethiopia as the promised land and says that the Emperor Haile Selassie was in fact Jesus Christ returned. But of course Selassie is dead and if this is the Kingdom it doesn't square very well with what we were led to expect by the prophets.

It is a tendency of human beings everywhere to want to be special with God and the Gospel provides the pristine way of doing so. But appropriating the covenant with Israel is a poor way to do it and insulting to the Jews, to say

nothing of God. Making up a biography in order to appear special is a secular human tendency too. Englishmen misappropriate titles and family names in order to achieve what they regard as nobility and people of every nation are fond of claiming extra special roots. But the Bible is very clear on just who it was that God chose and that's all there is to that.

The **theological evidence** for the Jewish people retaining their chosen status has to do again with the reliability of God as a covenant maker. If the Almighty had supposed that the Jews would go sour on Him then He would have told Abraham something like, "I will make of you a great nation as long as you behave yourselves." He would have specified that the honor of being "chosen" was dependent on the reverence and moral rightness of the chosen ones. But the covenant is not stated that way. God's choice was obviously arbitrary because the Jewish people have not exceeded anyone else in their righteousness. They have been no more reverent (nor irreverent) than any other people. Evidently God simply wished to work through one people rather than through all people when He chose Abraham. Until the selection of Abraham, God had worked through the many nations but the system had led only to the Tower of Babel.

The argument for the theological disenfranchisement of the Jews goes something like this: "They never kept their law, they rejected Jesus Christ and they obviously are ungodly today. Therefore God is finished with them. They had their chance and they muffed it." (To that is sometimes added, "They talk too loud and they push in front of you in lines.") The thinking is fallacious because it is based on human biases and not on biblical principles. If we depend on human prejudice then no matter whom God had chosen we would try to disenfranchise them and put ourselves in their place.

Paul speaks to the theological arguments succinctly:

God hath not cast away his people which He foreknew... (Rom. 11:2).

Thus Paul, speaking after the crucifixion, makes clear that God not only has not cast away the Jewish people but that He "foreknew" them, or in effect, He well knew how they were going to behave when He chose them. Paul was an educated biblical scholar, a "Pharisee of the Pharisees", and he could well appreciate that the majority of his people had made a grave error where Christ was concerned. He among everyone—chosen as he was to be the apostle to the gentiles—could have argued that God was through with the Jews. But instead he teaches just the opposite. It actually would have greatly energized his ministry if he could have gone to the gentiles and honestly said, "You're the chosen people now. Why don't you really make something out of that?" He could have argued them into the Kingdom by telling them that the covenant with the Jews was now up for grabs and that they should seize the opportunity of becoming the new

chosen people. But no matter how convenient that might have been, the apostle stuck to the scriptures and taught that God was sticking to the Jews. I wish we could do the same today.

The historical evidence supporting the chosen status of the Jews has to do with times, even very dark times spiritually, when God Himself reiterated His own conviction that they were His Chosen People. Time and again throughout the long and sometimes discouraging history of the Chosen People, the mighty men of Israel themselves complained to God about the behavior of the people at large. From Moses to the Messiah Himself, cries from earth rose heavenward about the incompetence and grave shortcomings of the Jewish people. Jesus referred to them constantly as, "ye of little faith". Paul chose the example of the mighty Elijah during his depressing desert sojourn. This reverent one had been targeted by Jezebel and he was genuinely afraid of her. Stronger than his fear for his own life, however, was his revulsion at the idol worship of the Israelites. Alone with God he let it all out:

And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away (I Kings 19:14).

Here is a prophet of Israel, and a most honored one—to later enjoy translation to heaven—saying to God, in effect, "I'm the only believer left and now they're coming for me." Such a passage might well be selected to show that even their own holy men were conscious of the historical failures of the Jewish people.

But God's answer to the dilemma of that occasion is instructive:

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed into Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him (I Kings 19:18).

God had actually counted the number of those who refused the idolatrous Baal worship and stuck to the covenant of the Chosen People. It wasn't much—7,000 out of a nation which numbered perhaps 3,000,000—but God had numbered them all. They were a faithful remnant, just as the Jewish Christians are a faithful remnant today. They may not be the majority but they are very much noticed by God.

Paul quotes the Elijah passage in Romans 11:2-4 in order to make just that point. He is saying to his Roman readers that God is aware, and always has been, of the difficulties in His choice of the Jews. Nevertheless He is also well aware of that precious minority of believers always present among them. Historically then, it is not enough to say that the Jewish people are not believers. There are always some who believe and those are precious to God. On historical grounds it is likely that no people are superior to any other in their reverence toward God.

In the **eschatology** of the argument (eschatology is a fancy word for prophecy)

the Jews have a different destiny than the Church and one that is highly in their favor. Mixing Israel and the Church is fatal when we come to prophecy. Half the Bible suddenly becomes incomprehensible. The embarrassment being suffered by those today who say that the Church is now Israel is their just reward for departing from scripture. As prophecy after prophecy becomes fulfilled—the 1948 restoration, the 1967 recovery of Jerusalem, the 1980 making of Jerusalem the capital, etc., etc.,—their position becomes ludicrous. But more damning still are the different prophetic results to be obtained by Israel and the Church. The Church, of course, goes to heaven in the

Rapture and to the Kingdom with the Lord. Israel suffers through the Tribulation Period as best as it can and then is saved at the Second Coming, as we saw above. If the Church is Israel, how shall we understand Rom. 11:26: **"And so all Israel shall be saved ...'"?** If the Church were Israel this verse would indicate that the Church is not yet saved but must await the return of the Lord. We could cite a hundred more such verses.

In reality, Israel and the Church end up in the same place at the same time, the Kingdom on earth, but their ways of getting there are quite different. This is not to say that some of Israel can't go along with the Church—everyone is surely invited. But that matter is up to the Church; we either will witness to the Jews and get them saved or we will not and they will die in their sins. Those who claim that the Jews are already saved obviously aren't helping much.

Also to carry out the idea of God being finished with the Jews to its extreme, there should be no Jews saved at all today. It should be God's will that only gentiles are saved if He has given up on Israel. But as a matter of fact, a goodly proportion of Jewish people have come to Christ, particularly in this century, when Bible study has advanced beyond those "Church = Israel" ways of thinking. The Jewish statistics on how many Jews are Christians admit to 1% of the Jewish population. I often wonder if 1% of all the gentiles of the world are saved.

In any case without going into the fine details of prophecy, which are better explained in other of the author's writings, it is clear that the Jews are still chosen and that the Church and Israel are entirely different entities.

It may be especially clear during the Tribulation Period how different the Church and Israel really are. To the earthly observer at that time, one will be missing—in heaven with its King—and the other will be present and voting with its feet. The Church will have gone on in the Rapture; Israel will deal with all the misfortune of the seven years of the Antichrist. If some of those holding the false doctrines detailed above are present during the Tribulation Period, a reasonable possibility, their minds will be at rest if not at peace. They will see how very

different Israel and the Church really are, and they may live to see Israel as the true Chosen People when the King returns.

In conclusion, we have seen the covenantal, biographical, theological, historical, and eschatological evidences that God has not rejected the Jewish people. We have additionally seen that Israel is not the same thing as the Church. Enough of all that hard writing and reading: it's time now to get on to more pleasant things. Of all the pleasant things that I know in the world, none excel the land of Israel itself—its beauty, its ruggedness, its outrageous confidence, its hopes and dreams. I have never seen a place like it. I'll be glad to go there for a thousand years.

Below follows the chapter the Christian publisher rejected, on the grounds of my belief in all that we've said so far.

Israel, My Love

What can I tell you ... I love the place.

Israel to me is bigger than Texas, more freaky than California, more dangerous than New York City, more fun than France, more beautiful than Ireland.

There's something there that really gets you—I don't care who you are. The Talmud says that if a man breathes the air of Jerusalem he grows wiser, and why not? God has lived there.

I've been a lot of places and seen a lot of things, but I've never seen anything quite like Israel.

God’s Country

We carelessly call various places that we like, “God's country." A friend of mine who joined the vast pilgrimage to southern California in the sixties and told me soberly, "It's really God's country." I went out to see that, and I toured Los Angeles and its environs. If that's God's country I wonder where the devil's country is.

But Israel really **is** God's country. He didn't just promise it to His Chosen People; He also elected to reside there Himself.

God lived in the great Temples of Jerusalem following His temporary residence in the portable Tabernacle. Many Bible students don't fully realize that the establishment of the Tabernacle, and the subsequent permanent Temples, was to the purpose of providing quarters for God-in-residence. "**And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them,**" God instructed the overwhelmed Moses on the Mount (Ex. 25:8).

The Bible also details the subsequent removal of God from the Temple due to apostasy in general and pagan worship virtually carried on in God's apartment

on earth. But God still has plans, to say the least, for His property on the Temple mount. His Son will live there, too, for a thousand years, and the whole world will be obliged to report there, at least annually, for worship (Zech. 14:16).

We seldom think of Israel as our—the Church's—homeland, but it will be. The Church is without a land today. People have called the Jew, "The man without a country," but the Jew has a country. The Church is without a country.

The Church will have God's country. Hopefully the Church will take the Jew along when it goes to occupy the Jew's country. Zechariah's prophecy about the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles in the Kingdom to come contains an interesting reference to who will be living where in that great age:

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (Zech. 14:16).

Zechariah is talking about the people of the world in the future Kingdom, but not the church. The church was certainly not among those "which came against Jerusalem" at the time of Armageddon. The church was already in heaven at that time. It's the worldly people—those saved during the Tribulation Period and their subsequent offspring—who will occupy the nations of the world. The church, it would appear from this scripture and many others, will occupy Israel.

That stands to reason. We are now the Bride of Christ, and at that time we will have already had our wedding (Rev. 19:7-8) and we will be the actual **wife** of Christ. A wife lives with her husband; a queen with her king. Israel will be **our** country. God's country will be reserved for God's children.

In view of that, I suppose we ought to know something about that land. If someone told me I was going to take up residence in some certain place for a thousand years, I would say, "Mind if I look it over first?"

“Thus Saith the Lord"

The prophets were very clear about the future of Israel. Anyone who has read the prophets knows what's going to happen there as times goes on and God's plan completely unfolds. Anyone who was a Bible student of any serious level in 1948 could not have been the least bit surprised to see the Chosen People come home, even after so long a sojourn among the nations. "It is written." Evidence is piling up overwhelmingly that Israel today satisfies the voluminous prophetic pronouncements just perfectly. There are some prophecies matched to the letter in Israel already, and the nation is still very young.

In my many visits to Israel over the past few years I have come across prophecy fulfillments at every bend of the road. God said that the desert would blossom like a rose, and indeed Israel has recently become an exporter of roses. God said Russia would hate that restored Israel (Ezek. 38) and we can really see

it coming to pass. God said the Jews would possess Jerusalem and they have.

But I came across a very obscure prophecy out of Zephaniah one day in Israel that left me speechless. Who ever reads Zephaniah anymore? What would Zephaniah have to say about modern times? Well, I found out in a dramatic way.

It was part of a tour my wife and I were taking. We were riding along the coast of the Mediterranean toward the little city of Ashkelon, which is mentioned in connection with border wars against the Philistines in the Old Testament. It was hot but still pleasant because the sea breeze coming in from the vast blue Mediterranean cooled off the tropical terrain day and night. We understood that both the ancient Israelis and the Philistines had valued the blessings of the coast—the scenic peace and the dependable breezes.

I knew that Ashkelon was originally a Philistine settlement but as we turned a bend in the road I could see two cities there— ancient and modern-Israeli. It was explained that the Israelis had recently constructed new Ashkelon, across the road from the old city, complete with all services (air-conditioned buildings, piped-in water and all the rest) for the constantly arriving immigrants. But it seemed that they had underestimated the numbers of immigrants and it had been necessary for the new arrivals to find housing in the old city.

In other words, here was a very peculiar situation in the way of utilizing an ancient ruin. The Philistines had built Ashkelon and they had built it well. Many of the original houses were in fine shape—made of stone and placed at advantageous angles to catch the breezes. They were comfortable, hospitable houses, despite their hoary age. Know of any 3,000 year-old houses? They're hard to come by over here—or anywhere but Israel. And the new immigrants, already speaking the language of the former ones who had been placed in New Ashkelon, did not mind at all setting up housekeeping in the very streets of the ancient enemy. In fact, it was quite a kick. After all, not everyone can take advantage of such craftsmanship these days; the Philistine builders would be welcome in many an American suburb, and what a warranty they could issue on new homes!

I was smiling in satisfaction at the ingenuity of my people when our tour director, a better Bible teacher than I, stood up with His King James open to Zephaniah. What he read left us stunned at the accuracy of God's men of the Old Testament ages:

And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity (2:7).

And we were seeing it right before our eyes. I can just see God telling Zephaniah, as he allowed the ancient prophet a glimpse into the hectic 20th

century, "Look here at the coastline, right where I drove my beautiful Mediterranean up against the sands of the wilderness. You see those Philistine houses? Good builders those Philistines! Well, I have plans for those sturdy dwellings. I will find my children of Judah in their captivity some great day, and I will bring them out, as I brought them out of Egypt. I will bring them from Russia and from America and from the whole world. And if there are not houses enough in the Promised Land I will lodge them here in Ashkelon, right in the homes of their enemy! They will have the comfort of the coastline and the comfort of those good houses because I will never forget them!"

Now unhappily, everything about Israel to be found in the prophets is not about the ultimate triumph of the Chosen People.

Israel really isn't all roses. Almost all of the Great Tribulation prophecy concerns this unique land and most of it is extremely disheartening where the Jews are concerned. There is not space here to fully develop all this prophecy, of course, but it would serve the witness to the Jews well to know the outline of the things to come and how it affects little Israel. Fine books are available which deal fully with these matters, as any Bible-studying believer knows. Suffice it here to say that any knowledge that the believer possesses toward **warning** the Jew about his future will be ultimately deeply appreciated by the Jew.

Another "Final Solution"

The Antichrist will be much more interested in Israel than the Christian church ever was. He'll promote a holocaust over there that will make Hitler's seem pale by comparison.

He'll put out a contract on Israel—he'll literally make a covenant with the Israelis, presumably to protect their borders in exchange for special privileges where the Chosen People are concerned. Dictators who wish to be worshipped have always had trouble with the Jews because they will not worship men. The Roman emperors, who experienced little difficulty commanding the religious allegiance of the rest of the known world, never quite made it with the Jews, and finally had to run them off. The Antichrist, who will set up a worldwide personality cult—the virtual worship of himself—will carefully cultivate the indomitable Chosen People as part of his program. He will be smarter than Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Titus, et. al. He'll try to make a deal, at least at first (Dan. 9:27).

And Israel will go for it, at least at first. If you think Israel needs friends now, just imagine the situation in the Tribulation Period.

When the Antichrist estimates that he has gathered the support of enough of the world, he will break his contract with Israel in a dramatic way. He will enter

the Temple of God in Jerusalem—to be rebuilt at that time—and declare that he himself is God (2 Thess. 2:3- 4). He will cause the renewed "**sacrifices and oblations to cease**" (Dan. 9:27) and he will insist on worship of himself instead!

The desperate Jews will be obliged to at last take the advice of the Messiah:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains... For then shall be great tribulations, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be!

(Mt. 24:15-16, 21; parentheses God's)

When the Jews flee into the arid mountains of Judea, historically a difficult place to conduct manhunts, they will find something very interesting and helpful. New Testaments are being secreted in hiding places in those mountains by certain Christian missions to the Jews today. Tradition has it that this unique ministry actually started in the first century, but in any case, the Jews will not be without an explanation of what is actually happening there toward the final campaign of the spiritual warfare of God and Satan.

From that point, the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation Period, the whole world will head into Armageddon. That contest will be so vast it will apparently take some 3 1/2 years just to assemble the forces. The "King of the East" will march his 200 million-man army to Israel (presumably China, of course, who could actually field such an army today), and the kings of the North and South will also join the carnage. The Antichrist will field his European allies. They will all meet in a quiet valley of Megiddo, "called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

People vaguely know about Armageddon. It has always been a catchword for "the end of the world." But it won't be the end of the world, of course. As a matter of fact the chief survivor will be Israel. God will preserve his people once again.

The ultimate survival and salvation of Israel at the very end of this age is a fact not usually spoken of in the Church. Whenever I quote Romans 11:26, which flat-out states, "**All Israel will be saved,**" the reaction I get is, "Huh?" But Zechariah 12 and 13 give all the details of that dramatic and final national salvation, and Paul's magnificent 3-chapter sermon on the Jewish condition and its ultimate results (Rom. 9-11) clarify that issue. Israel—at least **surviving** Israel—will be saved to a man when the Lord returns to stop Armageddon.

Unfortunately only the Jews still alive to see the Second Coming will be saved. They will become saved in the same manner that all the rest of us have—by **seeing Christ**—in this case literally descending from heaven. The situation is simply this: If a Jew is not saved in this age, by a Christian witness, he will be obliged to become saved when the Antichrist walks the earth—a simply awful

time to be a believer in God—or he will have to make it all the way through the Tribulation Period and survive Armageddon to be saved.

World wars are hard to survive, especially when they happen on your property. Nobody's going to protect little Israel when the Antichrist goes into that Tribulation Temple.

So God will guarantee the entrance of a number of chosen people into the coming Kingdom, but we can certainly add to that number with his blessings. Perhaps this sketch of the coming events, according to scripture, will help with that.

It goes without saying that the gentiles also need to be saved now, before the tribulation comes. They don't even have the "bottom-line guarantee" of the Jewish survivors. They'll simply be either wiped out by Armageddon or condemned when the Lord returns to stop it. But there is already a relatively energetic mission to the gentiles. It's the Chosen People we're concerned about here.

That whole scenario—God's plan for the end of this age— may seem fantastic to your biblically unread Jewish friend, but as time goes on he will begin to see more signs of its validity if you have explained it. The 1907 Scofield Bible successfully predicted a powerful Russia enmity for a restored Jewish land of Israel in the notes on Ezekiel 38-39. It was not Scofield, of course, but Ezekiel who was able to see the future so clearly, but in any case, as things have developed we can see the reality of the prophecy. Likewise, if your friend has an appreciation for the picture of things to come according to the prophets, it stands to reason that when they come he will be more ready. Anyone who understands the career of the Antichrist will certainly recognize him when he steps forward. That person would very likely be saved before the end.

In a way, we can implant a witness that will bear fruit later on, if not now, when we explain prophecy. Like the faithful ones who place the New Testaments in the wilderness against the time when the Jews flee there, we can at least make sure that the vital information will be available when it's needed. Maybe your friend won't be saved today when you explain the future according to the Word, but when the future comes and he remembers what you said, he'll know just what to do. We are conceivably already witnessing to the Tribulation Period unbelievers.

And remember, the Jewish people who hear you now and get saved later on will be present with you in the Kingdom to come. They will undoubtedly say to you that sweetest of Hebrew words, "Todah", Thanks.

From Here to Eternity

There are simpler, more objective reasons for you to know something about the Holy Land of Israel than to promote a witness to the Jews.

For one thing, on your trip from here to eternity the most knowledgeable way to travel is to understand Israel, now and as the future comes upon us. Knowing Israel thoroughly is like having a tour guide on this ultimate trip to the Kingdom and beyond. You get a "feel" for what God is doing by understanding the progress of things in His land.

Certainly your knowledge of current events and the state of the world would be greatly increased if you kept tabs on Israel. Israel is fundamental to world politics, the global power struggle, the progress, or lack of progress, of the UN, the Russian-American relationship and any number of other headlines in the daily news. You can be a more responsible citizen, and a more responsible Christian, by making yourself aware of what's going on with what God regarded as "the center of the earth," Israel.

Back when I was in college in the 50's and 60's people who wanted to get on top of things in the worldly way studied the Russian language. Now that I'm a Christian I have become aware of churches and seminaries where people who want to get on top of things in the spiritual way study Hebrew. Those people have simply reasoned their way to the fact that the really big things are going to happen in Israel in the future, and they're biblically right.

I'm not advocating the study of the Hebrew language, but that knowledge of Israel leads to increased knowledge in general. Pick up any news weekly, or virtually any daily newspaper and just see where the real newsbreaks are happening. It's odd—except if we consider the Bible—that this little Middle Eastern nation gets so much space in world affairs these days.

If you want to acquire a real knowledge of prophecy—not just in theory but in actual fact—become an Israel watcher. There's no truer use of the phrase, "That's where it's at." Watch God's plan steadily moving onward. Watch the end coming, and with it, our reward.

God's will is the concern of any believer. See it unfolding in Israel. See how Israel defeats and defeats the vastly stronger Arab powers all around her. That's God working, brother and sister. See how that little nation with its pitifully limited natural resources and its immigrant population grows stronger and stronger. See how the concern about her seems to bring on greater and greater conflict.

Finally, check out your future home—your Kingdom. Why not get to know the land from which you'll reign with your husband, the King.

All those things, and many more that could be mentioned, come to the one who understands the land of Israel. The unbeliever will find Jerusalem "a

burdensome stone" in the future, according to scripture, but the knowledgeable believer finds her a lighthouse.

And once more over our main point: If you really know Israel—if you can really explain something fresh and new to the Jew out of the Word of God—the Jewish people will **want** to talk to you. You may perceive that they are jealous of you if you know Israel (because many of them don't, frankly).

And if your knowledge really convicts a Jew and brings him to his Messiah, you will have made a friend for all time.

And pray. Pray for the unbelievers, pray for God's Chosen People.

And "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

ISRAEL, MY PROMISED:

Has God finished with the Jews? Are the modern Israelites the valid Chosen People of the Bible? A sensitive and very personal look at the land of our Lord, as seen today and as promised in the Kingdom.

P.O. Box 12268, Dallas, Texas 75225

