

“The Truth Shall Set You Free”

Part 24

As time grows closer and closer to September 23, 2017, I am weighing what I would consider to be the wrap-up to this series for those missing the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. The past segments addressed the matter of the Vatican’s hate for Russia, how the Jesuits would foment a global war that would pit the United States against Russia in its efforts to destroy the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Russian nation. The Jesuits were expelled from Russia in 1816 and 1820 by its infamous Tsar Alexander.

Keep in mind this fomented hatred will precipitate a global or WWII event. I have been giving thought to a hypothetical supposition chain of events that goes like this:

- **North Korea launches a nuclear or hydrogen missile attack against the U.S. on Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, or the U.S. mainland.**
- **The United States responds in kind.**
- **Russia and Iran simultaneously move against Israel through its client-state Syrian bases at Tartus and Latakia. Russia has special operations troops based about 15-kilometers from the Israeli Golan Heights border.**
- **The United States military is stretched thin around the world and unable to conduct military operations in two major global theater conflict settings.**
- **God miraculously delivers Israel as described in Ezekiel, at which time the world begins to believe it is God alone that delivers Israel.**

We are told by many that God is finished with Israel, that she has been replaced with the church, and that the church is Zion, and the earthly Jerusalem has been replaced with the heavenly Jerusalem.

We have long been told this by covenant/reformed theologians who follow the "church fathers" that devised this view. This idea took hold with the Roman Catholic revered Saint Augustine of Hippo, North Africa. Now we are hearing replacement theology taught by many Baptist churches around the country. These adherents are teaching *"It's those of us who believe in Jesus Christ that are Israel. ... We Christians are the true people of God. We are the true Israel. And we are marching to Zion. So I'm Israel. Those people over there are not Israel"*

"There is NOTHING in the New Testament to support the Jewish occupation of Palestine. In fact, Paul clearly tells the believers, that we (saved) are the 'seed of Abraham' and the 'children of promise' -(Galatians 3-4; Romans 9)." The "BDS" movement of "Boycott, Divest, and Sanction against present day Israel is making huge strides, not just among mainline Protestant denominations, but in traditionally conservative solid Baptist Church support of Israel. There is a populist movement afoot among those between the age of 18 and 50 that have been propagandized by the Palestinian State here in the United States, and even greater numbers of European young people.

These men and women are saying that God is finished with national Israel, and in this article I will answer that false charge from Scripture. Do not let presumption mislead you here as the chief champion of this idea is the Vatican first and foremost. They, more so than any of the groups desiring to control the Holy City of Jerusalem have coveted possession of God's Holy Land. The Jesuit-controlled Vatican has employed both covert and overt measures to gain control over the 35-acre area known today as the Temple Mount. It is for this reason I have elected to deal with the controversy of "Replacement Theology" and it's being at the core of the events of the final period of Daniel's 70th Week.

Who says that God is not finished with national Israel? The whole Bible says this. It is taught from Genesis to Revelation. The only way to refute it is to "allegorize" and "spiritualize" a vast amount of plain Scripture, which is exactly what Replacement Theology does and which is exactly what I refuse to do. No one is going to rob us of a consistent normal literal method of interpreting Bible prophecy, because the evidence that this is the proper method of interpretation is overwhelming. In years past at two theological seminaries I was forced-fed this nonsense that God replaced the Jewish people.

The Abrahamic Covenant says God is not finished with Israel. It is with Abraham we begin to trace God's blessings.

God's covenant with Abraham is one of the most important things in human history. By this covenant, God created the nation of Israel and brought the Scriptures and the Savior to the world. By this covenant, God brought salvation to the sinful human race through Christ. By this covenant, God will fulfill His eternal plan to bring together in one all things in Christ -(Ephesians 1:10).

God's covenant to Abraham promises personal blessings (for Abraham himself), national blessings (for the 12 tribes of Israel), and universal blessings (for all of the redeemed)--not one or the other, but all three.

The personal aspect of Abraham's covenant belongs to Abraham himself: **"I will bless thee, and make thy name great,"** -(Genesis 12:2). Abraham is one of the most important men in human history. He is mentioned **250X** times in the Bible. He was blessed by wealth even in his lifetime -(Genesis 24:35). Through Isaac, Abraham is the father of the Jews and the Christians, and through Ishmael, he is the father of the Arabs and the Muslims. Paradise is named after him -(Luke 16:22), because he is the father of saving faith -(Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:14).

The national aspect of Abraham's covenant belongs to the nation Israel (**"I will make of thee a great nation,"** -(Genesis 12:2). Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel inherited the covenant through Isaac -(Genesis 26:1-4). God said to Jacob, **"And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land"** -(Genesis 35:9-12). To national Israel belongs the land that was promised to Abraham. Compare Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7. In 1st Chronicles 16:13-16 David affirmed that Abraham's covenant passed

through Isaac and Jacob to Jacob's children, the nation Israel, and that the promise includes the inheritance of the land.

The universal blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are enjoyed by all believers through Abraham's greater Seed, Jesus Christ (***"and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,"*** Genesis 12:3). Those who receive Jesus Christ become Abraham's seed -(Galatians 3:6-9, 29). But New Testament believers do not possess the land of Israel and our hope is not tied to that land. Our hope is not earthly but heavenly. We will rule and reign with Christ Jesus, not as Israel, but as Christ's Bride. How exactly the church will relate to Israel in the millennial kingdom is not revealed in Scripture.

Abraham was promised a seed. This is mentioned at least **24X** times in Genesis -(Genesis 12:7; 13:15-16; 15:5, 13, 18; 16:10; 17:7-10, 19; 21:12; 22:17-18; 24:7; 26:3-4, 24; 28:4, 13-14; 32:12; 35:12; 48:4).

There is national and physical seed. Abraham's seed is the nation Israel which shall inherit the land -(Genesis 15:13-21).

There is spiritual seed through Jesus Christ -(Galatians 3:16, 29). The apostle Paul teaches that all of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant come through Abraham's greater Seed, Jesus Christ -(Galatians 3:16), but Paul also teaches that Israel today is Abraham's seed, though not currently the children of God -(Romans 11:1; 2nd Corinthians 11:22).

The rebellion of Abraham's national seed, Israel, does not annul the promises that God has made to her. Everywhere in Scripture we are taught that national Israel would be judged for her sin, but that she will be restored to her own land and to the place of God's blessing when she repents. In distinguishing Israel from the Church on the Interpretation of prophecy, we find many passages that teach this -(Deuteronomy 28-30; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:8-15; Acts 3:18-21; 15:13-18; Romans 11:25-29).

Consider Leviticus 26:31-45. This passage describes the judgment that will come upon Israel because of her sin against God, but it says further that Israel will be restored when she repents and acknowledges her sin, and this restoration is because of the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"THEN WILL I REMEMBER MY COVENANT WITH JACOB, AND ALSO MY COVENANT WITH ISAAC, AND ALSO MY COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM will I remember; and I WILL REMEMBER THE LAND. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I WILL NOT CAST THEM AWAY, NEITHER WILL I ABHOR THEM, TO DESTROY THEM UTTERLY, AND TO BREAK MY COVENANT WITH THEM: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember THE COVENANT OF THEIR

ANCESTORS, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD" -(Leviticus 26:42-45).

Words could not be plainer. Israel's rebellion does not annul the covenant that God made with her through Jacob. In this passage, God is talking about the people of Israel and the land of Israel, and there is no legitimate way to apply this to the church.

In the Blessing and the Curse -(Genesis 12:3) God promised to bless those who bless Abraham and to curse those who curse him. Laban testified that God blessed him for Jacob's sake -(Genesis 30:27). Potiphar testified that God blessed him for Joseph's sake -(Genesis 39:2-3).

The principle of cursing those who curse Abraham and blessing those who bless him is applicable to Abraham's national seed. God has blessed and cursed nations for how they have treated Israel. God has used many nations to judge Israel when she sinned, but He always judged those pagan nations afterwards, many seem to overlook this fact. Isaiah 33:1 pronounces woe upon ***"the spoilers,"*** referring to the spoilers of Israel. God used the spoilers to judge sinning Israel, but He pronounced woe upon the spoilers:

- ◆ This happened to Assyria -(Isaiah 10:25).
- ◆ It happened to Babylon -(Jeremiah 51:11). God took vengeance on Babylon for destroying Israel's temple.
- ◆ In Zechariah 2:8-9, God says that Israel is the apple of His eye, and He warns that He will judge those who destroy Israel.
- ◆ The prophet Ezekiel addressed many nations and pronounced judgment upon them for hating Israel. See Ezekiel 25:3-7 (Ammonites)
 - Ezekiel 25:8-11 (Moab)
 - Ezekiel 25:12-14 (Edom)
 - Ezekiel 25:15-17 (Philistines)
 - Ezekiel 26:2-5 (Tyre)
 - Ezekiel 28:22-24 (Zidon)
 - Ezekiel 35:3-15 (Edom)

Israel is under God's judgment today for her unbelief, but she is still Israel, and she still belongs to God, and she is still under God's watch-care, and those who curse her are still cursed. I, for one, would not curse Israel, even in her most apostate condition. I recoil when tempted to fall into that trap. When Israel was wandering in the wilderness because of her sin and unbelief, God did not allow Balaam to curse her. ***"How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?"*** -(Numbers 23:8). Many victims of the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty, (a converted freighter to an intelligence gathering ship) at the time of the Israeli Six-Day War lobbied for a formal investigation into the incident that claimed 34 American Navy crew-members. They rightly so condemned Israel's efforts to sink the unarmed intelligence ship. All efforts to obtain a congressional investigation into the USS Liberty were shut-down by President Lyndon B. Johnson. President Johnson directly intervened and overruled

the USS Saratoga Naval task force commanders of the Sixth Fleet and ordered the return of U.S. Navy fighter aircraft dispatched to rescue the men on the USS Liberty.

I believe we can see this Biblical principle at work in the history of Great Britain. After Britain turned against Israel and renounced the Balfour Declaration, which was a solemn promise because of Jewish help during World War I, Britain did everything she could to arm the Arabs and to disarm the Jews prior to and after 1948. She soon lost her empire.

The principle of cursing those who curse Abraham and blessing those who bless him is applicable to born-again Christians who are Abraham's seed -(Galatians 3:29). God has blessed nations for how they have treated Christians and how they have given liberty for the preaching of the gospel. We can see this today. Those nations that give the most freedom for gospel preaching and church work are the most blessed nations.

Consider the Covenant of Deuteronomy 29-30. The covenant of Deuteronomy says God is not finished with Israel -(Deuteronomy 29-30). It has been called "the Palestinian Covenant," but we believe that a better name is "the Return to the Land Covenant."

The covenant of Deuteronomy 29-30 guarantees the return of Israel to the land. The same Israel that would rebel and be cast out of the land and suffer great indignation -(Deuteronomy 29:22-28) will return -(Deuteronomy 30:1-9).

This covenant was made with the 12 tribes of Israel at the end of the 40 years of wilderness wandering just before they entered the Promised Land. It was made in the land of Moab -(Deuteronomy 29:1), which bordered the land of Canaan on the east. The covenant promises that Israel will be restored to the land and blessed after the judgments of God are finished -(Deuteronomy 30:1-9).

The covenant is unconditional and sure –

- ♦ ***"thou SHALT return and shalt obey his voice"*** -(Deuteronomy 30:2-4)
- ♦ ***"the Lord thy God WILL bring thee into the land"*** -(Deuteronomy 30:5)
- ♦ ***"God WILL circumcise thine heart"*** -(Deuteronomy 30:6)
- ♦ ***"God WILL put all these curses upon thine enemies"*** -(Deuteronomy 30:7)
- ♦ ***"thou SHALT return and obey the voice of the Lord"*** -(Deuteronomy 30:8)
- ♦ ***"God WILL make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand"*** -(De. 30:9)

The covenant will be fulfilled when Israel though scattered among the nations repents - (Deuteronomy 30:1-2). This proves that apostate Israel of the Diaspora is the Israel that will fulfill this covenant. Israel will be gathered from among the nations and brought to ***"the land which thy fathers possessed"*** -(Deuteronomy 30:3-5).

Israel will be restored to the place of God's blessing. ***"And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he***

rejoiced over thy fathers" -(Deuteronomy 30:9). This covenant is not fulfilled in Israel today, but it will be fulfilled when Israel is converted during the time of Jacob's Trouble -(Jeremiah 30:7).

The covenant cannot be applied to "the church" without doing violence to the Biblical language. It pertains to people who were scattered among the nations and then brought back to the very land possessed by their fathers.

Moving on to the next Biblical Covenant, we build the case of the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic covenant says God is not finished with Israel -(2nd Samuel 7:4-17). The Davidic covenant is an extension of the covenant God made with Abraham. In the Davidic covenant, God gives more details about the national kingdom aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. It should be noted that Covenant/Reformed denominations errantly ignore that the Bible has eight Covenants, not two or three, as Covenant/Reformed denominations recognize.

Israel's future existence, restoration to the place of God's favor, and the re-establishment of her kingdom is based on God's unconditional promise to David.

The Davidic Covenant promises the following:

- ◆ **First**, the house and throne of David will be established forever -(2nd Samuel 7:13, 16).
- ◆ **Second**, David's children will be chastised for sin, but the covenant can never be annulled - (2nd Samuel 7:14-15).
- ◆ **Third**, the Davidic covenant will be fulfilled through Jesus Christ, David's Son, who inherits David's throne -(Matthew 1:1) and who will establish the Davidic kingdom -(Isaiah 9:6-7).

The Psalmists mentions the Davidic covenant and interprets it literally -(Psalms 18:50; 89:3-4, 20-37; 132:11-18). The Psalmists teaches us that the Davidic Covenant is the means whereby God will establish His kingdom on earth -(Psalm 89:20-29). Psalm 72 describes in much detail the physical, earthly kingdom of David's Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

The prophets often mention the Davidic covenant and interpret it literally -(Isaiah 9:6-7; 16:5; 22:22-24; 55:3-5; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:9; 33:15-26; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 12:7 - 13:1).

For example, Hosea plainly describes the fall of Israel followed by her return and the re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom.

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: AFTERWARD shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days" -(Hosea 3:4-5).

This is the Bible's teaching about Israel and her future in a nutshell. Israel would rebel against God's Word, be judged, abide many days without a king or a sacrifice or a priesthood (e.g.,

no kingdom and no temple), then return, repent, and be restored and blessed. The restoration will occur "***in the latter days.***"

According to Replacement Theology, Jesus is currently sitting on David's throne in heaven and this is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, but this requires allegorical gymnastics that I refuse to engage in. It requires "spiritualizing" the plain words of the Davidic covenant and the New Covenant.

Progressive Dispensationalism scholars also says that Christ is already sitting on David's throne, but it further teaches that Christ will establish a literal 1,000 year kingdom in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy at His return. This is called "*already but not yet,*" meaning that "Jesus is already on David's throne but has not yet completely fulfilled the promise of God to David for a descendant to sit on his throne" ("What Is Progressive Dispensationalism?" gotquestions.org). This view is held by many throughout the Christian community.

But no verse or passage in the New Testament says that Christ is currently sitting on David's throne. Psalm 110:1-4 doesn't say that; one must read this into the passage. David wrote Psalm 110, but he does not say here that the Messiah will sit on his (David's) throne while He awaits victory over His enemies. In fact, the Bible tells us that the throne upon which the Messiah currently sits is the Father's throne. -(Ephesians 1:19-21).

I turn now to The New Covenant specifics. God is not finished with Israel -(Jeremiah 31-33). The New Covenant is God's promise to convert rebellious Israel, restore her to her own land, and bless her.

Consider some facts about the New Covenant:

1. It was made with the nation Israel -(Jeremiah 31:31)
2. It promises the following things:
 - a. The regathering of Israel -(Jeremiah 31:6-11)
 - b. God's blessing upon Israel's land -(Jeremiah 31:4-5, 12-14, 24-25). Ezekiel often refers to the land as "***the land of Israel***" when he prophesies of Israel's restoration -(Ezekiel 11:17; 20:38, 42; 37:12; 38:18-19; 40:2; 47:18).
 - c. The spiritual conversion of the people and cleansing from sin -(Jeremiah 31:33-34)
 - d. The reestablishment of Israel's kingdom and the possession of the land -(Jeremiah 31:35-37)
 - e. Blessing upon Jerusalem as the capital of the kingdom -(Jeremiah 31:38-40)

There is no way to make this fit the church without doing violence to plain Bible language and to clear promises of God.

3. The New Covenant is unconditional and sure -(Jeremiah 33:19-26). God goes out of His way to make this absolutely clear.

"In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them."

Note that God specifically corrects those who say that He has cast off the families of Israel that they should be no more a nation. This is exactly what Replacement Theology says. The advocates of Replacement Theology notoriously "cherry-pick" Scripture to support its errant doctrine.

We need to consider two other major prophecies of the New Covenant in the Old Testament, among many that could be considered:

Isaiah 61:1-2 is the passage that Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry -(Luke 4:18-21). He stopped mid-way through verse 2 and said, ***"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."*** He didn't read the rest of the prophecy which deals with God's judgment on and the restoration of Israel.

The old wastes will be rebuilt -(Isaiah 61:4). Strangers will serve Israel as shepherds, farmers and vinedressers -(Isaiah 61:5). Israel will be converted and be the priests and ministers of God -(Isaiah 61:6). Israel will finally be what God intended that she be, as a light to the nations. Israel will be physically blessed and enriched -(Isaiah 61:6). The nations will recognize Israel's conversion and know that God has blessed her (Isaiah 61:9). This, too, tells us that these are real, earthly events.

God will restore Israel for His name's sake -(Ezekiel 36:22-23). As God's name has been profaned among the nations because of Israel's apostasy, so His name will be glorified in her repentance and restoration. God will regather Israel from among the nations and bring her to her ***"own land"*** -(Ezekiel 36:24). This is proof that the land of Israel belongs to ancient Israel and that currently apostate Israel will be restored to it. Israel will be converted and cleansed and

given a spiritual heart to love and obey God -(Ezekiel 36:25-27). Israel will then dwell in the land that God gave to their fathers -(Ezekiel 36:28). Israel will be physically blessed in the land -(Ezekiel 36:29-30, 33-34, 38).

The nations will know that the Lord has done this -(Ezekiel 36:36). The restoration and blessing will be visible, dramatic events, and there will be no question by the onlookers that prophecy will have been fulfilled.

There is much confusion in the Church regarding The New Covenant and Church-age Believers. I suggest to readers a serious question that is not addressed by those teaching Replacement Theology.

Question: If the New Covenant is not fulfilled in the church, why does the writer of Hebrews quote it -(Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:15-19)?

Answer:

1. Hebrews does not say the New Covenant is fulfilled in the church. It twice states, rather, that the New Covenant belongs to "the house of Israel" -(Hebrews 8:8, 10).
2. Hebrews refers to the New Covenant to show that the Mosaic Law was only temporary and that even the Old Testament promised that it would be abolished and replaced by another Covenant. Hebrews was written to Jews who professed Christ, some of whom were being tempted to return to the Jewish religion because of persecution. It was written to encourage them that Christ is superior in every way. The writer of Hebrews mentions the New Covenant to show that God had all along planned to replace the Mosaic Covenant with a better one.
3. The writer of Hebrews indicates that the New Testament believer partakes of the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant through Christ -(Hebrews 10:15-18), but nowhere does he say that this covenant has been transferred from national Israel to the church or that the physical aspects of the covenant should be spiritualized. Since the spiritual aspects of the New Covenant (and the spiritual aspects only) are cited in Hebrews 8:8-11 (from Jeremiah 31:31-34), it appears that New Testament believers participate only in the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant through Christ's atonement.
4. The apostle Paul plainly taught that the New Covenant will be fulfilled literally in Israel following the Church Age -(Romans 11:25-27). In verse 27 Paul refers to the covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Let's take a look at Isaiah 10:20-22. This is one of the many brief passages in the Old Testament prophets that summarize God's dealings with Israel. The prophecy deals with the remnant of the house of Jacob that will return and be blessed after the judgment. It is a remnant that will be saved, not every Jew or everyone who is the seed of Jacob.

The seed of Jacob will be judged and scattered among the nations, but a remnant of that seed will return and trust Jehovah God **"in truth,"** and the conversion will **"overflow with righteousness."** This has not yet happened, but it will happen during the time of Jacob's trouble when Israel will be converted in preparation for the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom.

Another example proving God is not finished with Israel is Ezekiel 34:11-31. This beautiful prophecy of the Shepherd leaves no doubt that God is not finished with national Israel. The Shepherd, of course, is Jehovah God, and we know from the New Testament that this is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who identified Himself as the "Good Shepherd" in John 10:11, 14.

He will regather the sheep from the countries where they have been scattered and bring them to **"their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel"** -(Ezekiel 34:12-13). This obviously is not what God is doing today in the Church Age. This is national Israel being brought back from her Diaspora to her own land.

God will distinguish between "cattle and cattle" -(Ezekiel 34:17-22). Not every Jew will be saved. Zechariah explains that one-third of the Jews living at that time will be saved -(Zechariah 13:8-9). The Lord will be their God, and David will be a prince among them -(Ezekiel 34:24). David's Son, Immanuel or Jehovah God in the flesh, will sit on the throne of Israel.

God will make a new covenant with Israel, and she will experience peace and blessing and prosperity -(Ezekiel 34:25-29). Note that God plainly says that **"the house of Israel are my people"** -(Ezekiel 34:30). This refers to restored Israel in the future.

Another example ignored by those teaching Replacement Theology is Ezekiel 37:1-14. The prophecy of the Valley of Dry Bones says God is not finished with Israel -(Ezekiel 37).

This great prophecy is the only one that explains that Israel will return from her wanderings among the nations in two stages, and in the first stage she will return in a spiritually dead condition just as we have witnessed in the reestablishment of Israel as a State in 1947/48.

The interpretation of the valley of dry bones is plainly given in the prophecy itself. It signifies Israel in her dispersion among the nations.

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" -(Ezekiel 37:11).

The resurrection of the dry bones represents Israel's return to the land and restoration as a nation. **"Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel"** -(Ezekiel 37:12).

This is as great a miracle as the resurrection from the dead. Never in human history has a nation been evicted from its land and scattered throughout the world for 2,000 years to survive as a nation and be restored to its original land and with its original language and religion.

The first stage of the restoration of Israel is in an unconverted state:

"So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: BUT THERE WAS NO BREATH IN THEM" -(Ezekiel 37:7-8).

This is exactly what Israel is today and where Israel is today prophetically. Modern Israel is not righteous and is not a fulfillment of the regathering described in connection with the prophecies we have already considered. The land has been developed in an amazing way, but it is not a fulfillment of prophecies about the desert blossoming as the rose -(Isaiah 35:1). Modern Israel is, by her own profession, a secular state and most Jews are secular Jews who aren't religious and don't believe in the God of the Bible. A large percentage are avowed atheists. A minority hold to various branches of "orthodox Judaism," which is a religion that does not follow the Old Testament but rather follows the Talmud. "Rabbinic Judaism" as it is called today is nothing more than ancient Phariseism.

But the prophecy teaches that God is going to touch Israel again and convert her spiritually:

"Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. ... And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD" -(Ezekiel 37:9-10, 14). This is in the future, and it is described in many prophecies, as we have seen, such as Zechariah 12-14.

It is clear from Ezekiel's prophecy that God is not finished with Israel. The same apostate Israel that was evicted from the land and scattered among her nations for her sin will be restored to the land. This has nothing to do with Church Age saints.

Another prophecy in Ezekiel 37:15-28 asserts strong emphasis. This prophecy emphasizes that Israel and Judah will be reunited -(Ezekiel 37:15-20). Though most Jews today do not know their tribe for certain, God knows, and He doesn't need a DNA test. The 12 tribes are not lost and will be restored by God.

Israel will be regathered from the nations and brought into ***"their own land"*** -(Ezekiel 37:21). They ***"will dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt"*** -(Ezekiel 37:25). There can be no question that the prophecy predicts the restoration of Israel to her own land and that it is presented as a literal, physical event.

Israel will be one nation and have one king and prince -(Ezekiel 37:22, 24, 25). David himself will be there in a leadership position, but other Scriptures explain that it is David's Son who will be the King of kings. Israel will be cleansed of her sin and will obey God -(Ezekiel 37:23, 24). God will make an everlasting covenant with Israel -(Ezekiel 37:26). God will place His temple in their midst -(Ezekiel 37:26-27). This is the temple described in great detail in Ezekiel 40-48. This will technically be, the 4th Temple. These things will be seen by the nations and God will be glorified by them -(Ezekiel 37:28). The prophet is describing real physical, earthly events.

The well-known prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 makes it amply clear that Israel has hard times ahead. The prophecy of Gog and Magog says that God is not finished with Israel -(Ezekiel 38-39). This prophecy describes an attack upon Israel by a great military alliance from the north. My purpose here is not to look at the prophecy in detail but to affirm that it proves that God is not finished with Israel.

The prophecy occurs when Israel has been **"brought back from the sword" and "is brought forth out of the nations"** -(Ezekiel 38:8). It occurs after a regathering that follows the land of Israel becoming waste. Obviously it refers to the restoration of the same Israel that was scattered among the nations. The attack of Gog and Magog will occur in the latter days -(Ezekiel 38:16). We see that Israel still exists in the end times.

The attack will occur at a time when the **"people of Israel dwelleth safely"** -(Ezekiel 38:14). This isn't today, even in spite of Israel's strong military. It could be during the first 3.5 years of her covenant with the Antichrist. It could refer to after Armageddon. It's difficult to place the time exactly, but it is certainly referring to a literal Israel in a literal land. The armies of Gog and Magog will be supernaturally destroyed by God -(Ezekiel 38:21-22). Israel will be brought back from the nations and will know the Lord. God's Spirit will be poured upon **"the house of Israel"** -(Ezekiel 39:25-29).

The nations will then understand God's dealings with Israel -(Ezekiel 39:23). In this prophecy, God calls Israel **"my people"** -(Ezekiel 38:14, 16). The land is called **"my land"** -(Ezekiel 38:16), referring to Jehovah God's, and **"the land of Israel"** -(Ezekiel 38:18, 19) and **"their own land"** -(Ezekiel 39:28).

It is perfectly obvious that God is not finished with Israel, that she will return to the land, be restored to God and to the place of His blessing, and her enemies will be punished. It is impossible to apply this prophecy to the church.

One of the major passages of the Old Testament ignored by Replacement Theology advocates is Daniel's 70 Week prophecy, which says that God is not finished with Israel (Daniel 9:24-28). This great prophecy clearly describes a complete summary of God's program for Israel from the Babylonian Captivity until the return of Christ. The 70 weeks are weeks of years, or 490 years, as it is clear from the fulfillment so far.

During the 70 weeks, God's judgments upon Israel will be completed and Christ will return to bring in the kingdom. The angel tells Daniel that the prophecy pertains to his own people, the Jews, and to the holy city, Jerusalem -(Daniel 9:24).

The first 69 weeks (483 years) extended from the time that the commandment was given to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity to the time of Christ's first coming. The commandment to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes the king of Persia, and is described in Nehemiah 1:1-8. (The same king gave the commandment to rebuild the temple 13 years earlier as described in the book of Ezra, but Daniel 9:25 speaks particularly of the rebuilding of the city wall.) Daniel's prophecy describes three great events that occurred in this time.

- ♦ **First**, Jerusalem was rebuilt -(Daniel 9:25). The rebuilding of the city streets and walls in troublous times is described in the book of Nehemiah.
- ♦ **Second**, Messiah was "**cut off, but not for himself**," meaning that He died on the cross for man's sins -(Daniel 9:26). His death was substitutionary.
- ♦ **Third**, the city and temple were destroyed -(Daniel 9:26). This occurred in AD 70 when the armies of Rome destroyed Jerusalem.

After that there will continue to be wars until the time of the end -(Daniel 9:26). This describes the Roman Jewish wars, but it also describes the last 2,000 years of Israel's history. Even today, though Israel is back in the land, she has had no peace, and she will have no peace until she repents and receives her Messiah, Jesus.

The last week, or seven years, of Daniel's prophecy remains to be fulfilled -(Daniel 9:27). Between the 69th and 70th weeks is the Church Age, which is called a "**mystery**" because it was not revealed to the Old Testament prophets -(Ephesians 3:3-6). The church age is like a valley between mountain peaks that the Old Testament prophets did not see lying between the peaks of the first and second coming of Christ. Paul describes the Church Age as the time of Israel's blindness in Romans 11:25-27.

The last week (seven years) of Daniel's prophecy is divided into two parts -(Daniel 9:27). At the beginning of the seven years, the Antichrist will make a false peace covenant with Israel. It is at this time that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Revelation 11 describes it being measured -(Revelations 11:1-2) at the very time when the Two Witnesses will prophesy in Jerusalem. Mid-way through the seven years the Antichrist will break this covenant and desecrate the temple by exalting himself as God. Compare 2nd Thessalonians 2:3-4. This event marks the beginning of the 3.5 years of Great Tribulation. Jesus calls this event "the abomination of desolation" -(Mt. 24:15).

This prophecy sees Israel, Daniel's people, continuing to the time of the Antichrist. It teaches us that the Antichrist and his program absolutely does not pertain to the church; it pertains to Israel and to her land and temple. In the following Old Testament books we see ample evidence confirming God is not through with Israel.

Hosea 3:4-5 says that God is not finished with Israel. This passage plainly describes the fall of Israel followed by her return and the re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom.

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: AFTERWARD shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." -(Hosea 3:4-5).

This is the Bible's teaching about Israel and her future in a nutshell. Israel would rebel against God's Word, be judged, abide many days without a king or a sacrifice or a priesthood (e.g., no kingdom and no temple), then return, repent, and be restored and blessed. The restoration will occur ***"in the latter days."***

The so-called Minor Prophets have references to God's future plan for Israel. Amos says that God is not finished with Israel.

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God" -(Amos 9:8-15).

This is another of the many Old Testament prophecies of the restoration of Israel after her worldwide dispersion. It is clear and precise, and only by doing violence to the language can it be made to describe anything other than a restoration of the nation Israel. Consider some of the lessons from a literal interpretation of this prophecy: God will judge Israel severely for her sin, but He will not utterly destroy her -(Amos 9:8).

Israel will be sifted among the nations, but not the least grain will fall to the earth -(Amos 9:9). He has always had His eye upon Israel and has been in control of her wanderings.

The sinners of Israel who do not believe God's Word will perish -(Amos 9:10). They are the national seed of Abraham, but that does not mean they are saved or will be saved. Those who do not repent will not be saved.

But Israel itself will be restored. The tabernacle of David will be raised up and built as in the old days -(Amos 9:11). This will occur when Christ returns and sits on the throne of David, ruling Israel and the whole world.

The restoration of the house of David will be accompanied by blessings on the land -(Amos 9:13-15). The prophecy pertains to land.

Words could not be more clear and simple to understand, and this is the consistent testimony of the entire Bible. The same Israel that turned from God and was judged and scattered among the nations will be restored to her land, the very land upon which she lived in ancient times, and she will live on that land and be blessed in that land, and the Son of David will restore the Davidic kingdom and rule and reign over it. That's the teaching of the Bible from the Pentateuch to Revelation.

Amos' prophecy is cited by James in Acts 15.

"And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" -(Acts. 15:15-17).

Here James quotes Amos 9:11 and gives a general reference to Amos 9:12 without quoting it exactly. His simple point is that the Old Testament prophets foresaw God's blessing on the Gentiles. This was the subject in question at the Jerusalem conference.

James does not say that Amos 9 is fulfilled in the church or that God is finished with Israel. For that, it would have been necessary that he interpret the kingdom prophecies allegorically or spiritually, but instead he interprets Amos literally. Since he cites the part of the prophecy about the salvation of the Gentiles as literal, there is no reason to believe that he was looking at the restoration of the house of David as anything other than literal. If the apostles had believed that the church has fulfilled such prophecies, this would have been the ideal place to have made that perfectly clear, but they did just the opposite.

Zechariah says God is not finished with Israel. Consider the great prophecy of Zechariah 12-14. Jerusalem will be besieged by the "people of the earth" but will be delivered and will conquer all their armies -(Zechariah 12: 1-9). The nations that come against Jerusalem will be destroyed. This has never happened. God destroyed Sennacherib's army, but that consisted of one Assyrian army, not the nations of the world. The armies of the world have never attacked Israel before. Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled when the nations attack Israel during the time of the Antichrist. It is part of the Battle of Armageddon.

At that time, Israel will repent and will acknowledge the crucified Jesus as Christ - (Zechariah 12:10-14). They will look upon him ***"whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn***

for him, as one mourneth for his only son." The mourning will be in Jerusalem and all over Israel. The mourning will involve the house of David and the house of Levi and the other families. This is obviously talking about national Israel and not the church in any sense. Israelites today might not know their tribal genealogies, but God knows.

Israel will be cleansed by the blood of Christ -(Zechariah 13:1). Israel will be cleansed of idolatry and false teaching (Zechariah 13:2-6). One-third of Israel will be converted, and two-thirds will be judged -(Zechariah 13:7-9). The third part will be brought through the Great Tribulation for purifying -(Zechariah 13:9). This is why the tribulation is also called the time of Jacob's trouble -(Jeremiah 30:7).

The Lord will return to the Mount of Olives and it will be divided -(Zechariah 14:1-7). A great valley will be formed, and the remnant of Jews will flee from Jerusalem. A river of living waters will flow from Jerusalem -(Zechariah 14:8). Ezekiel also describes this, and it will heal the Dead Sea and the desert area in the Judean wilderness to the east of Jerusalem -(Ezekiel 47:8-12). Israel's topography will be changed (Zechariah 14:10).

The LORD will be king over all the earth -(Zechariah 14:9). His kingship of the earth is spoken of in the context of His return to the Mount of Olives and blessings on the land of Israel. Israel will be blessed and enriched -(Zechariah 14:14). The surviving nations will come to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts -(Zechariah 14:16). The nations that refuse to submit will be punished -(Zechariah 14:17-19). Israel will be perfectly holy -(Zechariah 14:20-21).

This prophecy cannot be spiritualized to refer to the church without doing it such damage that it is rendered meaningless. The Hebrew texts of all of these passages I have quoted are not misleading either.

I want to move to New Testament passages, from Jesus Christ Himself. The Lord Jesus taught that God is not finished with Israel. Consider four examples:

In Matthew 23, after Jesus Christ condemned the Pharisees and their false traditions and false works religion, He said to the Jews of that day and to Jerusalem, "***Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, TILL ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,***" -(Matthew 23:38-39). Note the word "till." Christ promised judgment upon Israel. He prophesied that their temple would be desolate. But the judgment wasn't going to be permanent. It has an end, and it will end when Israel repents. This repentance is described in great detail by the prophet Zechariah (chapter 12).

In Matthew 24, Christ continued this same teaching. The temple of His day would be destroyed so that there would not remain "***one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down***" (verse 2). The visitor to Jerusalem can still see the "Titus stones" that were thrown from the temple mount in AD 70 and crashed to the street below at the south end of the western wall. And Jesus prophesied of the rise of the Antichrist spoken of by Daniel, who will stand in a rebuilt Jewish temple -(Matthew 24:15). And then those who are in Judea will flee -(Matthew 24:16).

Jesus is prophesying of the Israel that exists today, the Israel that occupies the hills of Judea and is preparing to build the third temple. Christ is prophesying of modern Israel. He says she will still be under God's judgment in the end times and will endure great tribulation -(Matthew 24). He prophesies of false Jewish christs that will rise, and we know that many of them have already risen -(Matthew 24:24-26).

In Matthew 24, Christ is teaching the same literal truths about Israel that all of the prophets describe. He doesn't describe Israel's conversion in Matthew 24, but that is described in many other prophecies. All of the prophecies give the same literal plan for Israel: rejection of Jesus as Christ, dispersion, judgment, conversion, and restoration.

What about Matthew 21:43?

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

If this verse were isolated, it could teach that God was finished with Israel and that the church has replaced Israel, but it cannot possibly teach that since Christ Himself said that He is not finished with Israel. He said they would not see Him TILL they repent -(Matthew 23:39).

Christ always described a literal physical kingdom on earth. He said ***"They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God"*** -(Luke 13:29).

Jesus Christ gave the parable in Luke 19:11-27 specifically to teach that the kingdom of God would not come at that time but would come after the king would go into a far country and then return -(Luke 19:12). After he returns he will reward his servants and judge his enemies. This describes the Church Age followed by the establishment of an earthly kingdom, exactly as we see throughout Scripture.

Acts 1 also tells us that Jesus Christ taught that the kingdom of Israel will be restored. After His resurrection, He spoke to the disciples ***"of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"*** -(Acts 1:3).

It is obvious that the kingdom Jesus Christ taught them about was the kingdom promised in Old Testament prophecy and that He had not taught them that the church has replaced Israel, because just before He ascended, the disciples asked, ***"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"*** -(Acts 1:6).

They believed that Israel's kingdom would be restored, they just didn't know when. Jesus Christ's reply makes it doubly clear that they were all on the same page about the future of Israel's kingdom. He said,

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" -(Acts 1:7-8).

If the disciples had still misunderstood Christ's teaching about Israel's kingdom, this would have been the perfect time to have corrected their thinking. But Christ didn't say, "You are confused; there is no restoration of Israel's kingdom." Instead, He told them that the timing of the re-establishment of the kingdom is God's business, and they need to focus on their own business in this present time, which is preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The apostolic conference in Acts 15 says that God is not finished with Israel. The conference was for the purpose of deciding the issue of whether Gentile believers must follow the law of Moses -(Acts 15:1).

The determination by the apostles and prophets was that they are not so obligated, because the law of Moses was a heavy yoke, whereas salvation is by God's grace -(Acts 15:10-11).

They understood that the purpose of the present time or age or dispensation is for God to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14). That is a description of the church age in a nutshell. Elsewhere Paul speaks of the fullness of the Gentiles coming in -(Romans 11:25). This tells us that there is an end to the church as far as who will belong to it. There is no end to the church (Ephesians 3:21), but there is an end to the Church Age during which the church is being gathered together. The Church Age has a beginning and an end.

In his summary, James shows that this is conformable to the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. He quotes from Amos to show that the prophets taught that God would restore the house of David after it was fallen down and would rebuild its ruins, and at that time there would be Gentiles who call on the name of the Lord -(Amos 9:11-12). James is not saying that the house of David is restored in the church. To the contrary, he is saying that it will be restored in the future and that when it is restored there will exist saved Gentiles. That implies the salvation of Gentiles before the restoration of Israel's kingdom, which hints at the Church Age. This does not contradict the teaching that the church is a mystery. It is a mystery and was nowhere revealed in Old Testament prophecy, yet there are hints of the Church Age in the Old Testament that can now be understood in hindsight.

What is indisputable is that the apostles believed that the kingdom of David would be literally restored, and it will be restored in the future and it is not currently restored in the Church Age. The apostles interpreted the prophecy of Amos 9:8-15 literally.

Romans 9, 10, and 11 are the clearest statements on Israel's restoration in the future. Paul clearly teaches in Romans 11 that God is not finished with Israel and that the church has not replaced Israel.

As there is a casting away of Israel, so there will be a receiving of Israel which will be associated with the resurrection of the dead -(Romans 11:15). Daniel also associates the restoration of Israel with the resurrection -(Daniel 12:1-2).

The church, though different from Israel, is closely associated with spiritual Israel (Romans 11:16-24). The root is not Israel herself. The root is Abraham's covenant and Abraham's Seed Jesus Christ. Both the church and Israel are connected with this root. There is one tree and multiple branches. An Old Testament saint like Samuel and a New Testament saint like Apollos are both children of Abraham. Some of the natural branches growing from the root were broken off because of unbelief, and when they repent they will be grafted back in. The natural branches refer to Israel by nature; the Jews are by nature the children of Abraham, but the natural cannot inherit the spiritual kingdom of God.

Professing Christians, too, should fear lest they be found to be in unbelief (Romans 11:20-21). This is the same type of warning as in Hebrews 3:12 - 4:3. It is a warning about professing Christ without possessing Christ through saving faith.

Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in - (Romans 11:25-27). This is the New Testament teaching about the church and the Church Age and Israel in a nutshell. Israel is in spiritual blindness today, and that is what we see in modern Israel, but God isn't finished with blind Israel. She will be saved and converted, and God's covenants with her will be fulfilled. Words could not be plainer. This blindness extends to what I share in the next paragraph.

On August 31st, 2017, the Jewish Sanhedrin banned all Messianic Jewish marriages in Israel. It was the first time a rabbinical court has ruled on the issue of the status of Jews who believe in Jesus as the Son of God, after a Messianic couple requested they be married in Israel according to Jewish law or "*halachia*." The couple was essentially told they would need to deny their faith in Christ Jesus as the Son of God to have a state-recognized Jewish wedding ceremony in Israel. The Sanhedrin ruling has huge implications for Messianic Jews. Not the least would mean couples would be deprived of retirement, medical and other benefits that come with a state-sanctioned marriage.

When Paul says that "all Israel shall be saved," he is referring to Israel as Israel and not to every Israelite. This is clear in comparing Scripture with Scripture. All Israel will be saved in the sense of the 12 tribes. Ezekiel tells us that God will restore Judah and Israel and they will be one -(Ezekiel 37:15-20). But Zechariah tells us that only one-third of individual Israelites living in that day will be converted -(Zechariah 13:8-9). Elsewhere, Paul stated that a remnant of Israel will be saved -(Romans 9:27).

Finally, the book of Revelation says that God is not finished with Israel. In fact, the book of Revelation can be outlined according to a distinction between the church and Israel. In

chapters 1-3, the churches are addressed, but in Revelation 4:1, John is caught up to heaven and after that we don't see the churches on earth.

In Revelation 7, 12,000 individuals from each of 12 tribes of Israel are sealed -(Revelation 7:1-8). The names of the tribes are given. Here we see that the 12 tribes of Israel have not ceased to exist before God and that He knows who and where they are and they have a future in His prophetic plan. The witness for God in the earth during the Tribulation is Israel, not the church. Again, there are no lost tribes of Israel.

In Revelation 8, the prayers of the saints are prayers for judgment. Only Israel prayed such prayers. Church Age saints are instructed to pray for her enemies, not against them (Luke 9:51-56). The imprecatory prayers of Revelation are those of the Psalms and are based on God's promise to Abraham to curse those that cursed him and his seed -(Genesis 12:1-3).

In Revelation 9, the scorpion-like creatures are given freedom to hurt all earth-dwellers except those Jews who were sealed by the angel of Revelation 7. If Church Age believers were on earth, they would be subject to this horrible judgment of God.

Revelation 10 identifies the events of Revelation 4-18 with those foretold by Old Testament prophets--the days of the Great Tribulation, the "Day of the Lord." The Church Age was never in the view of these Old Testament prophecies; it was a mystery not yet revealed. The church has a different purpose and program than national Israel. It is Israel that is in view in Old Testament prophecy and in Revelation 4-18.

The ministry of the two witnesses of Revelation 11 identifies them with national Israel and with Old Testament prophecies of the "Day of the Lord." The two witnesses minister from Jerusalem, Israel's capital. The church has no such capital, her hope being heavenly, not earthly -(Colossians 3:1-4; Philippian 3:17-21). The two witnesses are associated with the rebuilt Jewish temple, which is measured at the beginning of the prophecy, telling us that this is when it will be built. The two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth, which speaks of Israel. The sackcloth signifies repentance from sin and sorrow because of some calamity -(1st Kings 21:27; 2nd Kings 19:1; Esther 4:1; Isaiah 15:3; Jeremiah 4:8). Nowhere are the churches seen in sackcloth. The churches are told, rather, to **"rejoice in the Lord always"** -(Philippians 4:4). The Church Age believer's judgment is forever past, and he is to keep his mind centered in the heavenlies where, positionally, he is already seated with Christ -(Ephesians 2:5-10). Revelation 11:4 identifies the two witnesses with the Old Testament prophecy of Zechariah 4:3, 11, 14. Further, the two witnesses call down judgment upon their enemies in Revelation 11:5-6. Jesus rebuked his disciples for desiring to do just this and instructed the Church Age believer to pray for the well-being of his enemies, not for their destruction -(Luke 9:54-56; Romans 12:14, 17-21). None of this is church ground. This is Israel ground. This is literal Jerusalem, literal Jewish temple ground.

The devil persecutes Israel, not the church, during the Tribulation -(Revelation 12). There can be no doubt that the woman in this chapter primarily signifies Israel. Verse 5 shows the woman bringing forth Christ, and it is obvious that Jesus was brought forth by Israel, not by the

church -(Isaiah 9:6-7; Romans 9:5). Also, the symbols of Revelation 12:1-2 recall familiar Old Testament typology of Israel. She is referred to as a woman -(Isaiah 54:5-7). The sun and moon and the 12 stars of verse 2 bring us directly to Joseph's dream regarding Israel -(Genesis 37:9). The words of Revelation 12:2 are almost an exact quote from Micah 5:3, speaking of Israel's delivery of the Messiah.

I need to be especially careful here to note that Revelation 12:1-6 is a dual prophecy. I deal with this in my E-book *'The Season of the Rapture: God's Three-Fold Witness'*. It speaks of the Messiah's first coming and second coming. The English text is misleading in that it does not properly translate the Greek nuances.

Given all the passages regarding Israel's destiny I have noted along with noting many theological polemics, it should never be assumed God is done with or replaced Israel in His Master Plan of Redemption. God has big plans for Israel beginning with Daniel's 70th Week in the near future.

Pastor Bob
EvanTeachr@aol.com