

## Israel's glorious future - Part 2

Prophecy clearly shows that Israel restored, ruled by Jesus Christ, will prosper and flourish in the land which God promised to Abraham. The land, as we saw last time in Isaiah, will become fertile and productive. And that in turn will support a growing population, already swelled by the influx of the remaining Jews from all around the world. It has been calculated that the population of Israel will exceed 192 million by the end of the Millennium. This is based on a very conservative growth rate of one fifth of recent world increase. If this population were packed into the western portion of the present Fertile Crescent the population density would be well over 2,000 persons per square mile, far exceeding that of present day Great Britain, which is less than 600 per square mile. It certainly would not be too difficult for us to picture the Jews being regathered from around the world, being settled in their tribal divisions into the western strip of the Fertile Crescent. But consider what must occur for the growing population to live comfortably in their land. Picture the great desert between the Jordan and Euphrates rivers shrinking over time, permitting a gradual expansion of the tribal cantons eastward (see **Ezekiel 48**). Picture the expansion continuing throughout the reign of Christ, as Israel prospers and grows. For Isaiah shows that Israel will have a population explosion:

*“Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not travailed with child! For **more are the children of the desolate** than the children of the married woman, says the LORD. **Enlarge the place of your tent**, and let them stretch out the curtains of your habitations; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will **inherit the nations**, and make the desolate cities inhabited” - Isaiah 54:1-3.*

**Ezekiel chapter 48** shows the division of the Promised Land into thirteen parallel, west-to-east strips. In addition to the twelve tribal divisions, will be a strip surrounding Jerusalem, reserved for purposes of worship and administration. Ezekiel's geographical layout of the tribal divisions is different from that given in **Joshua chapters 13-19**. Why? The new arrangement allows for **expansion** of each tribal allotment, as their populations grow beyond what can be supported by the initial eastern border given. Each tribe can expand into unused territory eastwards towards the Euphrates river- according to the terms of God's promise to Abraham. Each tribe will be able expand, unlike the previous divisions, without interfering with the borders of their neighbouring tribes. God, not man, who controls the climate, is able to make the formerly arid eastern lands of the Syrian Desert more productive as time and circumstances require. We might expect by the end of the Millennium that all the tribal allotments will stretch from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River.

*“The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: ‘Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are -- northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make **your descendants** as the **dust of the earth**; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered’.” - Genesis 13:14-16.*

*“In blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will **multiply your descendants** as **the stars of the heaven** and as **the sand** which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies” - Genesis 22:17.*

*“I will make you a great\* nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing” - Genesis 12:2.*

\*The first “great” is Strong 1419 *gadowl*, a different word from the second, “great name”. The first word is used of the “great (or large) river, the river Euphrates”. Though the Jordan river may be great in other

respects, this word is not used of this small river. Similarly how could a great, meaning physically large, nation of Israel be expected to fit into the land which was ruled at its furthest historical extent by David and Solomon? We will look at this, God willing, next time.