

The Future of Israel under Christ

Given the widespread anti-Jewish sentiment in the world today, it will come as a great shock when Israel becomes the most powerful and influential nation after Christ returns. True, Israel rejected their Messiah and suffered the consequences. Of the temple Jesus pronounced, *"There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"* (Mark 13:2). And of the people, *"They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* - Luke 21:24. Paul understood by this that the afflictions of Israel and Jerusalem were only temporary - *"all Israel will be saved"* when *"the Deliverer (Jesus) will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"* - Romans 11:26. The reason for this is that *"the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"* (verse 29). In other words, God will not break His promise to Abraham concerning his natural descendants through Jacob. After Jacob's sons grew into a nation in Egypt, God said to them, *"the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth...because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers"* - Deuteronomy 7:6-8.

600 years later, the kingdom of Judah was overthrown by the Babylonians, because the people had rebelled against God. Yet God declared, *"though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished...You shall be My people, and I will be your God"* - Jeremiah 30:11-22. This should help explain how, against all odds, a population of more than six million now inhabits the state of Israel, on the same land from which they were scattered 2,000 years ago.

Much is said in the prophets concerning the future restoration and prosperity of Israel in the Promised Land, which, as Paul said, will happen after "the Deliverer" - Jesus - is returned. In the past God scattered his disobedient people. After reaching perhaps 5-6 million under David and Solomon, their numbers dwindled, and did not reach their peak until 1942 of 15 million before the loss of 6 million in the Holocaust. But Israel will have a major change of heart, they will happily conform to God's way, and God will see that the nation prospers. *"You shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited"* - Isaiah 54:3. During the 1,000 years reign of Christ, nothing will halt the population growth of Israel, until they encroach and spill over into the surrounding countries. Moses, after foretelling the scattering of Israel, said, *"The LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you...Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you MORE than your fathers"* - Deuteronomy 30:3-5.

The reason is given in Isaiah 60:21-22 - *"Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it."* In fact, Israel will become comparable in size with the populations in Iraq (now 30+ million) and Egypt (80+ million) - *"In that day Israel will be THE THIRD with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance'"* - Isaiah 19:24-25. He further speaks of the unprecedented population growth, *"Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit"* - Isaiah 27:6. What will happen, to cause Israel to accept Jesus as their Lord, and how will the people be kept from straying any more? This will be the subject, God willing, of the next instalment.