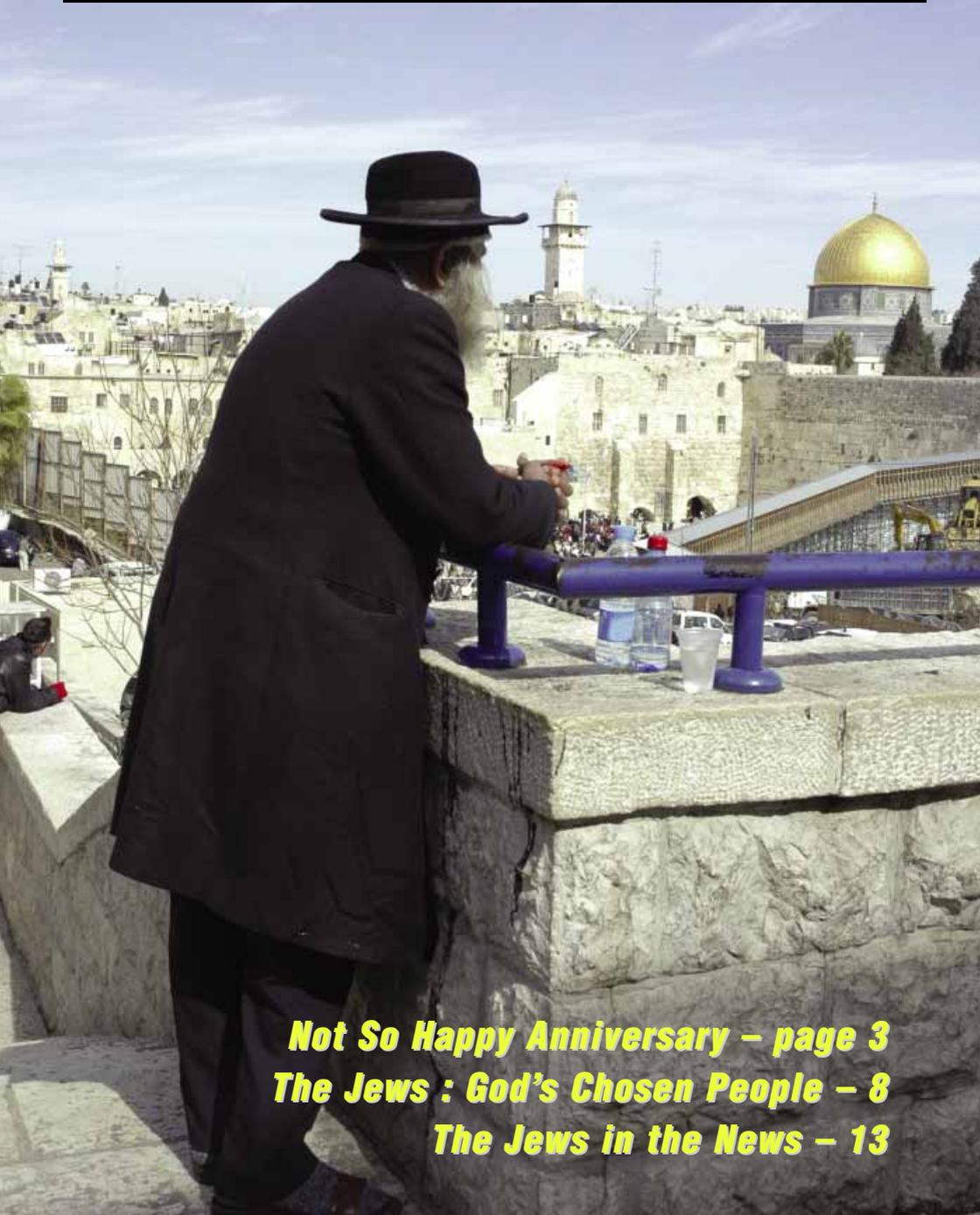


Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1488



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Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

124th Year

E08

1488

A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world. Its objectives are : to encourage study of the Bible as God's inspired message to mankind; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God's world-wide Kingdom.

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Publisher: The Glad Tidings Publishing Association (a registered charity) Number 248352

Bible Talks, Study Classes, Sunday Schools and Youth Clubs are held regularly by Christadelphians worldwide. The address of your nearest group can be obtained from either the Distribution Secretaries or from the local agents or information addresses given above.

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Acknowledgements

Photographs:

Chassidic Jew gazing over the Western Wall, Jerusalem
istockphotos

Illustrations:

istockphotos pg 8; Clipart.com 3-7,10-19.

Bible Versions

The version most used in this issue is the New King James Version (NKJV) and other versions are sometimes used.

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Not So Happy Anniversary

An elderly man looks down over Jerusalem – the city in which he has lived for many years and wonders what the future holds.

He is a Jew, gazing towards the Western Wall, a place revered by his ancestors for many generations. Here pious Jews have come over the centuries to pray to the God of their fathers and to implore His blessing. But what hope is there that their prayers for peace with security will be answered in the near future?

Unhappy Past

The area over which the old man is gazing has seen more trouble than almost anywhere else on earth. Since the days of King David, it has been occupied by Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Seljuks, Crusaders, Mamelukes, Ottoman Turks, the British and the Arab people. In the past, Jews only managed to occupy the city for about 1000 years. And they have been back in sole possession of it for just forty years, since the Six Day War of 1967.

This issue is all about God's purpose with the nation of Israel. The Bible says they are a special people because through them salvation is to come to all nations. This is why the gospel of salvation is called, in the New Testament, "*the hope of Israel*" (see Acts 28:20, 26:6 and John 4:22). Back in 1849, the founder of the Christadelphians, John Thomas, was persuaded to write down his understanding of Bible truth, and he duly published a

book which he entitled "*Elpis Israel*" – 'the hope of Israel'.

Remarkable Present

At the time he wrote there was little prospect of the Jewish race being reunited with their ancient land, which was firmly held by the Ottoman Turks. All the political indicators pointed to a continuance of Jewish dispersion and prolonged anti-Semitism. But the Bible said otherwise, so as part of his explanation of what was bound to happen to fulfil God's promises, John Thomas made the following statement:



"I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews. Their present

intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt."

That proved to be remarkably perceptive, as things worked out, for over 60 years later it was indeed Britain that supported and then policed the re-establishment of a Jewish community back in the land of their fathers. Later articles will explain just how that happened, and why John Thomas was so sure that the Jews must return to their land in fulfilment of Bible prophecy. The existence of the Jewish race is

remarkable enough in itself. Their return to Israel and the re-establishment of the State of Israel is nothing short of a modern miracle.

Unhappy Anniversary

Please do not jump to the conclusion that Christadelphians are political supporters of the nation of Israel, or that we are blindly pro-Zionist or anti-Arab. We are none of those things. We are excited by what has been happening in the Middle East because we see it as the fulfilment of Bible prophecy and a vital step towards the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. He is to rule as King from Jerusalem, over a worldwide kingdom that will include Jews, but which will also embrace people from all nations.

The Jewish people have returned to their land without acknowledging that Jesus Christ is their long-promised Messiah. They have had to fight for their existence ever since the State was formed in 1948 and that is still the case as they reach their 60th anniversary. The ruling political party Hamas, now in control of Gaza, will still not recognize their right to exist as a nation and their violence has resulted in counter-violence.

We deplore all acts of violence and terrorism, and we have no political affiliation with any nation or any government. As believers in the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, we give our unquestioned loyalty and obedience to him alone, and await his righteous government. He is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and only his return to earth will bring about lasting peace. Try as he might, President George Bush will not achieve his stated aim of bringing Jew and Palestinian together in a binding peace agreement, especially not in the

timescale he has set himself.

Opinions are too divided; the long-running hatred is too deep-rooted; Jerusalem is bound to be a stumbling block. It is Israel's capital city and it is also the city the Palestinians want as the capital city of their new nation.

Stumbling Block

The Prophet Zechariah lived over two thousand years ago, so he could never have foreseen 21st century politics, unless his message had been given him by God. It was, for it is a remarkable commentary on the role that Jerusalem is due to play in the peace agreement talks that might get underway under American sponsorship. This is what the prophet said:

“I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it ... but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place – Jerusalem ... It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son” (Zechariah 12:3-10).

It may not have arrived yet, but when the Jewish people emerge from their troubles and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their King, there is a very happy time awaiting them and, through them, for all those people from all nations who accept him as their Lord.

Editor

Positive Proof that God Exists!

*In a world that now questions the existence of God and believes instead in creation by chance and the triumph of human endeavour, there is something that offers positive proof that God exists and that He is active in our world, to complete His great purpose with the world He created. That proof is provided by the continued existence of the nation of Israel. In this article, **Peter Forbes** asks "What is so special about Israel?" and provides an important answer.*

The Enigmatic Jew

Ask any Christadelphian why Israel is so important to them and you are likely to get an answer back along these lines: *"The continued existence of the Jew and the establishment of the modern State of Israel is proof that God exists and that He is still working in the world"*. Articles elsewhere in this issue explain something of Israel's national history.

Israel has been subjugated by nations in the past and there have been many attempts to destroy the Jews. But the Jew is still identifiable. Nations have come and gone but the Jew remains. Where is the Assyrian? Where is the Babylonian? Where is the Roman? All these nations opposed the Jew and took them into captivity. These nations have gone, but the Jew remains. For this is what God said would happen.

"I am with you," says the LORD, "to save you; 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" (Jeremiah 30:11).

The Wandering Jew

It has become proverbial to describe someone who cannot settle anywhere as a "Wandering Jew". There is even a plant named 'Wandering Jew' – which is so named because of the way in which it spreads. Throughout history the Jewish people have moved from country to country, often seeking to escape persecution. Always retaining their separate identity, even though there have been many attempts made by individual Jews to assimilate into the culture where he or she lived.

So amazing is the Jew that many books have been written trying to explain why the Jew still exists. The wandering Jew is a sociological puzzle to many people, but not to Bible believers. For the Bible clearly foretold that the nation would be dispersed. Here's one example:

"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known – wood and stone" (Deuteronomy 28:64).



In their wandering to distant parts the Jews have often been persecuted. Some nations, notably Nazi Germany during the Second World War, systematically persecuted Jews and sought to eliminate them. Many had to flee to other countries to avoid death. It was exactly as the Bible had predicted would happen in a prophecy written about 1400 years before the birth of Christ:

“Among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see” (Deuteronomy 28:65-67).

The New Nation

But the Jewish people were not destined to remain scattered and homeless forever. Other prophets added further information about God’s purpose and plan for His people. He would recover and restore them and this was to be a sign to all nations that His plan is on track and that everything will soon come to its intended gracious conclusion. God said, through the prophets:

“For behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that I will bring back from captivity my people Israel and Judah,” says the LORD. “And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it” (Jeremiah 30:3).

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; the city shall be built upon its own mound, and the palace shall remain according to its own plan. Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry; I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small” (Jeremiah 30:18,19).

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land” (Ezekiel 36:24).

Whilst these prophecies will not be completely fulfilled until the Jews recognise Jesus as their Messiah, we have seen the beginning of their fulfilment with the formation of the State of Israel in 1948. This is why the establishment of the modern State of Israel is seen as proof that God exists and that he is still working in the world.

Steps along the Way

It might seem obvious that when the time had come to restore this homeless people to their land that they would be allowed to resettle in the land of Palestine, their original national home. However, that did not always appear so obvious; for other peoples had moved in to occupy their former land. In 1903, Britain suggested that the Jews be given a home in Uganda in Africa and a substantial number of delegates to the Zionist Congress thought it was a good idea. However that did not happen. Over the years there have been many suggestions made as to where they might be found a national home outside the land of Palestine. Here is a list of some of those suggestions and their dates:

South America

- 1652 Curacao – Proposed by the East India Company
- 1654 Surinam – Proposed by the British
- 1659 Cayenne – Proposed by the French W India Company
- 1730 South America – Suggested by Hermann Moritz
- 1892 Argentina – Proposed by Baron de Hirsch
- 1904 Some Jews set up a colony in Brazil

North America

- 1819 Proposal – along Mississippi & Missouri River
- 1825 Ararat near Niagara – Proposed by Mordecai Noah
- 1884 Saskatchewan

Elsewhere in the World

- 1820 Asia Minor – Proposed by Jews in Russia
- 1839 Syria – Proposal by the British
- 1841 Crimea – Proposed by Jews in Russia
- 1880 Cyprus – Proposed by Russian and Rumanian Jews
- 1908 Mesopotamia – Proposed by Jewish Territorial Association
- 1903 El Arish – proposed by British
- 1927 Melbourne – Proposed by the Australian government
- 1928 Birobidjan (Russia) – Russians established colony
- 1940 Madagascar – proposed by Germany
- 1946 Vietnam – Proposed by Ho Chi Min

All these proposals, however well intentioned, were doomed to founder. God had promised, as we have seen, that the Jewish people would one day be restored to their former land – the land of Israel.

*“I will cause them **to return to the***

***land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it”** (Jeremiah 30:3);*

*“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and **bring you into your own land”** (Ezekiel 36:24).*

The Flag of Israel

When Israel came out of Egypt, to begin their journey to the Promised Land, they had a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide them. It must have been a wonderful sight which confirmed, on a daily basis, that their God was with them and was working for them. However, as time went on, the fire by night and cloud by day would be taken for granted. “It has always been there”, might have been the comment of those who had grown up knowing nothing else.

In like manner, the flag of Israel – the Star of David – is a reminder that God exists and that He is at work in the world. Older readers will know that this flag is a comparatively recent arrival on the world scene, for Israel is a new nation – just 60 years old in its latest national phase of existence. And the flag was only designed for the Zionist Conference of 1897. Younger readers might never have known a time when it wasn't there – flying in Jerusalem, or clustered among the flags at the United Nations assembly building.

Familiarity may have bred complacency. If so, it is time to take stock once again. The existence of the State of Israel is a modern miracle. It is the most positive proof that we can have that God exists and that He is working in the world today.

Peter Forbes

The Jews: God's Chosen People

Extraordinarily, the Jewish people have continued to exist in spite of numerous persecutions and attempts at genocide. What a remarkable thing this is!

In times past they have been persecuted, stripped of their homeland and scattered to the four corners of the earth. Yet, not only have they survived as a people, they have retained their national identity. No other people in the history of mankind have faced such impossible odds and still survived.

The apple of God's eye

So how can all this be explained? God provides the answer: *"I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed ... therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God"* (Isaiah 43:12). The nation of Israel is living proof that God lives and reigns supreme. He elsewhere declared that *"though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee"* (Jeremiah 30:11). Indeed this illustrates just how the Almighty has divinely intervened, time and time again, with the Jews – His people – in order that all may finally recognise that He is their living God.

We all need to fully appreciate this fact: that God has chosen Israel. For the Jewish people are the *"apple of His eye"* (Zechariah 2:8). They are

uniquely called. And God Himself, through His faithful prophet, informs us just how important His promises are with this unique nation, for they are based upon His covenant with the patriarchs of faith – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

"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" (Jeremiah 33:25, 26).

And as we evidently still have "day and night" – the fixed pattern which God put in motion at the beginning of creation – therefore, God will fulfil His promises with His beloved nation of Israel. The Almighty will bring His people back into the Land promised to their forefathers, in order that His eternal covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can be finally fulfilled.

Modern Day Miracle!

During the last hundred years or so we have all witnessed an extraordinary re-gathering of the children of Israel. So amazing that it could well be described as a modern-day miracle! From a scriptural perspective this has been monumental, for the restoration of Israel is central to the establishment of the Kingdom



of God. Moreover, this was something the apostles all fervently believed, which is why they asked the famed question (just moments before their Master ascended into heaven to be with his heavenly Father): *“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6).

In this short question we see God’s plan: the nation of Israel once possessed the kingdom and, when Jesus returns, will possess it once again!

Significantly, the Psalmist said: *“When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory”* (Psalm 102:16). From the early cry of Zionism by Theodor Herzl, as far back as 1870, Almighty God – through the work of His mighty angelic host – has been gradually building Israel up again. This was made most evident in 1948, when Israel – against all odds – once again became the homeland of the Jewish people. The Bible was right all along!

But who could ever have imagined that this would, one day, come true after the ransacking of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD70? We only have to bring to mind some of the terrible pictures of the last World War to realise that this is a most amazing prediction indeed! So many times the future of the Jewish people has looked bleak to say the least! It is so fitting, then, that a well-known author, after closely studying the Jewish people, concluded: *“No fact in the history of the 20th Century is more staggeringly improbable than the State of Israel”* (C. Sykes, 1965: “Cross Roads to Israel”). How true this is!

Let us all therefore watch!

Today, if we look to the Land we see that Israel blossoms as a living witness and a testimony that the God of Israel reigns supreme; and we can be confident that God will bring about His ultimate plan and purpose with this earth very soon. For the Lord Jesus said: *“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”* (Luke 21:24). Amazingly, we are indeed the generation that has seen Israel reborn and Jerusalem’s captivity finally come to an end. The year 2007 marks forty years since Jerusalem was captured by the Jews (actually reclaimed on the sixth day of the Six Day War in 1967), and 2008 represents sixty years since the Jews returned to the Land of Israel (in fact Israel’s independence was joyously confirmed when a new Jewish state – ‘the State of Israel’ – was officially announced by David Ben-Gurion on 14th May 1948). All of these events were predicted in the Bible! What extraordinary times we are living in!



What we therefore see around us are signs which herald Christ’s return, and remind us to be ever-watching and waiting for him. As Jesus said:

“When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

Jesus is going to return very soon with a reward for the faithful, of that there is no doubt. So let us all be ready and waiting for him, for it will not be long. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Stephen Whitehouse

God's Unfolding Purpose

1. When God, faced by the rebellion of the children of Israel, reiterated the unchanging and unbreakable nature of His purpose, He said:

"Truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD" (Numbers 14:21).

2. That has always been God's reaction to the stubbornness and rebelliousness of man. His purpose cannot be frustrated by human wickedness. Mankind is unable to rise to the greatness of his calling; but God has the ability to cope with this inability within the method He has chosen to carry forward His purpose. However far mankind strays, God's purpose still moves forward.

3. This, of course, is to view the outworking of God's plan from a human standpoint. God, in His infinite wisdom, knows the end from the beginning, and has, in His foreknowledge, provided for every eventuality and circumstance.

4. The two views expressed above are not incompatible, for the human will – man's power of choice – remains inviolate, and God's unfolding purpose merely takes account of what God always knew would happen. Thus it is written of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was: *"fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but*



was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20). God knew from the beginning that He would have to send His Son, to rescue the situation. But Jesus only appeared on the scene when the time was right.

5. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the early chapters of Genesis we have been considering in this series:

Man was created in God's image and likeness, and was given the commission to have dominion over all the works of His hands. Then Adam chose the serpent's way of looking at things and thus he defaced the image in which he was made. Sin and death blighted what, for him, could have been a glorious future. His actions brought disastrous consequences on all his progeny, who thereafter were subject to the tyranny of the sin that reigned in their bodies and the death which inevitably ensued.

6. But there, in Eden, God indicated a way of salvation. Man's nakedness, which spoke so clearly of his moral poverty in the eyes of God, was



covered by the skin of a slain animal, indicating that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. The curse upon the serpent pointed unerringly to the man of God's providing, the seed of the woman who, trampling it underfoot, would himself be bitten

in gaining the victory. Thus indicating that in breaking the power of sin forever, he himself would suffer death.

7. So, in the early chapters of Genesis, we find all the indications of an acceptable form of worship which was established from the time of the fall. The LORD God *“placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden”* (Genesis 3:24). The word rendered *‘placed’* is associated later with the Tabernacle, God’s dwelling place in the midst of His people. (See Exodus 25:8; 29:45 and Psalm 78:60).

So it was to this place that Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices *“at the end of the day”* (Gen. 4:3 KJV mg.) That is at the appointed time at the end of the days, linking our thoughts with the day of Atonement. At the door of this tabernacle (was there a tent there as well?) the sin offering crouched (Gen. 4:7). It was from this place that Cain feared he would be driven out – *“from thy face shall I be hid”* (Gen. 4:14 lit, faces, i.e. of the cherubim).

Note also that the cause of the friction between Cain and Abel would appear to have been the question of the firstborn’s right to the priesthood. *“If thou doest well ... shalt thou not have the excellency?”* (Gen. 4.7 KJV margin, compared with Genesis 49:3).

8. All the indications are that the patriarchal form of worship was based on the family, the head thereof acting as priest on behalf of the other members.



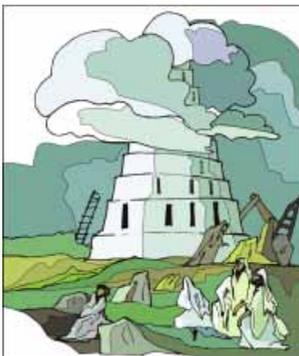
9. The history of man, however, was one of degeneration. Gradually, though this privilege of approach to God was open to all men, they corrupted His way upon earth. They went in the way of Cain, until finally there was no remedy: *“the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart”* (Genesis 6:6).

So the LORD purposed to destroy the earth and man who He had created by means of a flood. But, as at the beginning, with Adam’s sin, man could not frustrate the purpose of God. For it was at that time that: *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD”* (6:8). With him and with his family, God made a new beginning: it was through them that He carried forward His purpose in the earth.

10. Still God dealt with man on the same basis. The family with its priest remained the form of acceptable worship. But once more man proved himself unworthy of this privilege. This particular epoch of human history ended with the events of the tower of Babel for, said God,

“Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them” (11:6).

God’s purpose, however, could not be thwarted and in the face of man’s rebellion God unfolded a new phase in His dealings with men. If His truth was to be preserved in the earth, no longer could it be left to the individual family.



So God determined to chose one nation to whom He could entrust the responsibility of preserving the knowledge of His way of salvation. To whom He would reveal Himself and to whom He would entrust His holy oracles.

In a special sense they would be His people and He would be their God. Theirs would be an inestimable privilege and a dreadful responsibility, for they must shine as a light in the world, shedding abroad the knowledge of God's truth and, through their example, they would draw men to their God.



Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation

11. But where was there a nation worthy of such a trust, which might witness for Him through all the dark ages of human history? There was none – so God made one. He created the nation of Israel and made them His chosen people. To do this God called one man, Abram, to whom He made promises in which were enshrined His whole purpose with man. Through him, by means of the miraculous birth of his son Isaac in his and Sarah, his wife's, old age, God began the creation of the nation of Israel, whose history was thereafter to dominate the pages of Scripture. Truly it could be said of them:

“Now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine’” (Isaiah 43:1).

12. When we reflect upon human wickedness and God's long-suffering, we can but wonder at the manner in

which God, far from allowing His purpose to be frustrated, has provided at every time of crisis the answer to man's inability to rise to God's demands. His unchanging purpose remains as a witness to His faithfulness. He has always been true to Himself, and to the promises He made, and He always will be.

“For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: ‘I am the LORD, and there is no other’”

(Isaiah 45:18).

Therefore the call goes forth to the 21st century as to all preceding ones:

“Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by myself; the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath” *(Isaiah 45:22,23).*

Dudley Fifield

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The Jews in the News

Some sixty years ago, everyone stopped to listen to the BBC wireless broadcasting "The News".

In those days people took the voice of the BBC as authoritative; relied absolutely on its news bulletins, and never questioned what they were told. Yet the BBC (the British Broadcasting Corporation) only came into existence in 1922; that's how remarkably things have developed. Before then people depended upon newspapers and they too were treated with respect and in general were believed.

Yet for almost all of human history, news was passed by word of mouth: sometimes officially through a courier who often took weeks to reach those who needed to know, more likely unofficially, as people shared what they knew or what they had heard. It was only with the arrival of the telegram and the telephone that things speeded up. Nowadays, thanks to satellite technology, "news", in both words and pictures, is received as the events are happening.

Why the Jews?

Ever since AD 70 when they lost their homeland, the Jews have constantly been spoken of and written about in international affairs, either because of individual achievement or because of their treatment as a race by the regimes of other countries. Since the advent of newspapers and broadcasting, they are mentioned pretty well every week.



Why are they regarded as so newsworthy? Why such a lot of coverage? What's so amazing about them?

It is quite astounding that they have survived at all as a nation! They were almost always treated with suspicion and often with intolerance. Sometimes they were expelled as undesirables from some European countries. They fled from one country to another often because of the intense persecution they suffered. In the 20th century, the Nazis in Germany were determined to destroy them completely. They devised what they called "The Final Solution" and pursued it in the most barbaric manner.

Long-Standing

The Jews make up one of the world's oldest uninterrupted cultures, with almost four thousand years of continuous history. Just stop to think of some of the world's most famous people. Several names come from long ago but others are much more recent –

☆ *Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Judas Iscariot, Flavius Josephus (the historian).*

And, nearer our own time –

☆ *Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Anne Frank and her diary, John von Neumann (one of the fathers of modern computing), the great banking family of the Rothschilds; musicians like Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, Yehudi Menuhin, George Gershwin, Benny Goodman, Leonard Bernstein, Bob Dylan.*

Men and women in other forms of entertainment –

☆ *Sarah Bernhardt, Groucho Marx, Louis B. Mayer (of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), Steven Spielberg;*

Politicians like –

☆ *Benjamin Disraeli, Leon Trotsky, Karl Marx, Henry Kissinger, not to mention Levi Strauss.*

We should pause to ask ourselves, “Why it is that such a relatively few dispersed and often despaired people have made such an impact on world affairs?” The inescapable fact is that all those I’ve just mentioned, and many other famous people besides, are Jews. The influence of this culture and its people has been immense. Their impact on history is perhaps summed up in this quotation from Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), the 19th century Prime Minister of Great Britain. In reply to the rather sneering words of another Member of Parliament, he said this –

“Yes, I am a Jew, and when the ancestors of the right honourable gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown land, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon”.

God Rules

Christadelphians believe that God is and always has been actively working politically in the earth to bring His purpose to its fulfilment. Long ago the prophet Daniel was inspired to make this observation:

“The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whoever he will, and sets over it the lowest of men” (Daniel 4:17).

God has revealed this on-going purpose in two ways:

- ① By revelation in the Bible, which is fundamentally a Jewish book, and
- ② In the person, work and words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a result of our Bible reading, we have come to believe that the Jews are central to that purpose and its fulfilment. They are God’s chosen people. This Bible is the only voice of authority in a world that has lost its way.

You might well ask why it is that we make this claim. On what grounds do we say that it is the only authority? I hope that as you read this you will come to see some of the reasons why we hold this conviction.

God’s Witnesses

The prophet Isaiah declared that God has his witnesses in the earth who testify to His existence and His ability to control future events according to His purpose. This is what he said, as God’s spokesman:

“Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear and say, ‘It is truth.’ You are my witnesses,” says the LORD, ‘And my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he. Before me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after me” (Isaiah 43:9,10).

In this passage (Isaiah 43:1-13) God tells us how the Jewish people will, albeit unwillingly at times and despite their constant disobedience, always be a witness for the truth of God’s revelation.

Just spend a few moments turning up the following Bible passages:

1. *God's chosen people:*
Genesis 12:1-3
2. *God's chosen land:*
Genesis 13:14-17,
Deuteronomy 32: 8 & 11: 12
3. *Curses for disobedience:*
Deuteronomy 28: 36-37 &
64-67
4. *Not cast off altogether:*
Jeremiah 30:10-11
5. *Their regathering:*
Ezekiel 37:11-14
6. *Jerusalem: Zechariah 12:3*

Even a cursory look at the history of the Jewish people, especially since AD 70, will help you to consider the significance of these people. The words of Moses and the other prophets of so long ago are coming true in our lifetime. The Israelis constantly testify to the truth of God's Word, that is why they are so often in the news.

Future Developments

When Jesus was about to ascend to heaven the angels told the watching disciples:

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Jesus Christ is without doubt the greatest of all Jews, indeed the greatest of all men. He is to return to this earth, not this time as an infant, born in obscurity, but with authoritative power. Have a look at Matthew's gospel (chapter 24:30-31) and the words of the prophet Zechariah (chapter 14:4,9), and you will see what is promised for the future.

Zechariah also foretells the way in which Jews will meet the Lord Jesus Christ and, this time, acclaim him as their King (see Zechariah 12:9,10). As a nation, Israel has to be brought to its knees before they will recognize that the Jesus of Nazareth whom their forebears had crucified, is none other than their long-awaited Messiah. For Jesus is the king of the Jews, and was born for that eventual role (see Luke 1:30-33).

Chosen People

This is why the Jews are so often in the news; they are God's chosen people. As such, they are central to God's purpose. We believe that the day of Christ's return is not far away, and we believe that particularly because of the regathering of the Jews and the establishment of the State of Israel during the 20th century. Jesus said that there would be Jews in Jerusalem when he returned, and now they are there, just as he said.

The question for us all then is quite simple. "Am I in any way prepared to face the greatest Jew of all time – Jesus Christ?" We all might well ask what is going to happen to us when he returns. Our preparations for that great event must begin with an understanding of God's revelation to mankind. The coming Kingdom of God is not just for Jews.

Non-Jews (or Gentiles) can become related to the promises God made to Abraham so long ago. We too can share the faith of Abraham and become his spiritual descendants. That's the sort of news you don't read in the papers, but that's the Really Good News from God.

Trevor A. Pritchard

Outline of Jewish History:

AD 70 to 2007

AD 70	Destruction of Jerusalem and Herod's Temple by the Roman army led by Titus.	
73	Last stand of the Jews at Masada.	
132-5	Bar Kokhba uprising against Rome.	
313-636	Eastern Roman or Byzantine rule	
636-1099	Arab rule	
691	Dome of the Rock built by Caliph Abd el-Malik	
1099-1291	Crusader domination: the Kingdom of Jerusalem.	
1290	Jews expelled from England	
1291-1516	Mameluke rule)	
) Turkish Power	
1517-1917	Ottoman rule)	
1897	First Zionist Congress convened by Theodore Herzl in Basel, Switzerland.	
1882-1914	First and second large scale immigration, mainly from Russia and Poland.	
1909	First Kibbutz, Degania, and first modern all-Jewish city, Tel Aviv founded.	
1917	British conquest of Palestine. British Foreign Minister Earl Balfour pledges support for the establishment of a "Jewish national home in Palestine", on condition that the rights of existing populations were not harmed. (The Balfour Declaration.)	
1918-1947	British rule	
1919-1923	Third large scale immigration, mainly from Russia.	
1922	Britain is granted a mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations.	
1924-1932	Fourth large scale immigration, mainly from Poland.	
1933-1939	Fifth large scale immigration, mainly from Germany.	
1939-1945	Holocaust in Europe.	
1947	United Nations proposes the establishment of Arab and Jewish states in Palestine.	
1948 14th May	State of Israel proclaimed	

Arch of Titus in Rome

1948-49	Israel attacked by Arab, Egyptian and Syrian forces. They were defeated and Israel doubled in size. 900,000 Palestinian refugees leave Israel.
1949	The first Knesset elected.
1948-1952	Mass immigration (over half a million people) from Europe and Arab countries.
1956	Sinai campaign against Egypt (then led by Colonel Nasser).
1967	Egypt blockaded the port of Eilat which resulted in the third Arab-Israeli war known as the Six Day War: Jerusalem reunited.
1968-1970	Syria and Egypt's war of attrition against Israel.
1973	Yom Kippur War.
1978	Camp David Accords negotiated by America's President Carter.
1980	Jerusalem declared the capital of Israel.
1982	Israel invaded Lebanon to dislodge the PLO.
1984	Operation Moses, immigration of Jews from Ethiopia.
1987-1988	Widespread violence ("the intifada") in Israeli-administered areas.
1989	Beginning of mass immigration of Jews from the former USSR.
1991	Israel attacked by scud missiles during the first Gulf War.
1994	Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty signed.
1996	Fundamentalist Arab terrorism against Israel escalates.
1998	Israel and the PLO sign the Wye River Memorandum to facilitate implementation of the Interim Agreement.
2000	Barak and Arafat meet at Camp David for final negotiations: talks end in deadlock.
2000	Second intifada begins: Ariel Sharon visits the Temple Mount.
2002	Israeli forces invade and reoccupy seven West Bank towns to destroy terrorist infrastructure.
2003	"Road map to peace" (prepared by US, UN, EU and Russia) delivered to Israel and the Palestinians. Israel continues to build its 'separation fence'.
2004	Israel's 'Disengagement Plan' is approved by the Knesset.
2005	Israel withdraws from Gaza.
2006	Military operations against Palestinian attacks from Gaza and the Hezbollah terror organisation in Lebanon (hostilities end in August).
2007	Rocket attacks continue from Gaza and Israeli military action reprisals against the gunmen are on-going.

God's Promises to Abraham

Abraham lived in the Middle East about four thousand years ago in a society that worshipped the sun. Archaeologists have enabled us to learn much information about the kind of society in which he grew up. However, Abraham was not happy in the city of Ur. He recognised that the sun had been created by God and that He was the one to worship.

We don't know how, but God spoke to Abraham and told him that he was to leave his home town and go to the land of Canaan, (we know it as Israel). God said that this land would be given to Abraham forever and that, through him, his descendents and this land, all the people of the world would eventually be blessed by God. You can find the details about this and all the promises in Genesis chapter 12, verses 1-7 and 13:14-17.

History tells us that Abraham eventually became the founder of the Jewish nation and some Arab nations, but in another conversation with God Abraham learned that it was through the Jewish line of his son Isaac that the promises would be realised.

Great Nation

God kept His promise to make Abraham and his descendents great. The Jewish nation was established with special laws from God and they became very powerful at the time of King David and his son King Solomon. However, much more of the promise was realised when God caused Abraham and David's direct descen-

dent Mary to give birth to His son: the Lord Jesus. He was the means by which Jews and Gentiles can be part of that promise to Abraham. By living a perfect life and voluntarily going to his death as a sacrifice, he has created a way by which we can all become part of Abraham's family.

Great Opportunity

By believing the promises God has made, to Abraham and others, and by baptism into the saving name of Jesus we can become brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus (and therefore descendents of faithful Abraham). As Scripture says:

"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:27-29).

Together with Abraham, we can look forward to the time when we inherit all the promises God gave to him. Abraham still has at least one promise to receive from God, for at present he cannot inherit the land of Israel forever. He needs to be raised from the unconscious state of death.

When the Lord Jesus returns to raise Abraham from death, will you be there with him to inherit those promises made so long ago?

Cynthia Miles

Happy Anniversary

There is a time coming when people from all nations will join together in Jerusalem to celebrate the greatest event of all time. It will mean a reunion of people from near and far, from the present and the past. The host of that great celebration will be the One who has made it all possible, the risen and glorious Lord Jesus Christ who is to return from heaven to set up God's kingdom on earth.

City of the King

Jerusalem's future is bound up with the prospect of the return of Jesus. As several articles in this special issue have explained, there are some dark and difficult days ahead for the city and the people who live there, Jew and Arab. A latter-day invasion of the city is foretold in detail and the displacement of much of the Jewish population. But in their great hour of need, and their renewed pleas for God to help them, He will do just that.

Jesus will return. Long ago he described Jerusalem as *"the city of the great King"* (Matthew 5:35) and the prophet Isaiah made it clear that the One who will be that King must first be born of a virgin (see Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6,7).

A king is coming who will reign in righteousness (Isaiah 32:1) and who will establish justice and judgement in the earth (9:7). In his days peace and prosperity will flourish because people will again know God, will learn to

worship Him, and will want to walk in His ways (Isaiah 2:1-5).

Anniversary Celebrations

This is how the prophet describes the celebrations that will be enjoyed in those days, when a King rules again in Jerusalem:

"In this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And he will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. And it will be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and he will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest" (Isaiah 25:6-10).

We do not know when these celebrations will take place. Nobody on earth knows exactly when it will happen. But we do know that an invitation is issued, in the Bible, to people of all nations. If you want to be there, rejoicing with the King, make sure that the hope that was first given to Israel is the hope you too hold – the hope of a Saviour who can rescue you from all your problems and set your feet firmly on the Way of Life.



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God's Chosen

We can become God's Chosen People, with the same promises and enjoying the same fatherly care that God bestowed on Abraham and his descendants. *"There is neither Jew nor Greek..."*



Paul wrote to the Galatians *"... for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Gal 3:28,29). As with Israel, so with Gentiles, the call is limited to individual response.

David M Pearce

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