

# **Establishing God's Kingdom on Earth**

The Bible states that when Jesus returns to the earth as God's king, he will make Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom. However, this will require great changes both there and worldwide. Progressively, Jesus will rid the earth of all misrule, crime, sin, suffering, and unbelief.

## **Jerusalem at the Centre**

The 'saalem' in 'Jerusalem' means 'peace', but we know it seems far from that today: Jews and Palestinians fight over it, each side supported by other nations. About 2,400 years ago the Old Testament foretold this situation and said that it would be one of the signs that Messiah (Christ) would soon be back on earth. Zechariah 12:2-3 is a clear example, where God says:

*Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that 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.*

Every time we see or hear world leaders arguing about Jerusalem, it is further proof that the Bible really is God's message to us. Other prophecies revealed that, although the Jews would return to Israel, they would not

be a godly nation at that time. This also is true today. Israel as a nation is relatively secular, and much more importantly, only a small minority accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah.



## **Dramatic Change in Israel**

A great invasion will destroy the state of Israel as it exists now, as we are shown in Ezekiel 38 and Zechariah 13-14. Only one third of the nation will survive, but their experiences will bring them to conversion and repentance.

*"And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the Lord, "that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is my people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God' "* (Zechariah 13:8-9).

Specifically, the survivors will accept Jesus as God's Prophet, Messiah, and

Son, a change of heart described in Zechariah 12:10–12. This will be a big change from the self-confidence that we see in modern Israel.

The prophet Ezekiel was shown a remarkable preview of what comes later, with God's presence coming to rest on the earth in the temple which Ezekiel saw in a most detailed vision:

*The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever" (Ezekiel 43:5–7).*

## **A Worldwide Kingdom**

These changes in Jerusalem and Israel are important because this new order will be applied globally. The government that the Lord Jesus and his immortal saints will set up in the land of Israel will be the centre and nucleus of the worldwide Kingdom of God. Daniel describes how this Kingdom will replace the existing kingdoms:

*And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44).*

The standards and laws of God will be extended across the world:

*Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit (Isaiah 27:6).*

David prophesies that this will happen, and the wonderful state in which Jesus' subjects will live:

*Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before him, and his enemies will lick the dust ... Yes, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in his sight (Psalm 72:9–14).*



Jesus will be helped by his resurrected and immortal people, and he will have at his disposal all the power of Almighty God. He will bring into being the just, effective, sound and honest government for which well-meaning men and women have always longed. The standards of this future world order will be God's standards, and all men and women will learn to honour Him. The result of this will be a world of peace and prosperity, of justice and godly behaviour: a perfect place to live.

**John Woodall**