

# Israel's Amazing Story

## Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy

Posted on Sep 30, 2004

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*Estimated reading time: 11 minutes*

As American writer Saul Bellow asked, "What is it that led the Jews to place themselves, after the greatest disaster in their history [the Holocaust], in a danger zone?" The surprising truth is that Jewish rule over Jerusalem is an essential element of end-time biblical prophecy!

**E**ver since the Roman siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the ultimate loss of the city for nearly two millennia beginning in A.D. 135, many generations of the Jewish people have held a deep desire to return to the Holy Land. Their almost universal cry has been, "Next year in Jerusalem!"

In the earliest books of the Bible, God had decreed that the 12 tribes of Israel should inherit the Promised Land, also called the Holy Land. The book of Joshua and the first chapter of Judges record how Israel, with God's help, conquered the area of ancient Canaan, which is primarily the land known as Israel today.

**A golden age—then trouble**

Then, some 3,000 years ago, the monarchy of the Jewish king David and his son Solomon led Israel to the fullest expansion of the Promised Land. During that golden age, the people's condition was aptly summed up in utopian terms: "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba [cities representing the northern and southern extent of ancient Israel], all the days of Solomon" (**1 Kings 4:25**).

Primarily because of blatant idolatry, these favorable conditions did not continue long. After Solomon's death, the kingdom of Israel was divided into two separate countries followed by national captivity of the northern 10 tribes some 200 years later. (The resulting fate of the northern 10 tribes has intrigued historians for centuries. To learn more about them, and their own amazing fulfillment of biblical prophecy, request our free booklet **The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy**.)

The two southern tribes (making up the kingdom of Judah, its people known as the Jews) followed their northern cousins in rejecting God and turning to idolatry. They soon met the same fate. The kingdom of Judah was invaded and its citizens deported 136 years after the demise of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Eventually a small percentage of Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem about 500 years before the time of Christ. A second temple was built—

only to be destroyed by Titus' Roman legions in A.D. 70, helping precipitate another diaspora or dispersion of the Jewish people to other nations.

Nonetheless, massive depopulation was not immediate and the Jews remaining in Jerusalem again revolted against the Romans in A.D. 132-135, unsuccessfully, leading to another scattering. Nevertheless, a small number of Jews remained in parts of the Holy Land throughout the intervening centuries.

### **Jewry in Palestine before statehood**

By the mid-19th century the Jewish population had reached 10,000, including 8,000 in Jerusalem alone. Many were immigrants from Poland and Lithuania. Russian emigration became more pronounced between 1882 and 1903 with 25,000 Jews entering Palestine. In fact, the Jewish population of Jerusalem alone had reached 25,000 by 1889, compared with 14,000 Arabs.

Still, the Jews remained a minority in the Holy Land by the turn of the century. Their population, however, continued to rise as time went by. For instance, between 1933 and 1936 the Jewish presence in the Holy Land increased from about 235,000 to nearly 385,000.

Determined Arab resistance began to slow this increase in 1937, but all

future setbacks proved temporary. In the aftermath of World War II, between late summer of 1945 and late spring of 1948, perhaps 40,000 Jews entered Palestine secretly. The first half of 1946 also saw a further 10,000 Jewish immigrants enter the Holy Land by boat.

By the time statehood finally arrived on May 14, 1948, the Jewish population of the Holy Land had reached about 700,000. (We mention a smattering of these statistics because of a general false impression that there were very few Jews in Palestine before statehood.)

In spite of periodic Arab and later British efforts to limit Jewish immigration, the flow of people to the Holy Land continued off and on—especially during the first half of the 20th century.

David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, understood the importance of having a considerable Jewish presence in the Holy Land when statehood might finally be achieved.

In early 1935, shortly before World War II broke out, Ben-Gurion observed with exceptional prophetic insight: "The disaster which has befallen German Jews is not limited to Germany alone. Hitler's regime places the entire Jewish people in danger . . . [It] cannot long survive without a war of revenge against France, Poland, Czechoslovakia . . . and against Soviet Russia . . . Who knows; perhaps only four or five years, if not less, stand between us and that awful day . . ."

"In this period we must double our numbers [in the Holy Land], for the size of the Jewish population on that day may determine our fate at the post-war settlement" (quoted by Noah Lucas, *Modern History of Israel*, 1975, p. 148, emphasis added throughout article). The necessary groundwork had been laid years in advance of statehood for a more massive immigration in decades to follow.

## **Theodor Herzl, Zionist pioneer**

Theodor Herzl, Paris correspondent for a prominent Viennese newspaper in the late 1800s, originally believed that Jews should solve their dilemmas by gradual assimilation into the gentile world.

Despite his Jewish roots, in 1892 Herzl had even denied the presence of French anti-Semitism, stating that "the French people remain strangers to, and without understanding of, anti-Semitism" (quoted by Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege*, 1986, p. 65).

Covering the Paris trial of the French military officer Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew, in 1894 radically altered Herzl's perspective. Dreyfus' trumped-up conviction and subsequent harsh imprisonment based on false evidence was a farce. But what shocked Herzl most was the ugly anti-Semitism displayed by the attendant crowds.

He quickly grasped the seriousness of the situation and immediately

began thinking in terms of getting the Jews out of Europe, the sooner the better. (Incidentally, French anti-Semitism is back in the news with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon alleging "the spread of the wildest anti-Semitism in France," attributing it to France's growing Muslim population.)

Commented O'Brien: "The Zionists had been right about the thing that mattered most. *They had sensed that the Jews of Europe were in deadly danger . . .* Herzl, when Hitler was only six, had already sensed the need for a mass exodus of European Jews" (p. 315).

Theodor Herzl formed the World Zionist Organization with a view to establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Noted British historian Martin Gilbert has written of Herzl: "On 3 September 1897 he wrote in his diary, 'Were I to sum up the Basle Congress [in Switzerland] in a word . . . it would be this: *At Basle I founded the Jewish State*. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in fifty, everyone will know it" (*Israel: A History*, 1998, p. 15).

In fact, it took just over 50. Zionist Jews like Herzl and Chaim Weizmann, a chemist from Russia residing in Manchester, were also instrumental in saving a remnant of European Jews from the future Holocaust. Partially due to their efforts, "there were more than 700,000 Jews in Israel when the New State was declared" (*The Siege*, p. 315).

## The crucial Balfour Declaration

Herzl died at only 44 and it was left for Weizmann to carry the baton forward. This he did effectively for several decades right up to statehood in 1948. Chaim Weizmann was instrumental in Zionist negotiations with the British government in the process of formulating the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

In brief this benchmark document stated: "His Majesty's Government view with favour *the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people*, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine . . ." (Nov. 2, 1917).

In early December of 1917, the British army in Palestine expelled Turkish forces from Jerusalem, just over a month after Balfour. Theoretically, the way was now open for the British declaration to be implemented in constructing a Jewish national home, paving the way for the Jews to leave continental Europe. Some little progress was made towards these two major goals, although accompanied by many frustrating and supremely costly setbacks as well.

Although 250,000 German Jews managed to find refuge in other nations, those who emigrated to other places in continental Europe

before World War II (1939-1945) soon found themselves back in Nazi hands, as David Ben-Gurion had foreseen in early 1935. Hitler's armies had overrun Europe. Many Jews were deported to Auschwitz and other death camps.

Even though the British record is far from perfect during this troubled era, prior to the war the nation did receive 40,000 German and Austrian Jews. It also made provision for 10,000 Jewish children to escape to Britain from Hitler's clutches.

### **A milestone in world history**

After World War II, events moved much faster on the path to Jewish statehood. World outrage over the Holocaust sped things up considerably. Although Britain's Labour government was fudging on the Balfour Declaration, U.S. President Harry Truman courageously stood in the gap and made possible the decisive final steps in the founding of the state of Israel.

Chaim Weizmann played a major role in convincing the American president. Truman later said of Weizmann in his autobiography: "He had known many disappointments and grown patient and wise in them" (*Years of Trial and Hope*, 1965).

Once truly convinced, President Truman outsmarted the opposition



and, behind the scenes, was largely responsible for a positive United Nations vote on behalf of Israel.

Much has been written about the near-miraculous nature of the founding, against all odds, of the modern state of Israel.

For instance, Sir Martin Gilbert observed: "Herzl's call for Jewish statehood seemed too grandiose, too fraught with the complications of local Turkish and Arab opposition, too ambitious with regard to the accepted place of the Jew in the world, to be more than an extraordinary dream, an eccentricity" (*Israel: A History*, p. 13).

In truth, the Jews achieved a modern nation-state in the Holy Land (against a fierce and determined opposition—including at times some very influential Jews) *simply because God had foretold that it would occur*. A Jewish state in the Holy Land had to exist so that certain biblical prophecies could be fulfilled.

### **The unrealized biblical dimension**

Let's understand that the survival of the religion and culture of this ancient biblical people defies the odds. The fact that the Jews were not assimilated into the nations to any significant degree is unprecedented.

Now, since the 1967 Six-Day War, the Jewish people are again in

possession of Jerusalem. On the western side of the Temple Mount, at the retaining wall for the vast platform Herod the Great constructed to support the temple of God in Jesus' day (now known as the Western or Wailing Wall), many Jews still cry and bemoan the ancient loss of the temple and pray earnestly for its restoration.

In His final major prophecy before His crucifixion, Jesus Christ described conditions wherein the Jews would again control Jerusalem. He said that the "holy place" would be desecrated, stating: "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . . then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" ([Matthew 24:15-16](#)).

What did the prophet Daniel say about this "abomination of desolation"? He writes that "the daily sacrifice [will be] taken away, and the abomination of desolation [will be] set up" ([Daniel 12:11](#)).

A preliminary fulfillment of this prophecy took place in 167 B.C. when the Syrian ruler Antiochus IV (Antiochus Epiphanes) invaded Judah, erected an idolatrous statue at the temple and sacrificed pigs on the temple altar.

Yet Jesus Christ's prophecy makes it clear that someone or something else will defile the holy place in Jerusalem shortly before His return.

For these prophecies to be fulfilled, it appears that sacrifices will be reinstated in some form. **Daniel 12:9-13** describes the abomination of desolation as occurring at "the time of the end" in conjunction with the cutting off of sacrifices. Apparently the Jews will again initiate sacrifices at or near Jerusalem; armies again will surround Jerusalem, and the sacrifices will be halted.

Israel needs a third Jewish temple or some designated "holy place" for this to happen. Before its establishment as a state in 1948, this seemed impossible. Many observers have noted the overwhelming odds against Israeli statehood. Yet it happened!

Furthermore, even after the fledgling nation of Israel was established, it appeared that its inhabitants would never control Jerusalem because the Arab nations had pledged to prevent it. Yet during the Six-Day War of 1967 Israel took full possession of its ancient capital. Still the Temple Mount or holy place was left under Arab supervision, making any building of a temple or setting up of a "holy place" yet future. Christians should look to God to work out events so that His will may be fulfilled.

The state of Israel has a substantial role to play in the realization of key biblical prophecies. Watch Jerusalem! *GN*

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(1937-2014)

John died on March 8, 2014, in Oxford, England, four days after suffering cardiac arrest while returning home from a press event in London. John was 77 and still going strong.

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## Comments

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Z28500 (<https://www.ucg.org/user/z28500>) 5 years ago

Boy, You just can't help but like John Schroeder

What a great Article!

I happen to be 100% Pro-Israel

Genesis 12:3

And I will bless them that bless thee,

and curse him that curseth thee:

and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

All those guys bashing Israel

Big Boo Boo

Happy Resurrection Day!

Christ Is Risen!

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