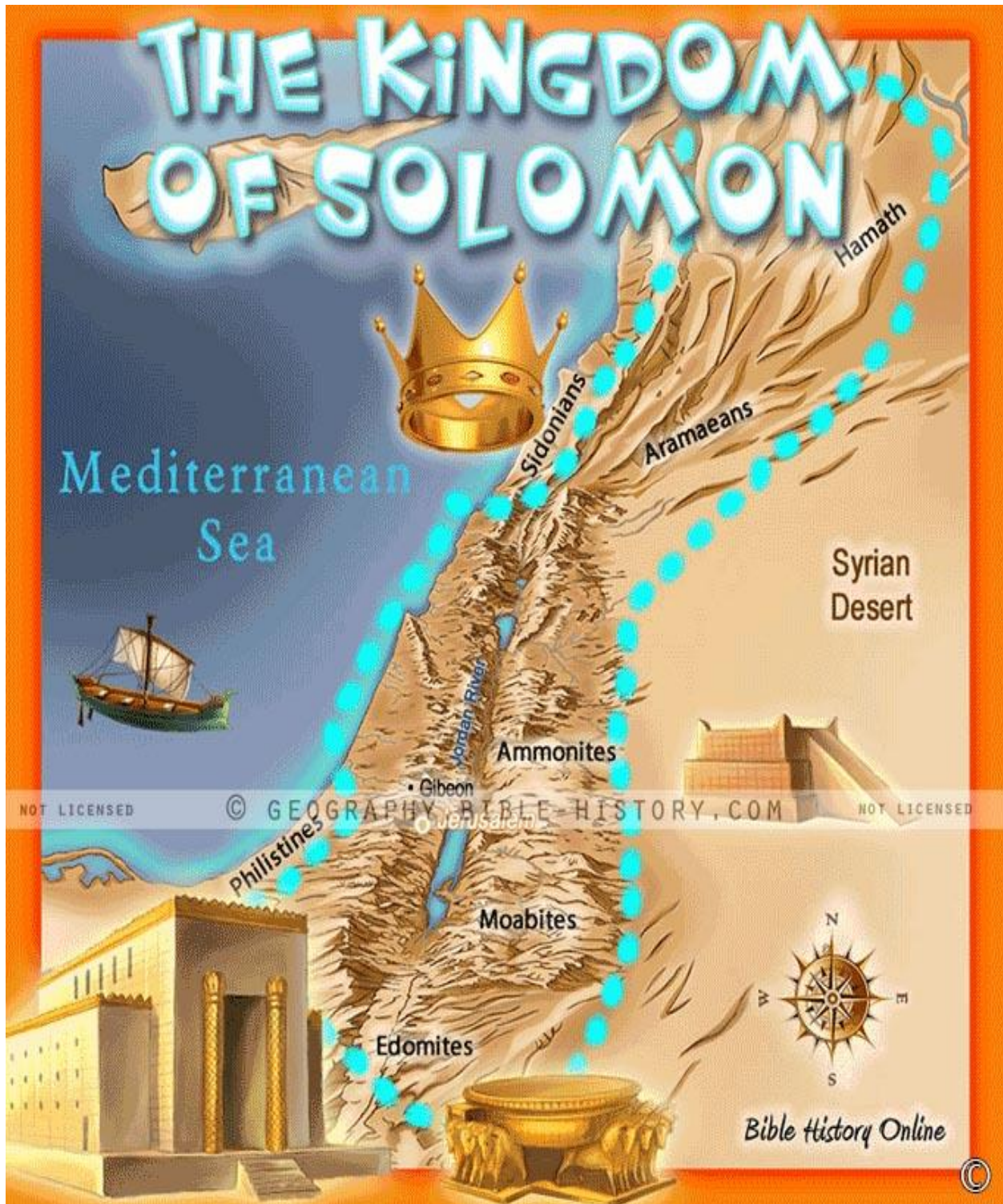


Modern Israel Not In The Bible

by **David Lee Burris**



THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND BIBLICAL PROPHECY

FROM THE *FCC LECTURE SERIES*

In 70 A.D. Titus, the Roman general, ordered both the city of Jerusalem and its temple destroyed. The Jews who remained in the land of Canaan continued to revolt against the Roman government. In 135 A.D., Hadrian destroyed the land and drove out the Jews, scattering them through the world. “In fact, there is not one country in the world where Jews actually are not found” (Pache, p. 307).

From 135 A.D. until the last century, there has not existed a “nation” of Israel. During the eighth century the Mohammedan conquest took possession of the land. About the last half of the tenth century the Frankish crusaders established themselves in the land only to be defeated by Saladin in 1187. The Ottoman Turks conquered the land in 1517 and it remained under their control until their defeat in World War I. At the point of the British occupation of Palestine, a dramatic event in the history of the Jewish people was about to take place.

During the period from 1827 to 1873, the Jewish population of Jerusalem had grown from a scanty 1,500 to 10,000 which was a majority of the population for the first time in almost eighteen hundred years. In 1837, a wealthy Jewish banker from England, Sir Moses Montefiore, visited Palestine. His concern for the Jews of Palestine would lead to the establishment of the Zionist movement. He was able only to buy enough land near Safad in upper Galilee to settle fifty-four families. The French Rothchilds undertook a similiar project near the end of the century. Both efforts were small and faced the resentment from the Arabs.

Theodor Herzl wrote in German, the publication entitled, “Jewish State,” in the Winter of 1895. It was a reaction to the strong rise of anti-Semitism and the Dreyfus affair. During the next year, his publication was translated into English, French and Hebrew.

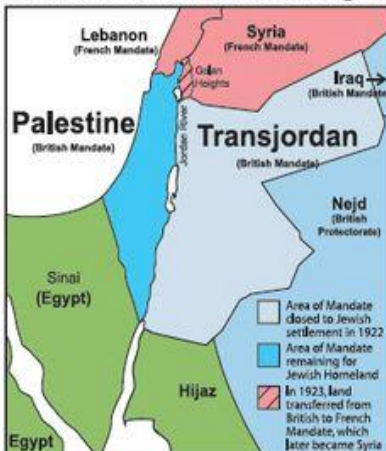
Israel Reborn

The League of Nations recognized the Jews' deep ties to their historic homeland, admired the thriving community they had been revitalizing since the 1880s and established the Palestine Mandate for a Jewish homeland.

This is modern Israel's story in maps.



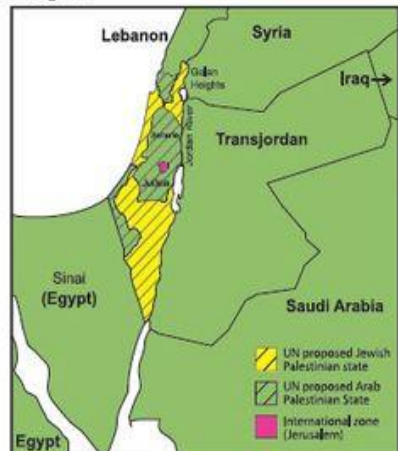
1917-1922 In the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Britain endorsed "Zionist aspirations" to reestablish their homeland in Palestine and promised to "facilitate" the effort.¹ In 1920, international peace negotiators incorporated the Balfour Declaration in the Treaty of Sevres and called for a Mandate in Palestine.² In 1922, the League of Nations instructed the British Mandate authorities to "facilitate" Jewish immigration and settlement of Palestine.³ Many European and Arab leaders hoped Jews would revive this small, impoverished, thinly populated region.



1922-1923 In 1922, in response to Arab pressure, Britain violated the Mandate and cut off 77 percent of Palestine, granted it exclusively to the Hashemites and forbade Jewish settlement in what became Jordan. Today, over 70 percent of Jordanians are Palestinian Arabs.

In 1923, Britain again violated the Mandate and gave the Golan Heights to the French Mandate which later became Syria.

During the Mandate, the term Palestinian described both Jewish and Arab residents of Palestine. Jews have been the majority in Jerusalem since the late 1860s.



1947-1948 UN Resolution 181 recommended partitioning the remaining Palestine Mandate between Arabs and Jews. The Jewish portion had a Jewish majority. Jewish leaders accepted it even though their portion comprised only 13 percent of the original Mandate and 60 percent of it was the arid Negev Desert. Arab leaders rejected the offer to create another Arab state in the Mandate and instead went to war to seize the whole area and eliminate Israel.



1949-1967 When the 1948 War ended, Jordan annexed the area it renamed the "West Bank," while Egypt occupied Gaza. Both areas remained unallocated portions of the former British Mandate.

With these ceasefire borders, Israel was only nine miles wide at its center, leaving its population centers vulnerable to military and terrorist attacks. In the 1950s and 1960s, Arabs opposed to Israel's existence repeatedly launched attacks from Syria, the West Bank and Gaza.



1967-1979 In 1967, when Israel's neighbors again mobilized for a full-scale invasion and blocked her waterways, Israel preempted them in a defensive war. In six days of fighting, Israel captured strategically vital buffer zones: the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, and the West Bank.

Israel immediately offered to negotiate with Jordan, Syria and Egypt and return land for peace. Arab governments refused to talk or recognize Israel. In 1973, Syria and Egypt launched a surprise attack to destroy Israel on Yom Kippur and were again defeated.



1979-2008 Hoping to foster peace, Israel relinquished the entire Sinai Peninsula, which it had captured in 1967, to Egypt in the 1979 Camp David Peace Accords. In 1994 Israel and Jordan signed a Peace Treaty.

Using a "land for peace" model, Israel and Palestinians tried to negotiate for a possible future Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. By the time Arafat began the violent Second Intifada in 2000, 98 percent of Palestinians lived under an autonomous Palestinian government.

Seeing it had no peace partner and hoping for progress, Israel withdrew unilaterally from Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza and parts of the West Bank in 2005. Nonetheless, following these withdrawals, Israel was continuously attacked by Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank and by Hezbollah from Lebanon.

¹Balfour Declaration, November 17, 1917. ²Treaty of Sevres, Section VII, Article 94, August 10, 1920. ³Council of the League of Nations, The Palestine Mandate, Article 6, July 24, 1922.

The theories were laid and the proposition made for the establishment of a Jewish state which would answer the need to end anti-Semitism and realize the age-old dream of every Jew to return to the Holy Land that it might be again the cultural and spiritual center of Judaism. Thus Herzl became the father of the modern Zionist movement—“to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.”

By 1910, the population of Jews in Jerusalem had grown to 50,000 of the 68,000 inhabitants. At the outbreak of World War I, the population of Jews had grown to 80,000. The idea of a national homeland for the Jews was no longer an idea in the mind of a Jew named Herzl, but it was a burning, growing idea in the minds of many Jews throughout the world.

On November 2, 1917 the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur J. Balfour made a declaration indicating the British government favored the establishment of a national Jewish homeland in Palestine. Shortly after World War I, the League of Nations entrusted Palestine with a mandate to the British government. During the next two decades thousands of Jews emigrated into the country. Yet the British government tried to maintain a friendly relationship with the Arab nation.

By the year 1939, the Jewish population had grown to 400,000 and severe restrictions were placed on future immigration. The British mandate forces were unable to maintain peace in Jerusalem which was the scene of many bloody riots. The British government recognized its failure to maintain a balance between the Arab and Jewish population.

After the Second World War, the British government served notice to the newly formed United Nations that they intended to “pull out” of the country.

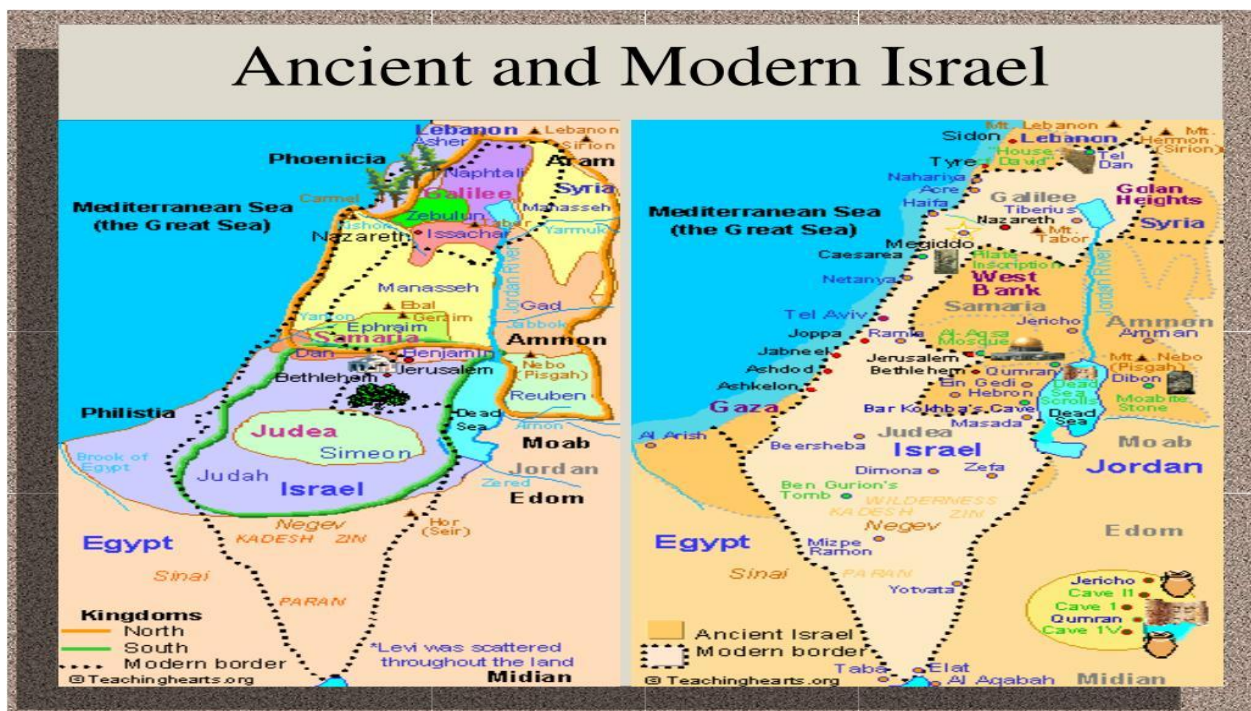
Under the direction of the General Assembly of the United Nations, a partition of the country based upon the majority of population was assigned to the two rival groups. This would establish both an Arab state and a Jewish state. The British government announced that the mandate forces would leave the country on May 15, 1948.

On May 15, 1948, before the British withdrew control, the Jewish National Council met in Tel Aviv. Only eight hours before the mandate ended, David Ben-Gurion announced the establishment of Eretz Israel with the following partial statement:

“On the 29th of November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

“Accordingly, we, members of the People’s Council, Representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist movement, we here assembled on the day of the termination of the British mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right. And on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel to be known as the State of Israel.”

Thus, on May 15, 1948, the State of Israel had become a reality and Zionism had reached its great objective. Although war broke out that day between the Arab nations and the State of Israel, a general armistice was reached and Israel was admitted as a member of the United Nations.



Since the establishment of the State of Israel, one central question has been raised in the study of eschatology. Eschatology is the study of the doctrine of last things and the theology of Biblical prophecy raised the question: Is there a Biblical basis for the restoration of Israel as a nation? There have been three general views of Israel's future as a nation. They are as follows: (1) Some have denied that Israel exists today and therefore has no future as a nation (cf. Albertus Pieters', *The Seed of Abraham*). Pieters denies the existence of Israel either in a race or national concept. (2) Another view is that Israel continues as a race but not as a nation. (cf. William Hendriksen, *And So All Israel Shall Be Saved*). (3) The last view is that Israel has a continuity as a race and a future as a nation in the Millennial Kingdom. There are many variations to these three views.

There are only two basic systems of interpretation. Premillennialism is the doctrine or belief that the millennium is to be introduced by the personal, visible return of Jesus Christ to the earth where he will reign for a thousand years. The primary issue is the twofold question of whether the covenant of God with Abraham involves the permanent existence of Israel as a nation and as a race and, second, the fulfillment of the promises that the land could be an everlasting possession.

The covenant of God with Abraham is recorded in Gen. 12:1–3 and four times it is renewed and amplified as stated in Gen. 13:14–17; 15:1–7; and 17:1–8; and 22:16–18. There are three essential promises recorded in these passages. First are the personal promises to Abraham that God would make his name great and cause Abraham to be the “father of a multitude.” The promise of the nation is described as a multitude of seed compared to the dust of the earth, the stars of the heavens, and the sand of the seashore, even including kings (13:16; 15:5; 17:6 and 22:17). Second, the promises to Abraham and the nations included the possession of the land (12:7). The promise is reiterated at Bethel (13:14) and the dimensions of the land are given in detail (15:18–21). Premillennialists would also emphasize the Abrahamic covenant as an “everlasting covenant” and the possession of the land by the seed of Abraham as an “eternal possession” (Genesis 17:7–9).

Third, the covenant of God with Abraham promises blessings upon “all the families of the earth” (Gen. 12:3). The seed of Abraham would be the channel of blessing that would extend to all the earth.

The premillennialist raises two questions regarding the Abrahamic covenant: 1. Are these promises to be taken as they are literally stated, or are they to be interpreted in a figurative sense? 2. Are these promises given to Abraham unconditionally or are they contingent upon subsequent obedience on the part of Abraham and his seed? Premillennialists hold that the Abrahamic covenant was hinged upon only one condition, namely, the obedience of Abraham in leaving Ur of Chaldees and going to the land of promise (Gen. 22:18; 26:5). The one condition having been met, no further conditions were laid upon him. “The main issue is whether the complete fulfillment of the covenant is certain in spite of human failure” (Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*)

The premillennial view also suggests a threefold reference to the seed of Abraham. First, there is the natural lineage or physical descendants. Second, there is the spiritual lineage within the natural. And third, there is the spiritual seed of Abraham who are not natural descendants or Israelites. Relating to the Abrahamic covenant, the question of interpretation hinges on the expression “seed of Abraham.”

In general, Premillennialists hold that the promises made to Abraham should be fulfilled by Abraham. Promises made to the seed of Abraham shall be fulfilled by his physical descendants and promises made to “all the families of the earth” will be fulfilled by Gentiles. Thus, according to the Premillennialist, the Abrahamic covenant includes literal promises to Abraham personally, promises to the physical descendants as a nation and promises of blessing through Israel to the Gentiles.

The next primary question is whether the Abrahamic covenant promised that God would make a great nation out of the seed of Abraham which will continue merely as a race without a future; or will the nation be restored as a political government and be a part of the millennial kingdom?

All conservative interpreters recognize that the scripture shows that Abraham had a physical seed (Gen. 12:2). God also made a choice between the natural seed of Abraham. God promised the birth of Isaac and said “I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him” (Gen. 17:19). This promise was fulfilled when Sarah gave birth to Isaac (21:3). God said to Abraham “for in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (21:12). God confirmed with Isaac the promise of a nation by saying, “... and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice” (Gen. 26:2–5). The question is concerning the perpetuity of Israel as a nation. According to Gen. 17:7–8, the covenant with Abraham is declared to be an everlasting covenant and the promise of the land as an everlasting possession. Dr. John Walvoord, in his *“Israel in Prophecy,”* said:

“It would be of course impossible for a covenant to be everlasting and a possession of the land to be everlasting unless the nation also continued forever. The Hebrew expression for “everlasting” is *olam* meaning “in perpetuity.” While it might not quite be the equivalent of the infinite term “everlasting;” it would certainly mean continuance as long as this present earth should last.”

Thus, the argument is that the nature of the covenant promised the continuance of Israel as a nation. One of the main features of the promise to Abraham is the promise of possession of “the land.” Four times Abraham is promised the land (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8). The Premillennialist considers the promises as unconditional as far as the ultimate fulfillment is concerned and they contend that Israel still has a bona fide ground for future possession of the promised land. The principal question is whether Israel has ever possessed all the land promised to her.

It is generally conceded that the promise regarding the seed of Abraham becoming a multitude as “the stars of heaven” and “the sand of the seashore” was already fulfilled by the days of David and Solomon (cf. Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 1 Kgs. 4:20; 1 Chron. 27:23; 2 Chron. 1:9).

The Premillennialist argues that a partial fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant demands a literal fulfillment of the rest.

A careful examination of the scriptures reflects the terms of the land promise. It involved (1) the possession of the land, (2) occupying the land, (3) and a permanent possession of the land (cf. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, p. 79). It is claimed by the Premillennialist that even during the reign of David and Solomon, (1) Israel did not *possess all* the promised land. (2) Israel did not *occupy* all the land but was paid a tribute (cf. 1 Kings 4:21). (3) And all agree that Israel's possession was not *permanent*. It is admitted that Israel possessed part of the land in Joshua's time and occupied the rest of the land in Solomon's time. But the issue is whether Israel will ever possess all the promised land as a permanent possession "as long as this present earth shall last" i.e. from a starting point until the end of the earth.

The history of the Jews is generally known down to the New Testament period, i. e. 1st century A.D. Three dispersions of Israel are recognized. First, there was the descent of Jacob and his family leaving the promised land and sojourning in Egypt for four hundred years (cf. Gen. 15:13–16). Second, there were the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities which removed the ten northern tribes of Israel and then the other tribes from the promised land. Third, there was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70–73 A.D., and final expulsion of the Jews in 135 A.D.

The question raised by the Premillennialist is whether Israel will be restored a third time to the promised land and receive it as an eternal possession. There have been three dispersions and two regatherings. Why not a third?

Hal Lindsey, in his popular book entitled *The Late Great Planet Earth*, has pointed out that many scholars denied the possibility concerning Biblical prophecies of the restoration of Israel as a nation in Palestine. For many, Lindsey says, this denial is based on the unscriptural attempts at "date setting" of the past. But the one thing "date setters" of the past failed to recognize was that Israel had to become a nation in the promised land.

Lindsey points out three important events were to happen before the period of the “Rapture or the second coming of Christ.” First, was the rebirth of the Jewish nation in Palestine. Second, the Jews would repossess the city of Jerusalem and especially the sacred sites. Third, the Jews would rebuild the temple and restore the ancient worship system. With the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948 and the possession of the old city of Jerusalem in 1967, one can easily see why there is an emotional appeal to the premillennial view. There remains only one more event to completely set the stage for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Two religious groups have indicated their expectancy of the return in the Fall of 1975. These are: Jehovah’s Witnesses in *Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God*, pp. 26–35 and Armstrong’s *Tomorrow’s World* magazine, May–June 1970, pp. 18-ff.

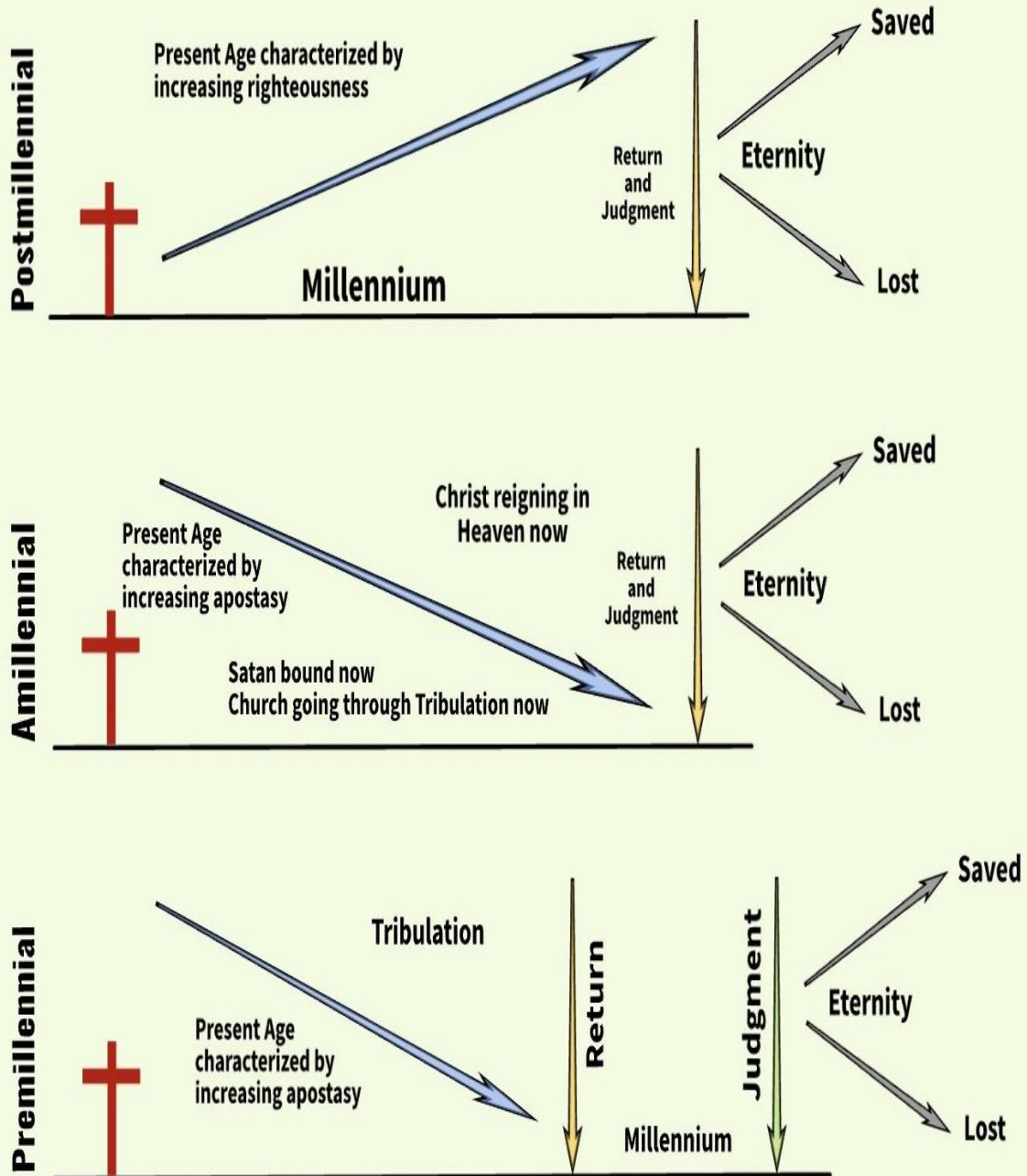
Lindsey even quotes a reporter’s interview with Israel Eldad, an Israeli historian. The question was, “Do you people intend to rebuild the temple?” Eldad replied “From the time that King David first conquered Jerusalem until Solomon built the temple, just one generation passed. So will it be with us.” One can easily feel the expectation and hope present in this Israeli Jew.

There remains one major problem hindering the rebuilding of the third temple. That problem is the Mosque of Omar, or properly called the Dome of the Rock, which is the second most holy place of the Moslem faith. It is believed to be built on the temple site. It was erected by Abd al-Malik in 691 A.D. and removed the hope of rebuilding the temple until recent times. The Jews have been for centuries visiting the Western or Wailing Wall of the temple to lament the passing of a glorious past and praying for restoration.

This gives one a brief survey of the premillennial view regarding the nation of Israel and the land promise of the Abrahamic covenant. The view holds that the covenant will be fulfilled literally without any conditions for its ultimate fulfillment. When the promise of complete and everlasting possession of the land is fulfilled, (and many Premillennialists believe it is in the process of completion now), the future millennial kingdom will come forth with its possessions in the eternal “new earth.”

Eschatological Schemes

Non-Dispensational



The second system of interpretation is Amillennialism. Generally, it is denied that Jesus Christ will return and literally reign upon the earth for a thousand years. The present age between the first and second comings is the fulfillment of the millennium. Eternity follows immediately after the second coming of Christ. Let us examine a few of the points from this view.

Relative to the question of the Abrahamic covenant, the promise of perpetuity to Israel as a nation is given in Genesis 17:7–8 and is based on the expression “everlasting.” The Hebrew word *olam* comes from a root meaning to hide, to conceal (cf. Gesenius’ *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 633 and Brown, Driver & Briggs, *Hebrew & English Lexicon*, p. 761). Essentially, the idea is a long hidden-time either in antiquity or the future of which the length is uncertain. The full indefinite notion of eternity without limitations is found only in passages which speak of the immortal nature and existence of God (Gen. 21:33; Isa. 40:28; Ps. 90:2; 103:17). All the other uses are limited by the nature of the item itself. “Eternity is endlessness and this idea is only qualified by the nature of the object to which it is applied or by the direct word of God” (Girdleston, p. 317). This is illustrated by, (1) the earth is not “moved forever” (Ps. 78:69; 104:4) and the “everlasting hills” (Gen. 49:26). (2) The “perpetual” covenant of the rainbow (Gen. 9:12–13). Both of the above are limited by the existence of the heavens and the earth (2 Pet. 3:10). (3) The Levitical priesthood was to be an “everlasting priesthood” by a “perpetual statute” (cf. Ex. 29:9; 40:15). The Levitical priesthood has been changed and thus the period of time has come to an end (Heb. 7:11–25, especially verse 12). (4) A bondservant was to be released after six years of service. But if he would not leave after his service, he was to be a “servant forever” (Deut. 15:17). Both of these illustrations show limitation less than the age of the earth. The Levitical priesthood lasted from Moses until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The priesthood’s genealogical records were destroyed. Therefore, we do not find priests in modern Judaism. Do you know a Jew who can prove of what tribe he is a member? The servant is limited by the lifetime of his master and / or his own life.

Thus, the idea or sense of this word means either a prolonged time (Young's Concordance gives "age-lasting," p. 311) or eternity. Only in the light of the context and other related passages can the length of time be determined in a passage of scripture. Thus, the conclusion that the Abrahamic covenant was to last until the end of the earth is questionable.

The next point regards the unconditional aspect of covenant.

The Amillennialist argument is based on the principle that the Abrahamic covenant is a conditional covenant, that its promises are dependent upon the obedience of men for fulfillment. Premillennialists state that the only condition was Abraham's obedience (Gen. 12:1, 5; 22:18; 26:5). But attention is drawn to the sign of the covenant required of Abraham in Genesis 17:9–14, the sign of circumcision. The sign involved the act of circumcision, on the eighth day after the birth, extended to children and slaves of the household. Note the last verse. If one was not circumcised, he was to be cut off from the people because he had broken "my covenant." In Numbers 14, the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and God told them that they would die in the wilderness. But Joshua circumcised the children of the wilderness "the second time." The reason given is because the Israelites coming out of Egyptian bondage "hearkened not unto the voice of Jehovah" (Josh. 5:2–6). Thus, Joshua circumcised the children of Israel before conquering the inhabitants of the promise land (cf. also Joshua 23:12–13).

The Amillennialist argues that Israel possessed all the land that was promised in the Abrahamic covenant. The question is simple: either the land promised has been given to the descendants of Abraham and Jacob or it has not. The scripture is plain in its description of the land area; that is, the land from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates (Gen. 15:18). Ten nations are listed in this passage as describing the inhabitants of the promise land. God had promised the gradual elimination of these nations (Exodus 23:30–31 and 3:17).

After the forty years of wilderness wandering, Moses again is commanded to charge Israel with the conquering of the land. He also gives a description of the land dimensions with the four extreme boundaries and cities (Numbers 34:1–12). He gives the charge to Israel to “go in and possess the land which the LORD swear unto your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed” (Deut. 1:8).

Under the leadership of Joshua, Israel went into the promised land and “took the WHOLE land, according to ALL that Jehovah spake unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their division by their tribes” (Joshua 11:23). Again, “So Jehovah gave unto Israel ALL the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they *possessed* it and *dwelt* therein”; “All came to pass” (Joshua 21:43, 45). It is obvious that the literal description of the land given unto Moses as described above fits the “larger land promise” better than just the land of Canaan. Yet Joshua is said to have taken the whole land, not just that which was promised to Moses but also unto the “fathers.” Not only did they conquer the nations (Joshua 24:11) but they POSSESSED and DWELT in the land “every man unto his inheritance” (Joshua 24:28). Thus, three times in the closing chapters of the Book of Joshua it is stated that the land promise made to Abraham had been fulfilled (cf. Joshua 21:43, 45; 23:14).

The inheritance of the land was also accompanied by a condition of obedience. They were warned against returning to the nations and intermarrying with them. “Jehovah your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap unto you, and a scourge in your side and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you” (Josh. 23:12–13). Because Israel did intermarry and cohabited with these nations; as God had commanded, Israel forfeited her right to retain full possession of the land (cf. Judges 2:20–23 and Deut. 8:19–20).



Estimated From District Governors & Tribute



During the reign of David, the armies of Israel were able to recover most of the land lost in their apostasy (2 Sam. 8:3). Under the reign of Solomon, the “larger land promise” was again recovered in full. The Book of Kings records: “and Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought *tribute* (Heb. *minchah* meaning present, offering) and served Solomon all the days of his life” (1 Kings 4:21).

“For he had *dominion* (Heb. *radah* meaning to tread, rule over or subdue) over all the region on this side of the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings on this side the River: and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:24–25).

The Biblical record is clear that Solomon *reigned* (Heb. *made alike*) over the entire area from the city Tiphseh on the western bank of the Euphrates to Gaza in the extreme south-west. Solomon had completely subdued, conquered all of these kingdoms. He had full dominion during his reign as is indicated by the strength of his presence, his army, cavalry and daily consumption of goods.

A third time the promise is confirmed as having been fulfilled by Nehemiah.

“Thou art Jehovah the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite, and the Gergashite, to give it unto his seed, *and hast performed thy words*; for thou art righteous” (Neh. 9:7–8).

The scriptures clearly state that God has faithfully fulfilled the promises given to Abraham regarding the land.

The last point of the discussion deals with the question of the restoration of Israel. Premillennialists appeal to many passages in the Prophets and apply these to the restoration of Israel literally to the promise land. Any conservative scholar applying conservative dates to the Prophets would recognize that most of these passages were referring to the restoration of Israel from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. One of the main prophets appealed to is Jeremiah. Let us examine passages referring to the foreign nations and Israel. The northern Kingdom of Israel has been in Assyrian captivity for about a hundred years. Jeremiah now declares judgment upon the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem. Five times Jeremiah declares destruction and desolation (4:27; 5:10, 18; 30:11; 46:28), but promises “yet I will not make a full end with you.” Twice Jeremiah prophesied the full end of the foreign nations (30:11; 46:28). But Israel would serve the kings of Babylon seventy years (25:11); afterward, God would cause a remnant to return to the promise land (29:10; 50:20).

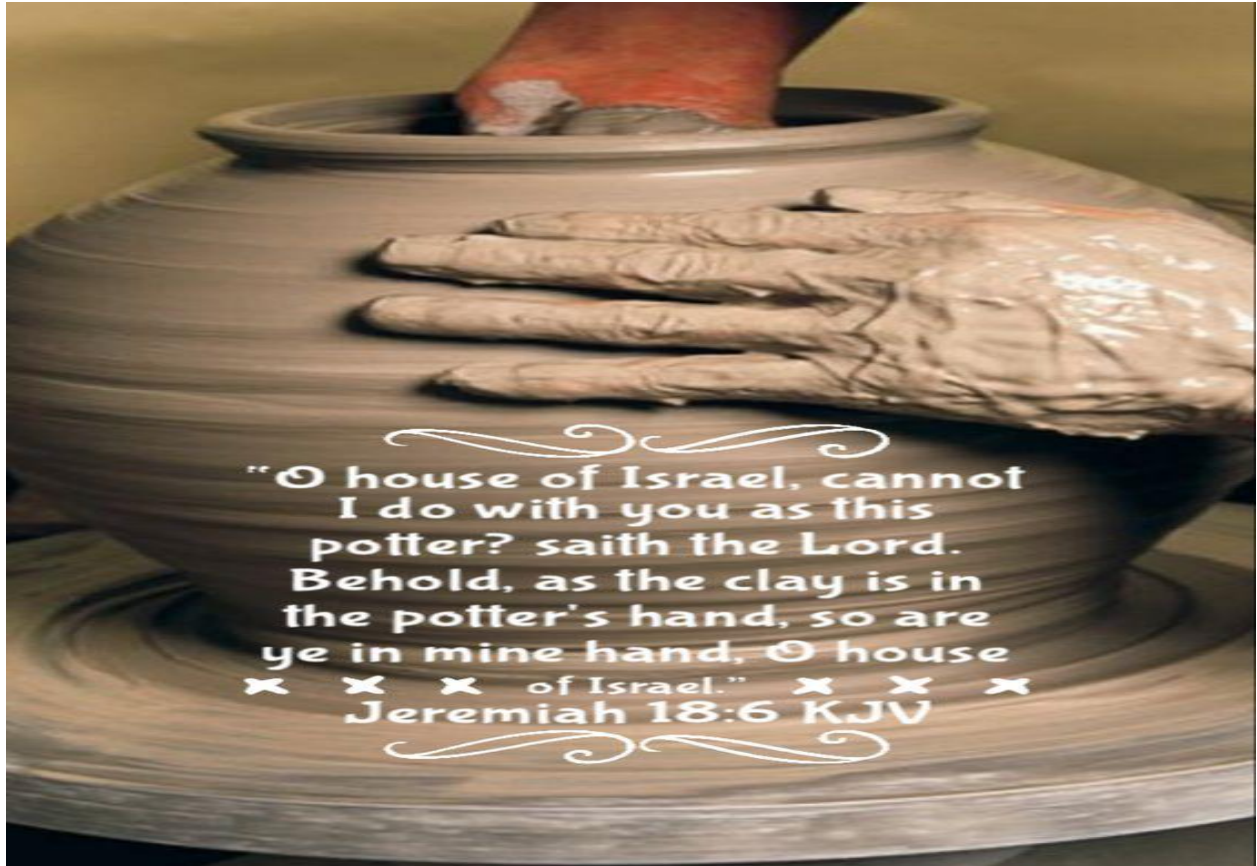
The prophet Jeremiah gives us two symbolic lessons from a potter’s vessel. In the eighteenth chapter, Jeremiah is sent by the Lord to a potter’s house that he might learn an object lesson from the work of the potter. The potter had a piece of clay on his wheel. He was making a vessel when the clay was marred. The potter simply started over again making another vessel “as seemed good to the potter to make it” (verse 4). The lesson is stated in the next verse. “O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?” Israel is the clay in the hands of Jehovah. The vessel becomes marred by sin, not by the imperfect skill of the potter. Jehovah has the right and the power to make another vessel which “seemed good” to Him. Only as long as the clay is workable, can it be shaped in the hands of the potter, and molded into a vessel of honor. “But they say, It is in vain, for we will walk after our own devices, and we will do every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart” (verse 12).

In the next chapter, Jeremiah is told to go buy a potter's earthen bottle. He is told to take the elders of the people and elders of the priests to the valley of Hinnon. There the message of judgment is revealed because of their wickedness and idolatry. The purpose for which Jeremiah was to purchase the earthen vessel is stated in verse 10, and the meaning of the broken vessel in verses 11–13. Jeremiah breaks the earthen vessel by throwing it into the rocky valley of Hinnon. It is broken into many pieces and scattered so as to make it impossible for someone to gather all the pieces and make the vessel whole again. The punishment is stated clearly: "Even so will I break this people and this city as one breaketh a potter's vessel, *that cannot be made whole again*" (emphasis mine).

The breaking of the vessel symbolizes the complete destruction of the Jewish people as a nation. Yes, one may go into the valley and find a few pieces of pottery and fit these together. But one cannot bring all the pieces together into a useful whole again.

What are the two different meanings of these two symbolic scenes? First, the potter's work symbolized the Divine process of formation by which God would mold the Israelites into a useful service. God formed a vessel of honor by molding and remolding until this Divine purpose was fulfilled. Second, the potter's vessel was no longer workable but was completely formed and baked. The vessel now symbolizes the destruction of a hardened Jewish people. They could not be reformed into a useful purpose and, therefore, must be destroyed. They were not annihilated as the other nations (4:27) but were broken beyond useful service. They are still a scattered living testimony of God's sovereign will and power.¹

¹ Tabor, H. (1974). [The State of Israel and Biblical Prophecy](#). In Bible Faculty of the Florida College (Ed.), *Biblical Authority: Its Meaning and Application* (pp. 112–125). Marion, IN: Cogdill Foundation Publications.



Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament

In [Jeremiah 19:6-13](#) the threatened punishment is given again at large, and that in two strophes or series of ideas, which explain the emblematical act with the pitcher. The first series, [Jeremiah 19:6-9](#), is introduced by [בְּקוֹתַי](#), which intimates the meaning of the pitcher; and the other, [Jeremiah 19:10-13](#), is bound up with the breaking of the pitcher. But both series are, [Jeremiah 19:6](#), opened by the mention of the locality of the act. As [Jeremiah 19:5](#) was but an expansion of [Jeremiah 7:31](#), so [Jeremiah 19:6](#) is a literal repetition of [Jeremiah 7:32](#). The valley of Benhinnom, with its places for abominable sacrifices ([תַּפְתַּי](#), see on [Jeremiah 7:32](#)), shall in the future be called Valley of Slaughter; i.e., at the judgment on Jerusalem it will be the place where the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah will be slain by the enemy. There God will make void ([בְּקוֹתַי](#), playing on [בְּקִבְבִּי](#)), i.e., bring to nothing; for what is poured out comes to nothing; cf. [Isaiah 19:3](#). There they shall fall by the sword in such numbers that their corpses shall be food for the beasts of prey (cf. [Jeremiah 7:33](#)), and the city of Jerusalem shall be frightfully ravaged ([Jeremiah 19:8](#), cf. [Jeremiah 18:16](#); [Jeremiah 25:9](#), etc.). [מַכְתָּהּ](#) (plural form of suffix), the wounds she has received. In [Jeremiah 19:9](#) is added yet another item to complete the awful picture, the terrible famine during the siege, partly taken from the words of [Deuteronomy 28:53](#), and [Leviticus 26:29](#). That this appalling misery did actually come about during the last siege by the Chaldeans, we learn from [Lamentations 4:10](#).

The second series, [Jeremiah 19:10-13](#), is introduced by the act of breaking the pitcher. This happens before the eyes of the elders who have accompanied Jeremiah thither: to them the explanatory word of the Lord is addressed. As the earthen pitcher, **so shall Jerusalem - people and city - be broken to pieces; and that irremediably. This is implied in: as one breaks a potter's vessel.**

The next clause: and in Tophet they shall bury connects very suitably with the idea of the **incurable breaking in sunder**. Because the breaking up of Jerusalem and its inhabitants shall be incurable, shall be like the breaking of a pitcher dashed into countless fragments, therefore there will be in Jerusalem lack of room to bury the dead, and the unclean places of Tophet will need to be used for that purpose. Thus (as had been said at [Jeremiah 19:11](#)) will I do unto this place and its inhabitants, [וּלְתַת](#), as Tophet; Josiah had turned all the place of Tophet in the valley of Benhinnom into an unclean region ([2 Kings 23:10](#)). All Jerusalem shall become an unclean place like Tophet. The houses of Jerusalem shall become unclean like the place Tophet, namely, all houses on whose roofs idolatry worship of the stars by sacrifice has been practised.

Modern Israel and The City of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is in the hands of Jews for the first time since 135 A.D. This date - 135 A.D. - may cause you to pause. Why 135 A.D.? Don't most writers consider 70 A.D., the time of Roman general Titus' destruction of Jerusalem, as the end of Jewish rule in Jerusalem? Yes, it seems most writers consider 70 A.D. as the last date of Jewish rule in Jerusalem. While this date fulfills the Lord's prophecy of Matthew 24:1-34, Mark 13:1-30, and Luke 21:5-32, it also begins the period described in Luke 21:24, which period ended in 135 A.D.

I find that a great many scholars, especially those among us, have overlooked the historical importance of the Bar Kokba (Kochba) rebellion of 132-135 B. C. Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the Jewish rebellion of 132-135 B.C. has come to light in a more vivid manner. Discoveries subsequent to 1947 have produced Jewish documents dating between two destructions of Jerusalem - 70 A.D. and 135 A.D.

The Roman emperor Hadrian prohibited circumcision and attached the penalty of death for violation. He planned to rebuild Jerusalem as a pagan 'center with pagan temples on the site of the Old Jewish temple, and to rename Jerusalem "Aelia Capitolina." Jews revolted as they had done previous to 70 A. D. The revolt (132 A. D.) was led by one Bar Kokba. Samaritans, heathen, and Jews joined in "a common attempt to throw off the Roman yoke."

The revolt met with great success. "As evidence of this it is reported that Tinnuis Rufus, governor of Judea, in one year gave up 50 fortified places together with 985 cities and villages to the rebels.

At the height of the revolt the rebellious Jews appear to have controlled all of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee." (20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Volume II, page 109). This revolt was too great in impact and in import to be overlooked by history and prophecy students.

In Jerusalem the Jews ruled once again. They issued coins, attempted to restore the old temple ritual, and even started construction on a new wall. But in 135 the Romans were able to end the [three year] rebellion and recapture Jerusalem. The site of the Temple was **plowed and sowed to salt** [as to Carthage], and the rubble of the ruins filled the hollows of the Tyropean valley which intersected the city from the north to south. Only the massive retaining wall of the Temple area erected by Herod the Great still remained, known today as the Wailing Wall . . ." (Merrill C. Tenny, New Testament Times, page 350).

The destruction of 135 A.D. was the sequel and finale of the destruction of 70 A. D. **Jesus prophesied the destruction of 70 A. D. but may well have projected toward the one of 135 A.D. in the statement: ". . .Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"** (Luke 21: 24). After 70 A.D. Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles until Bar Kokba took it for the Jews in 132 A. D. By this time the church had ceased to be predominantly Jewish and had become predominantly Gentile in membership. Thus the "times of the Gentiles" were fulfilled so far as the church is concerned - when the church became predominantly Gentile. As to Jerusalem, it ceased to be trodden down by the Gentiles.

On this passage and on a parallel in Romans 11:25 Foy Wallace, Jr. comments: "What then was the 'hardness in part' and 'the fullness of the Gentiles'? The hardness in part implies that later the hardening would be complete. The fullness of the Gentiles means conversion of the Gentiles. The gospel had first been preached to the Jews, and then the Gentiles were gathered into the church. Until the fullness of the Gentiles, Israel was hardened 'in part' then their hardening became complete" (God's Prophetic Word, pgs. 154). **By 132 A. D. the church was predominantly Gentile. There are but relatively few Jews who are Christians now, either in actuality or by profession. Gentiles are and have been in a state of "fullness" in the church, and in Christendom, since the second century.**

A number of other passages are misused by prophecy hounds who are excited over current political events in the Middle East. Some see in these events an approaching fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel. But a proper evaluation of the Biblical history of Israel's fall, exile, and restoration should dismiss this error.

In the Pentateuch, particularly in Deuteronomy, God warned Israel that continued possession of the land promised was to be conditioned on Israel's faithfulness to God. (Deuteronomy 4:25-27; 11: 17; 28:62-68). Deuteronomy 30:1-14 offers a restoration based on repentance and Nehemiah refers to it as having been fulfilled after Israel's Babylonian exile (Nehemiah 1:8-9).

In the conquest under Joshua Israel got all that was coming to them, and all that God promised the Hebrews exclusively through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was fulfilled (Joshua 21:43).

All God intended for Israel *ever* to have (Genesis 15: 18), Israel possessed in Old Testament times (I Kings 4:21; cf. 2 Samuel 8:3; 2 Chronicles 9:26). Nehemiah said God "has performed" what he promised to the descendants of Abraham (Nehemiah 9:7-8).

Some suggest that Deuteronomy 28:68 and Isaiah 11:11 might be involved soon in the current events in the Middle East. It is believed that Israel is destined to a "second exodus" out of Egypt - in mass. Whether Israel goes to Egypt as captives or conquerors is declared to be uncertain. Egypt has always been a place of refuge for those who needed, to flee from Palestine. As to the prophecies we have referred to, fulfillment is seen in the flight of Jews to Egypt in times of the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests (See Jeremiah 43-44).

Dummelows' Commentary on the Holy Bible points out in comment on Deuteronomy 28:68, "After the capture of Jerusalem the Roman general Titus sent a great many captives to the Egyptian mines." This illustrates my point. So, the fulfillment of the prophecies mentioned can be pinpointed to ancient events. **Any application of these prophecies to current events is pure speculation - and a "wresting" of scripture** (2 Peter 3:16).

The old saying "that history repeats itself" is the answer to the similarities of today's Middle East events. What happens over there is exciting because Bible places and Bible events are brought to light. Bible prophecy is remembered. But the real, the past fulfillment of Bible prophecy is often ignored.

Bible prophecy is a vast field of study and people who know but little about it are led into false conceptions about Middle East events by individuals who are obsessed with speculative interpretation. - TRUTH MAGAZINE, XII: 3, p. 1a; December 1967

God and the Modern Nation of Israel

What role does the nation of Israel play — past and present — in the plan of God? Does their illustrious past have any relevance today or in the future?

By Wayne Jackson | [Christian Courier](#)

Premillennialism is the notion that Jesus will return to this earth before he commences a one thousand-year reign on David's throne in Jerusalem.

Premillennialism, and its theological sister, dispensationalism, argue that in connection with the second coming of Christ, God intends to reestablish a Jewish kingdom in Palestine. The doctrine contends that there is yet a purpose to be served by **physical** Israel.

Dispensationalists allege that in the “seven-year tribulation period,” just prior to Christ's “millennial reign,” God will restore the Jews to Palestine, and a national conversion of the Hebrew people will occur. It is not claimed that every Jew will be won to Christ; however, such vast multitudes will be saved—numbers proportionate to Israel's tragic fall—that it is appropriate to refer to the phenomenon as a “national” conversion.

One writer describes this so-called “restoration” as follows:

The same prophets who predicted the world-wide exile and persecution of the Jews also predicted their restoration as a nation ... This restoration was to come about in the general time of the climactic seven-year countdown and its finale—the personal appearance of the Messiah to deliver the new state from destruction (Lindsey 1970, 37-38).

The foregoing theory is erroneous in that it repudiates numerous fundamental Bible truths. Further, it is exceedingly dangerous in that it offers a false hope to Jews. Walvoord, a millennialist, says that: “This hope of restoration has sustained the Jews through nineteen hundred years of struggle” (1974, 76). This “hope” has been grossly misplaced—thanks, in part to millennialists.

Israel in the Divine plan

A balanced study of the nation of Israel must include at least four elements: the selection, testing, rejection, and replacement of the Jewish people.

Selection

Almost two thousand years before the birth of Christ, Jehovah selected Abraham to be the founder of a new nation. It was declared that through him a seed would come by whom all peoples of the earth would be blessed (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 22:17-18).

Several centuries later, Abraham's offspring were delivered from an era of bondage in Egypt. They were given a special law and ritualistic system of worship which were designed to separate them from the other nations of the world (Ex. 19:5-6; cf. Eph. 2:14). All of this, of course, was in view of the coming Messiah (cf. Gal. 3:24-25; Heb. 9:1-10).

Testing

For some fifteen hundred years the Lord God attempted to cultivate the nation of Israel in preparation for the first advent of the Lord Jesus. It was a constant struggle to get the Hebrews to maintain a semblance of fidelity.

They grossly violated the law, frequently went after "strange gods," and they viciously persecuted the prophets Jehovah sent to call them to repentance. Jeremiah summarized the history of the Israelite people when he charged that they did "nothing" of all that Jehovah commanded them (Jer. 32:23).

Rejection

Because of the accelerating rebellion of the nation, consummated by the murder of Jesus Christ, God rejected the Hebrew people. Inexcusably, the Jews rejected their own Messiah; accordingly, Jehovah repudiated that nation and determined to scatter them as dust (Matthew 21:44). Thus, in the providence of God, the Roman armies came against Palestine in A.D. 70, and Judaism was destroyed (cf. Mt. 22:7; 24:1-34); the Jewish "vessel" was smashed, and it cannot be put back together (cf. Jer. 19:11).

According to Josephus, some 1.1 million Hebrews were slaughtered, and thousands were taken into slavery. All Jewish records were lost in that holocaust.

Today, there is not a single Jew who knows his tribal ancestry (McClintock and Strong 1969, 771). The physical nation of Israel is dead. The “Jews” that make up the State of Israel today (less than twenty-five percent of the world Jewish population) cannot legitimately be called a “nation.”

Replacement

As a consequence of Israel’s rejection of the Messiah, God has replaced physical Israel with a new nation, **spiritual Israel**. Today, the “Jew” is not one who is so physically, but one who is so inwardly, i.e., spiritually (Rom. 2:28-29).

In this age, those who submit to the gospel plan of redemption—whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 1:16)—become children of God, and thus are constituted as the true “seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:26-29).

Errors of Premillennialism Regarding Israel

In view of the foregoing considerations, the following factors clearly indicate that the premillennial view of the nation of Israel is erroneous, and it should be rejected by conscientious students of the Bible.

God is impartial

First, it is a reflection upon the benevolent character of Jehovah to suggest that he intended to **perpetually** favor one nation over all others.

Such a notion is at variance with the multiple Bible affirmations which assert the universal love of God, and his just, impartial disposition with reference to the whole human family (cf. Gen. 12:3; Psa. 145:9; Acts 10:34-35).

Nation of Israel was preparatory

Second, the premillennial dogma ignores the fact that God’s initial selection of the Hebrew people, and acquisition of the land of Canaan, was preparatory to the coming Christ. Jehovah employed the Jewish nation as a medium for the introduction of Christ into the world.

Now that the Messianic mission has been accomplished, the role of a “national Israel” no longer exists (cf. Gal. 3:24-25). That “middle wall of partition,” designed to isolate Israel from the nations, has been broken down (Eph. 2:14). It was abrogated at the cross (Col. 2:14). From the divine viewpoint, old physical Israel has passed away. It has now been superseded by a **new** Israel.

Nation of Israel’s favor was conditional

Third, the Old Testament makes it abundantly clear that Israel’s favor with Jehovah, even under the Mosaic regime, was **conditional**.

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1).

The Hebrews were constantly warned of the consequences of disobedience (cf. Deut. 28:15ff). They could be disinherited as a nation (Num. 14:12), and disfranchised of their land (Josh. 23:13, 16).

The truth is, there are about as many Old Testament warnings to Israel as there are promises!

No Promise of Israel’s restoration after Pentecost

Fourth, there is not a solitary New Testament passage which speaks of the restoration of national Israel and the reinstatement of Judaistic ritualism, etc.

The Old Testament prophecies which predict the **literal** return of the Hebrews to Palestine were fulfilled in the Jews’ release from political captivity (cf. Jer. 29:10; Ezr. 1:1).

Other predictions, which speak of a “restoration” of Israel, refer to a **spiritual restoration** (to God, not Palestine—cf. Isa. 49:5) through Jehovah’s servant, Christ. Sometimes this spiritual restoration to God, through the redemptive work of Christ, is **symbolically** viewed in terms of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, etc. (cf. Jer. 31:38-40).

This blessing was for Jew and Gentile alike. Study carefully Isa. 49:5ff, and note Paul’s use of this context in the New Testament (Acts 13:47; 2 Cor. 6:2).

Tragic future predicted for Israel

Fifth, there are many New Testament passages which portray a tragic future for physical Israel, with no hint of a national restoration. Consider the following dark prophecies.

Prophetic Pronouncements Concerning Israel

When one carefully considers the testimony of the New Testament, it becomes clear that the future of physical Israel is bleak.

The axe lieth at the root ...

Like modern millennialists, there were Jews of old who felt that there was intrinsic virtue in being a physical descendant of Abraham (cf. Jn. 8:39).

John the Baptizer informed them, however, that God was able to use stones in raising up seed to the patriarch. He then warned: "And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees" (Mt. 3:10).

The context focuses upon a threatened "wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7), which would find its nearest application in the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans in A.D. 70.

Now here is a vital point. When a tree is cut down, there is hope that it will sprout again, provided its stump or roots remain (cf. Job 14:7, 8; Isa. 11:1). But when the axe is laid at the **root**, where is the hope of restoration? There simply is none!

The cursed fig tree

Christ once pronounced a curse upon a barren fig tree near Jerusalem. The tree served as an apt illustration of fruitless national Israel. Jesus declared: "Let there be no fruit from thee **henceforth for ever**" (Mt. 21:19). Where is the hope in that?

Later, on that same Tuesday, just prior to Friday's crucifixion, the Lord announced to the Jews,

"The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mt. 21:43).

In other words, barren national Israel would be replaced by fruitful **spiritual** Israel, the church (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9; Gal. 6:16).

Parables of destruction

In the parable of the marriage of the king's son, Jesus spoke concerning those who spurned the royal invitation. It was prophesied that the king (God) would send his armies (the Romans), and destroy those murderers (the Jews), and burn their city (Jerusalem).

Why? They “were [imperfect tense—a **sustained** state] not worthy” (Mt. 22:1-8). Is there any suggestion of restoration there?

Later, in Matthew 23:38, Christ warned: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” The term “house,” as Bloomfield notes, refers not merely to the temple alone, but to the whole Jewish nation, especially its metropolis (1837, 116). “**Left desolate**” has a note of finality about it.

In the parable of the barren fig tree (Lk. 13:6-9), it is suggested that fruitless Israel would be soon cut down. “This parable gives Israel to know that its life is only a respite, and that this respite is nearing its end” (Godet 1879, 119).

There is no suggestion that the “tree” would spring up again. Strange indeed—if millennialism is true.

In another parable, uttered shortly before his death, Jesus depicted himself as a nobleman who was going into a far country (heaven) to receive for himself a kingdom (the church). Later, he would return (the second coming).

However, while he was in that distant land, his citizens (the Jews) hated him (imperfect tense—an **abiding** hatred) and sent this message to him: “We will not [present tense—a **continued** determination] that [you] reign over us” (Lk. 19:14).

Even millennialists admit that this refers to the Jewish rejection of Christ (Martin 1983, 252). Without the remotest suggestion that there would be an alteration of this hateful Jewish disposition, the nobleman, “when he was come back” (Luke 19:15), characterized these citizens as his “enemies,” and commanded they be slain (Lk. 19:27).

The language describes “the state of rejection in which [the Jews] are plunged **till the Lord’s return**” (Godet 1879, 223; emphasis added).

In yet another parable, Jesus foretold Israel’s rejection of the gospel, and the subsequent success of the kingdom of heaven among the Gentiles. Of those stubborn Jews, he declared: “[N]one of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Lk. 14:24).

This refers, of course, to the Jewish majority that refused the gospel (a small remnant accepted the invitation—cf. Rom. 11:5). Why did not the Lord give some clue that eventually there would be a massive Jewish acceptance of his invitation?

Christ’s predictions

In Luke’s account of the Olivet discourse, Christ, alluding to Jerusalem’s impending destruction, declared that the city would be “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Lk. 21:24).

The term “trodden down” is a present tense participle, suggesting prolonged hardships (though not necessarily uninterrupted) for Jerusalem (and what she represented—the nation).

This oppression was to continue until the “times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” The phrase “times of the Gentiles” is an expression for the current age.

It implies a “times of the Jews” (i.e., the Mosaic period). For fifteen centuries the Hebrews were Jehovah’s special people—an era which might be termed “the times of the Jews.”

When they rejected the Messiah, that age of prominence (called a “reign”—Mt. 21:43) ended. It was superseded by “the times of the Gentiles”—the Christian age.

It is clear that Israel is to be the recipient of divine retribution throughout the Christian era.

Millennialists argue, however, that Jerusalem was to be trodden down only “until” the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled. After that time, they contend, Jerusalem will be exalted to her former glory.

The key word in their argument is “until” (Greek, **achri**). Premillennialists assume the term has a **temporal** implication in Luke 21:24, thus implying a **reversal** of events after the time specified.

But the assumption is unwarranted. The term **achri** frequently has **terminal** thrust in the New Testament.

Consider, for example, Revelation 2:25, where Christ sought to encourage the saints at Thyatira:

*“[T]hat which ye have, hold fast **till** I come.”*

Does this suggest that these Christians will relinquish their blessings when he comes? Of course not.

Similarly, just because the Lord declared that Jerusalem would be trodden down **until** the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, that does not imply that, following “the times of the Gentiles,” the city would be restored to some sort of divine glory. Proof for such a theory will have to be found somewhere other than in the word “until.”

The truth of the matter is, God’s wrath has come upon Israel “to the uttermost” (1 Thessalonians 2:16).

Paul’s commentary on Israel’s hardened heart

In his letter to the Romans, Paul contends that “a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25).

There are several important matters that need to be noted here.

First, the “hardening” was the Jewish disbelief in Christ.

Second, the “in part” suggests that this lack of faith was characteristic of only a portion of the nation; there was a remnant that did believe (cf. Rom. 9:27; 11:5, 14).

Third, the verb “hath befallen” is a perfect tense form, stressing the **abiding nature** of that hardness—until the fulness of the Gentiles comes in.

Fourth, “fulness of the Gentiles” simply denotes the accomplishment of Jehovah’s purpose among the Gentiles (or the “nations”). In other words, Israel’s hardness will remain until the end of the present dispensation. As B.M. Christiansen comments: “This partial hardening will continue throughout the time of the Gentiles, i.e., until Christ’s return” (cf. Lenski 1961, 174).

Since the hardening of Israel was not total, but only “in part,” there is still hope that many Jews may be saved.

But how will the Jews be saved? They will be saved by their acceptance of the gospel (Rom. 10:12-16), and their surrender to the Deliverer from Zion (Rom. 11:26).

This provides the correct meaning of “so all Israel shall be saved.” The word “so” is an adverb of **manner**, meaning, “in this way.” Hence, it is in this way (the way of obeying Christ) that all Israel (who are saved) shall be saved.

This passage does not affirm a nation-wide conversion of the people of Israel.

The theory that Paul expected a mass conversion of Israel is flawed on several accounts:

It contradicts his entire line of argument in Romans 9-11.

It leaves as inexplicable the throbbing anguish for his brethren in the flesh, which saturates this entire section.

For instance, Paul writes: “For I could wish [potential imperfect—”I kept being on point of wishing”] that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:3).

Why—if he knew that a national conversion of Israel was an ultimate reality?

Conclusion. The premillennial concept of the nation of Israel is clearly erroneous. There is no promise of a national conversion of Israel in the Bible.

Modern Jews Not Genetically Hebrew or of Abraham's Seed

The origin of the Ashkenazi Jews, who come most recently from Europe, has largely been shrouded in mystery. But a new study suggests that at least their maternal lineage may derive largely from Europe. **Though the finding may seem intuitive, it contradicts the notion that European Jews mostly descend from people who left Israel and the Middle East around 2,000 years ago. Instead, a substantial proportion of the population originates from local Europeans who converted to Judaism, said co-author Martin Richards, an archaeogeneticist at the University of Huddersfield in England.**

Little is known about the history of Ashkenazi Jews before they were expelled from the Mediterranean and settled in what is now Poland around the 12th century. On average, all Ashkenazi Jews are genetically as closely related to each other as fourth or fifth cousins, said Dr. Harry Ostrer, a pathology, pediatrics and genetics professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and the author of "Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People."

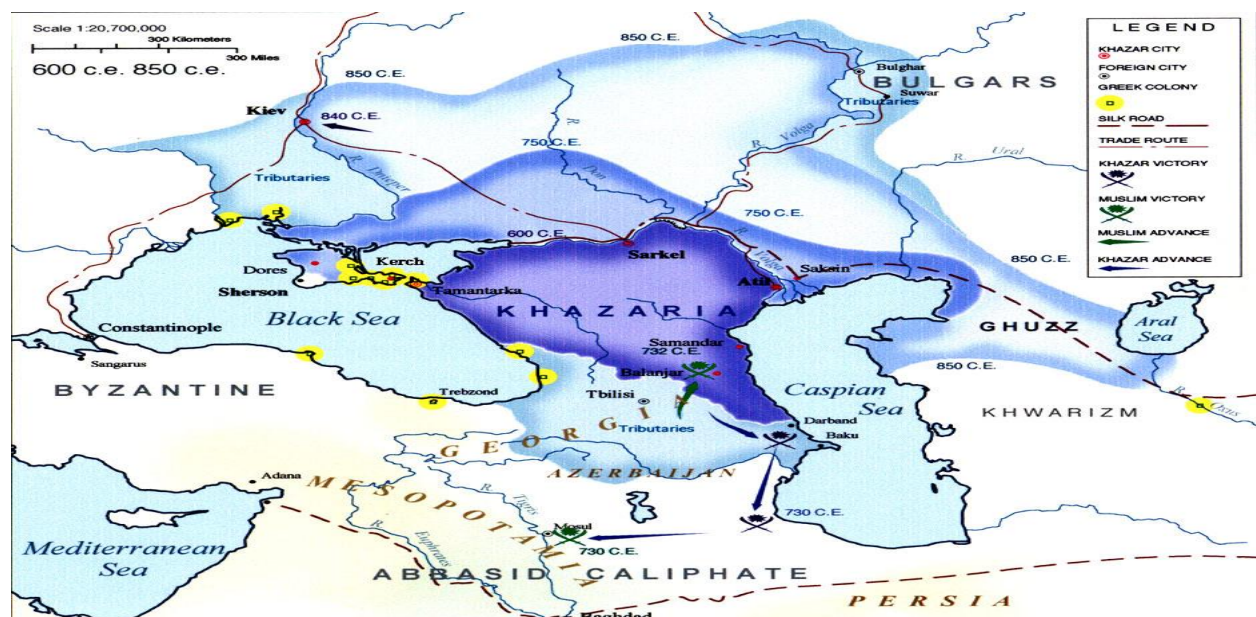
But depending on whether the lineage gets traced through maternal or paternal DNA or through the rest of the genome, researchers got very different answers for whether Ashkenazi originally came from Europe or the Near East. Based on accounts such as those of Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, by the time of the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70, as many as 6 million Jews were living in the Roman Empire, but outside Israel, mainly in Italy and Southern Europe. In contrast, only about 500,000 lived in Judea, said Ostrer, who was not involved in the new study. "The major Jewish communities were outside Judea," Ostrer told LiveScience.

Maternal DNA. Richards and his colleagues analyzed mitochondrial DNA, which is contained in the cytoplasm of the egg and passed down only from the mother, from more than 3,500 people throughout the Near East, the Caucasus and Europe, including Ashkenazi Jews. The team found that four founders were responsible for 40 percent of Ashkenazi mitochondrial DNA, and that all of these founders originated in Europe. The majority of the remaining people could be traced to other European lineages. All told, more than 80 percent of the maternal lineages of Ashkenazi Jews could be traced to Europe, with only a few lineages originating in the Near East. - LiveScience

Second Possibility Still Proves Modern Jews Not of Promise



From Jewish Author Arthur Koestler: "The large majority of surviving Jews in the world is of Eastern European—thus perhaps mainly of Khazar—origin. If so, this would mean that their (the Jews) ancestors came not from Canaan but from the Caucasus, once believed to be the cradle of the Aryan race, and that genetically they are more closely related to the Hun, Ulgur, and Magyar tribes than to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob..."



Returning Captives Details - Ezra 2 & Nehemiah 7

Genetic Linkage. Looking at some of the details of the lists, it should be noted that the Nehemiah of Ezra 2:2 and Nehemiah 7:7 is not the same as the Nehemiah after whom the book of Nehemiah is named. Mordecai in the same verses was not the later Mordecai of the book of Esther. Nehemiah 7:7 lists an extra leader named Nahamani. Some maintain that the description "people of Israel" in these verses means all 12 tribes are indicated. Yet we have already seen that those returning were of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi (Ezra 1:5). Among the small remnant that returned to Judea from Babylon in this and subsequent returns, there were a few people whose ancestors had migrated to Judah from the northern 10 tribes. Yet the vast majority of the people of the northern tribes remained scattered throughout this period—and they have not returned to the Promised Land to this day. The Jews, as the remnant of Israel, were appropriately designated as people of Israel. All Jews are Israelites. Yet, as has been amply demonstrated in past readings and comments, not all Israelites are Jews.

The total number of returning priests was 4,289 (see 2:36-39; Nehemiah 7:39-42). This was around 10 percent of the total of those returning (see Ezra 2:64; Nehemiah 7:66). "The relatively high proportion of priests amongst those who returned was doubtless due to the prospect of a new Temple, with its opportunities of service" (*New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 1970, note on Ezra 2:36-39). On the other hand, the total number of returning Levites is surprisingly listed as just 341 or 380 (see Ezra 2:40-42; Nehemiah 7:43-45)—much less than the 24,000 Levites involved in the worship of God in David's time (see 1 Chronicles 23:4). Why did so few come, particularly as compared with the priests? We don't know, but perhaps it is significant that priests had leadership positions with a certain glory, whereas the temple duties of the other Levites may have been viewed with comparatively little excitement or prestige. We then see a listing of the Nethinim and the sons of Solomon's servants (Ezra 2:43-58; Nehemiah 7:46-60). "Nethinim means 'Given Ones' or 'Dedicated Ones.' In 1 Chr. 9:2, the Nethinim are distinguished from the priests and the Levites. Jewish tradition identifies the Nethinim with the Gibeonites who had been assigned by Joshua to assist the Levites in more menial tasks (see Josh. 9:27).... The sons of Solomon's servants are linked with the Nethinim ([Ezra 2] v. 43). The numbers of the two groups are totaled together (see v. 58; Neh. 7:60)" (*Nelson Study Bible*, notes on Ezra 2:43-50, 55). The latter, according to *The Expositor's Bible Commentary's* note on Ezra 2:55, "may be the descendants of the Canaanites whom Solomon enslaved (1 Kings 9:20-21). But [another commentator] argues that they were instead descendants of the royal officers who were merchants in the service of Solomon (1 Kings 9:22, 27)."

It is interesting to observe the care with which the priesthood was guarded. People had to prove their genealogy to serve in it. Even those reckoned as priests yet without the documentary evidence were excluded from priestly service and entitlement until the Urim and Thummim could be consulted - (see Ezra 2:59-63; Nehemiah 7:61-65). However, "the rabbis held that 'since the destruction of the first temple the Urim and the Thummim ceased' (*Tosefta Sota* 13.1). They held that Ezra 2:63 expressed, not a historical possibility, but an eschatological [end-time] hope (b. *Sotah* 48a-b). Elsewhere in the Talmud (b. *Shebuoth* 16a), we read that Ezra had to reconsecrate the temple without benefit of the Urim and Thummim" (*Expositor's*, note on verse 63). – Bible Commentary, United Church of God

The Time Was At Hand, "Antichrist Mythology", Robert Finley

"A peaceful take-over by Muslims took place when the spreading Islamic revival reached Jerusalem around 630. I remember reading in Robert Ripley's *Believe It or Not* about sixty years ago how the city was delivered to Omar Al-Khattab in 637 without a struggle. *That's because so many of the Hebrew rabbis in Palestine had come to believe that Muhammad was that prophet foretold by Moses in Deut 18: 18 – 19.* They were astonished to see thousands of new converts to Islam from their own synagogues kneeling in prayer to worship God five times daily. Eventually, virtually all the synagogues in Palestine became mosques." (pg.219)

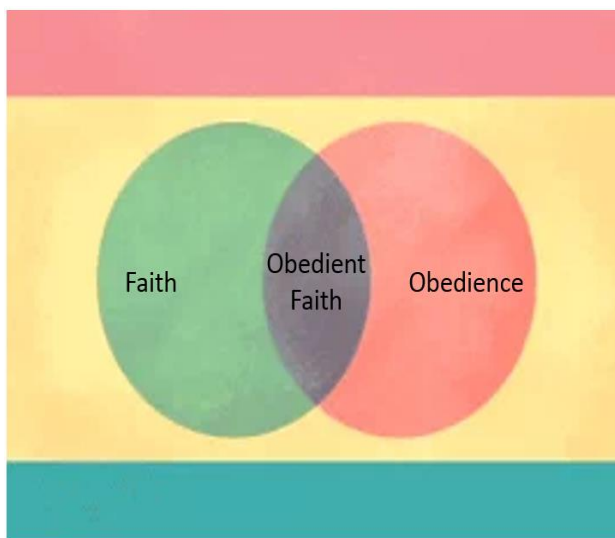
"There are no ten lost tribes. (All but one returned during Hasmonean Period.) Only one tribe, that of Dan, disappeared from the records of the twelve tribes until the time of the New Covenant. It was not until the Seventh Century that the twelve tribes lost their identity, and that was because a majority of Hebrews in Palestine converted to Islam. A few who did not convert emigrated to Khazaria, where the whole Ashkenazim nation converted to Judaism in the 8th Century."

"One major country that failed to convert [to Islam] was the empire of Khazaria, which lay between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in regions now called southern Russia and southeastern Ukraine. The Khazars had no religion, and earnest attempts were made to win them over by Roman Catholics on the west and Muslims along their eastern borders. King Bulan knew that if his people embraced the religion of either of their neighbors, they would have war with the other. So, around the middle of the Eighth Century (730-760) a choice was made to convert the population to Judaism. That move provided neutrality toward the two powerful religions on their borders."

AT THE NEXUS OF GRACE & GLORY

Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



O That Will Be Glory

2. *Who that will be glory for me, e grace,*

I an Glory for me, glory for me; ce,

When by His grace I shall look on His face, e

That will be glory, be glory for me. me.

