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The Continuing Journey of the Jewish People



By Steven J. Hogan

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Over 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ came from heaven to the land of Israel to do the work of His Father. He lived a perfect life, loved everyone, taught the truth, did all kinds of miracles, and trained disciples. Yet, He was crucified, He was killed by His enemies – and it was His Father's will (Acts 2:23). *"Christ died once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God"* (1 Pet. 3:18), so that God might forgive us of our sins and give us eternal life. Three days later, Christ rose from the dead, and 40 days after that, He left Israel and ascended into heaven to be with His Father. Heb. 1:1-3

Many Jewish people wanted Christ to remain in Israel to be their King and defeat their enemies. But He had other plans (Matt. 16:18). From heaven, Christ would be building the church, a spiritual body of believers, ones who would be saved from their

sins, and then serve Him while they lived on earth. But what about God's promises to the Jewish people? Would He still fulfill His plans for them? Yes, He would! Let me explain what needed to happen first.

Jesus was in Jerusalem that last week before He died, and He had a strong and sobering message for the Jews. He told them, *"… your enemies… will level you to the ground and your children with you… because you did not recognize the time of your visitation"* (Lk. 19:41-44). Jesus also warned His disciples about this impending disaster. *"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then recognize that her desolation is near… these are days of vengeance… there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."* Luke 21:20-24, Luke 23:27-31

Jesus, the Messiah, had come to Israel, but most Jews rejected His offer of mercy. God had no choice but to condemn them as a nation and cast them out of their land. Jesus' own people, ones He loved and wept over, had to be punished. It was around 70 AD that Roman soldiers savagely and mercilessly attacked the people of Israel. The result was that an enormous number of Jews were killed, and a great many others were taken as prisoners to nations all over the world. But would God's chosen people ever return to the land of Israel? Yes, they would!

Many Old Testament passages predicted that the Jews would return to their land. Here are a few of them: *"I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. They shall be My people and I will be their God"* (Jer. 32:36-44). *"I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land… and one king will be king for all of them"* (Ez. 37:21-22). *"I am going to save My*

people from the land of the east and from the land of the west and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness." Zech. 8:7-8

Jesus Himself predicted that the Jews would return to Israel – *"Jerusalem would be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* (Luke 21:23). *"Until"* means *"up to the time of the event mentioned."* That is, Jewish people will be in their land and have total control over it only when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, only when the Gentiles no longer have any power or influence over them.

History tells us that the Jewish people were forced out of their land around 70 AD. But in the 1880's, according to God's promise, they started returning to their land. And they kept coming and coming and are still coming, and now there are close to 7.2 million Jews living in Israel. To have a people group dispersed from their land for over 1800 years and then return to that same land with the same religion, same language, and same culture is unbelievable, amazing, unheard of, and truly miraculous!

4,000 years have now passed since God first set in motion His plans for the Jewish people. Let me summarize their long and difficult journey: it began with God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). About 600 years later, around 1400 BC, Joshua led the Jewish people into the promised land (Josh. 3-19). Close to 800 years later, they were exiled out of the land of Israel. And exactly 70 years later, in 538 BC, Jewish people began returning to their land. Jer. 29:10-14, Ezra

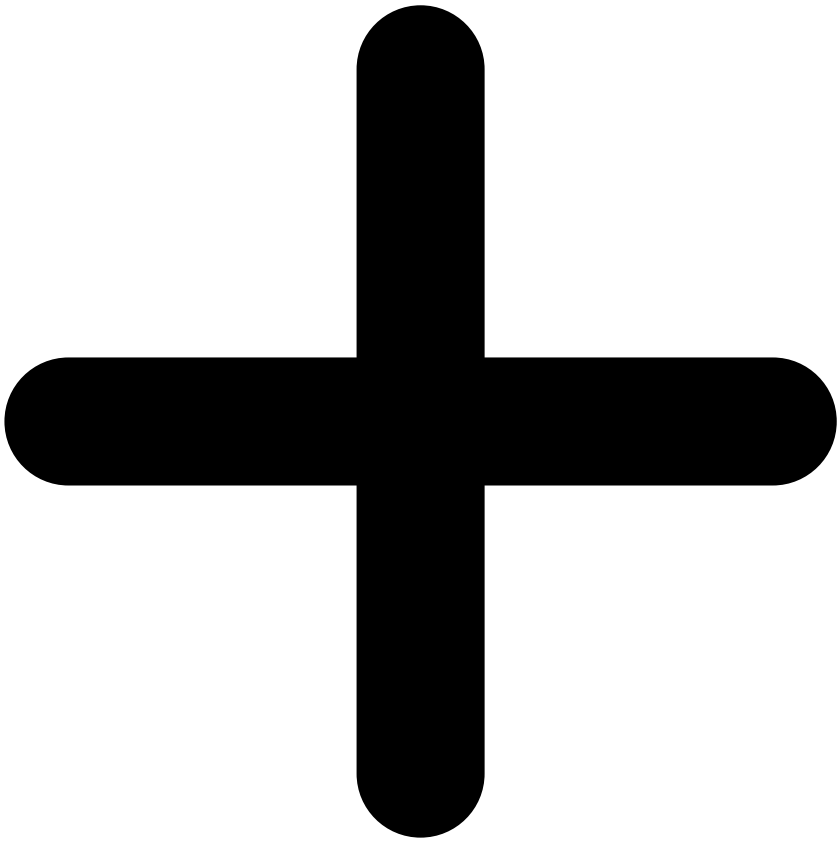
Finally, in 4 BC, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to Israel (Lk. 2:1-20), and He left 33 years later, but promised that He would return (Matt. 24:3-31). Around 70 AD, the Jewish people were, once again, exiled from Israel – and this time they were scattered all over the world (Lk.

21:24). And they were gone from their land a lot longer, for close to 1800 years, until the 1880's. And now its 2024 AD and nearly half the world's Jewish population has returned to their homeland.

The fact that the Jews are back in their land means we are living in the end-times (Dan. 12:4, 9), and this is relevant not just for Jews, but also for Christians. The following end-times' passages testify to this – Matt. 24:*9-14*, **15-27**, Luke 21:*12-19*, **20-24**, 2 Thess. 2:*1-2*, **3-9**, Rev. **7:2-8**, *9-14*, and Rev. **10-12:1-16**, *12:17 – 13* (italics are the church, and bold are the Jews). Note that these eschatological verses about Jews and Christians are sitting side by side, are adjacent to each other. Do you see what God is saying, and is doing? In the last years of this church age, He is renewing His work with the Jews and is finishing building the church.

God is setting the stage, is getting everything and everyone in place for the return of His Son to earth. In a little while, Christ will come back to rapture the church, judge the world, and save a remnant of Jews. Then He will be in Israel and, from there, reign over the world – and we will reign with Him, and be praising Him. *"Sing praises to our King… For God is the King of all the earth"* (Ps. 47:6-7). *"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King."* Psalm 48:1-2

P.S. It's imperative that you understand the history of the Jewish people in their land, from around 2000 BC up to the present day. I have written a series of posts on this subject and encourage you to read them all. They are #'s *290*, *291*, *292*, *295*, *296*, and this present one, #299. In my next post, #300, I will write out a number of verses on this blogsite's primary subject – *"Christ is Coming Again."*



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