

# **The Return**

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**October 11, 2011**

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One hears much today about the “eminent” return of Israel as foretold by the prophets. We are led to believe by many “bible scholars” that there will be a general gathering of the Jews from all nations. Some even advocate that the whole earth will be populated by godly people, presided over by the “ingathered” Jews.

Is this taught in the scriptures? If this is truly the fate of all peoples, it behooves all to study the word of God to determine what God’s purpose is for us.

## **God’s Blessing ... Curse**

Moses assured Israel that “...*God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth*”. (Deut. 28:1-14) There would not be any blessing withheld from them if they kept God’s commandments.

On the other hand, if they forsook God and his commandments, God would multiply his curses on all Israel. (Deut. 28:15-28)

Israel, throughout her history as God’s chosen people, continually rebelled against God’s commandments and adulterously went off after idols, seeking to live as other nations who did not know God.

Because of this, God continually caused His curse to come upon them in the form of invading armies, resulting in their exile into other nations; “...*smitten before thine enemies...and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth*” (Deut. 28:25).

## **First Dispersal ... Israel**

Following the division of the kingdom of the Hebrews, following the death of Solomon, the northern portion (identified as Israel...separate from Judah), the Israelite kings and people became so wicked and idolatrous that God brought in the Assyrians and removed them out of their lands. This was by far the largest portion of the Hebrews. “*Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight:there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.*” (2 Kings 17:17-18).

Some identify this removal as the “ten lost tribes” and attempt to trace their “wandering” throughout Europe in the ensuing centuries. This is clearly speculation coupled with false doctrine and has no bearing on facts revealed in the scriptures.

## **Second Dispersal...Judah**

Judah was taken captive into Babylon because of idolatry. (2 Kings 24:15) Later some returned to Judah, but not all. This took place in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Jews were scattered among other nations.

Some remained in other nations (See Esther). Some remained in Babylon even to the time of the Apostles. (1 Pet 5:13...There was a congregation of the church there)

There were other dispersals from time to time, but they were small local affairs and did not approach the concept of “national dispersals”.

### **Third Dispersal...Last And Greatest**

The most devastating dispersal took place in the days of the Roman Empire. This was foretold by the prophets and also our Saviour during his time on the earth. Notice the symbolism in Deut. 28:15-68:

- EAGLE...The eagle was the symbol of the Roman Empire (Vs 49)
- FIERCE “*A nation of fierce countenance...no regard for the old...nor..the young.*” (Vs 50)
- SIEGE “*...he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land...*” (Vs 52)
- CANNIBALISM “*...thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons... daughters...in the siege...wherein thine enemies shall distress thee.*” (Vs 53)
- “*...toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege...*” (Vs 57)
- Compare these with the description of these events by Jesus, himself. (Matt 24:1-28)
- BRUTALITY “*...the abomination of desolation...*” (Vs 15)
- SIEGE “*...let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.*” (Vss 16-18)
- TRIBULATION “*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*” (Vs 21)
- CANNIBALISM “*...woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*” (Vs 19)

Also, compare with Josephus’ account of these occurrences. (Josephus was a Jewish historian who recorded the “Antiquities of the Jews” and the “Wars of the Jews”)

- ROMAN BRUTALITY Read Books five and six of the “Wars of the Jews”; the descriptions are vivid and unmistakable.
- SEIGE OF JERUSALEM Books five and six describes the siege by Titus (son of Vespasian) and all the attendant cruelties.
- TRIBULATIONS OF THE BESEIGED JEWS The sufferings of the populace of Jerusalem is candidly described. The suffering is unbelievable.
- CANNIBALISM Book Six, Division 4, #201-217 describes this horrendous act, so heinous that the Romans, hearing of it, were horrified.

It cannot be denied that these all have reference to the same occurrences. These atrocities were perpetrated on the Jewish Nation, after which, the nation was virtually de-populated and carried

captive throughout the entire Roman Empire as slaves. According to secular history, some escaped eastward into the vast spaces of Asia, although the Bible does not record this. Some Jews remained in their country, but ultimately became a persecuted minority in the land.

Descriptions of the persecutions of the Jews throughout the ensuing centuries leave no doubt that this last dispersal was complete; there was no more Jewish Homeland. They had been scattered among all nations of the earth exactly as God had warned. Was it to remain so forever?

### **The Return Promised**

God promised that He would not forget those who were scattered throughout the nations. *“...then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.”* (Deut. 30:3)

The question is not whether or not God would keep His promise, but when and by what method he would do so.

### **“In The Latter Days”**

Hosea tells us that the return will be *“...in the latter days”*. (Hosea 3:5) *“Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the **latter days**”* When were, or are the latter days, according to the scriptures? *“...I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the **latter day** upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:”* (Job 19:25-26).

Note the words of Paul in Heb. 1:1-2, *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in **these last days** spoken unto us by his Son...”*

Peter fixes the time of the last days, Acts 2:17 *“...it shall come to pass in the **last days**, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...”*

To summarize:

- The Redeemer (Christ) would stand at the **latter day** on the earth...
- God spoke through Christ in these **last days**...
- Peter points to Pentecost as in the **last days**...

It was at this point in time that some very significant happenings occurred that indicate the time and means by which God would bring about the “return” of Israel as He had promised.

### **National Return Or A Residue?**

*“...there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, **out of every nation under heaven.**”* (Acts 2:5). Here was the in-gathering of the Jews promised by God; not in a national sense, but as a residue of this people. But some say, “This is merely your interpretation of the in-gathering, but not actually true.”

Acts 15:15-17, *“...to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins*

thereof, and I will set it up: That the **residue** of men (Jews) might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord...”

Thus we see that the scriptures teach that God brought about the in-gathering of the Jews on Pentecost during the “last days”, followed later by the introduction of the Gentiles.

This is attested to by Paul in Eph. 2:14-16, “...he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make of himself one new man, so making peace; And came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to them that are nigh.”

Forty days before Pentecost, the Apostles asked him, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Despite all Jesus had taught them for three years, they still expected God to restore a national kingdom to Israel.

Jesus then replied, “it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” However, he indicated to them that it was eminent. “And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but **wait for the promise of the Father**, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.” (Acts 1:4-5) He indicated this would be “...not many days hence...” (Vs 5)

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Vs 8)

## Tabernacle Of God

God promised that he would “...build again the tabernacle of David...” (Acts 2:5) The tabernacle was the tent wherein the Jews were to worship while on their journeys.

Paul indicates that Christian worship is to be performed in a more perfect tabernacle. “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.” (Heb. 9:11) This tabernacle was “not made with hands”. God said, “**I will build** again the tabernacle of David...”

This return of Israel was not to be a national return under the old national covenant of Israel, for under that covenant God could only be worshipped in Jerusalem.

To the Samaritan woman Jesus explained the form of worship to come at the in-gathering. She said to him, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain (Gerazim); and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall **neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem**, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

## What About Israel Today?

I remember reading in one of our religious papers in 1948, a brother wrote that we were seeing at that time the fulfillment of God’s promise to gather Israel back to their land. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

As we have seen, God's promise was not of a national nature. The modern nation of Israel is not built on religious principles. It is a secular nation, not governed by religious writings. The Orthodox Jews of Israel since its birth have complained that the nation is not following the teachings of the law, and predict its eventual fall.

The tabernacle of David (temple) has never been rebuilt, despite the claims of some that it soon will be built. (One "evangelist" prophesied that the temple would be rebuilt at the beginning of the 21st Millennium, 2000; it never happened, and it never will).

There is much more that could be cited to show the true purpose of God, but this will suffice to show the true fulfillment of the in-gathering to be on Pentecost.

For the love of the truth,

J D Logan











