

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESTORATION  
OF ISRAEL TO THE LAND

by

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In 1948, and after much warfare and bloodshed, there arose a new political identity--the Nation of Israel. The generations to follow that event would be fighting to keep that identity, and fighting against tremendous odds. The results of the wars of 1967 and 1973 were enough to make people realize that the Jews could not be driven out of existence. In fact, that was one of God's promises--that the Jews would inherit the land that was given to Abraham, and that they would dwell there again in the first stages of God's program.

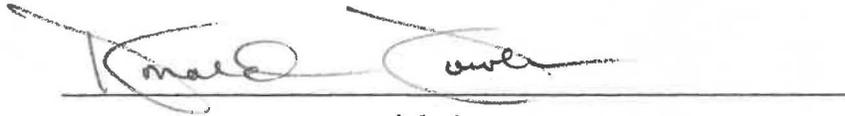
Some of those who realize these promises have come to understand that these events of 1948, 1967 and 1973, are proof that prophecies were true and that God may indeed be winding down the clock of time as we know it.

In evaluating these opinions it was first necessary to remind ourselves that because of certain hermeneutical principles, one must understand the return to the land in light of other events which are involved in that same time frame.

It is also crucial to understand correctly those specific passages dealing with the return to the land. Upon doing so, it is seen that, at that time there will also be a spiritual return to the Lord, the presence of a Shepherd (the Lord Jesus), and two other facts will be realized. One is that the power of God, which brought them back into the land, will be realized by all. Also this return will be permanent in nature.

Because of the fact that none of these other things are involved in what is happening in Israel today, it is proposed by this writer that there be a change in terminology concerning the events of these past years. It is the conclusion of this paper that, because one cannot be sure of God's timing, writers should speak of these modern events as possible foreshadowings of fulfilled prophecy.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "K. M. ...", is written over a horizontal line.

Adviser

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## INTRODUCTION

Any student of the Word of God quickly realizes the importance of understanding correctly those portions which are of a predictive nature.

Among those chapters of the Bible which have to do with future things, one will discover a considerable amount of information dealing with the physical restoration of Israel to the land. In light of what Scripture states about the plan and program of God, it is an absolute necessity that this event take place. Not only that, but the very fact that God is a God of truth demonstrates that what He has promised for the Jew will come about.

Due to the fact that this event is connected with other eschatological happenings, the return of the Jew to the land of Israel has been classified as a "sign of the time." In other words, some have concluded that when Israel does in fact occupy the land of Palestine, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is very near.

To get more specific, it has been the opinion of some writers today that the events in Israel in the years following 1948, assured us that not only has specific prophecy been fulfilled, but that we can also look for the soon return of our Lord.

The initial part of this paper will highlight

Israel's recent history and provide specific quotations regarding this topic. Following that, the relationship of hermeneutics to this issue will be discussed. Lastly, the focus of attention will be several passages of Scripture which will shed light on the biblical restoration.

It is admitted at the beginning of this study that there are many other ways to discuss the topic. It is also important to state that this is merely an introduction to all that could be said.

In short, the overall purpose of this thesis is to shed some light on the subject and to give an answer to the question: "Can we know that the events of 1948, 1967, and 1973 are clear examples of fulfilled prophecy with regard to the end times, thus making our Lord's coming very soon?"

## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

In the pursuit of this subject, the restoration of the Jews to the land, there is the necessity to discuss briefly several foundational ideas. While there will not be an exhaustive study of these subjects, information will be given which will contribute to an understanding of that particular aspect of the restoration under consideration.

#### Israel's Relationship to the Land

The single most important fact in this discussion is that God has a plan and program for His chosen people, and that plan includes their dwelling place.

#### God's Original Intention

Use of the Old Testament Scriptures at this point will help to present the beginning of the story of God's blessing for His people, Israel.

In Genesis 12:6-7, Moses states:

And Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Numerous references could be cited to demonstrate both God's intention and the objects of this declaration.

To Isaac God stated:

Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all the lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws (Genesis 26:2-5).

Arthur Kac, in his work on the rebirth of the state of Israel contributes:

The realization of the objectives of Israel's election rests on two premises. One of these is the presence of Israel in her land. If we turn once again to those passages in Genesis . . . we shall observe that Israel's mission to the world is inseparably linked with her possession of and her presence in the land of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

#### God's Continued Providence

Through a brief examination of two biblical events and a modern day phenomena, one will be able to realize that God's purpose has not been thwarted.

That great Exodus from the land of Egypt demonstrates not only God's sovereign control but also His continued desire for the Jews to have a homeland. The entire second book of the Pentateuch is a fulfillment of what God said would take place in Genesis 15:16, namely the bondage in Egypt. At the time of the death of Moses, God speaks to

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur W. Kac, The Rebirth of the State of Israel (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 20. See Kac's discussion of the election of Israel and its relationship to the land.

the fact that the people have been brought back to His intended place. Deuteronomy 34:4 states: "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.'"

With regard to the second event which demonstrates God's providence, Ezra and Nehemiah are the major sources of information. Probably that which best demonstrates the hand of God in the restoration to the land from Babylon is found in Ezra, chapter 6. Complementing this chapter with Isaiah 45, one can see God's plan being executed. Ezra 6:21-22 provides a good summary of this return to the promised land:

And the sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to join them, to seek the LORD God of Israel, ate the Passover. And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Finally, and from another perspective, one can view the preservation of Jewry as a providential act of God. While a separate thesis could be written on the subject, "What is a Jew," yet the fact that there are Jews today is of major significance. In fact, some would make the connection between the authority of Scriptures and the preservation of the Jews. While there has been a complete assimilation of Assyrians, Persians, Edomites, etc., into other cultures, this has not been true of the Jews. While some assimilation has occurred, Jews stand alone as a people

of continued identity.

### God's Future Program

What God has revealed about His future plans involving the land of Israel is both a significant part of the Old Testament Scriptures and also that which the remainder of this thesis will be built upon.

At the outset, it is important to provide examples of the kind of teaching by Old Testament authors. Jeremiah discusses the topic in the following way:

"Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when they will no longer say, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.' Then they will live on their own soil" (Jer 23:7-8).

Also, in Deuteronomy, the restoration is promised in the following terms:

So shall it be when . . . you call them to mind in all nations that the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God . . . then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity . . . and will gather you from all the peoples . . . and the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers (Deut 30:1-3).

Many other references which could be listed include Isaiah 49; 51; 52; Jeremiah 30; 31; 32; 51:4, 17-20; Ezekiel 36:24-28; 37; Amos 9:13-15; Zechariah 11, and many others.

Over in the New Testament the key reference appears to be Matthew 24:31, which reads: "And He will

send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds from the one end of the sky to the other."

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, there will not be a treatment of whether these prophecies were fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian captivity. This writer is of the opinion that these statements will be fulfilled by yet a future return. Various noted authors can provide a more detailed answer to this important question.<sup>1</sup>

### Israel's Recent History

The second important consideration involves an understanding of the three major events in the recent history of Israel which have bearing upon this study. The main reason for discussing these events is to demonstrate a logical connection between the statements of Scripture and the opinions of modern day authors.

#### Birth of a Nation--1948

Author William Hull Provides the account of a gathering of people, on May 14, 1948, to hear a speech that would culminate in a declaration. He gives the following account:

The man was David Ben Gurion: sixty-one years of

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<sup>1</sup>For a more complete understanding of the Babylonian return, consult John F. Walvoord, The Millennial Kingdom (Findlay, OH: Dunham Publishing Co., 1949); and Arthur W. Kac, The Rebirth of the State of Israel.

age, an emigrant from Russia who had come to Palestine in 1905. His face bore the mark of his struggles as a Jewish leader forced to fight against the Russians, Arabs, and British until this moment. But now he had come to the most important event in his life. It was in fact the most important event in the life of all the people of Israel since 33 A.D. The declaration he read was the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Quite a significant statement is found right before the closing remarks (see Appendix I for the entire decree), and it states: "Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfillment of the dream of generations for the redemption of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

Detailed accounts of that birth of a nation, including the struggles leading up to it can be found in numerous volumes.<sup>3</sup> The resulting immigration was significant. In little over a year, a quarter of a million newcomers entered Israel and by June, 1951, a total of 638,000 Jewish immigrants had been brought in, virtually doubling the

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<sup>1</sup>William L. Hull, The Fall and Rise of Israel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>For a more complete understanding, this writer would recommend the consulting of Abram L. Sachar, A History of the Jews (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 419-470; Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 279-353; and Frederick M. Schweitzer, A History of the Jews Since the First Century A.D. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971), pp. 281-296.

original population.<sup>1</sup>

When one considers the history of this people from the beginning to the present time, certainly this accomplishment demonstrates the sovereign hand of God in action. As this thesis continues, the significance of this event will be considered in more depth.

#### The Six Day War--1967

In June of 1967 another chapter was being written in the saga of the survival of this young nation. The brevity of this war was due to the fact that death blows were dealt to the Egyptian Air Force, and determined Israeli troops were victorious in the Sinai, in Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights.<sup>2</sup> This war resulted in the liberation of the Jordanians, and can be studied in depth in numerous volumes.<sup>3</sup>

#### Yom Kippur War--1973

In speaking about this particular Mideast confrontation, one writer states: "With the renewal of fighting, the hatred, fears, and suspicions that have infected the Arab-Israeli conflict from its beginning had

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<sup>1</sup>Schweitzer, A History of the Jews Since the First Century A.D., pp. 453-454.

<sup>2</sup>"The Quickest Wars," Time, June 1967, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>See H. M. Sacher, A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time, pp. 615ff.; and Moshe Dayan, Story of My Life (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976), pp. 287-358.

flared violently to the surface once again."<sup>1</sup>

While many Jews were in their synagogues observing Yom Kippur, October 6, 1973, was to hold more in store for Israel than the celebration of one of their holy days. Egypt attacked the Sinai Peninsula while Syria moved in on the Golan Heights. Although eleven Arab nations sent personnel and arms against Israel, poor strategy allowed the Israelis to quickly be on the offensive and to turn the tide in Israel's favor.<sup>2</sup>

Time magazine gave the following summary of the course of the short-lived war: "By Sunday morning, after merely a day of intense fighting, Israeli forces had seized the initiative on both fronts . . . Defense Minister Dayan said that the mop-up might take several days, but he predicted that the curious battle of Yom Kippur was already decided."<sup>3</sup>

It will become more evident in the section to follow as to why it is important to have studied the outcomes of both the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War.

#### Evaluations of Modern-Day Israel

It is quite natural that the previously mentioned

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<sup>1</sup>"The Mideast Erupts," Newsweek, October 1973, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>"Black October--Old Enemies at War Again," Time, October 1973, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. See the details in Newsweek and Time articles for the complete scenario, including the differences in arms and personnel.

events should be the basis for much debate, evaluation, and opinions in the political realm. It has also been the finding of this writer that many chapters in prophecy books and many sermons on predictive prophecy incorporate these past events into the material.

It is the attempt of this writer then, in this section to give several examples of teaching on this subject.

In his volume entitled, The Bible and Future Events, Leon Wood devotes a section to the topic of the "Clear Sign of the Modern State of Israel." He states:

The modern state is now a reality in the world. The student of prophecy need no longer say merely that this will happen some day, but it has already happened. This is one of the clearest and most unmistakable signs that the last day events are near at hand . . . With the nation actually there, and with many factors concerning it fitting into conditions set forth in Scripture for the last days, as will be seen, one may safely believe that Christ's coming is not far into the future.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, Jack Van Impe comments to the fact that the prophesied return of the children of Israel was happening.<sup>2</sup> The following further demonstrates the evaluations of the immigration following the birthday of the Nation:

Their tiny land hardly compared in size with its neighbors, and the population of 650,000 at the time of the nation's birth seemed minute compared to that of the Arab Nations surrounding them (approximately fifty million). Still the promises of scattering

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<sup>1</sup>Leon J. Wood, The Bible and Future Events (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Jack Van Impe, Israel's Final Holocaust (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), p. 96.

and persecution had been fulfilled, so why not the promises of restoration and blessing? Size or strength of opponents certainly did not alter the promises of God.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, with regard to 1948, Lindsey states that the one event which Bible students in the past overlooked was the paramount prophetic sign: Israel had to be a nation in the land of its forefather.<sup>2</sup>

Still other writers have zeroed in on the re-possession of Jerusalem in 1967 as a major area of importance. John Walvoord, in a Moody Monthly article expresses his opinion:

The final answer is hidden in the future, the events of the recent months have climaxed one of the most remarkable fulfillments of biblical prophecy since the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Thus as Israel once more occupies the historic Holy City, the world is confronted with the picture of a Nation miraculously preserved by God for nearly nineteen centuries. Instead of being blotted out, Israel is once more in her land. This return constitutes a preparation for the end of the age, the setting for the coming of the Lord for His Church and the fulfillment of Israel's prophetic destiny.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the third event in 1973, even more emphatic statements have been made, namely, that Israel would never be destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Van Impe, Israel's Final Holocaust, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970). See Lindsey's chapter (pp. 32-47) which discusses how 1948 has set the stage for the rest of the end-time events.

<sup>3</sup>John F. Walvoord, "The Amazing Rise of Israel," Moody Monthly, October 1967, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>"Talk of the End," Christianity Today, October 1973, p. 119.

The number of statements are without number.<sup>1</sup> In many cases, writers emphasizing these three dates in the history of Israel claim that specific predictive prophecies have been fulfilled. Many go a step further to deduce that, as a result, the Lord's coming is very near.

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<sup>1</sup>It is recommended that for further study, one should consult Dwight Wilson, Armageddon Now! (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977).

## CHAPTER II

### HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Context

It can be demonstrated by many passages in the Word of God that the context of a word or a complete statement plays a vital part in the understanding of that part of the word. This is especially true when studying words pertaining to salvation. Words such as repent, believe, or convert, can take on a whole different meaning given a different context. For a review of the part that context plays in the interpretive processes, several of the standard works could be cited. Ramm speaks concerning context with these words:

We can understand a particular passage only if we know what the whole Scripture teaches; but we can only know what the whole Scripture teaches by knowing the meaning of its parts. And so all theological interpretation of the Scripture is a rotation or spiraling from part to whole, and whole to part.<sup>1</sup>

In the following chapter, this principle will be put into practice as the details associated with the restoration are discussed.

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), p. 139. See also Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), pp. 186, 214.

### Parallel Passages

The principles in the Word of God pertaining to God's revealing of Himself lead us to the conclusion that His truth must be totally consistent, even if different individuals were employed by the Holy Spirit to record it.<sup>1</sup>

Many biblical writers contributed to the overall understanding of this theme at hand. The statements of major importance will be considered individually and correlated with the others.

### Progressive Character of Prophecy

Lastly, from a hermeneutical standpoint, it should be pointed out that this isolated teaching is no different from God's program in general. Not all was unveiled at once. It was the Lord's intent to use both many authors and many intervals in the course of time to reveal His plan for the ages.

Fairbairn contributes the following:

We have hitherto spoken of the mutual inter-connection and progressive character of the prophetic writings together, the one as the natural result and the sequel of the other. There might, however, be a connection without an actual progression. One prophecy might, in regard either to its subject, or to the form of representation it employed, have a respect to, and even be in a sense dependent upon, an earlier prophecy. And in so far as such may be the case, it must be proper

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<sup>1</sup>See the discussion on the relationship between Old and New Testaments by Donald A. Hagner, "The Old Testament in the New Testament," in Interpreting the Word of God, ed. Samuel J. Schultz and Morris A. Inch (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), pp. 78-104.

to keep it in view as an important element in the interpretation of prophecy, since a later prophecy of that description even when it does not add anything material to the earlier, and brings out no new aspect of the future, cannot fail to be of service in confirming or elucidating what has preceded.<sup>1</sup>

#### Limitations

It must be kept in mind that, working within the limitations of the curse, it will never be possible to develop a system of interpreting the Word of God so that each verse and each theme can be united with perfect harmony. Not only that, but the interpreter, at times, simply does not know how to employ the right kinds of terms to speak about one subject as it relates to another. This limitation will enter into the answering of our original question.

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<sup>1</sup>Patrick Fairbairn, The Interpretation of Prophecy (Edinburgh: Charles Birchall and Sons Ltd., 1856), p. 195.

## CHAPTER III

### BIBLICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tying the hermeneutical rule of context together with the subject of the restoration to the land will be the purpose of this chapter. As with any subject in the Old or New Testaments, there is a need to be aware of other details which contribute to a complete understanding of the given topic.

There appear to be four important aspects to the final restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel. It is the goal of the writer at this point to show the contextual relationships involved.

#### The Miraculous Return

Clearly one of the highlights of the book of Exodus is how God, in a supernatural way, provided for the safe return of His people. Exodus 14:23-31 provides the setting for the demonstration of God's control over His creation. Verse thirty gives the summary of the miracle: "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore."

Turning to Isaiah 11:15-16, the reader quickly views the employment of terminology which is similar to that of the fourteenth chapter of Exodus. The passage reads:

And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; and He will wave His hand over the river with His scorching wind; and He will strike it into seven streams, and will make man walk over dry-shod. And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of His people who will be left, just as there was for Israel in the day when they came up out of the land of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that there are at least two questions that could be raised concerning this passage. First, "Is this event going to be a real visible demonstration of God's miraculous power?" Then, "At what point in God's timetable will this take place?" It will be seen that the answers to both of those inquiries have bearing upon our subject of the restoration.

Taking the words of verses 15-16 at face value, there does not appear to be much of a debate as to whether the supernatural is involved. The fact that the prophet has used an actual occurrence of God's supernatural intervention as an illustration demonstrates that a literal interpretation is most natural. Leupold comments:

Again, the Lord will remove the obstacle--in the case "utterly destroy" it (the verb implies: "to put completely under the ban"). Two actions of the Almighty blend in the next line: a gesture of command coupled with an effective blast from the lips of God drying up the waters that lie across their path. That will make this deliverance more wonderful than the one at the Red Sea.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See also Zechariah 10:10-12 for the similarities in language. The comment should also be made that this statement be seen as a general prophecy of a return. This viewpoint would be consistent with the fact that there were only 450 Jews living in Iraq in 1981. (See the American Jewish Yearbook, 1981 [Philadelphia: Jewish Publishing Society of America, 1981], p. 288.

<sup>2</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Isaiah, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 225.

Others, including Peters, see God's supernatural working at this point, and in The Theocratic Kingdom, the verses are evaluated as being a "special Divine interposition."<sup>1</sup>

The other method of interpretation would be to view these statements as metaphorical in nature. Calvin presents this possibility in these terms:

By these metaphors, therefore, the prophet means nothing else than that nothing will stand in God's way, when it shall be His pleasure to rescue His people from captivity. He glances at the history of a former deliverance, that they may learn that it will be the same with that which they formerly enjoyed.<sup>2</sup>

Many would doubt that this statement is metaphorical in nature. Even if this approach to the passage is accepted, the principle involved would nevertheless be important as will be demonstrated in the summary of this chapter.

The focus at this point shifts to a discussion of the timing of supernatural intervention by God. What else in the context gives the reader a clue as to the point in history in which this will occur?

It is the opinion of this writer that this eleventh chapter of Isaiah, in two ways, presents the picture of the Messianic reign in a future millennial kingdom. In

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<sup>1</sup>George N. H. Peters, The Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, The Christ, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Kregal Publications, 1952), p. 62. See also statements by Gray, ICC--Isaiah, pp. 227-228, and Young, NICOT--Isaiah, pp. 339-401.

<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, vol. 1, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1850-1853), p. 396.

verses 1-10, the language is most definitely descriptive of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every source considered gave this interpretation, with the only difference being that many authors would not see this as a premillennial return.

Young comments:

At the outset then we are faced with the fact that the blessings about to be depicted are to be realized because of the shoot and branch which comes from Jesse's stump. This is Immanuel, the true Messiah, who is to be the hope of His people.<sup>1</sup>

It would be helpful, for a complete presentation of this subject, to review The Millennial Kingdom, by John F. Walvoord, and Systematic Theology, vol. 7, by Lewis Sperry Chafer. More important, a consideration of a number of Old Testament passages will help to present the whole picture.<sup>2</sup>

Verses eleven and following contribute more to an understanding of the time of these miraculous events of verses 15-16. Verse eleven reads:

Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

From the very first words of the verse, namely "that day," it appears that this recovering of the remnant will occur at the time of Christ's coming to set up the

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<sup>1</sup>Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 380.

<sup>2</sup>Verses similar in content include: Isaiah 16:5; 24:23; 32:2; 40:1-11; 42:3-4; 52:7-15; 55:4; Daniel 2:44; 7:27; Micah 4:1-8; 5:2-5; Zechariah 9:9; 14:16-17.

Millennial Kingdom. Furthermore, this verse goes on to describe a second return from those areas of the world in which the Jews were not dwelling at that time. It is also impossible, then, to view this as the return under Zerubabel (Ezra 2:2). Peters contributes, at this point, the following:

Isaiah 11:10-16 is conceded by many commentators, as even by Scott, Nagelsbach, etc., to teach a literal restoration. The "second time," vs. 11, cannot refer to deliverance from Egypt or from Babylon because in neither case were the Jews recovered from the lands here enumerated; and it cannot refer merely to a conversion (as some hold) of the people because it is linked with "a cutting off . . .," "a gathering of outcasts . . .," and it must related to . . . its connecting with the millennial era (context preceding and following).<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

This first passage has indicated that there is a contextual relationship between the return to the land and the exercise of God's supernatural powers. The truths of this eleventh chapter of Isaiah also point to the fact that there will be a return at the commencement of the Millennial Kingdom. More space will be given to this at a later point.

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<sup>1</sup>Peters, The Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, The Christ, pp. 62-63. Peters evaluates the alternative view with his comments: "When Fairbairn (Ezekiel), Schroeder (Ezekiel in Lange's Commentaries), and others, by a wholesale spiritualizing of the plain grammatical meaning (with great learning, etc.) make out that this is fulfilled in the Christian Church or world, the Jewish nation and land (and all particulars) being only typical of something else, this is the result of deep-rooted prejudice that overrides everything, bends everything, substitutes everything to make it correspond with its preconceived spiritual theory. We envy not the labors and results of such writers."

### The Spiritual Return

Of the Old Testament Scriptures relating to the restoration to the land, the teaching of Ezekiel (especially the 37th chapter) ranks among the most significant. The reason is that in the book of Ezekiel two teachings of major importance are contextually tied together. Naturally, then, it will be of utmost importance to comment on the subject matter that is spoken in the same breath with the Restoration.

There appears to be some significance to the fact that the Lord, at several points, speaks to the subject of the Restoration immediately before the subject of the conversion of the Nation. Ezekiel 36:24-25, along with 37:14 and 37:21-23, are clear examples. It would appear that the most natural interpretive approach would be to view these as being part of the same time frame, although it could be stated that Isaiah 61:2 is a classic example of a gap in time between two events. Following that line of reasoning might lead a person to deduce that the physical return to the land could precede the spiritual return to the Lord by many years.<sup>1</sup> While that viewpoint might seem to be supportable, based on Isaiah 61, it appears that the number of times these two events are connected is significant.

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<sup>1</sup>It should be stated at this point in the discussion that this writer is presupposing, both from personal contact with Jews in the land of Israel in 1976 and from contact with many sources (including the daily newspapers), that there has not been a general conversion of the Jews.

Many who have studied the book of Ezekiel or Old Testament prophecies in general have an opinion as to the meaning of the dry bones in chapter 37. In fact, this has been pointed to as a real key in the discussion of the return to the land and 1948 in particular. While much could be said about the vision and its interpretation, the comments at this juncture will pertain solely to the question presented at the beginning of this thesis.<sup>1</sup>

The one interpreting this vision should immediately realize the contextual setting, of which there are three key parts. Within the same chapter containing the physical and spiritual returns, is found also the discussion concerning the presence of the servant David (which will be discussed at a later point), the movement of the armies at the middle of the tribulation (chapters 38 and 39), and the future millennial temple (chapters 40-48). The key is that these specific prophecies all have to do with either the tribulation or millennial reign of Christ.

Dr. Merrill Unger has provided some very detailed discussion of this chapter--material which was found to be both helpful and thought-provoking. The introductory part of his series contributes to an understanding of the

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<sup>1</sup>For material concerning the resurrection of Israel and which builds the foundation for the discussion at hand, see: John F. Walvoord, "The Resurrection of Israel," BSac 102 (August 1945):280-290; and Carl Armerding, "Asleep in the Dust," BSac 121 (April 1964):153-158.

concepts discussed in chapter one of this paper.<sup>1</sup> The second section of Dr. Unger's treatment is also helpful in solidifying the idea of the miraculous return. He re-emphasizes the fact that "the restoration of Israel will be one of the outstanding miracles of the ages (Jer 16:14-15), eclipsing even the Egyptian deliverance and an indubitable proof that what God promises to do He is both able to do and will do (cf. Jer 31:35-36)."<sup>2</sup>

The discussion of the miraculous physical return is a perfect lead into the discussion of the spiritual return as described in Ezekiel 37. The prophet recorded these following important words:

Thus says the Lord God to these bones, "Behold I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive, and you will know that I am the Lord " (Ezek 37:5-6).

Commenting on the above verses, Dr. Unger states that the illustration of bones spread all over the face of the valley but coming together and fitting exactly is a demonstration of God's power to bring all the twelve tribes back together from the distant places.<sup>3</sup> The second area of consideration is most important for this study. The writer (Unger) continues his commentary thusly:

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<sup>1</sup>Merrill F. Unger, "Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration," BSac 106 (July 1949):312-324.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The "sinew," the "flesh," and the "skin" coming upon the "bones" (v. 8), which are now in proper place, might well suggest Israel's awakening to a feeling of nationalism, expressed in Zionism and kindred nationalistic trends of the past decades. All this takes place, however, before there is any national or spiritual life, that is to say while Israel is yet without nationhood, being politically dead. For we read the emphatic and pregnant declaration, despite the bones, being clothed with flesh: "But there was no breath in them" (v. 8).<sup>1</sup>

The summary of Unger's position presented in these articles is that the coming of the breath into the bodies of flesh is the coming of new life for a politically dead nation. It is reasoned that this breath could not indicate their spiritual life because of the fact that their spiritual life comes after their regathering to the land, which, at this point in the passage, has not yet occurred (see v. 12).<sup>2</sup>

This viewpoint is most significant in the discussion at hand and is quite possibly the thinking of those who make unqualified statements about Israel in the land today. It should be re-emphasized that, concerning the first part of the vision, Dr. Unger is in fact speculating, using words such as "this might well suggest Israeli awakening to . . . nationalism." On the other hand, he seems quite dogmatic that the breath is the coming to life of the nation. There is no argument whatsoever that Dr. Unger and others who interpret Ezekiel 37 in this way,

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<sup>1</sup>Unger, "Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration," p. 434.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

might be absolutely right.<sup>1</sup>

The other verses which appear to enter into this treatment of the subject are 12-14 in the same chapter:

Therefore, prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it,' declares the Lord."

Not only is it important to understand graves as being symbolic of the nations to which the Jews have gone,<sup>2</sup> but more important in this writer's opinion, is the contextual relationship between the return to the land and the spiritual return to the Lord. Verses thirteen and fourteen both indicate that when Israel has been placed in the land they will realize that it has been done by the hand of the Lord.

#### A Return with a Shepherd

So far in this chapter it has been demonstrated that the teachings of God's miraculous undertaking is contextually related to the return to the land in both a physical and spiritual world. A third aspect to the teaching of the return is that God's servant, David, "will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and

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<sup>1</sup>See also Arno C. Gaebelain, The Prophet Ezekiel (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1918), pp. 245-246; and Charles Lee Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), pp. 212-214.

<sup>2</sup>Compare the treatments in Unger, Feinberg and Gaebelain.

they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them" (Ezek 37:24).

Chapter 34 of the same book greatly complements this verse, teaching that God will feed His flock and bring them to rest (v. 15); the flock will no longer be a prey (v. 22); the Lord will set over them one shepherd, David (v. 23). Because of the nature of this thesis, the writer can but simply state the presupposition that David, in eschatological usages, refers to the person of the Lord Jesus, having come to reign for a 1000 year kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The subject of David the shepherd will be considered in a different way in the conclusion.

#### A Final Return

The last facet of the return to the land in the end times is very crucial as it relates to the conclusion of this paper. This teaching is found clearly in Amos 9:15 and it is that the Jews who return will find security in that place. The security is spoken of in these terms: "I will also plant them in their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them." Considering the initial promises given thousands of years ago, this hope of a permanent dwelling place is a tribute to God's faithfulness and truthfulness. The fertility of the land (Amos 9:13) and the prosperity involved

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<sup>1</sup>A starting point into a study of this area would be Gaebelein, The Prophet Ezekiel, pp. 225-230.

(v. 14) will be but a part of the blessing. There will be no more dispersion.

## CHAPTER IV

### IMMINENCY CONSIDERED

There is yet another approach to this study of the Restoration. The teachings of the Word of God concerning Christ's return for His Church and a discussion on "signs of the times" will contribute to the correct understanding of this subject.

#### The Doctrine of Imminency

Walvoord, in his work, The Rapture Question, comments on a passage which is of great importance to this subject. The writer states:

The hope of the return of Christ to take the saints to heaven is presented in John 14 as an imminent hope. There is no teaching of any intervening event. The prospect of being taken to heaven at the coming of Christ is not qualified by a description of any signs or prerequisite events.<sup>1</sup>

In his discussion of the two end time events, Berkhof contributes:

The first of these is the parousia, or simply, "the coming," and results in the rapture of the saints, sometimes represented as a secret rapture. This coming is imminent, that is, it can occur at any moment, since there are no predicted events which must precede its occurrence.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Rapture Question (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Company, 1957), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), p. 695.

As with any doctrinal question, the primary focus of attention must be on the words of Scripture themselves, and not on the teachings of theologians. In keeping with that, it is the opinion of this writer that the doctrine of Imminence is not contrived by Darby (as some suppose) but rather can be found in references such as John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philip-  
 pians 3:20; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:14; James 5:8; and 1 Peter 3:3-4. The teaching can also be seen in 1 Thessalonians 5:6, Titus 2:13 and Revelation 3:3--these references warning the believer to be watching for the Lord Himself, and not for any events that would precede His coming.

Pentecost brings up that which is realized by many and is a necessary part of this discussion. In Things To Come, this statement is found: "It is true that the events of the seventieth week will cast an adumbration before the rapture, but the object of the believer's attention is always directed to Christ, never to these portents."<sup>1</sup>

#### Signs of the Times

How some writers are viewing Israel in recent years has been discussed briefly in the first chapter. At this point, however, there is a need for comment concerning how some pretribulationists and others are seeing modern

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<sup>1</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come--A Study in Biblical Eschatology (Findlay, MI: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 203.

day Israel as a "sign of the time." In an article entitled, "The Eschatological Significance of the Return of Israel to the Land," Steven B. Levinson writes:

Just as the budding of the fig tree is a sign of summer (Luke 21:29) so in the coming into existence of the State of Israel may be seen the beginning of the fulfillment of Jesus' words. We have witnessed a wonderful recovery of an ancient people regaining their land, a land to which they have always laid claim. Has not this regathering of the people an eschatological significance? Nearly all the other signs mentioned in Matthew 24:1-11 have been fulfilled time and time again. The reason why I believe the set time is come is that the return of the people of God to their land is a unique event.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking with basically the same terminology, Boyer concludes that the return of some of the Jews to the land and the setting up of the State of Israel "has become one of the most convincing of all signs that we are nearing the end of this age."<sup>2</sup>

While a more detailed conclusion concerning these signs will be discussed later, the emphasis at this point seems to be that there appears to be a great problem coordinating the teachings of Scripture with the statements of some authors. It seems that if the statehood of Israel in 1948 is to be seen as a "sign of the time," then it appears that these authors must deny real imminence for 1948 years.

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<sup>1</sup>Steven B. Levinson, "The Eschatological Significance of the Return of Israel to the Land," in The Messiahship of Jesus: What Jews and Jewish Christians Say, ed. Arthur W. Kac (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), pp. 312-313.

<sup>2</sup>James L. Boyer, Prophecy: Things to Come (Winona Lake, IN: Brethren Missionary Herald Publishers, 1973), p. 119.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary

A word of review will enable the reader to better understand this conclusion. The reason for this thesis has been an influx of material concerning recent occurrences in the land of Israel. While many are pointing to the achievement of statehood in 1948 (see Appendix I for the Declaration of Independence), and the subsequent military victories in 1967 and 1973, as being a demonstration of the providence of God, many go beyond that and say that specific prophecies have been fulfilled. Thus, with another "sign of the time" before our eyes, we can expect our Lord's coming very soon.

In an attempt to discover whether that kind of statement could or should be said, this writer has attempted to accurately research what took place in Israel during these past years and also research and compare biblical truths concerning the physical restoration of the Jews to the land.

Upon considering the history of the Jews, it should be concluded that the hand of an almighty and a faithful God has been at work. Against overwhelming odds at many points in time, still the Jews have not only existed but have become a recognized political entity.

After it was emphasized that the hermeneutical principle of context is of major concern to the Bible student, the four major teachings that are contextually related to the restoration were discussed. (1) When the the Jews return to the land in the true eschatological sense, there will be the evidence of God's miraculous powers at work, as in the days of the Exodus. (2) The return to the land is accompanied by a spiritual return to the Lord. (3) The Lord Himself will be a shepherd to those who have come back. (4) This return, lastly, will be permanent in nature.

#### Application

It is at this point in the thesis that this writer will attempt to make the previous material practical. The discussion will be applied in three realms.

#### Biblically

The initial concern that has been one of the reasons for this thesis is the fact that has been mentioned before--namely, that there has been no confirmation of the fact that God is winding down the clock other than the rise of a political entity. These events which are contextually related (and time related) have not yet come to pass.

It must be stated at this juncture that it is the opinion of some writers that Israel being in the land in an unregenerate state is exactly the meaning of certain

prophetic passages. Boyer writes: ". . . sometime before the awful judgment of the day of the Lord and the time of Jacob's trouble there must be a partial return of the Jews to their land of Palestine, and some measure of national autonomy there, in order that the prophesied covenant with the Roman prince may be made."<sup>1</sup> Even if that viewpoint is accepted, how does anyone know for sure that 1948 is that time of autonomy spoken about? Why could it not be 2248, after many years of wars and oppression?

The second concern has to do with the material of the last chapter, and the gross inconsistency of calling 1948 a sign of the time. In his work entitled, Armageddon Now!--The Premillennarian Response to Russia and Israel Since 1917, Dwight Wilson spends most of one chapter dealing with the subject of Israel's statehood being called a "sign of the time." His epilogue is one of great importance to this study. The following statements are made with respect to a premillennarian literalism:

The premillennarian's history, however, is strewn with a mass of erroneous speculations which have been made dogmatically, at other times only as probabilities or possibilities, but the net result has always been the same--an increased skepticism toward premillennialism.<sup>2</sup>

Continuing on the list of prophetic interpretations that have come forth, he states:

The current crisis was always identified as a sign

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<sup>1</sup>Boyer, Prophecy: Things To Come, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, Armageddon Now!, p. 216.

of the end, whether it was the Russo-Japanese War, the First World War, the Second World War, the Palestine War, . . . or the Yom Kippur War . . . Speculation in the Antichrist has included Napoleon, Mussoline, Hitler, and Henry Kissinger . . . The restoration of the latter reign has been pinpointed to have begun in 1897, 1917, and 1948. The end of the "times of the Gentiles" has been placed in 1895, 1917, 1948, and 1967. "God" has been an impending threat since the Crimean War, both under the Czars and the Communitst.<sup>1</sup>

It should concern the premillennialists that these pictures are being presented, and yet there is that which is more critical. This talk of signs does not go unnoticed by the world. In an article in Newsweek focusing on the different groups who have demonstrated fanaticism (what the writer is getting at) the author concludes that the statements of these people are no longer credible, based on previous actions or predictions. Unfortunately, the evangelical Christians are not to be left unscathed. Speaking about Hal Lindsey the author states:

. . . Lindsey has repeatedly argued that the time has arrived for the battle of Armageddon in the Middle East and the subsequent second coming of Christ. The most auspicious of these signs, Lindsey insists, is the rebirth of Israel as a nation and, since 1967, the return of Old Jerusalem to Jewish control.<sup>2</sup>

Following more discussion about other signs of the end, the article ends with the following, probably sarcastic words:

According to Hal Lindsey, only one event would shake

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson, Armageddon Now!, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup>"The Boom in Doom," Newsweek, January 1977, p. 49.

his faith that the apocalypse is near: "If Israel is destroyed, that would do it. I wouldn't say the Bible is wrong, I would say that my interpretation of the Bible is wrong." But then, like the Millerites before them, Lindsey and his followers would probably find a new sign and once again begin preparing for the end of the world. Sooner or later they have to be right.<sup>1</sup>

In short, the most damaging result of looking for and concentrating on signs can be this loss of credibility.

### Practically

There are also some conclusions that can be drawn that, while they are Bible-related, are more practical in nature.

The first is basically a question to be posed. Why is it that such attention is given to the year 1948, when in reality only a small percentage of Jews and only a fraction of finances are now presented in the land? The 1981 American Jewish Yearbook shows us that there are still 5,920,000 Jews in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Not only that but there has in recent years been vast emigration from the land.<sup>3</sup>

The other question is this: "Is the return following 1948 really the return of Scripture in light of the scattering that will occur at the middle of the Tribulation?" Scripture declares: "And the woman fled into the

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<sup>1</sup>"The Boom in Doom," Newsweek, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>American Jewish Yearbook, 1981 (Philadelphia: American Jewish Publishing Co., 1981), p. 289.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days (Rev 12:6).<sup>1</sup> The return to the land prior to that event seems to be a matter of circumstance, not a subject of prophecy. That they must be there for the mid-tribulational scattering is understood, but the primary emphasis seems to be that they return at the end, when they experience a national conversion. Zechariah 12-14, along with numerous other references, demonstrates that the land is inhabited by a group of people who are rightly related to their God.

#### A Two-Fold Proposition

It is the conviction of this writer, at this point in his study of the Word of God, that there need to be two changes made in the thinking patterns of many authors and speakers.

#### Hermeneutically

At the outset of this discussion it must be said that a phrase such as "fulfilled prophecy" warrants comment. Without a doubt, there are numerous, even hundreds of Old Testament predictive statements which are seen to be fulfilled at a later point in time. Certainly, the specifics about the birth of our Savior stand among the classic examples. These were truly "fulfilled prophecies" because

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<sup>1</sup>See comments by John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 191.

of the fact that there could be no question about either the event itself or the accompanying events. When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, as the Old Testament predicted, there was no doubt as to the fact that this was the Christ. Scripture made that perfectly clear, and the Old Testament passage became a "fulfilled prophecy."

In the opinion of this writer, however, there are both old and new works being published that are using the terminology when other terms must be employed.<sup>1</sup> As it was mentioned at the outset, there are many who are intimating this fact, even if they do not come right out and entitle their book that way. There is a definite problem of inconsistency when Israel's political possession of the land is called a fulfillment. There has been no spiritual revival, no miraculous events proving to the Jews that they are there because God has placed them there and no shepherd guiding them into prosperity and fruitfulness. It appears to boil down to this--there is a lack of definite signs that Israel is regathered for the purpose for which the regathering is to take place--namely so that the other key events (spiritual return) could take place. Kac rightly asks the question in the title of his volume--  
"The Rebirth of the State of Israel--Is it of God or of

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<sup>1</sup>See George T. B. Davis, Israel Returns Home According to Prophecy (Philadelphia: The Million Testaments Campaigns, 1950); and David L. Cooper, Prophetic Fulfillments in Palestine Today (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1980).

Men" (underlining supplied for emphasis).

It should be stated, both from a practical and a hermeneutical standpoint, that the real answer to the question is "There is no way to determine if Israel's statehood in 1948 is significant eschatologically." Even if there is validity to the viewpoints that Israel is in the land prior to their conversion in order that they might be deceived by the Anti-Christ, there is still no way to know if that is taking place. There has been an exchange of ownership of parts of the Holy Land, including Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, and there could very well be more battles, victories and defeats until the beginning of God's final chapter. It appears even possible that Israel could again lose national status and the biblical truths would not at all be affected.

There is another way to speak about these events of the past years that appears to be more consistent with all that has been said. This involves "coining" terminology to be tied into a system of hermeneutics. This is nothing new, for we employ the terms we need to express the way we understand certain subjects. A good example would be to go back to the term "fulfilled." These events which came about, in a way in which we see that they should have, are termed "fulfilled prophecies." The term which would express a carefulness in this whole realm is the term "foreshadowment." Webster defines this term in the following

way: "to represent or typify beforehand; prefigure."<sup>1</sup> Using the newly employed term, it might be safe to say in answering our question at hand, that the statehood of Israel could be the foreshadowment to other eschatological events.

#### With Regard to Purpose

Two scriptural principles should keep the Bible student safeguarding himself from this sensationalistic approach to prophecy. One is that Jesus stated in Acts 1:7 that "it is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority." Also the New Testament is quite clear as to the real outcome of statements concerning the Lord's return. From a knowledge that the Lord's return could be at any moment, we are to "purify ourselves" (1 John 3:3), "live soberly and righteously" (Titus 10:24-25), and "redeem the time" by evangelizing (2 Pet 3:15).

In other words, statements about the last days, especially in the New Testament, are inseparably related to challenges about our own personal lives before God. Statements are never made to help the person discern the "signs of the times."

In conclusion, the question is repeated one final time: "Can we know that the events of 1948, 1967, and 1973 are

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7th ed. (Springfield, MA: G. & G. Merriam Company, 1967), p. 327.

clear examples of fulfilled prophecy with regard to the end times, thus making our Lord's coming very soon?" The answer, based on principles of interpretation and specific biblical statements about the restoration is a definite no. It must be emphasized that this "no" is not affirming that 1948 cannot be God's providential leading toward the millennium. It may well be--we just do not know. Nor should it be said that this "no" is from a rigid pessimistic heart. It would be a tremendous thing to know that statehood would soon lead to salvation. Yet, in an attempt to keep credibility before the world and to do justice to the Word of God, we simply pray "even so come," and leave the timing with Him.

A writer of Israel My Glory magazine ends his article on the possibility of the rapture in 1981 with the following words:

Let us continue to look "for the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), "to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thess 1:10), and "to love His appearing" (2 Tim 4:8). But let us beware lest we allow our "prophetic" teaching to become "pathetic" teaching by groundless speculation and date-setting.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Will Varner, "Will the Rapture Occur in 1983?" Israel My Glory, February 1981, p. 12.

## APPENDIX I

### STATEHOOD ACHIEVED

The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, read by David Ben Gurion, on May 14, 1948, is as follows:

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world.

Exiled from the land of Israel the Jewish people remained faithful to it and all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom.

Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades they returned in the masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever-growing community, with its own economic and cultural life. They sought peace yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought the blessings of progress to all inhabitants of the country and looked forward to sovereign independence.

In the year 1897 the First Zionist Congress, inspired by Theodor Herzl's vision of the Jewish State, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national revival in their own country.

This right was acknowledged by the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, and reaffirmed by the Mandate of the League of Nations, which gave explicit international recognition to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and their right to reconstitute their National Home.

The recent holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the need to solve the problem of the homelessness and lack of independence of the Jewish people by means of the re-establishment of the Jewish State, which would open gates to all Jews and endow the Jewish people with equality of status among the family of nations.

The survivors of the disastrous slaughter in Europe and also Jews from other lands, have not desisted from their efforts to reach Eretz-Yisrael, in face of difficulties, obstacles and perils; and have not ceased to urge their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their ancestral land.

In the Second World War the Jewish people in Palestine made their full contribution to the struggle of the freedom-loving nations against the Nazi evil. The sacrifices of their soldiers and their war effort gained them the right to rank with the nations which founded the United Nations.

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution requiring the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. The General Assembly called upon the inhabitants of the country to take all the necessary steps on their part to put the plan into effect. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent State is unassailable.

It is the natural right of the Jewish people to lead, as do all other nations, an independent existence in its sovereign State.

Accordingly we, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the World Zionist Movement, are met together in solemn assembly today, the day of the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine; and by virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people and of the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

We hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine to be called Medinath Yisrael (The State of Israel).

We hereby declare that, as from the termination of the Mandate at midnight, May 14-15, 1948, and pending the setting up of the duly elected bodies of the State in accordance with a Constitution, to be drawn up by

the Constituent Assembly not later than October 1, 1948, the National Council shall act as the Provisional State Council and that the National Administration shall constitute the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, which shall be known as Israel.

The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace as conceived by the Prophets of Israel; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race, or sex; will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture; will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and will loyally uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The State of Israel will be ready to cooperate with the organs and representatives of the United Nations in the implementation of the Resolution of the Assembly of November 29, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the Economic Union over the whole of Palestine.

We appeal to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building of its State and to admit Israel into the family of nations.

In the midst of wanton aggression, we yet call upon the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve the ways of peace and play their part in the development of the State, on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its bodies and institutions--provisional and permanent.

We extend our hand in peace and neighborliness to all the neighboring states and their peoples, and invite them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all. The State of Israel is prepared to make its contribution to the progress of the Middle East as a whole.

Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task immigration and development and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfillment of the dream of generations for the redemption of Israel.

With trust in Almighty God, we set our hand to this Declaration, at this Session of the Provisional State Council, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the fifth of Iyar, 5708,

the fourteenth day of May, 1948.

(Signed) David Ben Gurion, Daniel Auster, Mordekhai Bentov, Yitzchak Ban Zvi, Eliahu Berligné, Fritz Bernstein, Rabbi Wolff Gold, Meir Grabovsky, Yitzchak Gruenbaum, Dr. Avraham Granovsky, Eliahu Dobkin, Meir Wilner, Zerach Warhaftig, Herzl Vardi, Rachel Cohen, Rabbi Kalman Cahana, Sa'adya Kubashi, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin, Meir David Levinstein, Zvi Luria, Golda Meyerson, Nachum Nir, Zvi Segal, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hachohen Fishman, David Zvi Pinkas, Aharon Zisling, Moshe Kolodni, Eliezer Kaplan, Avraham Katznelson, Felix Rosenblueth, David Remez, Berl Repetur, Mordekhai Shattner, Bentzion Sternberg, Baknor Shitreet, Moshe Shapira, Moshe Shertok.

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