

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO PALESTINE

BIBLE TEXT Isaiah 60 :8-10 ; 61 :4 ; Jeremiah 16 :14-18 ; 32 :42-44 ; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Amos 9:11-15; Matthew 24:32-35

LESSON 163 Junior and Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch s yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer s nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:32, 33).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 60:1-22

¹ Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

³ And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

⁴ Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side.

⁵ Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

⁶ The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.

⁷ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:32-35).

The Parable of the Fig Tree

Jesus said that we were to learn, or understand, a parable of the fig tree. Scripture teaches us that this fig tree represents the Jewish nation (**Jeremiah 24:1-10** ¹ The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs *were* set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. ² One basket *had* very good figs, *even* like the figs *that are* first ripe: and the other basket *had* very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. ³ Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. ⁴ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ⁵ Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for *their* good. ⁶ For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull *them* down; and I will plant them, and not pluck *them* up. ⁷ And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. ⁸ And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: ⁹ And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, to *be* a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. ¹⁰ And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers. **Hosea 9:10** ¹⁰ I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: *but* they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto *that* shame; and *their* abominations were according as they loved. **Micah 7:1** ¹ Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: *there is* no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit. **Luke 13:6-9** ⁶ He spake also this parable; A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. ⁷ Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? ⁸ And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung *it*: ⁹ And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down). During the past fifty years, and especially during the latter part of the period, this fig tree has been budding and putting forth leaves. A section of Palestine today is witnessing unparalleled activity. It is throbbing with life and energy. The Jews are throwing all their strength into building up their land. On May 15, 1948, we saw the new nation of Israel come into being. What does all this mean? According to prophecy, the recent remarkable change in universal Jewish conditions can mean only one thing•

Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

⁸ Who *are* these *that* fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

⁹ Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

¹⁰ And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

¹¹ Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought.

¹² For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted.

¹³ The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

¹⁴ The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves

the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this world is very near. The parable of the fig tree describes conditions today. There is a very close parallel between this parable and Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, which tells about a noise, a shaking, and a coming together, bone to his bone. These two portions of Scripture must be kept in mind as we continue the study of this lesson.

"The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

"And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

"Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

"Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

"And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

"So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

"And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no , breath in them.

"Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

"So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

"Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

"And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

"And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD" (Ezekiel 37: 1-14).

The Promised Latter Rain

We have learned that God told the Children of Israel that if they would hearken diligently and obey His commandments, He would bless them by sending the early and latter rain upon their land; and that if they disobeyed, the rains would be withheld (**Deuteronomy 11:10-17** ¹⁰ For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: ¹¹ But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: ¹² A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. ¹³ And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴ That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. ¹⁵ And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. ¹⁶ Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; ¹⁷ And *then* the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.). They did disobey; and for centuries the rains were withheld from the land. During the last half of the nineteenth century, however, climatic conditions changed in Palestine. In 1869-70 the rainfall was 12.5 inches; in 1877-78 it was 42.95 inches. These were exceptional years; however, the trend is

down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵ Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through *thee*, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

¹⁶ Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

¹⁷ For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

¹⁸ Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

¹⁹ The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

²⁰ Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

²¹ Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever,

remarkable. Between 1860 and 1892 these latter rains increased the average annual rainfall 60 percent. The average annual rainfall is now reported as 26.06294 inches, about double what it has been for centuries — greater than the rainfall of Berlin or London. (The average annual rainfall in Portland; Oregon, is 41.62 inches.)

The Beginning of the Return of the Jews

With the gradual return of the latter rains, there has been a most remarkable stirring of the "dry bones" of Ezekiel's prophecy. "These bones are the whole house of Israel" who shall be living in those momentous times; and the graves are the nations where the Jews have lived during the past nineteen centuries.

There was a very definite stirring of Jewish national hopes following the formation of the World Zionist Organization in 1897, a political, nonreligious movement whose object is the arranging for the return of the Jews to their own land. The organization was not taken very seriously at first. However, it grew, and in some of its past annual conventions a rising tide of enthusiasm has been observed.

"For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

"And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldean.

"Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 32:42-44).

Prior to the beginning of this movement the Jews were forbidden to own real estate in Palestine. When the Turkish revolution took place and the Young Turk Party came into power, the sultan wanted more money, so he permitted the Jews to purchase property. Then began a small but steady flow of Jewish immigrants to the land of promise. The population began to increase.

In 1827 there were 500 Jews in and around Jerusalem; but by 1882 the Jewish population had risen to 4,000. The British Mandate intensified the increase, and today Jerusalem is fast becoming a great center of the world. "Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her" (Ezekiel 5:5). During the 32 years from 1882 to 1914 Palestine absorbed only 2 percent of the vast wave of Jews migrating overseas; but from 1919 to 1931 it absorbed 15 percent. From 1932 to 1947, however, between 50 and 60 percent of all Jewish migration reached Palestine. There are no explanations for this population increase, such as the discovery of oil or gold, or the establishment of *new* industries, in the case of Palestine. It is nothing else but the fig tree budding and putting forth its leaves.

"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations" (Isaiah 61:4).

The Balfour Declaration

At the close of 1916, while most of the nations of the world were engaged in World War 1, England and France were in a very serious position, due to the fact that they were short of a certain mineral necessary in the manufacture of ammunition and high explosives. A young *Russian* Jew, professor of chemistry at the University of Manchester, England, invented a powerful explosive. The British government tested it and found it to be the most destructive explosive known at that time. It was called T.N.T. The chemist was asked how much he desired for his rights, as he was in a position to demand a huge sum. He replied, "I do not want any money, just liberate Palestine, and secure it for Jewish occupation. That is all I ask of you."

The British government, recognizing the fact that the invention saved the allied nations in their hour of peril, issued, on November 2, 1917, the Balfour Declaration, in which *she* promised to help the Jews establish a national home in Palestine. This very important document reads, in part:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object: it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

the branch of my planting,
the work of my hands,
that I may be glorified.

²² A little one shall become
a thousand, and a small
one a strong nation: I the
LORD will hasten it in his
time.

The Jews throughout the world were overjoyed on the issuance of this declaration. Some compared it with the proclamation of Persia's King Cyrus, which brought an end to the first exile. And Lord Balfour, on his dying bed, appealed to the British people to keep this promise to the Jewish race, and not to make a solemn pledge "a mere scrap of paper."

The Wresting of the Holy Land from the Turks

Palestine at this time was under the control of the Turks, having entered the war on the side of Germany. Britain, in protecting her manifold interests, found it absolutely necessary to clear the Turks out of Palestine.

One month after the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, Palestine was taken by the British Army under General Allenby. As General Allenby approached Jerusalem with his army, he deliberated on the best method of capturing it. He abhorred the thought of shedding blood in this sacred city, or destroying any part of it. General Allenby was a Christian. When at the outskirts of the city, he cabled King George asking whether or not he should destroy it, if capture appeared otherwise impossible. The King cabled him to pray and do as he felt led. In the meantime a rumor had reached the city that a strong army was approaching, led by, one whose name was **Allenby**, which meant to the Turks, **Allah Be, the Prophet of God**. A terrifying conviction seized the Turkish army that God was against them, and they decided to send a delegation to arrange for the city's surrender. God had the right man with the right name for the job.

While General Allenby and his officers were at prayer on December 11, 1917, and airplanes were flying overhead, the Turkish delegation appeared and surrendered the city. Jerusalem had been captured 27 times in the past but this is the only time it was delivered and preserved in direct fulfillment of the Scripture passage: "As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it" (Isaiah 31:5). In March, 1918, the Jewish flag was unfurled from the Tower of David in the ancient section of the city, and General Allenby proclaimed Palestine a Jewish State.

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

"But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

"Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.

"For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes" (Jeremiah 16:14-17).

The Partitions of the Land

Statesmen agreed that it would require about 60,000 square miles on both sides of the Jordan River to make the Jews self-sustaining in their own land. The Arabs, also liberated at the same time, were given more than 1,000,000 square miles of land. At that time the Arabs believed this settlement of the ancient Hebrew claim a fair and just one.

Later, this Jewish territory was cut down to 45,000 Square miles, over the protests of Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, who declared this remainder was the absolute minimum necessary to make the people self-sustaining. This was the first partition.

Britain then cut off the area east of the Jordan, making the Trans-Jordan state and giving it to a puppet sheik. This cut Palestine down to 10,000 square miles, and was covered by The Churchill White Paper, dated June 3, 1922. This was the second partition.

Britain unsuccessfully tried, in 1937, to bring about another partition. Jewish leaders were even willing to accept this, but the people rebelled. Britain succeeded, however, in getting the United Nations to partition the land. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly voted 33 to 13 for the partition, and the Jewish territory was reduced to about 5,500 square miles — an area little larger than the state of Connecticut. This was the third partition.

About 2,700 years ago, the Lord issued a warning to the nations that should part His land in the last days: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. I will also gather all nations,

and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for **my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land**" (Joel 3:1, 2). (**Daniel 11:36-39** ³⁶ And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. ³⁷ Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. ³⁸ But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. ³⁹ Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.*) The entire land of Palestine, as we know it today, is about a tenth of the original promised land. It is about 50 miles wide and 150 miles long. The original boundaries of the promised land were: the river of Egypt on the south, the Euphrates on the north, the Arabian Desert on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west, an area about 25 times the size of that now occupied by Israel (**Genesis 15:18** ¹⁸ In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: **Exodus 23:31** ³¹ And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.).

Britain became very eager to bring her mandate over Palestine to a close, and surrendered it to the Commission of The United Nations on May 15, 1948, ending 26 years of rule which started out with much promise and ended in chaos, dismay, and disappointment.

A New Nation

Jews all the world over had been looking forward to the time when the British Mandate would end. They made bold and definite preparations to take over all responsibility for the establishment of Palestine as a national homeland for the Jews. They prepared to declare that a new nation was born — the nation of ISRAEL. A leading, nation-wide publication carried a most impressive account of what transpired as May 14, 1948, drew to a close, and May 15 dawned. We quote from this article: "Israel is born in travail and hope. In the deepening dusk on May 14, 1948 — which to them was the 24th day of the month of Iyar in the 5,708th year after creation — the Jews of Palestine gathered in their cities and villages to celebrate the most fateful moment in their history. The British Mandate still had eight hours to run, but already the last high commissioner had retired to the cruiser in Haifa harbor. There he sat watching the night creep across the eastern Mediterranean and the twilight envelope yet another fragment of old empire. He was too far offshore to hear the Jews chanting their ancient HATIKVAH (Song of Hope), but he well knew the words: 'We have not forgotten, nor shall we forget, our solemn promise . . . ' **In** the all-Jewish city of Tel Aviv, the provisional capital, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion ended nearly 2,000 years of Jewish longing for a homeland with a great blow of his fist upon the speakers' table. 'The name of our state shall be Israel,' he intoned, and a new nation was born."

Recognition of the new state was immediate. The United States and Russia promptly recognized Israel. By March 22, 1949, 46 nations had granted recognition to Israel. On May 11, 1949, Israel was admitted to the United Nations as the fifty-ninth member.

On May 16, 1948, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the chemist who invented T.N.T., was named the provisional president of the new republic, which lies at the crossroads of the world, near the junction of three continents. On February 17, 1949, he was inaugurated as Israel's first elected President. For the first time in more than 2,000 years a Jew has been chosen by his own people to head a Jewish State.

Israel's first Supreme Court Justices in more than 2,000 years were recently sworn into office. In February, 1949, Israel's first elected assembly of 120 members met in Jerusalem. Since the Sanhedrin passed out of existence, some 2,000 years ago, there has been no such representative body in the Holy Land.

Trouble Ahead

As soon as the British Mandate expired and the new State of Israel was born, they had war on their hands. The Israelis were outnumbered two-to-one by the Arabs in Palestine and surrounded by a hostile Arab league of seven states: Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, with a combined

population of about 33,000,000. The speech declaring that a new nation had been born was barely finished when the embittered Arab nations began their attack. The position of the Israelis appeared hopeless. However, to the careful student of the Bible, there could be only one outcome of this war: victory for the forces of Israel. God's unalterable Word must be fulfilled. This was one of the steps in God's plan to re-establish His people in their own land. The "times of the

Gentiles" is fast running out.

In the ten and one-half months following this rebirth of Israel, their military forces had defeated the combined armies of six of the Arab states who opposed them. Armistice papers have been signed and peace treaties are being negotiated.

The old walled section of Jerusalem is still being held by units of the Arab Legion. The Israelis hold practically all of modern Jerusalem, and it is their intention to make this city the permanent capital of Israel. In fact, the Israeli Cabinet has already transferred five ministers and five government departments to Jerusalem, and a three-man committee has been authorized to supervise future transfers to the Holy City. Jesus said: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21 :24).

The Old Section of Jerusalem

The "old City" contains the historic holy places. Abraham was sent to the same spot where the Mosque of Omar now stands, to offer up his only son Isaac. There, on the sacred rock of Moriah, Solomon built the Temple. Ezra rebuilt it there after the Babylonian captivity. And there the Temple of Herod the Great stood, until it was destroyed by the Roman Emperor Titus in 70 A. D.

The Wailing Wall is the only portion of the old Temple to which the Jews now have access. For centuries they have gathered there every Friday afternoon to pray and to lament. One writer says: "They strike their faces toward the wall and wet the stones with their tears and cry, 'Oh, God send us the Messiah!' " In another place he says they kiss the stones and flood them with tears. A well-known Zionist leader describes the wailing in these words: "It is somewhat of a howling melody, a passionate shrieking, a heart-rending wailing, a chorus from which the words come sounding forth: 'How long yet, O God?' "

The greatest desire in the heart of the Jews is to rebuild the Temple. A large group of Jews in Jerusalem unsuccessfully petitioned the League of Nations for a portion of the old Temple site on which to build a new Temple; and some time ago a seminary was opened in Jerusalem for the purpose of instructing young men in the Temple ceremonies and the sacrifices. In the literature of this seminary appear these words: "The glorious day will soon come when the Temple will be erected anew and the sacerdotal rites again be introduced."

Immigration

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

"And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee" (Isaiah 60:8-10).

For centuries the Jews scattered throughout the world have prayed toward Jerusalem, with a longing for their native land. Now they are returning in great numbers from all parts of the world. Palestine has had no separate existence as a national state since the Roman conquest in 63 B. C., but has belonged to one empire and then to another. The Jews who arrived during the past century found an underpopulated territory with no more than 300,000 inhabitants. Up to a few years ago, six Arabs immigrated into the land for every Jew who returned. This was due mostly to the fact that the Jews have made the land productive during this time. Much that is possessed by the Israelis today was purchased from the Arabs in years past at a price far in excess of its actual value, considering its run-down condition.

It has taken terrible persecution to inaugurate the return of the Jews. Prior to World War II, the German Jews were opposed to the Zionist movement and the return to Palestine. They had great power and influence in Germany and had prospered immeasurably. But God's Word has to be fulfilled! All the Jews eventually must be gathered to their own land; so the Lord again made even "the wrath of man" to praise Him, and permitted a dictator to come whose avowed intention was

to remove all the Jews from this earth. The Jews in Germany and Austria who survived are now clamoring for the opportunity of emigrating to Israel.

Between the two world wars, approximately 500,000 Jews returned to their homeland. During the late war immigration was greatly hindered, mostly because of the stringent restrictions laid down by Great Britain. However, the Jews are now free to return; and 130,000 Jews, from 70 different countries, reached Israel in 1948. The latest figures indicate that they are returning at the rate of nearly 1,000 per day, a rate of immigration far in excess of any that even the United States has ever known in its history. On March 15, 1949, 7,000 immigrants streamed into the state. The Israel Office of Information in the United States expected that 350,000 Jews would return during 1949. Official census returns of November 8, 1948, show 782,000 under the Government of Israel, 713,000 being Israelis and the remainder Arabs and other nationalities. There were more than 1,000,000 Jews in their homeland at the close of 1949.

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

"That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

"And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God" (Amos 9:11-15).

Conditions in Tel Aviv are described as follows: "The streets are overflowing; housing is the problem; construction can be seen on all sides. The magnitude of the immigration to Israel from all parts of the world le can be realized only when one learns that within three or four years the number of immigrants will be more than twice the number of inhabitants as of the first of 1949." This rate of immigration would cause the United States to expand to over 500,000,000 within a three-year period if it were applied to us. However, they say that all the oppressed Jewry of the world can come and be welcome; and, although this poses many serious problems, they are somehow or other worked out. A writer said: "I have cudgelled my poor brains to find the proper word to describe what I have seen since I arrived in Israel and must fall back on Fantastic. I have toyed with surprising, astounding, unusual, — but there is but one word that described the situation here." They are returning to Israel by land, sea, and air. A well-known author says that he finds the Jews a "peculiar people" in the sense that they are "the only 'foreigners' who can come into a new country and be — as most of them say to you — 'at home.' "

Some anti-Semitic writers say that Jews throughout the world do not want to return to their homeland, and claim that reports of Jews in European camps wanting to go to Israel is Zionist propaganda designed to gain United Nations' support in a scheme to grab the riches of the land; but the exodus of Jews from all the countries to Israel refutes this contention. Reports show that 90 percent of the Jews in Displaced Persons Camps and 85 percent of those living outside the camps, in the U. S. Zone of Germany, have applied for emigration to Israel; and it is certain that an even greater percentage in other zones of Germany would prefer to be released to go to Israel. At the beginning of 1949 there were some 700,000 Jews in Italian and French transit camps awaiting passage to their homeland; and virtually all the 140,000 Jewish displaced persons in Germany and Austria expected to reach Israel before the end of the year.

Development

The huge Jordan Valley Authority, calling for an expenditure of some \$250,000,000, is one of the biggest jobs ever undertaken by man. It will divert the Jordan River into a vast system of irrigation channels. An outstanding authority says that 600,000 acres of desert land can be brought under cultivation, thus providing fertile land for many thousands of people.

A town-planning expert has announced that numerous medium- sized cities of 50,000 to 60,000 population will be built throughout Israel. They have undertaken a large housing program calling for 20,000 units in 1949 and another 20,000 in 1950.

Expanding industry will absorb most of the newcomers with jobs according to the skill of the workman. The government is encouraging the expansion of textile, chemical, electrical appliance, and light-machinery industries. American rayon and plastic firms are setting up factories in Israel. The glass industry there is destined shortly to become one of the largest in the eastern Mediterranean area.

The sum of \$35,000,000 is now being spent on farm expansion, to feed Israel's fast-growing population, with at least 15 percent of the people to be engaged in general farming, as compared with the present 10 percent. Citrus fruits, Israel's main export commodity, are grown by 5 percent of the population. Several million cases are exported annually, and take prizes in world markets. Farm cooperatives in Galilee are being created. The food output is soaring in sections of the country once occupied by Arabs who worked with primitive tools. Young Israelis, trained in government schools, are using modern methods and machinery, producing twice as much wheat and five times as many grapes per acre as the Arabs grew on the same land. Other farm commodities are barley, corn, alfalfa, vegetables, potatoes, honey, and olives. "The desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited" (Ezekiel 36:34, 35). Many millions of trees are being planted, a fulfillment of prophecy (**Ezekiel 36:8-9** ⁸ But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. ⁹ For, behold, I *am* for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: **Isaiah 60:13** ¹³ The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.), several millions being planted in memory of the defenders of Israel and the 6,000,000 Jews annihilated by the Nazis.

The value of the chemical and mineral deposits in the Dead Sea is beyond computation. As fast as man removes these valuable deposits, nature restores them. It has been said that all the money ever minted since the days of Julius Cesar would not equal the cost price of this vast treasure if it had to be purchased in the mass. All this wealth has been hidden in the Dead Sea for thousands of years. No one knew it was there, and it was not discovered until the land was returned to its rightful owners — the Jews. It is said: "Palestine was Considered a poor price for any nation, but now We know it will be one worth fighting for, because of the stupendous riches, especially of the Dead Sea."

The Flag and Language

The colors of the Israeli flag are blue and white, the colors worn by the High Priest when he entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement when the Temple was still standing. In the center is the six-pointed star of David. The star is formed by two triangles interlaced, also of blue. We are informed: "One triangle represents the 'trinity' of man, i. e., body, soul and spirit. The other triangle, according to Jewish history, represents the God-head which, when the Messiah comes will be explained by Him."

The official and national language of Israel is Hebrew, which has been considered by all to be one of the dead languages. Everyone starts to learn the language upon arrival there. Palestine now has 17 daily newspapers, and eight of them are in the Hebrew language. We must bear in mind that what we are seeing today is just a forerunner of what is to take place. The fig tree is budding and putting forth leaves. "Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 37:5, 6). We must ever be mindful of the fact that the re-establishment of Israel upon their own land, and the accompanying blessings, both spiritual and temporal, are predicated upon Israel's acknowledging Jehovah as their Lord. "And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD" (Ezekiel 37:13, 14). Then will come to pass the salvation, or spiritual birth, of a nation in a day. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8).

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his

only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. . . . And the land shall mourn, every family apart" (Zechariah 12:10-12). We thus understand that the day of Israel's redemption is to be preceded by a mourning so deep and despairing that they will separate themselves and mourn as family-groups. There will be a deep sense of sin in their hearts as they come face to face with their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Pierced One. There is no evidence of such extreme mourning and contrition in Palestine today.

It is evident that God has not yet been recognized by the Israeli nation. There has been some lip service in public pronouncements, but the fact is that the Jews are establishing a materialistic state in Palestine. This is perfectly consistent with the ideology of the political movement called Zionism, which is the driving force behind the Israeli government. Zionism has never professed to have an interest in God or in His Word. The United Religious Party received only 17 out of a total of 121 seats in the first election for a Constituent Assembly. The Jewish national anthem makes no mention of God. The statements of Zionist leaders, in telling what they have done, make no reference to God or His sovereign will for Israel. But even though the Jews are going back in unbelief, yet they are steadily and surely being gathered by a Power greater than their own.

It is very obvious that the Lord is gathering Israel. They will not be gathered by the United Nations Organization, nor by any world-wide Zionist movement, nor by any great world power; but the Lord, the One who scattered them, will gather Israel. He will gather them out of all the countries, and He will plant them in their own land.

More has happened in the past decade or two, to fulfill prophecy regarding the Jews, than in any prior five-hundred-year period. The fig tree is hastily putting forth her leaves — and we know that summer is nigh! It behooves us, therefore, to look up, and lift up our heads, for our "redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).