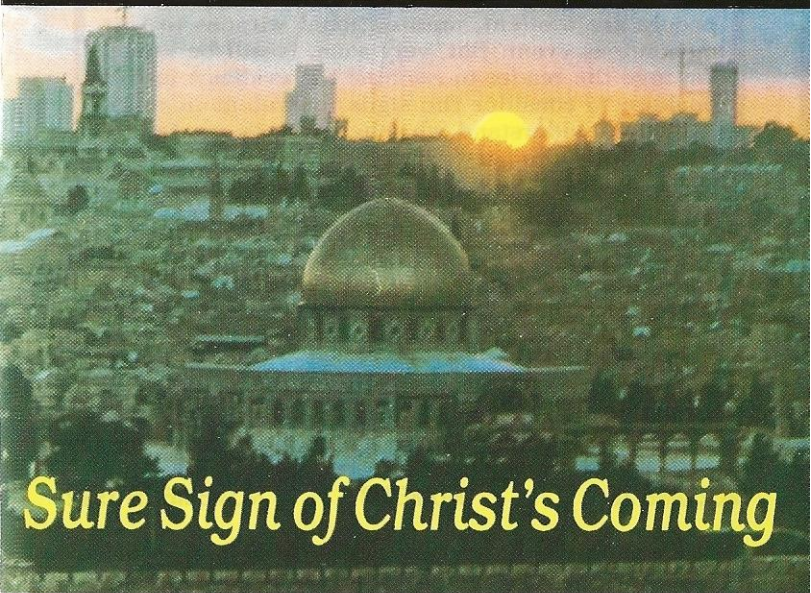


Israel's Revival



Sure Sign of Christ's Coming

NO other nation in history has had such a colorful and remarkable story, nor has held the attention of the world for so long. The Jewish community was constituted a nation over 3,500 years ago, whilst encamped in a dry, dusty wilderness. During the years that followed, the nation of Israel has felt the heights of world glory, and experienced the valleys of persecution and oppression. Yet they have continued to exist, when more mighty nations have disappeared. What is the secret of their unique history, and future destiny? It is found in the purpose that God has with this ancient people — a purpose that will continue notwithstanding all the efforts of mankind to avert it. The remarkable development of the State of Israel in the past forty years is the subject of clear Bible prophecy, and is presented as a sign of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible predicts a “set time to favor Zion”, and adds that “when the LORD shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory” (Psalm 102:13,16). So many signs abound in the political, social and national affairs of today’s world that we can expect the advent of Christ to be at any time. The Jewish people are a silent, unintentional witness to this momentous event. But, very soon, it will be a fact. We urge the reader to examine the evidence in this booklet; to consider the signs to evident in world affairs; to understand why these things are important to one’s own personal destiny.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

Edited by G.E.Mansfield,

Logos Publications, Box 220, Findon, Sth Australia 5023

A Bi-monthly Supplement to Logos Magazine

Additional or separate copies supplied at \$5 annually

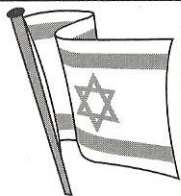
Declaring the Truth of the Scriptures revealed for the salvation of those who are prepared to examine the claims of Holy Writ; and presenting the glorious message of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of God’s eternal Kingdom on Earth.

VOLUME 38

NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER 1992

Israel's Revival



Sure Sign of Christ's Coming

Israel is more than a Jewish foothold in the Middle East; it is a Movement destined to have world-shaking consequences, affecting the lives of every living person upon the globe.

WORLD NEWS constantly focuses the spotlight on the animosities, violence and bloodshed that repeatedly erupt in the Middle East. It reveals an ominous record of antagonism that threatens to plunge the world into the most devastating war known to history. From the terrifying nature of the weapons of destruction today being stockpiled or "improved", it is obvious that a nuclear war could completely destroy civilisation, and render the earth uninhabitable. And the most critical point of impact is the Middle East.

From the time the Jews commenced to return to their ancient homeland at the invitation of the British following the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948; onwards to the occupation of the city of Jerusalem by the Israelis in 1967, and, since then, the Middle East has been in a state of constant international ferment.

These events fulfil Bible prophecy, enlivening the hopes of Bible students. They testify that the world is on the eve of the most dramatic event of all time: *the personal, visible return of Christ in power and glory*. At the same time, they also warn that the nations are rapidly moving towards the universal battle, which the Bible describes as *Armageddon*.

This presents a personal challenge. We can live in the present with hope, or with fear. We can share the glory of Christ at his coming, or face the terror of World War III.

Christ prophesied that the last days will reveal "distress of nations, with perplexity... men's hearts failing them for fear", but told his disciples that "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28).

It is obvious that the Middle East is crucial to the world's future. The major powers are always concerned when trouble erupts in that area.

WHY IS ISRAEL TOLERATED?

The tiny nation of Israel, with only about four and a half million inhabitants, living on a minuscule area of ground, remains a bone of contention in world politics, a problem that the major powers fear to solve.

Consider the attitude of the northern power of Russia. It has not hesitated to attack and invade nations that have stood in its path to world domination in the past, yet it does not do so to Israel. Not yet! When Russia invaded Hungary, and brutally smashed its way through the cities of that unhappy nation, ruthlessly gunning down any who dared oppose it, the Western World protested, but did nothing! When the Soviet Republic ordered its forces into Afghanistan, callously bombing its towns and citizens with no consideration of life, a vigorous protest was made by the West, but no military intervention to save it.

But the Middle East is treated differently. When Iraq threatened the security of the area, the major powers became militarily and politically involved. Yet, whilst Russia continues to support its allies in Syria, Iraq, Iran and elsewhere, supplying them with arms, it hesitates to physically intervene against Israel.

Why? Because statesmen know that whereas invasion elsewhere might be tolerated, for Russia to attack Israel will mean war on an immeasurable scale. That is because of Israel's unique position, and the political importance of the Middle East to the modern world.

But the significant fact to Bible students is that the very conditions existing there today were predicted in the Bible 2,500 years ago — together with their outcome!

ISRAEL IS UNIQUE!

Israel is one of the oldest countries in the world, and, paradoxically, also one of the youngest! It is the only country to have been reborn out of antiquity, revived after a struggle as

dramatic as any recorded in the Old Testament.

The Jews are the only people to have been scattered throughout the world, bitterly persecuted by most powers for over 2,000 years, and yet gathered together into a nation once again. Israel's language (*Hebrew*) is the only speech to have been resurrected from a dead language to a living, virile, modern one. The nation exists on a strip of land so narrow that on most maps its name must be printed outside its borders.

Yet it possesses more historic and religious sites of significance to the world than any other country.

Compressed into those narrow borders is a microcosm of the whole world, for the average Israeli, or his parent, have migrated from any of more than a hundred different lands. To live in Israel is like living in a pressure-cooker; it is always under tension. Yet the nation continues to expand and develop more rapidly than other larger countries.

It is a nation where the almost miraculous becomes the normal! When Joshua led the people into the Promised Land 3,500 years ago, he had to battle against "seven nations greater and mightier" (Deuteronomy 7:1). When the modern State was formed in 1948, it also had to battle against seven nations "greater and mightier" than Israel at the time: Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, and Lebanon! The invading Arabs were supported by a population of 40 million against 600,000 Jews in the Land. The Arabs were professional soldiers, better armed, and with far greater financial resources than the Israelis. Yet the latter won, and the State was formed.

Against great odds, victory came again in the *Suez Crisis* of 1956, the *Six Day War* of 1967, the *Yom Kippur* war of 1973—in spite of the most sophisticated weapons being supplied to its enemies by Russia.

There is more than Jewish brains and muscles in this success. It was predicted by God and recorded in the Bible. Therefore, in Israel the world witnesses a modern miracle. The nation is here to stay, for its destiny is clearly marked out in Bible prophecy. Israel's revival is the great sign of Christ's return.

It is also a prelude to Armageddon!

WHY ISRAEL EXISTS

Israel exists because God made a promise to Abraham, the

progenitor of the Jewish people, and a man of great faith. That promise forms part of the gospel. Paul declared (Galatians 3:8): "God preached before the gospel unto Abraham". Hence, long before the advent of Christ, the gospel had been revealed in the form of promises to the fathers of the Jewish race. Paul, also wrote: "Jesus was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to *confirm the promises made unto the fathers*" (Romans 15:8). The Lord Jesus Christ further taught a Gentile: "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). This statement must be an embarrassment to religionists who claim that God has no future for the Jewish nation.

Among the promises made to Abraham because of his faith and obedience, God declared: "I will make of thee a great nation" (Genesis 12:2). He invited Abraham to survey all the Middle Eastern territory through which he had journeyed, declaring: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever... Walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Genesis 13:14-17). This promise has not yet been fulfilled. Israel is not a great nation; and Abraham does not dwell in the land! Therefore, before the promises can be fulfilled, a change must come in the status of Israel, and Abraham must be raised from the dead.

Can we be sure of such a future? Undoubtedly! God has not only given His word to Abraham, but supplied a witness verifying it, guaranteeing what He has promised. The Jewish people constitute that witness, for God declared of Israel: "Ye are my witnesses that I am God" (Isaiah 43:12).

The Jewish people witness to the truth of God's Word because their very preservation as a people throughout the ages, and the current revival of the nation in the Holy Land are clearly God-designed and God-directed. The prophet Ezekiel declared: "Thus saith the LORD God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned, whither ye went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the nations... for I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (Ezekiel 36:22-24).

In that declaration, God stated that though the people of

Israel would ignore His teachings and ways, God would honour the promise He made to Abraham by restoring Israel as a nation in their ancient territory. The revival of Israel today is proof positive that we can rely upon His Word.

This was also the theme of apostolic preaching. When the Lord was about to ascend into heaven, his apostles asked him: "Wilt thou at this time restore *again the kingdom unto Israel?*" He replied that it was "not for them to know the times nor the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:6-7). Jesus did not deny that the kingdom would be given again to Israel; but declared that the time was not then ripe!

Shortly afterwards he ascended into heaven, and as he did so, two angels addressed the apostles with these thrilling words: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). The personal, visible return of Christ to reign on earth, and the restoration of Israel as proclaimed by the prophets, became the basic doctrines upon which first century Christianity was established. So Peter preached: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive *until the times of restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

The revival of Israel in the land today is preliminary to the restoration of those things spoken of by the prophets.

A HISTORY OF SUFFERING AND OPPRESSION

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He constituted them as "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). God Himself, was their heavenly king (Judges 8:23), and they were His subjects. When kings on earth were appointed to reign on His behalf, they did so as His vice-regents under His direction. They are described in the Bible as being seated on "the throne of the LORD as king" (1Chronicles 29:23). Of Solomon, the son of the illustrious king David, it is narrated: "The LORD hath chosen Solomon... to sit upon *the throne of the kingdom of the LORD* over Israel" (1Chronicles 28:5).

But because the people refused to heed God's Word, the

enemies of Israel were permitted to gain ascendancy over them. The nation was broken up, and Jews were scattered throughout the earth. The people had been warned: "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other... and among these nations shalt *thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life*" (Deuteronomy 28:64, 66).

The Jews turned their backs on God 1,900 years ago when they demanded the crucifixion of His Son, declaring, "His blood be on us and on our children". In doing so they denied themselves the help that God could and would have given them had they turned to Him in truth. Instead, their history for the past 2,000 years has been a record of persecution and suffering. During the German holocaust directed by Hitler in the Second World War, some 5,800,000 Jews perished in Nazi concentration camps. Even today, widespread hatred of the Jews is evident throughout the world, dramatised in the way in which Arab terrorists and others wage unrelenting warfare upon them.

However, notwithstanding the terrible story of persecution and oppression exacted against the Jews over the years, God's purpose will be fulfilled. Israel cannot be destroyed. The prophet Jeremiah declared: "For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11). Israel's history witnesses to the truth of that declaration. It was stated on the eve of their overthrow in BC.606 by the then mighty, but now defunct, empire of Babylon. Since then, every world power has dominated the Jew, and many nations, like Germany, have attempted to exterminate him. But in vain. The Jew has stood at the graveside of every persecutor. God's prophecy has proved true: "All they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey" (Jeremiah 30:16).

The prophet significantly adds: "*In the latter days ye shall*

consider it" (v.24). The "latter days" are upon us, and the things predicted relating to Israel and the world are coming to pass, thoroughly vindicating God's Word.

But though Israel will do all in its power to retain its present hold on its land, the Bible foretells that Israel will be subjected to a crisis instigated by Russia that will be beyond its ability to overcome. It will erupt into what the prophets describe as "*the time of Jacob's trouble*; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7). The latter-day "Jacob" will only be saved, as the prophet shows, by divine intervention through the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A THREE-PRONGED PROPHECY TODAY FULFILLING

The return of the Jews to their ancient homeland and the manner in which the ancient lands of the Bible are springing into life, not only fulfil Bible prophecy, but also herald the imminence of the most dramatic event of all time: the return of Christ. The Bible declares: "When the Lord shall build up Zion (*another name for Jerusalem from whence is derived the title: Zionist*) he shall appear in his glory" (Psalm 102:16). The period when this will occur is described as "*the set time to favour Zion*" (v.13). The apostle Paul adds this comment: "If the casting away of them (the Jews) be the reconciling of the world (in that Gentiles can be reconciled to God through Christ), what shall the receiving (restoration) of them be, but *life from the dead*" (Romans 11:15).

Thus both Old and New Testaments point to the revival of Israel as the great sign of Christ's coming.

Consider the sequence in the following prophetic statement: "Thus saith the LORD God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen (*Heb. nations*) whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all" (Ezekiel 37:21, 22). This prophecy requires three stages:

- 1. The restoration of the people to their ancient territory.**
- 2. The revival of the nation.**
- 3. The establishment of a monarchy with one king.**

Two parts of that prophecy have had partial fulfilment. It first predicts the restoration of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. In AD.70 the Romans captured Jerusalem and des-

stroyed its Temple. In AD.135, the Roman Emperor Hadrian rechanged the name of the city to *Colonia Aelia Capitolina*, issuing a law prohibiting Jews ever to return to it!

With the fall of the Roman Empire in the East in 1453, Palestine (as the Land of Israel was then called) came under the control of the Moslems, and eventually was governed by Turkey. World War I (1914-18) saw Turkey join the Central Powers of Europe, and declare war on Great Britain. In 1917, under General Allenby, the British forces attacked Turkey from Egypt, and though other points of conflict were bitterly contested, Jerusalem fell without a shot being fired. The *Balfour Declaration* was proclaimed by the British Government in 1917, making provision for the Jewish people to return, and establish a National Home in Palestine. Thus World War I witnessed a partial fulfilment of this ancient prophecy.

THE NATION REVIVED

On April 25, 1920, Britain was granted a mandate from the *League of Nations* to govern Palestine and implement this policy. Christadelphians not only recognised the event as a fulfilment of prophecy clearly recorded in the Bible, but a vindication of their interpretation of the prophets. One of their number, the late Dr. J. Thomas, in a book entitled *Elpis Israel*, published in 1849, wrote: "There is then a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation of Christ, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom. The pre-adventual colonisation of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agriculturists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth... under the efficient protection of the British power... But from the subjugation of the Jews for a short time after they have been colonised, the protection of the shadowing power (i.e. Britain) would seem to have been inefficient" (pages 441,444).

It can be appreciated with what excitement the Christadelphian community viewed the developments in the land as the Jews commenced to return and "build up its waste cities" as predicted (Amos 9:14).

World War 1 resulted in the first section of this three-

pronged prophecy having token fulfilment. But between World War I and World War II, the condition of the Jews in Palestine and Europe worsened. In Palestine, the Arabs hardened their attitude against the Jews; and in Europe, the Hitler regime proclaimed its policy of genocide against them. The Arabs rejected the concept of the *Balfour Declaration*, and waged guerilla warfare on the Jews who retaliated in kind. Palestine became an arena of debate, tension and terrorism. Violence erupted on all sides and many were guilty of foolish, and often cruel incidents.

But the Jews had nowhere else to go. In Europe they were persecuted by the rising power of Nazi Germany, and they lived in uncertainty elsewhere. In spite of the turmoil of the Middle East, it was, at least, a home. They continued to return, but pressure was exerted on the British by the Arabs who controlled the increasingly important oil reserves of the world, until Jewish migration was reduced to a mere trickle.

So bitter became the opposition to Jews in Palestine under the British, so great was the hatred generated against them in other parts, so many were being executed in the gas chambers of Germany, that a solution had to be found. When, after World War II, Germany lay battered and bleeding through the aerial bombardment of the Allies, and its concentration camps were exposed so that the frightful atrocities experienced by the Jews were made public for the first time, World Jewry demanded that they be granted independence in their ancient homeland.

In 1947 their case was debated by the *United Nations*, and in a remarkable decision in which, for the first, and almost only time in history, the USA and USSR agreed on a common international policy: the Jews were granted nationhood in Palestine.

So, after 2500 years of exile, Israel again came into existence; and the second part of Ezekiel's prophecy had token fulfilment: "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel". World War II had resulted in the establishment of nationhood for the Jewish people.

GOD'S APPOINTED MONARCH

The final stage in the development predicted by the prophet is the restoration of the monarchy of Israel. The last king to reign upon the Throne of David, described as the "throne of the Lord" (1Chronicles 29:23), was Zedekiah. He was told by Ezekiel the prophet, that the Throne would be overturned, "until

he come whose right it is" (Ezekiel 21:27). This coming king is the Lord Jesus Christ concerning whom his mother was told by the angel: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

Jesus Christ is the king referred to by Ezekiel. And as two parts of this three-pronged prophecy have had token fulfilment, it is certain that the third part will also be fulfilled: ***"One king shall be king to them all"*** (Ezekiel 37:22).

That king is the very one whom the Jewish people dragged before Pilate 1900 years ago, demanding "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked: "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered: "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:12-15). Under pressure, Pilate ordered the execution of Jesus by the Roman method of crucifixion, and over his cross was placed the caption announcing the reason: *This is... the King of the Jews*.

In fact, Jesus was both born and died as "king of the Jews". At his birth there came wise men from the east inquiring: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2), and when he died it was because his accusers challenged his teaching, that he was appointed to rule (John 18:37; 19:12). Christ affirmed that he was appointed as king, and declared that he had come into the world to bear witness unto that truth (John 18:37). He spoke a parable to the apostles because they imagined that "the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11). In it he likened himself to a nobleman who had to go into a far country (i.e. heaven) to receive a kingdom, "and to return" (v. 12). At his return, he would discipline and humble those who "hated him" and would not have him "to reign over them" (v. 14), and reward his servants who faithfully fulfilled his will.

Later, Jesus predicted the impending overthrow of Jerusalem (fulfilled when the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD.70), the scattering of the Jews into all parts of the earth, and their ultimate return to their ancient homeland.

He declared: "They (The Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*." (Luke 21:24).

Jesus thus taught that the Gentile domination of Jerusalem

was to be limited until the times of Gentile domination would be on the point of collapse. That time is now, as Psalm 102:16 clearly teaches.

It is amazing, that, though the nation of Israel was revived following World War II, the UN did not grant Jerusalem to the Jews. It was to remain an *international city* belonging to neither Jews nor Arabs, but with free access. However, in 1948 the Jordanians annexed Jerusalem, and denied the Jewish people entrance to the city. For almost twenty years, Jews could not enter the ancient part of the city of Jerusalem, even though it was their holy city, the centre of their worship.

But, in 1967 an event of greatest significance occurred. During May, Egypt demanded the withdrawal of UN peace-keeping troops from the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. Egypt then closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. These acts by Egypt were seen as a prelude to war. On June 5, 1967, the Israeli Air Force attacked airfields in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, thereby pre-empting the obvious intent of Egypt and her allies, and the *Six Day War* broke out. In an amazing manner, one of the swiftest victories in history was won by the Jewish forces. In five days, Egyptian military might was shattered: its army defeated and dispersed; its airforce destroyed, and Israel was victorious. But then, Jordan, believing that Israel was weakened through the effort, and that its main forces were far to the south, declared war. Israeli authorities appealed to King Hussein of Jordan not to do so, but in vain. The Jordanian army also suffered a disastrous defeat and Israel occupied the territory today described as the West Bank, ancient Samaria and Judea, including such cities as Nablus, Hebron and JERUSALEM!

Jesus' prophecy had been fulfilled!

The Jewish occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 provided dramatic and literal fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy recorded in Luke 21:24 indicating that "the times of the Gentiles" were about to be fulfilled, and that the world had entered the final stages leading to Christ's coming and Armageddon.

JEWRY TO BE CONVERTED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR MESSIAH

In these events, Jews remain opposed to the true gospel found in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote: "I would not that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (or secret)... that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *UNTIL* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer (*Christ*), and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they (the Jews) are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' (*Abraham etc.*) sakes" (Romans 11:25-28). Thus, the Jewish people would be blind to the true identity of Christ until "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in", at which time Christ will return, discipline, humble and convert the Jewish people.

Then will be fulfilled the final development in Ezekiel's three-pronged prophecy: "one king shall be king unto them all. " Christ will, at last, be "king of the Jews".

THE GREAT CONTEST OF ARMAGEDDON IMMINENT

That third stage in the prophecy will also witness World War III — *Armageddon!*

Observe the development: *World War I* witnessed the way opened for the Jews to return to their land; *World War II* brought the establishment of the State of Israel; *World War III* will introduce Christ to the world as the Victor of Armageddon. We are therefore living in very significant times.

Christ's prediction concerning Jerusalem endorses other prophecies of the Bible. For example, the prophet Joel refers to the time when God will "bring again the captivity of Judah (the Jewish people) and Jerusalem (the city)", at which time He will also "gather all nations" to Jerusalem to battle (see Joel 3:1-2; Zechariah 14:1-2).

As we have stated, 1917 saw the beginning of the return of the Jewish People; 1967 saw the city freed from Gentile domination; and since then there has been an increasing involvement of major powers in the future of the Middle East! These prophecies are being remarkably vindicated.

Following the Egyptian-Israeli Yom Kippur war in 1973, when the Arabs were defeated by Israel for the fourth time, they changed their tactics, and used oil as a weapon against the Jews. The impact of that has been adversely felt by the whole world both economically and commercially. As nations have become more and more thirsty for oil, so the importance of the Middle East has increased, as was indicated in the Iraq/Kuwaiti war of 1991. This international thirst for oil has proved to be an eco-

nomic benefit for the previously impoverished Arab nations; but politically it has become a most explosive problem. If any of the major powers dominated the area, it could hold the rest of the world, and particularly Europe, to ransom! And Bible prophecy shows that Russia will attempt to dominate the Middle East in order to control the world. Russia's actions will trigger *World War III*: the conflict that will introduce Christ to the world.

World statesmen are fearful of Russian involvement in Turkey and the Middle East; the Bible predicted it 2,500 years ago! Ezekiel warned of an invasion of the land of Israel "in the latter days" by a power "from the uttermost parts of the north" (Ezekiel 38:15-16 RV) to "take a spoil and to take a prey". This power is described as "Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" (v. 2). These are ancient territories familiar to Ezekiel but which no longer appear on the world's atlas under those titles. Magog is ancient Scythia, but the Scythians, according to *The Pelican Atlas of Ancient History*, migrated to eastern Germany, which Russia influences today. The word "chief" in Hebrew is a proper noun, and should be rendered **Ros** as it is in the Revised Version of the Bible. Ros was the ancient name for Russia. Hence the prophecy refers to a time when Russian power is exercised in Germany *as it does today*. Meshech and Tubal can be identified with Moscow and Tobolski, major cities of the northern power.

Ezekiel's prophecy, therefore, predicts an invasion of the Middle East by Russia in the latter days, at a time when "the people of Israel" occupy the land (see v. 16). That is the great threat to world peace today. Remember that Ezekiel refers to "the people of Israel" in "the latter days"—and prior to 1948 the term *Israel* had not been used geographically nor national, for a period as long as 2,500 years! The prophecy therefore applies to events subsequent to 1948.

The prophecy further describes the condition of the people of Israel as living in "unwalled villages" (*kibbutzim* or rural settlements: v. 11), as "gathered out of many people", and occupying lands that "have been always waste", but to which a measure of fertility has been restored (v. 8). The restoration of the people, revival of the nation, transformation of the land, and increasing interest of nations in its future have been brought about since 1917. In these things we witness the fulfilment of

Bible prophecy announcing the imminence of Christ's return.

ANTAGONISM — AND RUSSIAN INTENTIONS

After more than thirty years of hostility by her neighbors, Israel experienced a minor, but significant, change when, on Feb. 26, 1980, the State established formal diplomatic relations with Egypt. However, although this move represented a landmark in Middle-East relationships, the pathway to peace has remained both slippery and ill-defined. With other Arab powers, Egypt has continued to maintain a rigid position in regard to Palestinian self-government. At the same time, for reasons of self-preservation, Israel has shown reluctance to comply with UN Resolution 242, that requires the nation to withdraw from Arab-occupied territories. Further antagonism occurred when the Israeli Parliament, on July 30, 1980, passed a Bill which defined Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal and indivisible" capital.

Middle-East turbulence will reach a climax when Russia invades the area, which is clearly predicted in Bible prophecy. But the attack of Russia will not succeed — not because of any protest of the West, nor any military action that might occur, but because Christ will intervene. Zechariah 14:3 declares: "The LORD shall go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle".

The prophecy of Daniel 11:40-45 adds to that of Ezekiel. He describes how that the Russian power from the north will sweep through the Middle East in a lightning attack against Egypt with Libya and Ethiopia as his supporters (v. 43), and so "the land of Egypt shall not escape". This prophecy shows that "at the time of the end" Russia will attack Egypt.

That is the reason why, when Egypt was in close alliance with Russia in the days of President Nasser, we published our conviction that Egypt's policy must change in that regard, and turning from Russia she must tie in her lot with the West. That has since come to pass under the rule of the late President Sadat.

Gradually the Middle East, and the whole world, is politically conforming to the requirements of Bible prophecy. That is obvious to those who clearly recognise the facts of both. Therefore, whilst people might be fearful and afraid of current developments, those who understand the significance of Bible prophecy look upon the scene with hope. The Lord Jesus Christ declared: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look

up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

CHRIST'S INTERVENTION

It will not be the powers of the West that will turn Russia back from world domination, and destroy the spirit of militarism that will sweep through the world, but Christ. Prior to the battle of Armageddon he will return from heaven, to raise from the dead those who have known his will, rewarding eith eternal life those who obeyed it. In predicting the events relating to the time of the end, Daniel speaks of the return of Christ, and declares: "At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:1-2).

Christ will return for that purpose. The world needs his strong, infallible, guiding hands, and the signs of the times proclaim the imminence of his coming. He will return personally and visibly to this earth, to set up God's kingdom, and to reign from Jerusalem over a world at peace. Consider the evidence of the following Scriptures.

Christ's Coming: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye (the apostles) have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The Metropolis of His Rule: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jeremiah 3:17).

The Nature of the Kingdom He will Establish on Earth: "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

The Effect of his Rule: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains (at Jerusalem)... and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of

the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Christ will intervene at Armageddon to establish his power in the earth. He will make Jerusalem the metropolis of his rule, and his power will extend to all nations. With almighty power he will compel nations to submit to his authority; and with divine wisdom he will legislate for their benefit. He will establish his kingdom on earth, and, instead of war, he will maintain peace in the earth.

OUR PERSONAL SALVATION

The coming of Christ will bring salvation and immortality to those who have sought to obey his will in their lives. To this end, Christ commissioned his Apostles: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Personal salvation requires effort on our part. We must put ourselves in the Way of Truth as outlined in the Bible, for it is the only way to life eternal (Romans 1:16). We must obey the principles set down in the Word, and in so doing we will discover the means to real and lasting happiness and contentment. If we faithfully seek to please God, we will have a hope that will provide security beyond all the difficulties we might face in this present experience.

As God is fulfilling His ancient promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so he invites Gentiles to participate in the same benefits. The three steps to salvation are: Belief, Baptism, Obedience. When these principles are faithfully followed, we can experience the greatest revival of all, for Paul says: "For if the casting away of them (*the dispersion of Israel in AD.70*) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be (*the return to the land of their Fathers*), but life from the dead?" (Romans 11:15). The promise of immortality is the grand hope of the Bible. The restoration of Israel is the guarantee of that!

QUESTIONS upon the matter presented in this booklet are invited, and should be addressed to *The Editor, Herald of the Coming Age, Box 220, Findon, South Australia 5023.*

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...or, as the name implies, the *Brethren of Christ* (Heb. 2:11), are a body of people associated together by a belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12); and by immersion into Christ (Gal. 3:27) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and identification with his resurrection (Rom. 6:5).

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