

ISRAEL IN THE END OF TIME

Today we see that Israel is losing one part after another of their country. The state of Israel is seeking help from the UN, USA and EU. They negotiate with their hostile minded neighbours to secure peace, but the result is that they have to abandon piece after piece of the "promised land" in return for a very doubtful peace.¹ What will it lead to?

There is no doubt that Israel had a special commission in the time of the Old Testament. Abraham is recognized as the ancestor of the Jews. He had faith in God, contrary to the people in the surrounding countries who worshipped different idols. Since he believed in God among so many heathen nations, God wanted to be with Abraham and bless him in a very special way.

History shows that the Jewish nation did not always put their trust in God. They departed from God and worshipped idols. They broke the commandments of God and His statutes, and did what was evil in the sight of God. They had to suffer the consequences of their choices, just like us. The promises given them were explicit. If they would heed the voice of the Lord, their God, and do what was right in His sight, obey His commandments and keep all His statutes.... then God would be with them and protect them. If they wanted to go their own way, they would no longer enjoy the protection of God. In this way we can see that the promises of God throughout the Bible rest on specific terms and conditions.² The Israelites often followed their own inclinations even if they were contrary to the directions given by God. History tells us that whenever they did not confess their sins and repent, they would very soon be taken captive by other rulers. They were scattered and mixed with other nations, robbed and persecuted. They had to face the consequences of their own actions. They had to suffer the consequences of departing from the way of God, His commandments and statutes.

The Jews had a sanctuary service. If they had sinned, they were to take a lamb without blemish, confess their sin and kill the animal themselves. Of course, this ceremony could not save the person performing this act. The sacrifice was to be slain in faith, looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ who would give His life once and for all, so "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."³

AS A MAN

After the fall of Adam, the human race was lost since God had said that "the wages of sin is death..."⁴ However,

God had a rescue plan. God loved mankind so much that He decided to give His only begotten Son, to deliver humanity. Jesus Christ was also willing to do this. Yes, He humbled himself by coming to this earth in the likeness of sinful flesh.⁵ Only as a human being could He manage to save us. Man had fallen into sin, and the only way to rescue humanity was that the Creator/the Word/the Son of God became a human being and lived a life free from sin.⁴³ That is what

Jesus did. It is written: "*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*"

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." And it continues: "*For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the*

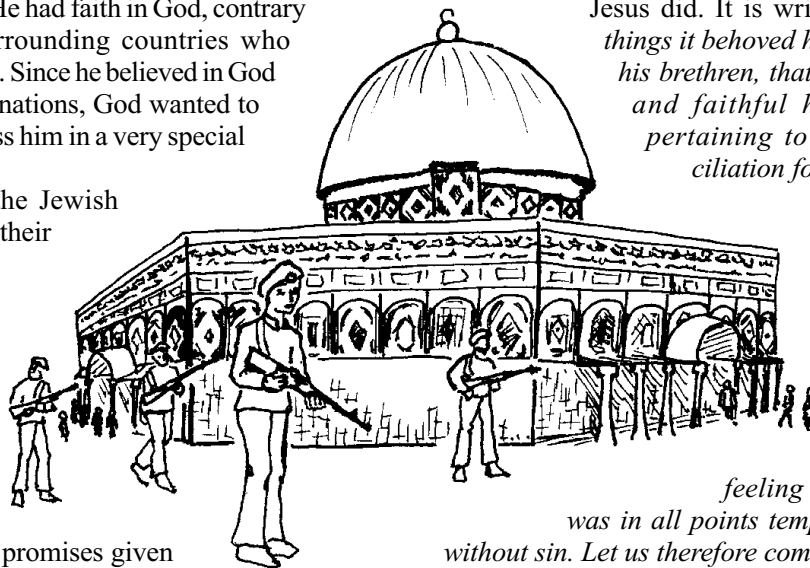
*feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*⁶

THEY REJECTED HIM

But how was Jesus received when He came to this earth? Was He welcomed by the Jewish people? The Bible describes the birth of Jesus and His life as follows: "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*⁷

Through a parable Jesus tells us how the Jewish leaders decided to kill Him.⁸ In this parable we find the owner of the vineyard (God), the son (Jesus) and the hired servants (the leaders of Israel, who led the people astray). When the son (Jesus) came to gather the harvest, the servants killed him.

It was the Jewish people that caused the death of Jesus, it was they who shouted: "*Away with him, away with him, crucify him!*"⁹ They denied Jesus as their king saying: "*We have no king but Caesar*";⁹ They cried: "*His blood be on us, and on our children.*"⁹ The Jewish leaders had made their choice and involved the people in it. They chose Barabbas. He was a robber and a murderer, and represented Satan. Christ was God's representative. The nation who chose Barabbas instead of Christ, were in the future to feel the cruelty of Barabbas. Jesus says to the people of Israel concerning their choice: "*Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation*



bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." ¹⁰ It was Jesus Himself that said it was the Israelites (the elders of Israel, who led their people astray) who rejected Him, and He does not lie.

The Jews had through the life of Jesus seen the love of God, His goodness, righteousness and mercy. Now they rejected and despised the Saviour. The blood, shed at Calvary, was the weight in the balance causing their downfall as God's chosen people. So it will be on that last great day, when those rejecting the mercy of God will receive their judgment.³⁸

The parable of the vineyard is therefore valid not only for the Jewish people. It is also addressing the church leaders today, ministers, teachers of religion and those who have learned to know Jesus Christ and Bible truths. The followers of Jesus should with joy – with the help of the Holy Spirit – reflect the character of Jesus in everyday life. They shall not only be hearers of the word, but also doers of it. If they fail their responsibility and their calling, God will choose others to complete God's great plan with the human family.

In the book of Daniel, the angel Gabriel proclaimed that a time period of "70 weeks" or 490 years, were determined for the Jewish people.¹¹ This prophecy should be counted "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem."¹² According to history and the book of Ezra, chapter 7, this commandment was given during King Artaxerxes' 7th year of reign, in year 457 BC, and it ended in 34 AD. In the beginning of the last 7 years (70th week), year 27 AD, "Messiah the Prince" was to be anointed.¹² That was Jesus when He was baptized in the river Jordan. In the middle of this week "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."¹² That happened when Jesus died on the Cross. At the end of the 70th week, the Jews settled their "destiny" as a nation, as God's chosen people, when they stoned Stephen and persecuted the Christians. That means at the end of these "70 weeks," year 34 AD, the Jews ceased to be God's special people among the other nations. That is why it reads "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city..."¹¹ Again we are reminded of Jesus' own words to the Jewish people: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." ¹⁰

When Paul was converted and began preaching to the Jews about salvation through Jesus Christ, "they (the Jews) were filled with envy; and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it forth from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." ¹³

WHO IS A GENUINE JEW TODAY?

The Bible speaks of a "remnant of Israel" who will live and be prepared to welcome Jesus Christ when He soon returns to gather his own. Paul speaks of "the children of Abraham." The question remains as to "who is a genuine Jew today?" The apostle Paul, puts it this way: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter."¹⁴ Another place in the

Bible Paul says: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And he continues: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."¹⁵ Are these not plain words? All receiving salvation in Jesus Christ by faith, are the children of Abraham, heirs according to the promise. Jews have no precedence. They are not saved by being descendants of Abraham. The same conditions apply to the Jews as to others, they too have to accept Jesus as the mediator between God and man in order to be saved. Therefore Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." And "whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." ¹⁶ This is not a substitution of Biblical theology, it is pure Biblical theology.

Therefore, whether we are Jews or Arabs, Americans or Norwegians, we have to go through Jesus Christ in order to obtain grace, forgiveness and acceptance by God. We must be born again. We must have the change of mind that takes place by beholding the glory of Jesus. While we behold the glory of Jesus our minds are changed. To be accounted as God's people, we need this transformation of mind. Having this experience, we will be faithful servants of God. By the help of God we will then cheerfully do His will.⁴¹

When we surrender completely to God and say Yes to the Spirit, and No to the flesh with its lusts, we will be partakers of the divine nature through the Holy Spirit.⁴² This experience we all need to have in order to inherit eternal life.

A REMNANT LEFT

However, God has not cast away His people. The Bible speaks of "a remnant" that is left.¹⁷ Despite the fact that Israel as a nation rejected Jesus as the Messiah, God is still seeking to reach everyone, the Jews included. God is seeking to reach them by His word and through the influence of the Holy Spirit upon their minds.

When Jesus returns, there will be a "remnant," a leftover of God's people. We have seen that the true children of God today are the spiritual Israel, those who have received Jesus by faith. They are the children of Abraham, heirs according to the promise.¹⁵ We believe that this "remnant" will consist of true Christians, converted Arabs, Muslims, Jews, Catholics etc. It does not matter what culture or religious background the individual may have, but they all have to gain a common experience – **they all have to know the Saviour, Jesus Christ**. They all have to decide to follow the Spirit and not the flesh. They have to realize their need of continual fellowship with God, and they need to obtain power from God continuously in order to live in harmony with His will. Therefore it says of those delivered, those who live when Jesus returns, they are those who have "*the patience of the saints... that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*" They "*have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*"⁴⁴ They have humbly received the salvation in Jesus Christ, by faith.

The apostle Paul writes in Romans chapter 11 and verse 20 about Israel, that "*because of unbelief they were broken off.*" But later in verse 23, Paul acknowledges that the Jews, too, have a chance to be converted and receive the gift of salvation. Paul writes: "*And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff*

them in again." Jesus is the vine, His followers are the branches.²⁰ The Jews, as a nation, cut their connection with Jesus by rejecting and crucifying the Saviour. But as individuals they can be grafted in again if they believe that Jesus came to this earth about 2000 years ago, and if they receive Him as the only one who can save us from sin.²¹

STAND UP AND WALK

Jesus is always willing to receive us. The one *"that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,"* says Jesus.²² He stands there, as the father of the prodigal son, with His arms opened wide, eager to receive us. However we must also do our part. It was not enough that the prodigal son thought of going home to his father. No, it was when he acted upon his thoughts and plans, when he stood up and went home that the joy of reunion was a fact. Likewise we also must come to Jesus, whether we are Jews, Arabs or nominal Christians. God is now calling you to make this decision.²³

ANTICHRIST

There are many that believe the Antichrist will come some time in the near future. Martin Luther said in his time: *"it is plain that the mark of the Antichrist coincide with those of the pope's kingdom and his followers."*³⁹ And: *"the Pope is Antichrist."*⁴⁰ The reformers had no doubt as to the identity of the great antichristian power factor mentioned in the Bible. All the identifying marks of the Biblical Antichrist, the "harlot" or the "beast" from the sea, fits the Papacy. (See the pamphlet *"Watch out for the Power Elite and the global union!"*).

That Antichrist is a power factor that will occur for the first time just before the return of Jesus, only to rule for a short period of time, is a theory that can be traced back to the Catholic Church. It was conceived by a Jesuit priest, Francisco Ribera, from Spain, who lived in the 16th century. It was a clever move from the Catholic camp, intended to lead away from who the real Biblical Antichristian power factor is. But the Bible and history both acknowledge the **papal** abuse of power during the Middle-Ages. The Bible reveals that the Catholic Church will regain power just before the return of Jesus.²⁴ Today we see how both the State and the Church are uniting in making an international system of laws, that will bind nations and denominations together - directly according to the Catholic model. Both the State and the Church, most Protestants and the Catholics will unite to set up "the mark of the beast."

The Antichrist is here. This economic, political and religious power factor is working full time in order to gather the world under its umbrella, the umbrella of the Catholic Church. It does so through diplomacy, European- and in-

ternational laws, strong confederacies and alliances using buzz-words such as "solidarity," "peace," "co-operation," "unity" etc.

MIDDLE-EAST CONFLICT OR GLOBAL CONFLICT?

When God made His covenant with Abraham, God said: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the River Euphrates."³⁶ If this is meant to be the Euphrates of today, this promise was fulfilled already in the time of Solomon. Solomon did reign over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines.³⁷

Many adherents of Israel believe that Israel will regain the land lost since their former borders were established after entering Canaan at the time of Joshua, and also as the borders were at the time of Solomon. Today, however, the opposite is happening. Israel is giving away territory after territory of the "promised land" in order to have peace. Jerusalem is trodden down by foreign nations. The Temple Mount is today mostly occupied by Moslems.

In 691 AD the Moslems built on the Temple Mount, the mosque, The Dome of the Rock. It is the same mosque which is standing there today in addition to another one, called Al-Aqsa. Next after Mekka and Medina the Dome of the Rock is considered to be the Moslem third most holy place in the world.

Even though the Israelites have returned to Jerusalem, they have not regained control of the Temple Mount. They would like to rebuild their own temple there which was destroyed by the Romans in year 70 AD. Because of the lack of control over the Temple Mount, they are not able to build their own temple there and reinstate the old Jewish sacrificial offerings. Until this happens they have, in reality, not "returned" to Jerusalem. They do not have full control over the Temple Mount. They are not masters in their own house.

Moslems are threatening with "jihad" (holy war) if their holy places are being damaged. If the Israelites should tear down these two Moslem mosques and occupy the whole Temple Mount, and erect their own temple, then there would be real trouble. Besides, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is a holy place both for Jews, Moslems and nominal Christians. The Jews are still today spread among other nations, and mixed with them, - even in their own country. People of different nationalities occupy the streets of Jerusalem. They have their rights as well. Jews have to live among non-Jews, and the Bible says that it will be that way until Jesus returns.²⁶

But why focus so much on the Middle-East? The Bible reveals that the last conflict will be a **global** conflict. All the powers of evil in this world will unite to create a new world order, a false peace which builds on human authorities and

References:

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| 2. Deut. 20:1-16; Exod. 15:26 | 13. Acts. 13:45-46 | | 36. Gen. 15:18 |
| 3. John. 3:16 | 14. Rom. 2:28,29 | 26. Luke. 20:23-28 | 37. 1. King. 4:21; 2. King. 9:26; 1. Chron. 5:9 |
| 4. Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:17 | 15. Gal. 3:7,28-29 | 27. Rev. 17:12-14 | 38. John. 3:16-18; Ecc. 12:13-14; James 2:10-26 |
| 5. Rom. 8:3; John. 1:1-3,14; Heb. 2:14-17 | 16. John. 14:6; John. 3:16 | 28. John. 14:27 | 39. From "The Book of Concord"p. 327 |
| 6. Heb. 2:17-18; Heb. 4:15,16 | 17. Rom. 11:1-6 | 29. Rev. 13:3-10 | 40. J. H. M. D'Aubigne, "History of the Reformation" bind 6, kap. 9. |
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| 8. Matt. 21:33-45 | 19. Rev. 14:1-12 | 31. John. 14:1-3 | 42. 2 Pet. 1:4 |
| 9. Matt. 27:20-25; Jn. 19:15 | 20. John. 15. 4-5 | 32. Rev. 7:9 | 43. John. 1. 1-4,14 |
| 10. Matt. 21:42-44; Acts. 4:8-12 | 21. John. 14:6; Matt. 1:21; John. 1:12; Acts. 4:12 | 33. Rev. 20:4 | 44. Rev. 14:12 and Rev. 7:14. |
| 11. Dan. 9:24(Prophetic time: One day for a year, Eze. 4:6; Num. 14:34) | 22. John. 6:37 | 34. Zec. 14:4,5,9 | |
| | 23. John. 15:11-24 | 35. 1. Thess. 4:15-17; Rev. 22:12; 2. Pet. 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-4; | |
| | 24. Rev. 13:3-18 | | |

laws. The Bible says that it is these powers that will make war with the Lamb (Christ) and those who are siding with the Lamb.²⁷ It is only when men say YES to Jesus that there can be created true peace. **"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,"** says Jesus, **"not as the world giveth, give I unto you."**²⁸

The Bible reveals that the Papacy (the "Antichrist", the harlot, the beast from the sea) will play a central role in the attempt of uniting the world. Today we see the attempt to gather the world under the umbrella of the Catholic Church, both in the area of economy, politics and religion. Presently they are in the process of coordinating their powers. The Bible says that "all the world wondered after the beast" - the papacy.²⁹

Presently we are also witnessing how the world is uniting, both through EU, EEC, GATT, UN, NATO, the West-Union, a common currency and a central bank, international confederacies and alliances etc. The conflict in the Middle-East is part of this unification. Just like Norway, Sweden, USA etc. are being humbled to submit themselves under the international system of laws, so Israel and the Arab States will be humbled into being governed to a large degree, by the same laws. We already see that Israel and the Arab states no longer alone make important decisions concerning the Middle-East conflict. It is the international powers, especially through UN and USA, that are the main negotiators in this conflict. The parties involved are led to accept solutions which are in harmony with the global socialism. The individual nations have to surrender their sovereignty and **submit to international guidelines.**

The nations are indeed in the process of the uniting, as described in Biblical end-time prophecies.³⁰ Israel and the Arab States will enter into the **global unification** process. We are now witnessing part of that process in the Middle-East.

TO ISRAEL OR TO HEAVEN?

Israel-adherents believe that Jesus will return and be seated on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and that peace then will reign for 1000 years.

However the Bible says that the saved will go with Jesus to heaven. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, He said: **"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."**³¹

In Revelation chapter 4 it is written that the throne of Jesus is in heaven. Three chapters later we read about the saved standing before the throne of God and the Lamb - in Heaven.³² Revelation chapter 15 and verse two, describes the saved standing on a sea of glass, safe at home in the

kingdom of God. They **"had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name."**

Dear reader! The Bible says that the believers - both those who have been resting in their graves (and have been resurrected when Jesus returns), and those living when Jesus returns - shall together be caught up in the air to meet their Lord. They are going to heaven. There they will be for 1000 years - not here on earth.³³ After those 1000 years Jesus will again return to the earth, to the Mount of Olives. The redeemed of all ages, who have been in Heaven for 1000 years, will then descend to the earth with the Holy City. The Bible describes this incident like this: **"and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with Him." "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley." "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth."**³⁴

When the new Jerusalem in all its glory comes down from heaven, it will descend upon that very place which is cleansed and prepared for it, and Christ, together with His people, will enter into it.

Mankind is seeking to restore peace on earth through a global union (the New World Order), through New Age and so on. But there will never be peace on this earth until God has cleansed and purified the earth from sin with fire. Then Satan and all the godless will be destroyed by fire. After this God will create a new heaven and a new earth, and the New Jerusalem will receive a special place on this new earth.³⁵

Let us now prepare ourselves for Heaven, so we can be with Jesus when He soon returns to gather His people. Then we can experience the new earth and the new Jerusalem. and most of all Jesus Christ..and the saved . This hope is for all of us, including the Jews, as long as they and we receive Jesus Christ as Messiah, the Saviour, NOW.

Many believe that there will be a new period of probationary time of grace and revival when Jesus returns, and that Israel will play an important role in this process. But when Jesus returns, everyone's destiny has been settled. Then it will be too late to repent. Then the account in the books of Heaven has been settled. It has already been decided who will be taken to heaven and who will be lost. Therefore it is important for us to prepare our lives for the coming of Jesus, NOW!³⁵

The signs of the times indicate that the return of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven, with all the Holy angels, is imminent. May you and I be prepared to meet Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, with joy!

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