Israel in Prophecy: Still God's Chosen?

The "sheer numbers (of Christians who support Israel) surpasses that of American Jews." Toledo Blade, 8-28-02.

Why the fervor concerning the welfare of Israel? What part do they play in end time events? To answer these questions, we must turn to the scriptures: After all, we were promised, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. Therefore, we can always find the answers in the Bible.

There are a few things we must understand to fully understand how Israel fits in to things today. What does the name Israel mean? In the Hebrew culture, every name had a deeper meaning. The names meant more than just a simple title. To find out the true meaning of a name in the Bible, we must look at the first time it is used.

The name "Israel" is first used in Genesis 32:28: "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Jacob had deceived his father to obtain the blessing that was due Esau. Upon discovering the deception of Jacob, Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob?" Gen. 27:36. The name Jacob meant "***deceiver***," and he lived up to the name!

Twenty years later, as Jacob journeyed home, he received news of his brothers approach and feared that he, and his family, would pay for his sins of old. Jacob hid his family and "... was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Gen. 32:24. Upon the realization of who his "assailant" was, Jacob pleaded, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." vs. 26. The angel, although he knew who Jacob was, asked him for his name.

As Jacob answered in humility, it represented a confession of, and turning away from, his past sins. The new name that he received from the angel, Israel, meant "overcomer:" The angel said that Jacob had "....power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." vs. 28. Jacob had overcome his sins, he was now a new creature, able to serve God.

The name Israel was a ***spiritual name*** given to a man who ***overcame sin*** in his life.

The descendants of Jacob were to become the "Nation of Israel. Moses was instructed to say to Pharaoh, "Thus saith the LORD, ***Israel is my son, even my firstborn***: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me." Exo. 4:22-23. It was God's desire to make these people a great nation of ***overcomers*** that would serve Him. Unfortunately, most of the Jews never fully lived up to this name. They never realized the significance of the term Israel: Again, ***Israel is a spiritual name for the spiritual kingdom of those who overcome sin, not just a physical place***.

A Conditional Promise and the Results of Failure

Upon reaching Mt. Sinai, the Israelites were given a conditional promise: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel...Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Ex. 19:3-6. ***Notice God said, "if ye will obey...then ye shall be." If they didn't, they would not be!***

After entering the "promised land," the Hebrew nation turned from God and worshipped Baal time and time again. They failed to meet the conditions of the promises listed in Exodus 19. In 722 B.C., the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom were taken to Assyria. Judah realized the same retribution because of her disloyalty to God when she was carried to Babylon in 586 B.C. and the glorious temple built by Solomon was destroyed.

The captivity of Judah was to last seventy years [Jer. 25:11-12; Dan. 9:2]. After this time period, Israel was to get a second chance. Jerusalem and the temple were to be rebuilt. Israel would become a nation again, but the same ***conditions would apply*** to them as before the captivity. They must walk in the ways of righteousness or betray God's favor and kindle His wrath.

While in captivity, "In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar," king of Babylon, Daniel received a vision portraying the rise and fall of the worlds empires and a 2300 "day" prophecy. Some of the scenes were terrifying to him and he did not understand what the vision was about: "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the King's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Dan. 8:27.

"In the first year of Darius," the ruler of the now Medo/Persian Empire, while Daniel was in prayer, Gabriel comes to explain the vision and tell him what was to become of his people. This prophecy was to reveal the probation of the Jews and mark the beginning of the 2300 day prophecy in the vision of Daniel 8 of which the 70 weeks, which we are about to look at, was the first part. Just as the covenant made at Sinai, this was a conditional prophecy:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." Dan. 9:24. ***The word translated to "determined," "chathak" (Strong's # 2852), means "to cut off."*** If the Jews failed to meet the requirements laid out within the previous verses, they would forfeit their "birthright."

Now lets consider the conditions: "finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to ***seal up the vision and prophecy,*** and to anoint the most Holy." *ibid*. The Jews needed to repent of their wickedness and usher in "everlasting righteousness." If they fulfilled this condition, they would "seal up the vision and prophecy." In other words, the terrible scenes portrayed in the visions of Daniel would be sealed, that is, not occur.

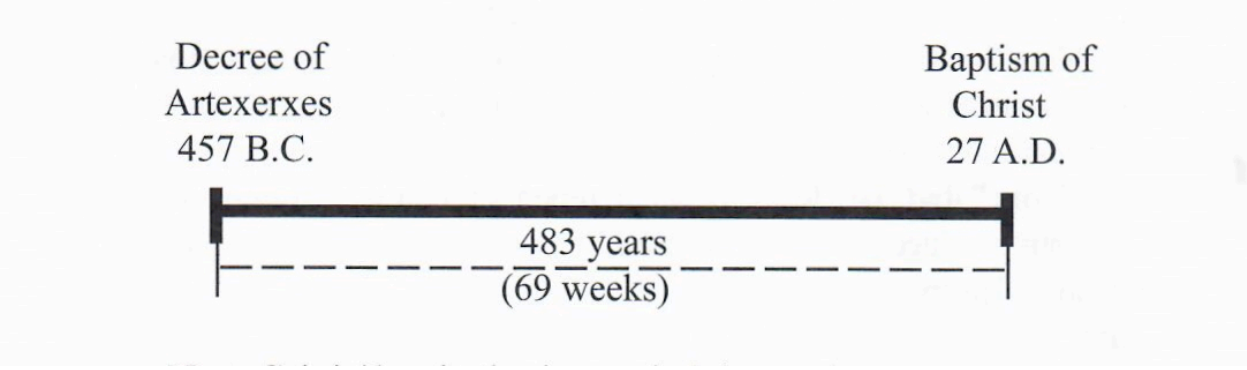
Daniel is given a starting date for this prophecy: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be ***seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks***: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." vs. 25.

Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel says, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." Eze. 4:6. The 70 weeks then would last for 490 years: 7 x 70 = 490. (Thus, the 2300 "days" of Daniel 9:14 is actually 2300 years!).

Persia would conquer Babylon in 538 B.C. After this conquest, King Cyrus issued a decree for the Jews to return to their land and to rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:1-3). Later, King Darius issued another decree that led to the completion of the temple (Ezra 6:1, 8). Unfortunately, because, as men always do, the Jews became comfortable with their lives in captivity—after all, who wants to travel so far away and struggle? Under King Artaxerxes, with a decree to Nehemiah, the Jews were to rebuild the wall around the city (Nehemiah 1:3; 2:1-9)—Yet the predicted "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" did not occur until King Artaxerxes issued a lengthy decree giving Ezra official authority to "set magistrates and judges" over Jerusalem and to "execute judgment" upon all who

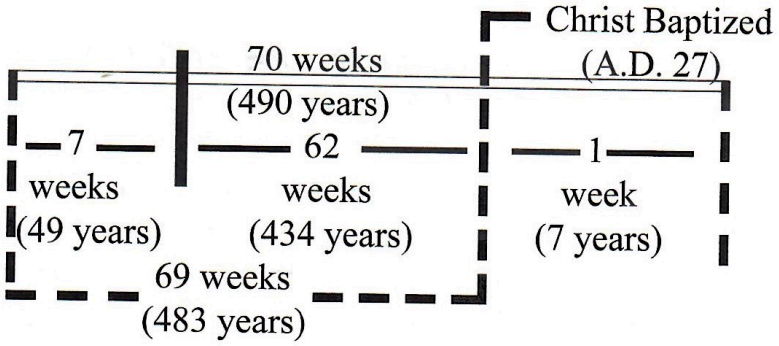
refused to follow the laws of God and the king (Ezra 7:21, 25, 26). This was the only decree which fully restored civil authority to Jerusalem and to the Jewish state. That commandment occurred "in the seventh year of Artaxerxes." Ezra 7:7. The date was 457 B.C. ***The Jews were given 490 years from 457 B.C. to fulfill their calling.***

Continuing with the vision, we read, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [49 years], and threescore and two weeks [434 years]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." vs. 25. The Messiah, or the "Anointed One," is Christ. From the starting point of 457 B.C. until the Messiah should come, we have 483 years [49 + 434]. 483 - 457 = 26 A.D. There was no "zero" year between "B.C." and "A.D." , thus instead of A.D. 26, we have A.D. 27. This was the exact year of Jesus Baptism!



Next, Gabriel breaks the time periods into to three:

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for ***one week***: and in the ***midst of the week*** he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." *ibid*., vs. 26-27. Now we have 7 weeks + 62 weeks + 1 week = 70 weeks. We have already seen that the 7 weeks + 62 weeks is 69 weeks and brings us to A.D. 27, that leaves the 70th week of the prophecy.



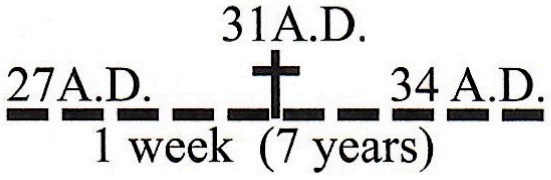
Within this final week, "Messiah the Prince" shall be "***cut off***, but not for himself." The Messiah, Jesus Christ, was crucified in 31 A.D. Verse 27 tells=us that "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

When Christ was crucified, we read, "t***he veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*** " Matt. 27:51. The sacrificial system, the temple services and the "handwriting of ordinances" (Col. 2:14) were nailed to the cross.

Christ had entered the temple in the beginning and at the end of His ministry and declared that His Fathers house had become a house of merchandise. [See John 2:16] The Scribes, Sadducees and Pharisee's had rejected every evidence and every plea from Infinite Love. Finally, Jesus declared, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. " Mat. 23:37-38.

Notice that Christ now referred to the temple (which He never returned to) as "your house" instead of "my Father's house," further fulfilling Daniel's prophecy: "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate."

In verse 26, we are told that "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." From the start of Christ's ministry in A.D. 27 until 34 A.D., the Gospel was preached solely to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 10:6. After the stoning of Stephen [see Acts 7:59], the Gospel went to the Gentiles [Acts 8]. The stoning of Stephen, in 34 A.D., ended the seventy week prophecy closing the Jewish probationary period (as a nation, not individually). The prophecy of the 70 weeks had come to an end, right on time.



Can it get any clearer

Jew and Gentile

> "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth fruits thereof." Matt. 21:43.

The Jewish nation had rejected the warnings of all of the prophets and scriptures and had finally rejected Christ Himself. Instead of being a light to the world and bringing in "everlasting righteousness," they followed the darkness of the world thus forfeiting their calling. So, who was or is this "new nation?"

Abraham had two sons: Isaac and Ishmael. Ishmael was a child of the flesh; Isaac was a child of faith. It was Isaac, the child of faith, that God was to make His covenant with. Of this, Paul tells us that:

> "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is to say, They which are the children of the flesh, (like Ishmael, not a child of faith) these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Rom. 9:6-8.

Paul made it crystal clear:

> "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; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom 2:28-29.

We become "Jews" by faith in Christ!

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. Thus, this "new nation" is what the Hebrew nation was supposed to be! A nation of God's faithful, not a nation of the flesh.

We are all the children of Abraham and God by faith in Christ Jesus. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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." Gal. 3:26-28.

Paul tells us that the Gentiles and the Jews that accept Christ would become this great new nation:

> ”And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree... Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in." Rom. 11:17; 19.

Concerning physical Israel, he says, "...because of unbelief they were broken off…” *ibid.* 20. With this great privilege comes a warning as well:

> "Be not highminded, but fear, For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." *ibid*., 21, 22.

Here we see the same conditions laid before the new nation of spiritual Israel that was given to physical Israel at Sinai: "If thou continue"; otherwise, if not, we "shalt be cut off" as they were. We must overcome sin in our lives or lose the Spirit of Grace.

Alas, for the "natural branches," physical Israel, those that repent and accept Christ, can become spiritual Israel with us: “... if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. " vs. 23. Peter clearly states, "God is no respecter of persons: "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Acts 10:34; 35.

Lastly, we have this passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians:

“...ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances [not the ten commandments, rather the commandments contained in the handwriting of ordinances. See Col. 2:14.]; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so

making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Eph. 2:12-20.

In 2 Peter 2:9-10, the men of faith, that is, the Christians, are referred to as a nation:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (this is what God had asked Israel to be - see Deut. 14:2; 26:18); that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

The Bible is very plain: Those who follow after Christ, the Christians, are the new nation of Spiritual Israel - God's "peculiar people."

The Destruction of Jerusalem

"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compassion thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:42-44.

The hour of hope and pardon was fast passing; the cup of God's long—deferred wrath was almost full. The cloud that had been gathering through ages of apostasy and rebellion, now black with woe, was about to burst upon a guilty people; and He who alone could save them from their impending fate had been slighted, abused, rejected, and was soon to be crucified.

> "What could have been done to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Isaiah 5:1-4.

"For nearly forty years after the doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced by Christ Himself, the Lord delayed His judgments upon the city and the nation … There were still many among the Jews who were ignorant of the character and the work of Christ. The children had not the light which their parents had spurned. The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to themselves, they became partakers of the parents' sins, and filled up the measure of their iniquity." GC, pp. 27-28.

During the siege of Jerusalem, "Titus would willingly have put an end to the fearful scene, and thus have spared Jerusalem the full measure of her doom. He was filled with horror as he saw the bodies of the dead lying in heaps in the valleys … He made an earnest appeal to the Jewish leaders. Josephus himself, entreated them to surrender, to save themselves, their city, and their place of worship. But his words were answered with bitter curses. Darts were hurled at him, their last human mediator, as he stood pleading with them … The blind obstinacy of the Jewish leaders, and the detestable crimes perpetrated within the besieged city, excited the horror and indignation of the Romans, and Titus at last decided to take the temple by storm. In their fury the soldiers hurled blazing brands into the chambers adjoining the temple, and then with their swords they slaughtered in great numbers those who had found shelter there. Blood flowed down the temple steps like water. Thousands upon thousands of Jews perished "The slaughter within was even more dreadful than the spectacle from without. Men and women, old and young, insurgents and priests, those who fought and those who entreated mercy, were hewn down in indiscriminate carnage. The number of the slain exceeded that of the slayers. The legionaries had to clamber over heaps of dead to carry on the work of extermination." Milman, *The History of the Jews*, book 16.

"A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up on the temple that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now, there was then a great number of false prophets...to impose upon the people that they should wait for deliverance from God." Josephus, Wars of the Jews, book 6, chapter 5.

Over 1 million Jews perished - God left them to the leader they chose.
At Christ's trial, looking upon the smitten Lamb of God, the Jews had

cried, "***His blood be on us, and on our children."*** That awful cry ascended to the throne of God. That sentence, pronounced upon themselves, was written in heaven. That prayer was heard. The blood of the Son of God was upon their children and their children's children, ***a perpetual curse***.

"Not this man, but Barabbas." Barabbas, the robber and murderer, was the representative of Satan. Christ was the representative of God. Christ had been rejected; Barabbas had been chosen. Barabbas they were to have. In making this choice they accepted him who from the beginning was a liar and a murderer. Satan was their leader. As a nation they would act out his dictation. His works they would do. His rule they must endure. That people who chose Barabbas in the place of Christ were to feel the cruelty of Barabbas as long as time should last.

Terribly was it realized in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70., in the Inquisition and the Holocaust! Terribly has it been manifested in the condition of the Jewish nation for two thousand years, a branch severed from the vine, a dead, fruitless branch, to be gathered up and burned. From land to land throughout the world, from century to century, persecution to persecution. Even to this day, there is no peace for the tiny nation of Israel.

Does the Bible Predict the Rebuilding of the Temple?

There are three main arguments used in favor of the theory that a third temple must be built, but before we look at these ideas, lets remember a few key points concerning the second Jewish temple.

1.) At Christ's crucifixion, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Mat. 27:51 This signified that the services in the temple and its animal sacrifices had come to an end - the true Lamb of God had just been slain for the sins of men.

2.) When Jesus cried out, "It is finished," (John 19:30) type had met antitype, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" Col 2:14. Would God again initiate services that were made to point to the cross? No, this would be a denial of the Lordship of Christ! Again, animal sacrifices mean nothing.

3.) Jesus declared to the Jews: "Behold, your house is left unto youndesolate," (Mat. 23:38.) and that "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mat. 24:2). The temple was no longer the house of God and was destroyed in A.D. 70 by Titus.

4.) Jesus is the "minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Heb. 8:2. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12. We need no earthly temple.

Now for the "proofs" of a rebuilt temple:

1.) Daniel 9:27 describes one who will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. The idea is that the "Antichrist" will stop the services of this new temple. We have already seen in our exposition above and on the seventy week prophecy that it is Christ who stopped the sacrificial system, not Satan!

2.) Various temple texts in Revelation: All of the texts in Revelation that mention a temple refer directly to the temple in heaven, not in literal Israel; Jesus ministers for us in heaven, not here on earth.

3.) 2 Thess. 2:4: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Paul well knew that the temple in Jerusalem meant nothing and was to be destroyed within a few years. The key to understanding what this verse means is by remembering that word used in this verse "temple" is "***naos.***" In writing to "the church which is at Corinth," he said, "know ye not that ye are the temple [naos] of God." 1 Cor. 3:16. The temple of God is the Christian church! The man of sin will "sit" in a position of authority over the Christian churches at the end and "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Mat. 24:24. Paul calls the antichrist "the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3) which is the same thing Jesus called Judas. This shows us that, like Judas, it will be a professedly Christian power that will betray God's people. We are warned thus: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Cor. 11:13-15.

The Battle of Armageddon

As we have seen, modern Israel is a spiritual nation, not a physical nation. In this light, it is important to remember that the things that affected Israel of old have a spiritual significance for us. The book of Revelation uses Old Testament things to describe the spiritual battle of the end time in the same way that Christ uses Earthly things to describe Heavenly things. For instance, "Babylon." Rev. 14:8, etc. Babylon, in prophecy, represents confusion and defiance to God's will. The ancient Hebrews referred to Babylon as "*balal*," a word which means confusion. Babylon was established by Nimrod who built the tower of Babel in defiance to God's will, a monument to apostasy. God put a stop to this by confounding the languages of men. "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did confound the language of all the earth" Gen. 11:9. Therefore, the spiritual condition represented by the word "Babylon" is "defiance to God's will, apostasy and confusion." Babylon will not be resurrected to control the world from Iraq!

The "original" event or name is referred to as a ***type***. Moses was a type of Christ because he brought the children of God out of the bondage of Egypt just as Christ will deliver all that follow Him out of the bondage of sin. Now, with that understanding, we can unlock the truth about "Armageddon."

"Armageddon" is not a literal place anywhere on earth; it never has been. The word "Armageddon" is a combination of two words: Ar, which means mountain and, Mageddon, which is a reference to the valley of Megiddo. A mountain in prophecy represents a spiritual nation; good or apostate:

> "...my holy mountain Jerusalem" (Isa. 66:20) is a reference to God's people, while "...I will render unto Babylon..all their evil..I am against thee, O destroying mountain" (Isa. 51:25; 27.) is a verse that figuratively describes Babylon as a destroying mountain. The Spiritual Babylon of the end is a destroying mountain: She will destroy many people spiritually.

The valley of Megiddo was the place where King Josiah "hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God" and was slain. (2 Chron. 35:22) Josiah had gone against the clear admonition of the Lord, and the battle of Megiddo had become a judgement against him.

"Ar" is a "spiritual nation" in the "valley of judgement;" - mageddon.

This is Armageddon - the great battle of God almighty. The battle between God and His faithful and the those who stand under the banner of the Prince of Darkness.

That ***this is not the literal valley of Megiddo in the Middle East*** is also evidenced by the preceding verses: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. 16:13-14.

This is a global event! Since the people here mentioned are gathered together by the "three unclean spirits," these people are those who would defy God as Josiah did and perish. Joel 3:14 says, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision." All will face judgement: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev 22:12. Paul tells us that at Christ’s second coming, He shall come "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" 2 Th 1:8.

Got and Magog

President Ronald Reagan was convinced that the Soviet Union, which he referred to as the "evil empire," was Gog. He was heavily influenced by Hal Lindsey's The Late Great Planet Earth. Others today believe that it might be China; Is this realistic? No! A close examination of the verses associated with Gog and Magog show it to be entirely different.

> "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Rev. 20:7-9.

The first thing we notice is that this battle ***follows the millennium***—the 1000 years in heaven!

At Christ's second coming, only those with the seal of God are said to have "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished." vs. 4-5. John 5:29 tells us that this is the second resurrection — “the resurrection of damnation."

Satan, released from his "prison" after the millennium, will convince the wicked [Gog and Magog], that have been resurrected [to face their final judgement], that they can take the Holy City, but "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." ***Literal Israel, Russia and China that exist 12 today have no part in this prophecy!***

The Kings of the East

> "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." Rev. 16:12

Because of the belief that Armageddon is going to be a battle fought in literal Israel, many have interpreted this scripture as referring to a time when the literal Euphrates river will be dried up to allow the armies of China or some other hostile eastern force to invade Israel. Common sense should tell us that this is not so - what would China want with Israel anyway?

To properly understand this verse, we will look at some literal events from the past.

> “...Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus..." Isa. 44:28; 45:1.

This prophecy was made about 150 years before it actually happened - it even named the person before his birth! Cyrus the Mede diverted the waters of the Euphrates River (which supported and supplied life to Babylon) that he might enter the city of Babylon, thus capturing it. Cyrus was a "King from the East," and immediately made a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. ***Cyrus was a type of Christ.*** Just like Christ, Cyrus is referred to as the "Lord's Anointed." Just as Cyrus dried up the literal Euphrates, Christ will cause those at the end of time who were supporting "Mystical Babylon" to "hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn

her with fire." Rev. 17:16. Babylon shall be supported no more.

The "King of the East" represents Christ at His second coming. (In the original Greek, ***the word translated "Kings" is not plural***).

Throughout the Bible we see the power of God coming from the east to deliver His people: In Exo. 10:13, the East wind brought the plague of locusts upon Egypt; Exo. 14:21 tells of the east wind that parted the Red Sea; Ps. 48:7 says, the ships of Tarshish are destroyed by an east wind; Hosea 13:15 calls the east wind the Lord's wind; The three wise men saw Christ's star in the east; Rev. 7:2 says the angel with the seal of God comes from the east.

The 144,000

Many believe that the 144,000 are literal Jews from the lost tribes of Israel; is this true? A closer look shows that this is not so at all.

First of all, the 144,000 are those which have the seal of God in their foreheads. In talking to the Ephesians, Paul warns, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." v. 4:30. The Ephesians, like the rest of us, are spiritual Jews "inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. 2:28.

Christ has "made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us," (Eph. 2:14) why would He erect a new one? He wouldn't: "For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)" Rom 2:11-13. Only those who follow in the ways of righteousness will be sealed for redemption regardless of your ancestry!

Next, Revelation 21:15-17 defines the number “144.”

“And he that talked with me had a ***golden reed to measure the city,*** and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. ***The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*** And he

measured the wall thereof, ***an hundred and forty and four cubits***, according to the ***measure of a man, that is, of the angel***."

When we compare this to Isaiah 28:17, we can understand it fully: "judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet …"

Measurements are judgements—the line is the marking on the ground—the length and the breath; the plummet is vertical—are we totally in-line with God?

As mentioned before, the names used in the Bible are more than mere titles, they always have a deeper meaning. In Rev. 7:5-8, the order and names of the tribes given are different than anywhere else in the Bible. If we look for the first time the name was used, usually at the birth of one of the people, we can discern the meaning of the name. By doing this, we see a hidden message in these verses.

The names given are [followed by the "birth text" in parenthesis]: Judah (Gen. 29:35); Reuben (Gen. 29:32); Gad (Gen. 30:11); Aser (Gen. 30:13); Nepthalim (Gen. 30:8); Manassas (Gen. 41:51); Simeon (Gen. 29:33); Levi (29:34); Issachar (Gen. 30:18); Zabulon (Gen. 30:20); Joseph (gen. 30:22); Benjamin (Gen. 35:18; Benoni was the name given by Rachel, it was changed by Jacob to Benjamin - son of my right hand).

By putting the meanings of each of the names together we get:

Now will I praise the Lord. The Lord hath looked upon my affliction and a troop cometh [Christ and His angels].

Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed. ["Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Rev. 3:9. Mystery Babylon is the ***mother of harlots***, those that follow her are her ***daughters*** and they will realize that God has favored those the persecuted].

With great wrestling [or struggles] I have wrestled and have prevailed, and God will make me forget all my toil. [Like Jacob, these people are over-comers. Jesus says, "To him that over-cometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," and "the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces." Isa. 25:8; Rev. 3:21.] The Lord heard that I was hated. [Jesus warns us: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Mat 10:22].

My husband will be joined unto me. [Christ is the bridegroom, His faithful church is the bride; they shall be united at the "Marriage supper of the Lamb. " Rev. 19:9.]

God has given me my hire [reward], God hath endued me with a good dowry [gift]. [Jesus says, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.]

God hath taken away my reproach with the son of His right hand. ["the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth;" Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Isa. 25:8; Mark 16:19].

Remember this crucial point—***Satan wants men to look to the physical world that we might not discern the spiritual.*** The great failure of the Jews was the fact that they were carnally minded. Christians are in danger of doing the same thing. Satan uses literal Israelto obscure the events concerning spiritual Israel!

Don't get caught up in the delusions surrounding Israel: "Study to show thyself approved unto God...rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15.