

Despite Mass Persecution, Jews Cling to the Hope of Jeremiah 29:11

What makes the history of the Jews surprising is that the Jews have survived and thrived, despite many attempts to destroy them. The ancient pharaoh tried to destroy the Israelites by killing all the male infants. The twelve tribes of Israel were carried into captivity by the Assyrians and later the Babylonians. Jerusalem was again destroyed by the Romans in the first century and the Jews forced into the Diaspora. The Crusaders, marching through Europe on their quest for the Holy Land during the early centuries of the Middle Ages, slaughtered entire Jewish communities.

During the Spanish Inquisition at the end of the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity and then banished from Spain and Portugal. Countless thousands of Jews were eventually put to death. Less than a century ago, the Nazis exterminated over six million Jews along with millions of other “undesirables” such as gypsies, the elderly and the infirm, in their attempt to wipe the Jews off the face of the earth.

It would take pages to list all of the other attempts that have been made to eradicate the Jews. In my book *A Rabbi Looks at the Last Days*, I wrote about some of the more recent ones:

The Suez War of 1956: In the early 1950s, Egypt closed the Suez Canal to Israeli ships. The United Nations ordered the canal open, but Egypt refused. Then, Egypt's President Nasser sent scores of terrorists into Israel, saying, “Egypt has decided to dispatch her heroes, the disciples of Pharaoh and the sons of Islam and they will cleanse the land of Palestine ... There will be no peace on Israel's border because we demand

vengeance, and vengeance is Israel's death."

His foreign minister, Muhammad Salah al-Din, added, "We shall not be satisfied except by the final obliteration of Israel from the map of the Middle East."

After hundreds of Israelis were killed, Israel had no choice but to retaliate. The Egyptian army was quickly and easily defeated, and Israeli troops pushed deep into Egyptian territory before a cease-fire was declared. President Eisenhower pressured the Israeli government to return the land that had been conquered in battle, and Israel complied and returned the Sinai Peninsula

The Six-Day War of 1967: On May 20, 1967, Syria's Defense Minister Hafez al-Assad announced, "Our forces are now entirely ready to ... explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland. The Syrian army, with its finger on the trigger, is united ... I, as a military man, believe that the time has come to enter into a battle of annihilation."

Ten days later, Israel's old enemy, President Nasser of Egypt, said, "The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are poised on the borders of Israel ... while standing behind us are the armies of Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Sudan and the whole Arab nation. This act will astound the world. Today they will know that the Arabs are arranged for battle, the critical hour has arrived. We have reached the stage of serious action and not declarations."

The world was astounded, all right. After six days of war, the Arab coalition was utterly defeated.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973: The next war began on October 6, 1973. It was Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Israel did not expect and was not prepared for the coordinated surprise attack undertaken by Egypt and Syria. On the Golan Heights, fewer than 200 Israeli tanks faced an invasion of 1,400 tanks from Syria. Along the Suez Canal, some

436 Israeli soldiers tried to hold off an estimated 80,000 Egyptian troops.

At least nine Arab countries were actively engaged in the assault on Israel, contributing troops, weapons and/or money. Libya's Muammar Gaddafi sent \$1 billion in military aid to Egypt.

This has been life for the people of Israel. They are either at war, or being threatened by war.

Again, there is no way, other than God's intervention, that the Israeli people could have withstood the constant attacks against them.

Today Jews in many parts of the world continue to face ongoing persecution and violence. And yet the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob continue to grow in economic strength and in numbers. Why? There's only one reasonable explanation, and it is a supernatural one. God has protected and guarded the Jewish people. He promised to watch over them and give them a future, and He has done so.

In Jeremiah 29:11, He promised in the midst of their exile to give them a future ... and by application, the same promise applies to us, those who "love God and are called according to His purpose" This promise is for you, today." {eoa}

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