

Jerusalem's Future

I love Jerusalem! I love it because it's a beautiful city and because it is where Messiah taught, laid down His life for the sins of mankind, and was resurrected, triumphing over death. It is the city of the great kings David and Solomon, and the place where the prophets and other great Bible heroes came to worship God in the temple.

From a human perspective, Jerusalem would not rank as one of the world's most important cities. Even when biblical history was being written in Jerusalem's streets, the city was not as significant as Alexandria, Rome or Athens.

Still, 3,000 years after King David's reign, most of the world's population believes that Jerusalem is the most important city on earth. There is only one possible reason: It is important to God and to His plans for the last days.

Consider these facts: Jerusalem has no strategic military significance; is not an important seaport; does not sit on an important trade route; and is not close to an abundance of critical natural resources (for example, oil). Yet oceans of blood have been shed over this city's more than 730,000 residents.

Jerusalem's role in the unfolding of the last days was made clear when Yeshua told His disciples what would happen just before His return: "'Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled'" (Luke 21:24, NKJV). This Scripture has been debated for nearly 2,000 years, and still there is no consensus. It is clear, however, that Jesus was describing events on earth that would lead to His return.

I don't know all He means in this important verse. But I do know for certain that the physical and spiritual restoration of Israel is key to understanding it. All the signs of this

prophetic fulfillment have begun falling into place since the re-establishment of the state of Israel.

Once the flame of faith spread beyond the borders of Israel, Christianity became a predominantly gentile religion. For 19 centuries, the number of Jews who openly professed faith in Yeshua was very small.

But that is changing. Right now, more Jews believe in Yeshua than at any other time in history, with the possible exception of the first century, and I believe there is a direct connection to Yeshua's words about "the times of the Gentiles."

Many teachers of prophecy say Yeshua was referring to the restoration of Israel as a state, but I believe they are overlooking the restoration of the *people* of Israel. Multiplied thousands of Jews around the world are experiencing a restoration to their biblical homeland *and* restoration to God through faith in Messiah. A physical *and* aspiritual restoration is taking place!

Paul wrote: "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:25-26).

Israel and Jerusalem are back in Jewish hands. The people of Israel scattered throughout the world are returning to their land and to their God.

Sadly, however, the days of terror and violence are not yet over for the Jewish people. Satan is finished, but he won't concede without a fight. He will continue to use people to carry out his plans.

Do I believe that Armageddon is imminent? Several hallmarks of earth's final battle are obvious:

1. Israel, the primary target, will ultimately be forced to deal with Iran, a possible nuclear power, alone. Israel will be blamed for initiating a first strike.

2. Scripture says Russia will be involved, although I don't think that nation is prepared for such a conflict right now.

3. My understanding of prophecy tells me that all nations, including the U.S., will turn against Israel.

Read Zechariah 14:2 and join me in praying that every believer will wake up and realize the time is short. We need to be about our Father's business "while it is day" for "night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).

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