

How Israel's Restoration Signals the End

"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, KJV).

The return of Christ is contingent upon "the *times* of restitution of all things." The word *times* is in the plural form, meaning "a series of events" linked to restitution. The word *restitution* is similar to the word *restoration*. The Greek word for *restitution* (*apokatastasis*) was used to describe the Jews' return to Israel from Egypt with Moses and their return to Israel after the Babylonian captivity. In both cases the Hebrew nation was released from bondage, returned to their land and brought restoration to the land through agriculture and farming (Jer. 27:22; Joel 2:25). Christ will return after an order of restoration occurs.

The biblical prophets also predicted a series of restorations that will unfold prior to the return of the Messiah. When these predictions begin to come to pass, it is a major witness that the closing out of the end of the age is at hand and the kingdom of the Messiah is over the horizon.

The first major event would be the reestablishing of Israel as a nation. Over 100 years before Israel was reborn on May 14-15, 1948, Bible scholars who accepted the literal interpretation of the restoration prophecies began writing and teaching that the Jews must return to a restored nation called Israel prior to the Lord's return.

One such man was Professor S.W. Watson, who in 1888 taught that three things must occur before Christ could return. First, Israel would again be a nation. Second, Jerusalem must be in the hands and control of the Jews, and, finally, the Jews would be returning from all nations back to the Promised Land. In 1912, A.B. Simpson wrote a book titled *The Coming One*, in which he stated: "Then there is the promise of their [Israel's] restoration. This is to be in two stages: first, national and then spiritual. The two stages are represented by Ezekiel in the vision of the valley of dry bones."

In 1940 Harry Rimmer wrote a prophetic book titled *The Coming War and the Rise of Russia*. In it he mentions 14 things that must occur prior to the coming of Christ. He stated that the Jews would be back in Palestine and will have Jerusalem back. He predicted that there would be a great war that would drive the Jews back to Palestine. He also spoke of Hitler dividing Germany and how Germany would later be united again.

In the 1930s and 1940s, a great Bible scholar, Finis Dake, author of the *Dake's Annotated Bible*, spent thousands of hours researching the Scriptures and writing personal notes and commentaries on each verse. In Isaiah 35, the prophet Isaiah predicted a time when the barren deserts of Israel would blossom as a rose and fill the world with fruit (Is. 35:1; see also Is. 27:6). At the time of Mr. Dake's research, most of Palestine was either a swamp or a desolate, dry wilderness with little or no vegetation. In this setting, Dake commented on the 2,500-year-old prediction by Isaiah that Israel's deserts would blossom and fill the world with fruit: "A complete restoration or reestablishment. It refers to the Millennium when Christ will reign 1,000 years. No prophecy about the coming of the Lord can be fulfilled until the Jews are back in their land."

In the 1930s and early 1940s, Dake understood two facts: that no prophecy about the coming of the Lord could be fulfilled until the Jews were back in their land (Israel), and that the

blossoming of the desert was to be taken literally and not as some spiritual allegory. In other words, the dry land would one day become fruitful. He only missed one part of his interpretation. He placed the timing of this fulfillment during the thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4), not during the time of the end. When his Bible notes were written, the Jews were still scattered among the nations and were being persecuted by the Nazis. The nation of Israel was nonexistent, and the land was called *Palestine* and was under British mandate.

When examining prophetic Scripture, these men and others like them took the prophecies about Israel's restoration literally and not spiritually or allegorically. They predicted a day when the Jews would return and rebuild the places of old. Several understood there were seven signs of the time of the end.

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