

# The witness of fulfilled Bible prophecy

## 5. One nation upon the mountains of Israel

Stephen Green

*This article traces the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies predicting the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in the latter days. The events of the past sixty years have provided dramatic evidence of Divine foreknowledge in the establishment of the State of Israel, and Divine providence in its protection during the subsequent troubled years up to the present.*

**E**XAMINING the early part of Ezekiel 37 we find two prophecies. First the *national resurrection of Israel* is being foretold through a vision of a valley filled with dried-up bones, which are the bones of Israel. These bones put on flesh to become living people and “an exceeding great army” (v. 10).

This resurrection covers the whole house of Israel, not simply one part (v. 11). We are told that the Lord is performing this work of re-creation, and He says that when it has been completed then the people produced will recognise that He has spoken it and performed it (vv. 12-14). It will be to them evidence of the existence of God and of the inspiration and accuracy of His Word.

A second prophecy follows concerning *two sticks representing the tribes of Judah and Joseph*. These two sticks are combined into one stick (vv. 15ff). This indicates that there will no longer be two divided powers in the house of Israel, as was the case following the revolt of the ten tribes from King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and continued to be so until those tribes were taken into captivity by Assyria. As this God-induced division weakened the whole house of Israel in the days of Rehoboam, so the rejoining of the two will strengthen the one stick of Israel when they return from among the nations.

Note that the two sticks become one in the hand of Ezekiel (v. 17). He is symbolic of the Son of man, who when he returns will hold the single stick as “one king [who] shall be king to them all” (v. 22). But in overall control of the kingship is the Lord God, Who makes the two sticks come together and become one in His hand (explained in verse 19).

Of these two prophecies, parts have already had an obvious fulfilment over recent generations.

The opening of the graves of the house of Israel to allow their return is one part.\* However, the full promise of these prophecies has not yet been achieved, and the associated promise of verse 23 that God will save His people and *cleanse* them—“so shall they be My people, and I will be their God”—has clearly not yet been

fulfilled.

For the full application of this prophecy we await the return of Christ and the ushering in of God’s Kingdom. But there is a partial application to be seen in our own days and for the past sixty years. In the present article we are more particularly concerned with this application because of its power to inform and stimulate us to respect the God Who has caused it to come to fruit, and that by it we might receive faith that the greater, future promise will also be fulfilled at a later but not long-distant time.

### **Declaration of Independence and of the State of Israel**

Israel’s Declaration of Independence was signed by thirty-eight of the Jewish leaders on 14 May 1948, a Friday. It was carried out at 5 o’clock, that is, just before the Sabbath began, to allow the religious Jews to sign. Two days before it had been decided at an emergency meeting of David ben-Gurion’s Provisional Council that the name of the new state would be Israel.

With the State of Israel being declared there was little time for rejoicing. The morning of 15 May saw the British forces fully evacuated, bar a temporary guard at Haifa, their port of evacuation. Five armies of Arab neighbours had already been attacking on many fronts, and the forces of Israel needed to respond as best they could. There are stories of great shortage of quality armaments,

---

\* The return of the Jews to their ancient homeland and the gradual rebuilding of their nation up to the Declaration of Independence in 1948 is dealt with in detail in [“He that scattered Israel shall gather him”](#), by Brother Nicholas White (p. 149).



**David ben-Gurion, Israel's first president, announcing Israel's Declaration of Independence in Independence Hall, Tel Aviv.**

and of them being run around from one front to another; as soon as one problem was resolved, they were needed to tackle another.

During the War of Independence there were a number of truces arranged by the UN: a truce on 11 June lasted four weeks, followed by ten days fighting; a truce on 19 July lasted thirteen weeks, with fighting again from 15 October; and finally came an armistice agreement 7 January—over a year from the UN vote on partition.

The state created was a democracy. *Its land was God's; its people were God's; but its spirit was not of God, it was democracy, it was of man.* This was clearly illustrated by the elections later held on 25 January 1949.

In terms of the prophecy in Ezekiel 37:22—"I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel"—a fulfilment had now occurred. A single political unit of Israeli national power was in control of Israel upon the mountains of Israel. There were a variety of political parties and opinions, but only one government.

### **Effect of winning the war**

The immediate consequence of winning the War of Independence was a great boost to the confidence of Jews worldwide. From the beginning of the State of Israel the government abolished all restrictions on the entry of Jews into the land of Israel and on 5 July 1950 enacted the Law of Return, by which any Jew from any country in the world was guaranteed the right of entry to Israel

and immediate citizenship. These steps removed the great hindrances to immigration previously applied by the British, and encouraged many to come from Europe.

Israel's winning their independence also resulted in an increase in anti-Semitism amongst Israel's neighbours, and this in turn forced many Jews from those countries to leave and emigrate to Israel. Further large waves of immigration from Russia and Ethiopia followed in the 1990s.

Problems and benefits resulted from the massive immigration. Advantages were the abundant source of army recruits and the great labour pool. On the other hand, the problems of absorbing such a large number into the small economy of Israel, and providing for their needs in the meantime, were exceedingly great. Difficulties of housing, education and employment took a decade fully to overcome.

Since the early days of the state, the size of the economy and the integrated population has grown, and the waves of immigration have reduced in size and frequency, so that problems of this kind are now much less. Today (2010) their economy has become very prosperous. However, in the early days these problems were part of the question as to how Israel could survive. In so many aspects of the life of the country the hand of God was to be seen behind the scenes, looking after her and ensuring that problems did not become fatal. It is a sign to those willing to see it that He has been at work.



**Independence Hall, where Israel's Declaration of Independence was signed.**

### Subsequent survival of the State of Israel

Through persecution over the centuries and in many lands the descendants of Jacob have survived as a separate people. This remarkable feature has been noted by many. In spite of a strong temptation on their part to assimilate and so lose their link with history and with the Old Testament Scriptures, God Himself has continued to separate them through the attitude of their neighbours, which regularly forced them to flee to fresh locations.

It is a different situation for the State of Israel. The antagonism of neighbouring states cannot be moderated by moving to a different location. The very existence of the state comes to be at stake, so the problems of the political resurrection of Israel tend to be repeated. The history since 1948 has been one of frequent war with her neighbours. That she has survived so many attempts against her is again a tribute to God's overall protection, although the Jews themselves may mostly ascribe it to their own prowess and determination.

The antagonism of Israel's neighbours has also spread into a worldwide context. In November 1975, after a year of PLO lobbying, the United Nations General

assembly voted by seventy-five states to thirty-five to condemn Zionism as 'racism'. This was taken by many as an attack upon Israel merely for its existence.

### **"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isa. 54:17)**

Beside direct attacks upon Israel, a variety of other weapons have been used in an attempt to damage Israel's position.

**The oil weapon** (used especially for the ten years following the war of 1973):

This involved the threat of withdrawing oil supplies from countries supporting Israel. Although the control of supplies hiked the price of oil, its effect has been largely cancelled by the stimulus to find new oil fields and new suppliers.

**Missile attacks** (used most recently by the Iranian-backed Hizbullah in Lebanon):

These have been used as a form of psychological warfare on the population of Israel, and to make things difficult for them. The Second Lebanon War appears to have reduced such attacks and their effectiveness.

**Terrorism and suicide bombing** (used by the PLO and Hamas in the Intifadas):

Both are forms of psychological warfare intended to instil fear in the population of Israel and perhaps also to prompt overreaction from Israel's leaders in the hope of achieving political advantage to the Arab cause.

None of these weapons being used against Israel is having a major and lasting effect, as the words from Isaiah 54:17 prophesy. They are as "thorns in [Israel's] sides". We see the hand of God ensuring that they remain so. Although much of Isaiah 54 is prophecy not yet fulfilled, verse 17 is expressed in a general ongoing way, and to date has always remained fulfilled.

### **Further wars triggered by threat or attack against Israel**

<b>1956</b>	Suez War (100 days; initiated by Egypt's closure of the Suez Canal)
<b>1967</b>	Six-Day War (and battle for Jerusalem)
<b>1973</b>	October War (from Yom Kippur, 6–24 October)
<b>1982</b>	First Lebanon War (with the PLO)
<b>1987</b>	First Intifada (Palestinian uprising within Israel)
<b>2000</b>	Second Intifada
<b>2006</b>	Second Lebanon War (1 month; initiated by a Hizbullah attack)

*Mostly short term and terminated by ceasefires organised by the UN*

*Israel has survived each attack and has tended to be strengthened by it*



**Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, from a painting by Sister Winifred Blagburn.**

The dominating cause of Arab hostilities is hate against Israel. They are not necessary for the survival of the Arabs. Israel is the only one currently fighting for its survival. In the results of this hate we see fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham and to Jacob: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Gen. 12:3; 27:29).

### **Overall history of the State of Israel**

Overall, the period from Israel's declaration of independence has been a time of gradual consolidation and strengthening of the various aspects of a state: militarily, economically, politically, the size of its population, and its integration and unity as a secular state. However, there have often been occasions when Israel have looked, or been, weak compared with their opposition; yet each time God has brought them through. He does this

for the sake of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and for the sake of His own Name (Deut. 4:31; 7:7,8; Ezek. 36:22,32; Rom. 11:28).

Another reason why the prophecy of "one nation . . . upon the mountains of Israel" is being fulfilled gradually and over a long period is not only to make it easier and more feasible for those involved, but also that Israel might continue to be for a long time an active sign to the world, that some from among the nations might be enlightened and encouraged to accept the things of God and of His King the Lord Jesus Christ. Although the sign of Israel is often ignored, it is able to enlighten and encourage those who can see the hand of God at work.

*Peace has proved illusive* throughout the history of the modern State of Israel. True peace will not arrive until the King and Shepherd of Israel comes in the person of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

"The State of Israel was established 62 years ago, by order of the international community, as the homeland of the Jewish nation—in recognition of our historic ties to this land and in the wake of the world's demonstrable failure to protect the Jews in exile" (*International Jerusalem Post*, 11-17 Jun. 2010).