

see Deut. 13:1-5; 18:15-22). The reader can truly believe that “the God of heaven [will] set up a kingdom”, and that the final stage of the prophecy of Daniel 2, the stone smiting the image, will happen. The words of Daniel have come to pass, and from this we know that God sent him and his words are true. The complete accuracy of this prophecy proves beyond doubt that these are the words of God, and they will come to pass.

God was in complete control; He gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream, He told Daniel what the dream was and its interpretation. God was telling

us what would happen from the time of Babylon right through to our day and beyond. God was proving to us beyond any doubt that He is the true and living God, and that His Word is truth, and will come to pass.

Only one question remains to be asked: When the day comes that the stone will smite the image, where will you be? Will you be with the stone that smote the image, or will you be destroyed by it? A study of Nebuchadnezzar’s image requires a personal response by each of us as we wait the day when the God of heaven will set up His Kingdom.

The witness of fulfilled Bible prophecy

3. The LORD shall scatter thee among all people

Stephen Whitehouse

This article shows that the Jewish people are living witnesses to the existence of God. The Scriptures foretold that Israel would disobey God and be scattered all over the world. God prophesied that the Assyrians, then the Babylonians and finally the Romans would invade Israel and disperse the people to all nations. However, they would not be assimilated but remain a distinct race.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL demonstrates His power throughout the Scriptures by informing the reader about the future of nations and peoples. Only God can do this, and He challenges others to try:

“Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you” (Isa. 41:21-24).

God contests with the nations to try to produce idols that can predict things to come, or even account for things that have already happened.

But they cannot. What is more, God chooses the most unlikely subjects and materials and brings them to glory.

Israel, the focus of Bible prophecy

God explained to Israel why He loves them and why He chose them:

“The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, Which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:7-9).

God had chosen Israel to be a people who were separated for Him, not because they were great in number—on the contrary, they were the smallest of nations—but because He had made a promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2) and He loved them. Indeed, God declared to the nation of Israel, “Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me,

and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me” (Isa. 43:10). And He said again, “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no saviour” (v. 11); “ye are My witnesses . . . that I am God” (v. 12). The people of Israel are God’s witnesses, and it is for this reason that the nation is the central focus of Bible prophecy. They are a living demonstration that God exists, that He has a purpose with Israel and the rest of the world, centred in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and that His work of salvation is effective, even today.

One of the major prophetic themes is God’s working with Israel with the express purpose of bringing them to salvation. Early on in the Bible, before they entered into the Land, God told the nation that blessings would be poured upon them if they were obedient but cursings would follow if they chose to be disobedient. There are two key prophecies set forth, recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, that describe in detail the specific consequences if Israel were unfaithful.

The [table](#) below chronicles the major details of these prophecies.

Prophecies concerning Israel’s dispersion

If we look closely at the table, we can see that one major warning to Israel is that she would be taken into captivity by an oppressor and scattered, if she was unfaithful to the God of Israel. The prophet Isaiah predicted that the Assyrians would take the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity because of her disobedience despite all God’s warnings about the consequences of faithlessness:

“For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria . . . Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah’s son; now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come

Details of the curses	Bible references
God warned Israel that their persistent unfaithfulness and disobedience would bring natural disasters, drought, famine, dreadful diseases and plagues, and defeat and oppression at the hand of their enemies.	Lev. 26:14-29; Deut. 28:16-35,38-46
The land would be wasted by their enemies and eventually left desolate and barren as long as Israel remained scattered among the nations.	Lev. 26:32-35,43
All formal religious worship, including the great temple in Jerusalem, would be destroyed.	Lev. 26:30,31; Dan. 9:26,27; Hos. 3:4; Mt. 24:2; Lk. 21:5,6
Gentile dominion over God’s land and His special city (Jerusalem) would last for a long, uninterrupted period.	Lk. 21:24
After the destruction of their land and nation, Israel would be sold as slaves and driven into exile in all nations.	Lev. 26:37,38; Deut. 4:27; 28:64,68; Lk. 21:24
There they would wander from nation to nation, a homeless people without peace or rest, living in constant fear of their lives, suffering from many diseases, plagues and sicknesses.	Lev. 26:36-39; Deut. 28:59-67
Having refused to serve the God of Israel, they would be made to serve the gods of their captors.	Deut. 4:28; 28:64
Yet, astonishingly, the Jews would remain a distinct and separate people, never allowed to assimilate or be destroyed.	Lev. 26:44; Jer. 30:11; 31:35-37; 33:24-26; Amos 9:8,9
For this reason, Gentile opposition would express itself in critical terms memorialised in proverbs and bywords.	Deut. 28:37; Jer. 24:9

up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel" (Isa. 8:4-8).

The Assyrian armies are pictured as the flood of the Euphrates overflowing its banks and sweeping through both the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah. The warning was repeated again in 10:5,6: "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets". However, in the midst of this prophecy God gave a stirring promise of their return from exile (vv. 20-27). For He solemnly declared, "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God" (v. 21).

Unfaithfulness was by no means a characteristic only of northern Israel. Jeremiah later prophesied that Babylon would conquer the southern tribes and carry them off into captivity too because of their unfaithfulness. In a series of encounters, the prophet prophesied this in contradiction to the false prophets who told the king of Judah that Babylon would not conquer Israel (see Jer. 27:6-11). He not only prophesied the coming of Babylon, but also recorded the fulfillment after it had happened: "In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up" (39:1,2).

The chapter records the tragic capture of Zedekiah, the killing of his sons before his eyes, and his being blinded and taken to Babylon as a prisoner (vv. 5-7). Jeremiah also recorded the destruction of Jerusalem (vv. 8-10). In two places the prophet prophesied that their exile would last for seventy years (25:12; 29:10). And, just as God had said, seventy years after the captivity began, Cyrus King of Persia issued a proclamation permitting the Jews to return to their Land, as recorded in the two closing verses of 2 Chronicles.¹

The siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70

The Old Testament predicted another dispersion, the extent of which was never realized during earlier times. As contained in the prophecy of

Moses, God declared, "And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone" (Deut. 28:64). The prophecy describes the anxiety, persecution and trouble Israel would face as they were scattered all over the world. The Lord Jesus himself was well aware of this prophecy, and he too warned Israel of their approaching desolation if they remained unfaithful, expressing it in the most graphic detail:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:20-24).

Just as the prophets and the Lord Jesus foretold, another oppressor came against Israel with great fury. The children of Israel again had proved to be disobedient, and this time round they had committed the worst crime of all in rejecting the Son of God as their Messiah. They consented to his death upon the cross with the heart-chilling words, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Mt. 27:25).

In an act of Divine retribution and fulfilment of what God had said through Moses—"The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far . . . as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance" (Deut. 28:49,50)—the eagle-bearing, Latin-speaking Romans besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and all the horrors described in Deuteronomy 28 finally came to pass. This was easily the most terrible time in history up to this date. Josephus, a contemporary historian in the first century A.D., indicates that over a million people

1. It is worth noting that, in the Hebrew order of the Old Testament books, Chronicles stands last. Instead of ending with "a curse" (Mal. 4:6), the Jewish Bible ends on this positive and encouraging note.

perished in Jerusalem, and approximately 100,000 were taken captive. The temple, only recently completed under Herod the Great in the first century B.C., was again destroyed. There was literally not one temple stone left on another, just as Jesus had predicted (Mt. 24:2).

After the Bar Kochba rebellion of 135 A.D., Emperor Hadrian put the land of Israel up for sale. Not only were Jews forbidden to live in the Holy City, but the name of Jerusalem was changed to Aelia Capitolina, and the province of Judea was renamed Syria Palestina. It was as if all memory of the Jews and their previous possession of the Promised Land were being blotted out from history.

While the Jews were exiled, their land became desolate, sparsely inhabited by Gentiles and a few groups of Jews. For as long as until the end of the 1800s, the enemies of the Jews ruled the land. But the Bible anticipated the Jews' future regathering, for Jesus predicted, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24).

As in previous dispersions, Israel would be restored, which we know occurred, in momentous fashion, in 1948, nearly 2,000 years after they had been originally expelled. What is equally amazing is that throughout all this time they remained a separate and distinct people. And whereas Babylon and Israel's other enemies have all ceased as nationalities, the Jew has survived. We should then ask, Was this all expected and probable? The celebrated author Mark Twain asked himself the very same question and came to but one conclusion:

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian,

the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"²

Conclusion

From this brief study of the nation of Israel we have seen that God knows the end from the beginning, and has given us "a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet. 1:19) in order to give us total confidence, just as the writer to the Hebrews says, "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (11:6). We can weigh up the evidence and see that for ourselves. And with this knowledge, God Himself leaves us with a challenge:

- "Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:11,12).
- "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right" (vv. 18,19).
- "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength:

2 Mark Twain, "Concerning the Jews", *Harper's Magazine*, 1899; see *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*, Doubleday (1963), p. 249.

even to Him shall men come; and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (vv. 22-25).

As we see from the verses above, Israel's future is secure; when the Lord Jesus returns she will finally be "justified" and will receive "glory" from

the Son of God, their once-rejected Messiah but now eternal King. The question is, however, Will we enjoy the same blessing? God's instruction is very clear: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved". This is the command and invitation to God's Kingdom; but what will we do with it? We make the answer now.