

The Jews have been established as God's witnesses. Everything that happens to them is in fulfillment of what the LORD had said. Whether blessing for acceptable behavior, or, curses for failure to hear the word of God, their destiny as a nation is predetermined. As a result of God's unchangeable character, his covenants of promise made to Abraham are assured, hence Abraham's descendents will continue as promised. If God had not sent the Prophets to reveal the coming of Messiah and the restoration of their Kingdom, the Jews would have been completely without hope during their captivity in Babylon. These promises sustained them as they eagerly anticipated the day of their deliverance.

Many of these prophecies have a much wider application than that of their first return from captivity in Babylon. We too, in this modern generation, have been privileged to see Israel in their land as foretold. This is a dramatic sign in preparation for Christ's second coming and the nearness of his Kingdom. Israel's will find a true restoration in the "time of the end" when "They shall look on him whom they pierced".

Isaiah 43:10 – 12 You are my witnesses says the LORD.... that I am God! There is to be no doubt that the unfolding history and outlook of the Nation of Israel is testimony that the plan of God is being worked out as laid out in the scriptures.

Jeremiah 25:9-11 Jeremiah specifically states the duration of their captivity in Babylon would be 70 years, and then they would be brought back. He goes on to record in verse 14 that other nations would also "serve themselves" or take advantage of Israel. History has proved this to be true. In every case, however, the nations which have had dominion over the Jews have themselves been judged by God and brought down or ceased to exist. Remember Genesis 12:3 "I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee. God's promises guarantee Israel's survival and restoration.

2 Chronicles 36:21 The captivity of Israel by Babylon came to an end exactly as prophesied by Jeremiah. This further demonstrates the reliability and veracity of God's word and ultimately is the assurance that he will fulfill his promises.

Ezra 1:1-5 Let's now consider the circumstances under which Cyrus, the King of Persia, was instrumental and authorized the return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. The principal highlights in connection with the restoration of the Jews are found in the following references.

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| A. Return to Jerusalem<br>Ezra 1:5               | E. Temple finished<br>Ezra 6:15                                |
| B. Building of the Altar<br>Ezra 3:2-3           | F. Reformation under Ezra<br>Ezra 9 and 10                     |
| C. Foundation of the Temple laid<br>Ezra 3:10-11 | G. Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt<br>Nehemiah 6:15                 |
| D. Work delayed<br>Ezra 4                        | H. Restoration of the Law and ordinances.<br>Nehemiah 8 and 10 |

Please take a few minutes to read both Ezra and Nehemiah to get a better sense of the overall time period of restoration.

Ezekiel 11:13, 16-20 Reference to verse 13 will show that these verses are in answer to the question "will thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?"

God will gather the Jews from the nations in which they were scattered. Ultimately, however, the final and total restoration of the people is dependent upon their spiritual conversion (v20). There must be a change in their characteristic stiff-necked and hard-hearted attitude toward God's will.

Ezekiel 36:17-38 Israel will be restored, but not for their sakes alone, (v22) but for the sake of the holy name of the LORD (Yahweh).

We may divide these references as follows:

v.17 their actions were unacceptable before God.

vv.18-19 so, God brought judgments against them and scattered them.

vv.22-28 These verses confirm a very important principle. God does not make mistakes. God chose Israel to be a Holy Nation and a separate people. They did not willingly rise to the glorious destiny to which God called them as a nation. As a result God's Name has been profaned wherever the Jews have been dispersed throughout the world. This condition will not, however, be allowed to last indefinitely. The Divine purpose of God toward the nation which has brought reproach upon His Name, will at last be the means of bringing honor and glory to His Name. These verses show how this will be accomplished. (compare Jeremiah 33:9-11)

Ezekiel 37 The vision and prophecy of the "Valley of Dry Bones", is a remarkable depiction of "life" coming back into this nation that is to be scattered and "dead". The collection of the bones together and flesh on the bones and life restored in the body are partially fulfilled in recent history. Take a moment to read the entire chapter and appreciate the miracle of re-gathering the nation of Israel into their own land again. The Jewish nation being politically dead, describes how it is miraculously resurrected, and in the final phase brings us to the glorious prospect of the Jews firmly re-established in the Holy Land with Christ as their King. While we abhor the abuse of the second world war against the Jewish nation, it was instrumental in furthering the purpose of God to have the children of Israel return to the land.

v.24 The name "David" is used to identify the great King who is to come.

There is purposeful significance in the use of this name, since its meaning is "Beloved." It is now easy to make the connection, for Jesus is God's "Beloved" son in whom He is well pleased. The Messiah was not known by name to any of the prophets. The angel made His name known for the first time when he told Mary, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." Luke 1:31

Ezekiel 38 This is further discussed in this vision of the later days, the nation from the north come against the people that "is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel" (v 8)

Micah 4:1-7 This outlook to the later days shows the “the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” Jerusalem is the “city of the great king”, and all nations will be called to worship the LORD there. We see in this passage a changed community, one who seeks the LORD, who have put away war for ploughshares and farming equipment. All in the name of God.

The nation of Israel is set by God as witness to us that the LORD continues to work His plan in the earth. We can see the nation has now been restored back into their land. Further, in the words of Jesus Christ in Luke 21:24 With the recapture of the city of Jerusalem in 1967, the times of the Gentiles (nations) are nearly complete. The return of Jesus is imminent. We too are witnesses to the fact we are in “the last days” and now wait the promised return of Jesus to the earth which will begin the final stage of God’s plan to be brought to play.