

**WAKE UP CHURCH -  
YOU ALONE ARE ISRAEL**

**BY**

**JAMES MCKEEVER**

## PREFACE

After weighing in my heart and mind before the Lord for several months the following article, I came to the conclusion that it would be very illuminating for students of this manual to have this information in their hearts.

Brother McKeever, the writer-author, is a faithful brother and friend to me. He wrote in his END NEWS DIGEST that we are about 99% in agreement in what we believe or write. I presume that as of this 6/91, that that unity of believing still prevails. The 1% that is still in question is not worth the price of separating our friendship or brotherhood into disunity of the faith in our Lord Jesus.

It takes mature believers to remain one in heart and spirit, when there is disagreement on any one view point. It would be irresponsible to strain at gnats. There are thoughts in this article that I am not in agreement with, but they are so minor, that any effort to share my views would detract from its great, sound truths, therefore, unimportant. Like I do, I advise you who read the following to open your heart, receive what the Holy Spirit gives life in, put the rest aside, or on a shelf, but to remain teachable is imperative. If we work at being inter-instructable, inter-correctable, with a contrite spirit and heart is essential, for the Lord will look upon us with favour and bring us to the fulfilment of Isaiah 52:8 (KJ), “... *for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion.*”

Brother McKeever has authored a complementary book entitled, “CLAIM YOUR BIRTHRIGHT.” Here is a masterpiece of Bible revelation concerning our birthright, with prophetic insight into scriptures, that is most valuable to us in these end times. Your hearts will leap with joy and faith as you meditate upon the truths in the book listed above.

Because of Calvary, we love you all fervently.

Brother Royal Cronquist

## **WAKE UP CHURCH YOU ALONE ARE ISRAEL!**

**The following article was first published in James McKeever's Christian End-times News Digest, of Omega Ministries. It is here written verbatim by permission. It is so clearly presented that the Universal Body of Christ ought to read and believe it!**

There has been so much garbage floating around the Body of Christ about the rapture occurring in 1988, and specifically September 11-13, 1988. The problem of this trash, and I call it trash because it is false teaching. Let me say loud and clear, as I have many times before, the timing of the rapture of the Church and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ has absolutely nothing to do with the Nation of Israel being formed.

As I said earlier, the main problem is that these people are looking at the nation of Israel as God's Israel. I declare to you that it is not. The Church is the only Israel of God today. I have a teaching of VHS video tape entitled "Keys to Understanding Prophecy," in which I discuss two primary keys to understand prophecy. These are:

1. Understanding who Israel is.
2. Understanding the book of Revelation, that it is not chronological.

Unless you have a solid grasp of both of these, you will never be able to understand prophecy. Let us now turn our attention to just the first of these and see if we can understand who Israel is.

### **ISRAEL AND THE COVENANTS**

The subject of Israel is a complex one and, therefore, there is much confusion concerning it. It would take a complete book to deal with this subject in its entirety, but we must at least look at it briefly if we are going to understand many of the prophecies.

One of the problems is that there are at least 6 entities, ALL OF WHICH ARE CALLED "ISRAEL."

1. The man named Israel (Jacob) in the Bible.
2. The ten Northern Tribes.
3. The twelve Tribes.
4. A geographic place or portion of land called the Promised Land (Palestine).
5. The nation that exists today between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River [the nation Israel].
6. True Israel.

Let me say at this point that there is not an anti-Semitic cell in my body. In our trips to the middle-east, the Lord has given me a real love and appreciation for the Hebrews in the nation Israel. They are a tough resilient people whom I admire a great deal. I say

this so that you will clearly understand my feelings towards them, because some of the things that I will share on the surface may seem negative toward them, but they are not.

As we begin to look at the question of who Israel is, the first thing we need to examine together is the relationship between the covenants.

## **THE OLD COVENANT VERSUS THE NEW COVENANT**

Much of people's thinking concerning who Israel is depends on their view of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

If one believes that the Old Covenant still continues and that the New Covenant simply took its place parallel to the Old Covenant 2000 years ago, and that both are still valid, one would come out with one set of answers. On the other hand, if one believes that the Old Covenant ended and the New Covenant replaced it, then one would arrive at a different conclusion of Israel. I believe that the second view is the valid one.

Christ Jesus said that He came to fulfil the law, but not destroy it (MT 5:17). He fulfilled all of the requirements of the old contract, thus terminating it. This means that the old contract is no longer valid as a means of justification and the only way to God is through the new Contract (New Covenant). In either case, Christ Jesus is our salvation; His blood validated the New Covenant.

We all know that Christ Jesus declared all foods clean (MK 7:18-19) and, thus, negated the ceremonial part of the Old Covenant, But what about the ten commandments? Romans 6 says this:

*14. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under Law, but under Grace.*

Here we see that we are no longer under the Law (of the Old Testament), but under Grace. The question then would come, what does it mean by "law"? Is this just the ceremonial law? Romans 7 clears this up:

*7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'*

Here we see one of the ten commandments quoted as being part of "the Law." This means that Christians are no longer under the ten commandments. If they were, they should worship on Saturday rather than on Sunday. So the entire old contract has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ and no longer applies to anyone, whether he be Hebrew or Christian. Let me hasten to add that there are many valid reasons for studying and singing songs from the Old Testament. We can still learn many things from the Law about our God, even though we are not under it.

We have seen that the Old Covenant consists of the Old Testament ceremonial law and the ten commandments. It also obviously comprises of the promises (covenants) that God made to the Patriarchs. We have also seen that we are no longer under “the law,” which is the Old Covenant. The book of Hebrews goes into this in even more of an explicit way. In Hebrews 8:6-13 we read these words:

*6. But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better Covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.*

*7. For if that first Covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.*

*8. For finding faults with them, He says, Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah;*

*9. not like the Covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; For they did not continue in My Covenant, and I did not care for them says the Lord.*

*10. For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days says the Lord: I will put My Laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God.”*

*11. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying “know the Lord,” for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.*

*12. “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”*

*13. When He said, “A New Covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.*

We clearly see from this passage in Hebrews that the first covenant, the Old Covenant, is obsolete and is ready to disappear in the first century. Thus, I would have to conclude that the Old Covenant has been fulfilled and terminated and the New Covenant replaced it.

Therefore, I cannot get excited about the Hebrews worshipping on the Sabbath (Saturday). They are simply trying to reach the God of Abraham through an invalid means, through a cancelled contract. In that respect, they are no better off than the Arabs, who try to reach the God of Abraham through the Muslim religion. They, too, are trying to reach Him through an invalid means.

One reason we know that the Old Covenant has been cancelled and the New Covenant has taken its place is Christ Jesus’ statement in John 14:

*6. Jesus said to him, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; No one comes to The Father but by Me ...”*

Here Christ Jesus states that He is the only way to God. Therefore, we must conclude that no one, not even the Hebrews, can come to God any other way than by Christ Jesus. The Old Covenant would be a means of trying to come to God without going through Christ Jesus. Hence, we must conclude that the Old Covenant is no longer effective. This does not mean that the Law does not still have a function in our lives - to show us our sin and to reveal the character and desires of our Heavenly Father. But the Old Covenant, as a contract, is no longer viable. The only way to God is through Christ Jesus for everyone, including the Hebrews.

We have said that we are no longer under the Old Testament Law, including the ten commandments. Lest you misunderstand that this gives us a license to sin, I would hasten to remind you that in the New Testament we are called to even a higher and purer way to live. An illustration may help you to try to understand.

Let us say that someone was driving down a highway having a speed limit of 50 miles per hour posted all along it. Yet if someone were to absolutely guarantee that individual that there was not a policeman within 200 miles, how fast would he drive? My guess is that he would drive 60 or maybe 70 miles per hour.

On the other hand, let us say that all of the 56 mile-per-hour speed limit signs were taken down and a policeman was riding in the front seat with the driver. If he told the driver to drive 55, how fast would the individual drive? Probably 53 miles per hours. If the policeman told the individual to drive 30 or in some rare instances, even 70 miles per hour, with the police officer sitting in the front seat, beside him that driver would obey precisely what the police officer said, regardless of the signs along the highway.

So it is with God. In the Old Testament we had the written Law, the signs along the highway. However, in the New Testament we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, sitting in the front seat with us. If we are really following God, we are therefore called to live in a higher and purer way.

In the Old Testament one was not to commit adultery, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are not even to lust, not to even think about it in our minds, (MT 5:27-28). Under the Old Covenant one was not to commit murder, but under the New Covenant, with the Holy Spirit within our hearts, we are not even to hate, (MT 6:21-22). So we are called to even a higher, purer and more righteous way of life than was required under the Old Covenant.

Paul sums this up well in Romans. He points out that we are not under the Law, the Old Covenant, but we are under Grace. The question might then arise as to whether we should sin more so that God's Grace would be even more abundant. In Romans 6, this is Paul's answer:

1. *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that Grace might increase?*
2. *May it never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it?*

As we have seen, we are no longer under the Old Covenant, which has been completed, finished and made obsolete. We are now under the New Covenant. But you might ask, “What about the eternal promises made to Abraham?” That is a very valid question, which we will now address.

### WHO IS ISRAEL TODAY?

The basic problem with Christians today is, “That they do not believe the Bible.” At least they do not believe the Bible concerning Jews and Israel. For example; let us say, “That standing before a Christian group were two people. One was a blonde-headed young man from southern California named Johnny Johnson, who knew Christ Jesus as his Saviour and who really loved the Lord. Standing besides him was Abe Goldstein, who lived in Jerusalem and did not know Christ Jesus.” If I asked the Christian group, “Which of the two was a Jew, most of them would erroneously say, ‘Abe Goldstein from Jerusalem.’” The reason they would say this is because they really do not believe the Bible, which says this in Romans 2:

*26. If therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?*

*27. And will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who through the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?*

*28. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; Neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh,*

*29. but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; And circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter, and his praise is not from men, but from God.*

The only way one can have one’s heart circumcised by the Holy Spirit is when one becomes a Christian. Thus, if you really believe these verses from Romans, you would say in our example, that Johnny Johnson is a Jew, and Abe Goldstein is not. Remember, “he is not a Jew who is one outwardly.” (ROM 2:28)

You might just pause for a moment and ask yourself, “Which one do you really believe is a Jew?” I think you will conclude, as I have, that according to the Bible, anyone who has received Christ Jesus as his Saviour is a Jew, and anyone who does not know Christ Jesus as Saviour is not a Jew. This means that all Christians (according to these verses in Romans) are Jews, regardless of racial background, and that even if someone is living in Jerusalem today, if he does not know Christ Jesus as his Saviour, he is not a Jew.

This is a very important point. You might just want to pause and pray about this. Allow the Holy Spirit to minister unto you the significance of what we have just discussed.

God made some promises to Abraham, such as this one in Genesis 15:

18. *On that day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates ..."*

Another promise made to Abraham is found in Genesis 12:

3. *And I will bless those who bless you. And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families in the earth shall be blessed.*

The question then comes, who is heir today of all the promises made to Abraham? This is another way of saying, "WHO IS ISRAEL?" We get a clear and a perfect answer to this in Galatians 3:

6. *Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*

7. *Know you therefore that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

8. *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel before hand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you."*

9. *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

10. *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them."*

11. *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."*

12. *However, the Law is not of Faith; On the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them."*

13. *Christ Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree ..."*

14. *In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come unto the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promises of the Spirit through faith ...*

28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

29. *And if you belong to Christ Jesus, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

Verse 7 says that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. The implication there is that those who are not of faith are not sons of Abraham. What faith is that talking about? Verse 14 tells us that it is faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, verse 7 says all those who have faith in Jesus Christ are sons of Abraham, and by implication, all those who do not have faith in Jesus Christ are not sons of Abraham. Verse 28 and 29 clear this

up even more. Here the Word of the Lord says that the terms, “Jew” (Hebrew) and “Greek” (Gentile) do not mean anything any more. If we belong to Christ Jesus, then we are Abraham’s offspring. Offspring is a biological term. All of those who know Jesus Christ are heirs to all the promises made to Abraham! You and I, as Christians, are heirs to the promises made to Abraham, and those who do not know Jesus Christ, including all non-Christian Hebrews living in Jerusalem or any other part of the world, are not heirs to the promises made to Abraham.

The sons of Abraham, all of the believers in Jesus Christ, ARE TRUE ISRAEL! According to these scriptures mentioned above, all other people, regardless of their biological origin, are not heirs of the promises made to Abraham.

When Christians sing, “Awake Oh Israel,” we are really telling ourselves to wake up to something. When we talk about Israel returning to the Promised Land, we are really talking about the believers in Christ Jesus returning to the promised land, specifically to Mount Zion.

To me this is very exciting! We are God’s chosen people. All of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) are ours to inherit! Praise the Lord!

I believe that upon careful examination of the scriptures, and I hope that you will do this for yourself, you will find that Israel ALWAYS HAS BEEN AND ALWAYS WILL BE A SPIRITUAL ENTITY. For example, there are only four women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ Jesus. Two of these, Ruth and Rahab, were NOT BIOLOGICALLY DESCENDED from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yet they were part of Israel.

Some might say that Christ Jesus’ lineage came down through the men and not the women. Since Christ Jesus did not have any physical father, that argument does not hold up at all. If you say that Ruth and Rahab were not part of Israel, then these two vital links in the chain are broken and this would imply that Christ Jesus is not of Israel, which obviously is not true. Therefore, we must conclude that these two women, Ruth and Rahab, are indeed part of Israel.

The Bible tells us that the Old Testament congregation of Israel included more than native-born Hebrews and was, therefore, NOT BIOLOGICAL in nature. In Exodus 12:

*19. Seven days there shall be found no leaven in your house; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land.*

In fact, in the Old Testament there are clearly outlined procedures for assimilating proselytes, those not physically descended from Abraham, who wanted to become part of Israel. Hebrews who did not follow God were removed from Israel.

One of the scriptures that deals with assimilating those who were not physically of Abraham’s offspring in the Old Testament is found in Isaiah 56:

6. *“Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, and to love the Name of the Lord, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and holds fast My Covenant;*
7. *even those I will bring to My Holy Mountain, and make them joyful in My House of Prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My Altar; for My House will be called a House of Prayer for all peoples.”*
8. *The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.”*

Two other scriptures that also deal with this subject are in the following, of Ezekiel 47:

21. *“So you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the Tribes of Israel,*
22. *And it will come about that you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the aliens who stay in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the Tribes of Israel.*
23. *And it will come about that in the Tribe with which the alien stays, there you shall give him his inheritance,” declares the Lord God.*

In Exodus 12:

43. *And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner is to eat of it;*
44. *but every man’s slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it.*
45. *A sojourner or a hired servant shall not eat of it.*
46. *It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.*
47. *All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this.*
48. *But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover unto the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.*
49. *The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.”*

As you can see from the three passages above, if a stranger or alien wanted to eat the Passover, to be circumcised, and to follow God, then he was no longer to be considered an alien, but rather part of the congregation of Israel.

Concerning the exclusion from Israel of Hebrews who refused to follow God, in the majority of the cases it was God Himself who eliminated them from Israel. For example, consider the following in Exodus 32:

31. *Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin and they have made a god of gold for themselves.*
32. *But now, if you will, forgive their sin, and if not, please blot me out of Your Book which You have written!"*
33. *And the Lord said unto Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My Book.*
34. *But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you; never-the-less, in the Day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin."*
35. *Then the Lord smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.*

Deuteronomy 29:

20. *The Lord shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this Book will rest upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.*
21. *Then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the Tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the Covenant which are written in this Book of the Law ...*

Obviously, we could dwell much longer on this subject, but I wanted to give just a little of the Old Testament background to show that the Israel of those days was a congregation based on SPIRITUAL CRITERIA, rather than on PHYSICAL or BIOLOGICAL CRITERIA. In the Psalms 73, there is a beautiful definition of who Israel is: "Those who are pure in heart," which is a spiritual criteria.

1. *Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.*

Another example which points out that Israel has always been and is today a spiritual entity, and not a physical or biological entity, is the olive tree described in Romans 11:

13. *But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an Apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry.*
14. *If somehow I might have to move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them ...*
17. *But if some of the Branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,*

18. *do not be arrogant towards the Branches; but if you are arrogant, remember it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.*

19. *You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”*

20. *Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;*

21. *for if God did not spare the natural Branches, neither will He spare you.*

22. *Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.*

23. *And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.*

24. *For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are of the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?*

The olive tree is Israel. After Christ Jesus’ sacrificial death, the individual Hebrews who did not believe in Christ Jesus were broken off. The Gentiles who believed in Christ Jesus were grafted in, and if, any of the broken off branches, the Hebrews, received Christ Jesus as their Saviour, they were grafted back in.

To repeat. The olive tree is Israel. There is only one olive tree - not two, as some might say. Some would try to have a physical, biological Israel and a spiritual Israel. I do not find that concept in the Bible. There is only one Israel and it is spiritual, and always has been. It is simple that the rules for how one becomes a part of Israel, changed in Christ Jesus. The way one now becomes part of Israel is by believing in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour. In Old Testament times, one became part of Israel by believing God, being circumcised, and obeying Him, looking forward to the cross of Christ Jesus.

Let’s look at another passage that shows that we are dealing with a spiritual entity when we talk about Israel, in Ephesians 2:

11. *Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision,” by the so called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands.*

12. *Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ Jesus, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the Covenants of Promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

13. *But now in Christ Jesus, you who were formerly afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ Jesus.*

14. *For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,*

*15. by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of Commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,*

*16. and might reconcile them both in one body through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.*

Here the Bible points out that Christ Jesus took the Hebrews and the non-Hebrews, who previously were excluded from Israel, and He made them, those out of each group who would receive Christ Jesus, into one group by His death on the cross. He made the two into “one new man,” the now, expanded Israel. There are those who would like to pull this one new man apart into “Hebrew Christians” and “non-Hebrew Christians.” Again, this is not scriptural, since Christ Jesus made the two groups into “one new man” and THAT NEW MAN IS ISRAEL TODAY, and consists of all those who believe in Jesus Christ. Hebrews who do not believe in Jesus Christ are not part of this new man and thus are not part of Israel today. Of course, believers from Old Testament (pre-cross) times are part of Israel.

Just as an aside, there are those today who think that a “completed Hebrew,” one who has become a Christian, has a superior position spiritually to other Christians. When they say this they are trying to pull the one new man back into two parts. I am all for reaching the Hebrews for Christ Jesus, but equally for reaching all races. A Hebrew who has become a Christian is no better or no worse than a Spaniard who becomes a Christian. We are all complete in Christ! Praise the Lord!

This fact that all those who are physically, biologically descended from Jacob (Israel) are not really part of God’s Israel, unless they have received Christ Jesus as Saviour, is clearly stated by Paul in his letter to the Romans 9:

*6. But it is not as though the Word of God has failed, for they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;*

*7. Neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “Through Isaac your descendants will be named.”*

*8. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of promises are regarded as descendants.*

*9. For this is a word of promise: “At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”*

*10. And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;*

*11. for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,*

*12. it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger.”*

*13. Just as it is written, “Jacob I have loved but Esau I hated.”*

14. *What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!*
15. *For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*
16. *So then it does not depend upon the man who wills or the man who runs, but upon God who has mercy.*
17. *For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."*
18. *So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.*

In the passage above, we see that biological descendancy from Jacob (Israel) does not make one part of True Israel.

This passage also brings out another interesting concept. The promises made to Abraham only applied to his spiritual seed, Isaac, and did not apply to his other sons. Evidently, in addition to Isaac and Ishmael, Abraham had six other sons by another wife, in addition to sons by concubines. This is found in Genesis 25:

1. *Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Katurah.*
2. *And she bore to him Zimran, and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah ...*
5. *Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac;*
6. *but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.*

This passage from Genesis records that Abraham had a number of sons. Yet the promises made unto Abraham did not pass on unto them, nor to Ishmael, but only to Isaac. So we see that from the very beginning, we were not looking at biological heirs to Abraham's promises but spiritual heirs. This line of heirship to all of the promises made to Abraham continues today for Abraham's seed. But we know that all born again Christians today are the seed of Abraham.

The fact that God has changed the rules about how an individual becomes part of Israel was made clear by Christ Jesus when He taught concerning the Vineyard in Luke 20:

9. *And He began to tell the people this parable, "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to the vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time.*
10. *And at the harvest time He sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty handed.*

11. *And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty handed.*
12. *And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.*
13. *And the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: perhaps they will respect him.'*
14. *But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.'*
15. *And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?*
16. *He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it, they said, "May it never be."*
17. *But he looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the Chief Cornerstone?'*
18. *Everyone who falls on the stone will be broken to pieces; But on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."*
19. *And the Scribes and Chief Priests tried to lay hands upon Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spake this parable against them.*

In this parable Christ Jesus is clearly saying that the Hebrews (vine-growers), who rejected the prophets of God (the slaves) and killed the Son (Jesus Christ), would eventually have the vineyard (Israel) taken away from them. This "vineyard" will then be given to a people who would love and respect the vineyard, the owner (God) and His Son. Thus, the definition of who inherits God's promises definitely changed as God took away the inheritance from the Hebrews. The scribes and priests clearly understood what Jesus Christ was saying, and they knew that He was speaking this parable against the Jewish leaders and the Jewish system and nation of that day.

We have seen from the Bible that Israel always has been a SPIRITUAL ENTITY. Today Israel is composed of all those who have received Jesus Christ as their Saviour and it excludes anyone, including the natural Hebrews, who have not received Christ Jesus as their Saviour. All the promises made to Abraham are to be inherited by Israel, by all those who have received Christ Jesus as their Saviour, praise the Lord! This includes the promise about the land of Palestine, as we will see later. Another promise to be inherited by Israel (the Christians) is that God will bless those who will bless the Christians and will curse those who curse them. This is an exciting thing to be remembered during the times of persecution ahead.

### **THE CHURCH IS ISRAEL**

Up until now, we have looked at passages in the Bible that clearly show us that the believers in Jesus Christ are Israel. Now we will consider another source which shows that through the centuries people have understood that the Church is Israel. We would first like to look at one of the wonderful old hymns that many of have sung many times

## **ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS NAME!**

- 1. All hail the power of Jesus Name! Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all!*
- 2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, Ye ransomed from the fall,  
Hail Him who saves you by His Grace, And crown Him Lord  
of all; Hail Him who saves you by His Grace, And crown Him  
Lord of all!*
- 3. Let every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball, To  
Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all; To Him  
all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all!*
- 4. O that with yonder sacred throng, we at His feet may fall!  
We'll join the everlasting Son, and crown Him Lord of all!*  
(Composed by Edward Perronet and John Rippon, alt.)

From this precious old hymn, a favourite of many Christians, we can see that those who are ransomed from the fall of Adam, Christians, are called the Chosen Seed of Israel's race (second stanza). There was no doubt in the mind of the man who wrote this great hymn that CHRISTIANS ARE INDEED ISRAEL.

Turning to some of the more modern choruses that are popular in charismatic circles, we have ones such as this:

## **AWAKE O ISRAEL**

- 1. Awake, O Israel! Put off thy slumber and the truth shall set  
you free! For out of Zion comes thy Deliverer, in the year of  
Jubilee!*
- 2. For in the furnace of much affliction I have chosen thee,  
behold, And so for Iron I'll give thee silver, And for brass I'll  
give thee gold.*
- 3. Thou art chosen, for I have sought thee, Thou art graven on  
My hand, and I will gather all those that gather, They shall  
come back to their land.*
- 4. O hallelujah! O hallelujah! Hallelujah! O praise the Lord!  
O hallelujah! O praise the Lord!*  
(Composed by Merla Watson)

I do not know what you think about when you sing the words of this song. You are not telling some Hebrews who live in Palestine to get out of bed. It is a song to the Church telling us to wake up and that the truth will set us free. Unfortunately, there is much false teaching being circulated in the Body of Christ, but this song says that those who seek and find the truth will be set free! Of course we know that Christ Jesus is the truth. Also, there are evidently some things from which we are going to need to be delivered from (verse 1) and our Deliverer is coming again!

The second verse talks about the furnace of affliction that I believe we are going to be going through. God is substituting precious for base things in our lives through this furnace of affliction.

The third verse beautifully points out that Christians today are the chosen people of God. Remember, that Christ Jesus says, “Ye have not chosen Me but I have chosen you...” (MT 15:16 [kj]) So when you talk about God’s chosen people (the Church, Israel), that is us, the born again Christians. Christians are God’s chosen people! Peter tells us that we are now God’s chosen race; even though we were once not a people, He has now made us His people. It is written in 1 Peter 2:

*9. But you are a chosen race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a People for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;*  
*10. for you once were not a People, but now you are the People of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

The last half of the third verse of the song, “Awake, O Israel,” speaks of something that we will look at in depth a little bit later. The land of Palestine was promised to Abraham, right? Of course. We read that earlier, in Genesis 15. Then in Galatians 3, we found out that all those who believe in Christ Jesus are heirs to all the promises made unto Abraham.

Then to whom does the land of Israel belong? I believe that we can legitimately conclude that it belongs to Christians. At the end of the tribulation, Christ Jesus is going to gather all the Christians, both the living and the dead, to the land, our land, the Christians land. It is from there that we will rule and reign with Christ Jesus for a thousand years. Praise the Lord!

This return of Christians to Zion, which is in our land, is a subject of a beautiful chorus taken from Isaiah 51:11, composed by Ruth Lake:

### **THEREFORE THE REDEEMED**

*Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion,  
And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.  
They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.  
Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.*

This reminds me of the popular old hymn that says, “We’re marching to Zion.” That land and that mountain are our inheritance, that is, the inheritance of the redeemed, which refers to Christians. I am excited about the day when God will gather us, ISRAEL, to that land. What a time of rejoicing that will be. There is another exciting prophetic chorus that we sing, taken from Micah 4:2:

## COME AND LET US GO

*Come and let us go unto the mountain of the Lord, Unto the City of our God,  
Come and let us go unto the mountain of the Lord, Unto the City of our God.  
And He will teach us His ways, And we will walk in His paths.  
Come let us go unto the mountain of the Lord, Unto the City of our God.*

The mountain of the Lord is, of course, Mount Zion and when He gathers us together, He is going to teach us His ways perfectly and we will walk in His paths. I am excited about going to Zion, the inheritance promised to Abraham, which is the inheritance of ISRAEL, all those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, born of His Spirit.

I would like to include just one more chorus which states that the Christians are Israel. Many Christians sing this chorus, but unfortunately, they do not believe the words of it:

### THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

*He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Jesus took our chains,  
broke them and freed us,  
He now is our rock of victory. He is our strength in the time of weariness.  
He is our tower in the time of woe. O He is the hope of Israel.*

How clearly this chorus expresses our new identity as Israel. Jesus, Lion of Judah, is the victorious one who conquered sin and death, delivering us from the chains of slavery to sin and freeing us to new lives of service and worship unto Him. As born again Christians who submit all to Jesus, the ‘King of the Jews,’ we become Jews, members of the Tribe of Judah and inheritors of God’s promises. Thus, through Jesus and Him alone, we have hope, not only for salvation from sin, but also for strength and deliverance in times of distress that face us. Jesus is a solid rock in whom we may trust completely for victory. Thanks be to God.

### WHAT ABOUT THE RETURN OF THE NATION ISRAEL TO THE PROMISED LAND?

I am praying that the Lord will help me deal with this next topic completely in His will. It is a ticklish subject. because so many Bible scholars today look at the establishment of the “nation of Israel” in 1948 as the beginning of the countdown on the prophetic clock. These teachers attach much significance to the biological Hebrews. The reason I use the term “Hebrews” is because Hebrew is a biological term, where “Israel” is a spiritual term.

Once the biological Hebrews rejected Jesus Christ. God’s very own Son, and the Old Covenant was replaced by the New Covenant, and the Old Israel was replaced by the Now Israel; then the natural Hebrews lost their spiritual status with God, their status as

God's chosen people, and could only come to God like everyone else - through Jesus Christ. The language they speak is Hebrew. It is unfortunate, in some ways, that they called their nation "Israel." It would have eliminated much confusion if it had been called some name involving the word "Hebrew."

We have already seen the Church is Israel. Therefore, prophetic passages, like Ezekiel 36 and 37, which deal with the return of Israel to the promised land, I believe are talking about the time when Christ Jesus will take all Christians to that land.

Historically the Hebrews were never allowed to return to the land of Palestine in a state of unbelief. They had to wonder in the wilderness for 40 years until all the generation of unbelievers had died. Then those who did believe were allowed to enter. Over and over again, Israel was warned that it would be dispersed if it entered into a state of unbelief. When they became unfaithful to God, they were exiled. They were only allowed to return to the land of Palestine when they repented and turned back to God. God would not allow them to be gathered back in unbelief.

Let us now look at the scriptures which prophesy the end-time return of Israel to the promised land. The first passage we will examine is from Chapter 36 of Ezekiel:

24. *"For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land.*

25. *Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.*

26. *Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

27. *And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and you will be careful to observe My Ordinances.*

28. *And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.*

29. *Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you.*

30. *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, that you may not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.*

31. *Then you will remember your evil ways and deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.*

32. *I am doing this for your sake," declares the Lord God, "Let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O House of Israel!"*

33. *Thus says the Lord God, "On the day that I cleanse you from all of your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places to be rebuilt.*

*34. And the desolate land will be cultivated, instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passed by...*”

As we have seen, the biological Hebrews of today do not spiritually qualify as the “House of Israel.” One of the key verses in the above passage is verse 33. Read it again.

In other words, when Israel, True Israel, the Church, is gathered from all nations, on that day God will cleanse them from all their iniquities. Do you believe that the Hebrews living in Palestine today have been cleansed from all of their iniquities? In my opinion this prophecy could not have been fulfilled by the Hebrews in 1948, since they returned to the land of Palestine in unbelief and without cleansing.

Another such prophecy is found in Ezekiel 39.

*25. Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Now I shall restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I shall be jealous for My Holy Name.*

*26. And they shall forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid.*

*27. When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of many nations.*

*28. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them to go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again unto their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer.*

*29. And I will not hide My Face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the House of Israel,” declares the Lord God.*

Here we see that when the “whole House of Israel,” True Israel, the Church, is gathered back to the promised land, God shall have poured (past tense) out His Spirit on the whole House of Israel (verse 29). The only way the Spirit is poured out on anyone today is after he has received Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Has the Holy Spirit been poured out on the non-Christian Hebrews living in Palestine (the land, the nation Israel) today? NO! Again, I do not feel that there is any way that the Hebrews fulfilled this prophecy in 1948; rather, I feel it will be fulfilled when the Church is taken en masse to Palestine at the end of the tribulation.

The return of Israel to the promised land is also prophesied in Jeremiah 29:

*13. “And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all of your heart.*

*14. And I will be found of you,” declares the LORD, “and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,”*

*declares the LORD, “and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you in exile.”*

This passage was specifically talking about the return of Israel from the Assyrian-Babylonian captivity, it is evident when you read it in context, but it shows the sequence in which things must happen. Verse 13 says that Israel must seek God. They must search for Him with their whole heart, and when they do this, they will find Him, and then He will restore them to their land. Today, the way that anyone can find God is through Jesus Christ, for He said, “I am the way the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (JN 14:6, 6:44, 65, 37) The Hebrews returning unto Palestine in 1948 did not follow this pattern of first seeking God with all of their heart.

(I, Brother Royal Cronquist, want to insert a comment here: {“That all nations, including the United States, including the Church, the Body of Christ, do not know that the present peoples, in the land of Palestine-Israel, are not Jews at all.”} I have documented evidence that the present so-called Jews in Palestine, the land of Israel, are not Hebrew-Semitic, having NO blood lineage at all from Isaac, the Son of Promise out of Abraham. They are Khazar-Jews, a blood lineage from the Turkish, Mongolian peoples, which is from the seed-lineage of Cain, who went out from the presence of the Lord, with no Bible evidence of ever returning unto the Lord (GE 4:16). This is not saying that there are no Semetic Hebrew-Jewish-Israelites blood lineage presently in Israel. What I am saying is that the present governing rulers of the nation “Israel” are Kazhar’s, non-Semitic, meaning they are not Semetic-Jews-Israelites at all. And it is the Semitic blood line that is the natural seed of Abraham. This further complicates the nations, or the Christians calling the people there in Palestine Jews. They are false Jews, Antichrist people’s)

Now back to Brother James McKeever’s writings:

These are but a sampling of the scriptures that we could present. The Hebrews’ return to Palestine in 1948 does not fulfil the above prophecies. These prophecies were either referring to earlier returns, when the Hebrews did return in unbelief, or to a future return of Israel (the Christians, the present true Israel of God) in BELIEF, in RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

If the Hebrews return to Palestine did not fulfil these prophecies, what will? I do not claim to have all the answers, but in my spirit I sense that those who comprise true Israel, all those who believe in Jesus Christ and are born again, and this excludes anyone who does not know Him as Saviour, are the ones who will return in BELIEF and in CLEANNESS. As we will see later, it is likely that, at the end of the tribulation period, TRUE ISRAEL, the CHURCH of Jesus Christ, will return to Palestine to rule and reign with Christ Jesus from Mount Zion for one thousand years. So when we, as Christians, look forward to “marching to Zion,” as the song says, those are not empty words. We will go to Zion. What a day of rejoicing that is going to be, when we see Jesus, and when we learn from Him directly and can perfectly obey His every command.

## **WHAT ABOUT THE HEBREWS?**

Let me first repeat the fact that I love the Hebrews and I love their nation, I am all for them. I love to visit “our promised land” that they are temporarily occupying. Unfortunately, all that they are building will be wiped out during the tribulation period and you and I will have the task of rebuilding it during the millennium (more on this is discussed in chapter 11 of my book entitled “The Coming Climax of History”). Incidentally, there are many Hebrews living in Palestine (the nation of Israel), but very few true natural Jews. The only Jews living there are those people, of all races who have received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

There is one major reason why the Hebrews had to go back to Palestine and that is to build a major place of worship. We know that this place of worship must be rebuilt because in Matthew Christ Jesus referred to the “abomination of desolation” appearing in “the Holy Place.” This “Holy Place” is what I call the Tribulation Temple (A back issue of ‘END’ which dealt with this subject is entitled “The Tribulation Temple.”)

Also, in Revelation 11, John is given a rod to measure the Temple, which says that there will be a temple again, during the great tribulation. The re-establishment of this Temple could not occur unless the Hebrews returned to Palestine. So we see that there is a definite prophetic reason why the Hebrews needed to go back to the land of Palestine - to build the Temple. However, there is not Biblical evidence that 144,000 of those Hebrews will be come Evangelists during the tribulation, as some teach.

## **SUMMARY ON ISRAEL AND THE COVENANTS**

All I have tried to do thus far in this article is to help you clearly see, from the Bible, that Israel today is composed only of all those who have believe in Jesus Christ, experiencing the born again experience, regardless of racial background. All those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, unto the new-birth-salvation, are not part of Israel, even if they are of the Hebrew race.

We have also seen that all Christians are Jews, thus from the Tribe of Judah. This means that all the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and, Jacob, whose spiritual name was Israel, are ours to inherit. This means that THE LAND that God promised to Abraham (Palestine) IS OUR LAND. We should be looking forward to ruling and reigning with Christ Jesus from there for one thousand years.

In the article we will use the term “Hebrew” to mean anyone biologically descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I believe that Christians should support the Hebrews in Palestine who are doing us a tremendous favour. The favour they are doing us is that they are going to build a place of worship (the tribulation temple), which we see in the time of birth pangs and the great tribulation. It is very possible that this tribulation Temple is the present, newly constructed Great Synagogue, which was dedicated in Jerusalem in August 1982.

There are sincere men of God who attach prophetic significance to the Hebrews forming “the nation of Israel” in 1948. There are entire ministries that are dedicated to evangelising those Hebrews. The Evangelical World, in general, still looks at the

Hebrews in Palestine, as God's chosen people, and as Israel. I am casting no stones at any of these people. They know Christ Jesus as their Saviour and they are preaching Him as the only way to eternal life. Therefore I praise God for their ministries and I would encourage them to continue in any ministry to the Hebrews.

However, I can not reconcile to the Scriptures any teaching other than the fact, as the Bible declares, that all those who believe in Jesus Christ are Jews, and are the Israel of God, are the only ones who are heirs to the promises made to Abraham. As such, the Christians are now God's chosen people, are now the Israel of God in the earth. I am sure Satan would like to keep us blind to our true identity and all that it implies. He would love to convince us that our inheritance belongs to someone else.

I am not asking you to agree with me, but I am asking you to prayerfully consider it. You can see that if one Bible Teacher felt that the Hebrews were Israel, and another Bible Teacher felt that born again Christians were Israel, they would view the gathering of Israel to the land of Palestine, as prophesied in the Bible, in two totally different ways.

As I said earlier, when the Hebrews returned to Palestine in 1948, I do not believe that they fulfilled the prophecies of Ezekiel 36 and 37 concerning Israel returning to their promised land. That will be fulfilled when the Christians, at the end of the tribulation, are caught up by Christ's gathering angels to our land, to Mount Zion, right outside of Jerusalem.

There, in Mount Zion, and in our promised land, for one thousand years, Christ Jesus will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths. Praise God for that wonderful coming day!

I would suggest that you pause and pray right now; Settle this question in your own mind about who are Jews and who are Israel. I realise that this view of Israel is not the standard "party line" and that sincere men and women of God may not agree on this.

If they claim that they love the Hebrews more than I do that is not true. However, in these end times, God is giving new light on many things and we must be open to changing some of our old thinking. A correct understanding of who Israel is vital to being able to understand much of prophecy. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ALL CHRISTIANS!**

To reiterate, if you know Christ Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord, I strongly believe that you are a Jew (**RO 2:28-29**), therefore, you are Israel. Because of this, I believe you, being a Christian, are the only ones who are heirs to the promises made to Abraham. If someone were to talk to you and ask you if you are a Jew, you would have to answer "yes," according to the scriptures in the New Testament.

Another key topic in understanding what the Bible teaches is the subject of the fig tree. Some of this has previously been covered in my Christian News Digest, entitled "END," but I felt the Lord wanted me to bring all of this together in one place, for your sakes, and to help the Church in America WAKE UP as to WHO THEY REALLY ARE. Let us now move on to examine this.

## **THE FIG TREE AND ISRAEL**

As we have mentioned, there are many Bible teachers, and especially those who teach about prophecy, who say that “God’s prophetic clock started its countdown in 1948 when the nation of Israel was formed again, after several centuries,” and that Christ Jesus would return or the tribulation would start within one generation of that time. I say that this is nonsense. They base this on teachings of Jesus in Matthew 24, wherein He gives a parable about a fig tree. They claim that the fig is the newly-formed nation of Israel. I feel that this is fantasy with no Biblical basis.

I believe that God would have me caution the teachers and authors who are propagating this teaching that enough is enough. It is not easy to come out strongly on this subject, but I must be true to what God called me to do. I ask that you would be prayerful as you read this, asking God to show you what He would wish to say to you personally and to the Body of Christ. Also, pray that He would protect you from misunderstanding my heart and motives, which are to help the Body of Christ and to obey God.

According to most teachers who claim that the fig tree is the nation of Israel, a generation is 40 years. Thus, if you add 40 years to 1948, then you have the tribulation beginning in 1988, if you believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. There was a book written in the late 1970’s entitled “101 REASONS WHY CHRIST JESUS WILL RETURN IN 1988.”

This particular author was very explicit. However, most of the teachers and writers on this subject are less direct. They teach that Christ Jesus will return by 1988, without ever explicitly stating it. If you are reading this after 1988 is over, parts of this article may be less relevant to you. However, I would encourage you to read it anyway so as not to miss the pertinent aspects of this discussion.

Before we get into the Bible reasons why I disagree with these teachers, we first need to look at what happened in 1981.

### **THE TRIBULATION DID NOT START IN 1981**

In June 1980, my Christian News Letter entitled “END” had as a title of the main article, “WILL THE TRIBULATION START IN 1981?”

The reason we discussed that subject in 1980, well ahead of time, is because many were teaching that the prophetic countdown clock started on May 14, 1948. Then if one would add 40 years to that, one would come up with 1988. If one subtracted 7 years for the tribulation, the great tribulation would then begin in 1981. Since all these people believed in a pre-tribulation rapture, in essence they were teaching that Christ Jesus would return in 1981.

Most of these teachers did not explicitly state that that was what they were teaching, but that indeed was the essence of their teaching as we outlined in the June 1980 issue of the newsletter.

In fact, my wife Jeani and I went to hear a prominent Christian Leader speak here in Medford, OR, on April 29-30, 1980. Accompanying us was a couple, the wife of which was the President of the Women's Aglow chapter. After hearing him talk on April 30, her comment was, "He is really teaching that Christ Jesus is coming back next year!" And we all agreed. The speaker did not state this in his talk, but this was the inference in the teaching that he gave. Much of his talk is reproduced in the June 1980 issue of "END."

Also, in that issue, I quoted from a book written by another well-known pre-tribulationist, and it was evident that this is what he believed as well,

I wrote this issue early in 1980, so that if any of these teachers disagreed concerning my perception of what they were teaching, they had plenty of time to reply, and I would have been happy to have printed their response. However, none of them responded, and then later in 1981, some began to deny that they ever taught that. They would sidestep the issue by saying, "I never said that Christ was going to return in 1981." That is true. They may never had said it explicitly, yet that is what they were teaching indirectly.

A wonderful Christian, who formerly attended a church in the Rogue Valley of Oregon, told me that in her Church they were clearly teaching that Christ would return in 1981. However, after that year nothing was ever said about it and no admission of error was made.

Let me hasten to add that I love the brothers who believe in and teach the pre-tribulation rapture. They are my brothers in Christ and I praise the Lord for their ministries. I hope they reach more and more people for Jesus. However, I think that in some major areas of prophecy, they are misleading people. In 1981, they were able to soft-shoe dance their way around and start claiming that they were wrong in subtracting the 7 years, and that the 7 years would start in 1988.

In February 1987, I wrote to these brothers in real love and concern, saying that if Christ Jesus does not return in 1988, they will have some public recanting to do. There is just so long that one can hold to an old theory after it has proven false. If the rapture does not occur in 1988, either their teaching about the prophetic clock and Israel is wrong or their pre-tribulation rapture theory is wrong, or both. Anyone who continues to listen to their teaching of prophecy after 1988 deserves the misleading that he will get, unless these brothers repent to their error and turn to a more biblical position concerning the end-times of the age.

### **WHERE DID THIS 1988 TEACHING GET IT'S START?**

The answer to the question of where this 1988 teaching got its start could also fill a volume to do it justice. Here we will just be able to look at it briefly. One of the key passages that we need to review in regard to this subject is in Matthew 24. Jesus and His disciples had just come from the temple and they were over on the Mount of Olives, where they frequently went. This beautiful hill overlooks the Temple Mount and, as they were sitting there, the disciples asked Christ Jesus the following in Matthew 24:

3. *And as He was sitting of the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and the end of the age?"*

Evidently the Saviour had taught them much about the age ending and about His return. Here they asked Him plainly what it was going to be like right before He came back and right before the age ended.

The age that they were talking about is obviously the age that contained His return, They did not ask, "What will the end of the next age be like?" Therefore, the age they were living had already started there as they were sitting on the Mount of Olives.

Since Jesus was going to be crucified in just a few days, I believe that He gave them a very straightforward answer to their question about what things would be like right before He came back and are right before this age ended. His answer was in Matthew 24:

4. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, "See to that no one misleads you.*

5. *For many will come in My Name, saying, 'I am Christ,' and will mislead many.*

6. *And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not frightened, for these things must take place, but that is not yet the end.*

7. *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.*

8. *But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.*

9. *THEN THEY WILL DELIVER YOU (the believers in Christ Jesus) TO TRIBULATION, and WILL KILL YOU, and you will BE HATED by all nations on account of My Name.*

10. *And AT THAT TIME MANY WILL FALL AWAY and WILL DELIVER YOU UP ONE ANOTHER and hate one another.*

11. *And many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.*

12. *And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.*

13. *But the one who endures unto the end, he shall be saved.*

14. *And this gospel shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.*

15. *Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place (let the reader understand),*

16. *then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;*

17. *let him who is on the house top not go down to get the things out that are in his house;*

18. *and let him who is in the field not return back to get his cloak.*

19. *But woe unto those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days!*
20. *BUT PRAY THAT YOUR FLIGHT MAY NOT BE IN THE WINTER, or on the Sabbath;*
21. *for then there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, NOR EVER SHALL BE ...”*

We see here that the great tribulation begins in verse 21, but Jesus tells us that preceding that will be a time that He calls the time of “the birth pangs.” In the time of the birth pangs, there will be wars, famine, earth upheavals, persecution and the gospel will go to all nations.

Also, before the great tribulation begins, Jesus said there would be the Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place. The word “desolate” means “void of people” or “uninhabited” (IS 6:11; JE 33:10, 50:13). A good definition of desolate is found in Jeremiah 6:

8. *“Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I be alienated from you; lest I make you a desolation, a land not inhabited.”*

So something is going to happen to Jerusalem that is going to make it uninhabited before the great tribulation begins.

To show you the inconsistency of people who teach on the end times, I have asked some of them if they believed in the abomination of desolation, and their answer was, “definitely yes.” I then asked them if they believed that Jerusalem was going to be uninhabited, and their answer was “definitely no.” I pointed out to them that they could not believe both because if you believed in the abomination of desolation, then you would have to believe that Jerusalem is going to become uninhabited (dis-inhabited) prior to the great tribulation.

Let us return to the description that Jesus gave of the end of this age. As we noted, the great tribulation begins in Matthew 24:

21. *“For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.*
22. *And UNLESS THOSE DAYS HAD BEEN CUT SHORT, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.*
23. *Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him.*
24. *For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.*
25. *Behold, I have told you in advance.*

26. *If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner room,' do not believe them.*
27. *For just as the lightening comes from the east, and flashes even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.*
28. *Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*
29. *But immediately after the tribulation of these days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.*
30. *And the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.*
31. *And He will send forth His Angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky together ...”*

In this passage, we not only see the great tribulation, but also what is going to happen immediately after it. Immediately after the tribulation, the angels will go out to collect the alive Christians from the four winds and the dead Christians from one end of the sky to the other. This is talking about the time of the rapture, at the last trumpet sounding. (1 CO 15:52, 1 TH 4:17, RE 10:7)

### **A CLOSE LOOK AT THE FIG TREE**

Jesus continued with His answer to the disciples' question in Matthew 24 this way:

32. *“Now learn a parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know the summer is near.*
33. *Even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.*
34. *Truly I say unto you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”*

Jesus says here that we should take a lesson from nature: when we see a tree, in this case He used a fig tree, and its branches become tender and it puts forth its leaves, we should know that its spring and the summer is coming. Jesus then points out when we begin to see all the things happen that He talked about in the early part of the chapter, we should recognize that Jesus is right at the door. Then He says that the generation that sees these things begin to happen will not pass away until all of the things that He mentioned in verse 4 through to 31 take place.

His mentioning of the fig tree example had absolutely nothing to do with the Hebrews forming a nation. Jesus simply and plainly taught that the generation that began to see the earth upheavals, the famines and so forth was going to be the generation that would see His return, and that that generation would see all of the things that He had mentioned from verses 4 through 31.

There is no biblical evidence that Christ Jesus intended the fig tree mentioned here to be anything but simply a fig tree. There are those who try to make out the fig tree to represent Israel. I see no justification for arbitrarily applying the Matthew 24 passage about a fig tree, for example in Mark 11:

*12. And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry.*

*13. And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.*

*20. And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.*

*21. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which you cursed has withered."*

If you ask proponents of the fig tree theory if this fig tree, that Jesus cursed and caused to dry up and die, represents Israel, they would say, "Absolutely not." I would encourage them to be consistent in handling the scriptures. I try to be consistent but obviously do not always make it. However when someone points out an inconsistency in something that I have been teaching, I try to correct it and acknowledge it publicly.

I can not find a single scripture that equates Israel to a fig tree. I will give you some of the key verses that these people use to try to come up with this. In Judges 9:

*7. Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and called out. Thus he said to them, "Listen to me, O men of Shechem, that God may listen to you.*

*8. Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us!'*

*9. But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my fatness by which God and men are honoured, and go to wave over the trees?'*

*10. The trees said to the fig tree, 'You come, reign over us.'*

*11. But the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?'*

*12. Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come, reign over us?'*

*13. But the vine said unto them, 'Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?'*

*14. Finally all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come, reign over us!'*

*15. And the bramble said unto the trees, 'if in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, may fire come out from the bramble and consume the Cedars of Lebanon.'"*

There is nothing here in Judges 9 that equates Israel to the fig tree. Another Scripture that some teachers try to use is found in Deuteronomy 8:

7. *For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, and land of brooks and water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valley's and hills;*
8. *a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey ...*

Here again, there is no way that you can stretch that to say that Israel is represented by a fig tree. You could just as well say that pomegranates or barley represent Israel.

I have checked all the scriptures that I can find concerning the fig tree and no where does it represent Israel. I would have to say that the statement of many of these people that, "Israel is always represented by a fig tree in the Scriptures" is simply a false statement.

I would welcome anyone to show me from the scriptures where the nation of Israel is ever described as a fig tree. In Jeremiah 24:5 some of the Jews were compared to figs, and in Hosea 9:10, some of the fathers were compared to the first fruit on a fig tree, but I can not find anywhere in the scriptures that the nation of Israel is called a fig tree. I would appreciate being enlightened on the subject. I am open to learning.

A tree that does represent Israel, at least in one instance in the scriptures, is the olive tree. You can read Romans 11:17-24 and see this very clearly.

If we examine Luke 21, which is a parallel passage to Matthew 24, we see even more clearly that the fig tree does not represent Israel in Christ Jesus' Olivet discourse. This is a long passage, but please read it carefully and prayerfully.

5. *And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,*
6. *"As for these things which you are looking at, the day will come in which there will not be one stone left upon another which will not be torn down."*
7. *And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"*
8. *And He said, "SEE TO IT THAT YOU BE NOT MISLEAD; for many will come in My Name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is at hand'; do not go after them.*
9. *And when you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified: for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."*
10. *Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,*
11. *and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terror and great signs from heaven.*

12. *But before all these things, THEY WILL LAY THEIR HANDS ON YOU AND WILL PERSECUTE YOU, DELIVERING YOU TO THE SYNAGOGUES AND PRISONS, BRINGING YOU BEFORE KINGS AND GOVERNORS for My Names sake.*
13. *It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.*
14. *So make up your minds not to prepare before hand to defend yourselves;*
15. *for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.*
16. *BUT YOU WILL BE DELIVERED UP EVEN BY PARENTS AND BROTHERS AND RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, AND THEY WILL PUT SOME OF YOU TO DEATH,*
17. *and you will be hated by all on account of My Name.*
18. *Yet not a hair of your head will perish.*
19. *By your endurance you will gain your lives.*
20. *But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.*
21. *Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let none of those who are in the country enter the city;*
22. *because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things that are written may be fulfilled.*
23. *Woe to those who are with child and to those who are with babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people,*
24. *and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*
25. *And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among the nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,*
26. *men fainting from fear and expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*
27. *And when you will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER AND GLORY ...”*

One thing to note from this passage (verse 20) is that in the END-TIME of THIS AGE, Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. At that point she is about to become uninhabited, “her desolation is at hand.”

At Christ Jesus’ conclusion to His teaching about the end of this age, He shares this parable in Luke 21:

28. *“But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”*
29. *And He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees;*
30. *as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.*
31. *Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the Kingdom of God is near.*
32. *Truly I say unto you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place ...”*

We see in verse 29 that when the fig tree and all the other trees put forth leaves, we know that summer is near. Thus, obviously this illustration has nothing to do with establishing a Hebrew nation. Jesus is simply taking an example out of nature about all the trees putting forth their leaves that summer is near. If the fig tree represents Israel being formed in 1948, what do all of the other trees represent? The answer is that they are not to represent anything but trees, and neither is the fig tree.

In the same way that when we begin to see the things happen that He described earlier in the chapter, then we know that if we are that generation, all of it will completely happen. This includes His return in power and glory to rule and reign on the earth for one thousand years! Even so, come King Jesus!

### **A QUICK REVIEW**

So let us review what we have covered concerning the fig tree and Israel. We see that the fig tree does not represent Israel in the first place, but if it did, we would also have to take into account passages such as the one in which Christ Jesus cursed the fig tree and caused it to die.

We have also seen that Christ Jesus was not talking about a fig tree being “planted” such as those who would imply who teach the 1948 prophetic clock theory, which is obviously false. Christ Jesus taught a simple parable from nature about an existing fig tree and other trees that were already planted and were in place. He simply said that when you see them put out leaves, you know it is spring. And just as surely, that when you begin to see the things happen that are in the birth pangs, then you know that Jesus is at the door and that the generation that sees these things will see His return.

Isn't it exciting that most likely we are the generation which is going to see all these things begin to happen and come to full fruition with the return of our glorious Saviour, Jesus Christ, here on the earth? How I am looking forward to His return! I love Him so.

### **BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHINGS**

You notice that I said, “Beware of false teachings,” not “Beware of false teachers.” There are many good Christian brothers who teach that the fig tree is the nation of Israel. I believe they are wrong on that particular subject, but much of what they teach

about Jesus is really good and really glorifies Jesus Christ. Therefore, I would not classify them as false teachers. They are precious brothers of mine in Jesus Christ. As a watchman, however, I would encourage you to stop listening to them on things concerning prophecy, unless they turn from these false teachings.

It is becoming very critical that you weigh everything very carefully that you are taught to be sure that it matches with the scriptures. If someone tells you that “Israel is always referred to as a fig tree,” then you are going to need to take your concordance and look up “fig” to see if this is so. If it is not so, that gives you reason to discard that teaching and certainly to be more cautious regarding other things that that particular teacher might proclaim to you.

There are many false teachings about the end times of this age that are going around today. Another one is that the Gog-Magog war might happen at any time. That, too, is not scriptural. I deal with this in depth in the book entitled, “THE COMING CLIMAX OF HISTORY,” (available at Omega Ministries P.O. BOX 1788, Medford, OR 97501, Phone 503/826-9877). In it we solidly back up by scriptures everything that we say. However, with my writings and teachings also, you still must be sure yourself that they match the scriptures. I encourage you to check them out.

### **WHY ARE THESE THINGS IMPORTANT?**

Some people think that we should only concentrate on becoming like Jesus and witnessing and not on things concerning the end of this age. It is interesting that 1/3rd of the bible is prophecy, If we disregard it, are we not saying that God made a mistake by including that 1/3rd of the Bible? God put it there for a reason and the reason is for us to read, study, meditate on it and understand it.

In the end of this age, many Christians are going to be misled and deceived. Remember, we read this in Matthew 24:

11. *“And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many ...”*

Here Christ Jesus is talking about many Christians being misled at the end of this age. This misleading can go a long way to damaging their faith.

For example, when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies and then some abomination in it causes it to become dis-inhabited, some Christians are likely to lose faith in God, because they are convinced that God would never let down the nation of Israel.

In order that things like that do not shake your faith, you need to know clearly what the bible has to say about the end of this age. I do not want your faith to be shaken. I want you to know the truth. Among other things, the truth will set you free from fear. It will set you free from the future and the unknown,

**WE MUST BE WILLING TO CHANGE OUR  
MINDS VIEW POINT IN OUR HEARTS (PR 4:23)**

Perhaps in the past you have believed that the prophetic time clock started in 1948, with the establishment of the nation, Israel, that the nation of Israel was the fig tree, and that forty years after her establishment the whole thing would wrap up. Maybe you have even taught this to others.

If the tribulation does not begin in 1988, and therefore, for those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture, Christ's return does not come in 1988, by January 1, 1989, this article should challenge you then to recant of a false teaching and to declare God's truth. The quicker you let go of the old, when God shows you that you are in error, and embrace what He shows you as truth. the more He will use you.

Just an as example, I used to believe that the rapture would occur before the tribulation, because that was what I had been taught. But when God showed me otherwise, from the scriptures and the counsel of a brother in Christ Jesus, I did not hang on to what I had previously believed, but gladly changed. I also once believed that the fig tree was Israel, because that was what I had heard others say. Then I checked it out in the scriptures for myself, asking the Holy Spirit to teach me, and I learned that there was no basis for that belief.

Therefore I can not fault someone who believes that way today. The difficulty comes if one refuses to check the scriptures and/or change.

There may be Christians reading this of varied persuasions - pastors, authors, teachers and laymen alike, who need to make an examination of the scriptures, asking the Holy Spirit to teach them the truth concerning some of the subjects raised herein, regardless of what their prior beliefs may have been. Then if the Lord shows them, something different, they need to have the courage (guts) to acknowledge it. If we are "Truth seekers," this should be a joy for us and not something to be dreaded.

Jim Hylton, Ft. Worth, TX, recently said:

"There are no graduates from the School of Christ Jesus. No alumni are listed as achievers who have gone out to make their mark on the world. What would approach graduation is not going out from Christ Jesus but going to be with Him in heaven. Those who make such marks are not graduates but students who are learning. Leaders are disciples. Unlike so-called old soldiers, who never die but just fade away, old soldiers in Christ Jesus never die or fade away. Old disciples go on learning."

Hopefully our discussion of this widespread false teaching concerning the end of this age will serve to encourage you **TO DO YOUR OWN STUDYING, IN ORDER TO VERIFY THE TRUTH** of what you are being taught. If it has, then you are richer for it.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This has been a much longer article than we normally have in “END,” but I felt the Lord wanted me to bring together in one place some of the basic teaching on “WHO ISRAEL IS,” and on the “FIG TREE.” Much of this article is taken from my book, “THE COMING CLIMAX OF HISTORY” and chapter 10 of “THE RAPTURE BOOK.” WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE CHURCH IS ISRAEL. THERE IS ONLY ONE ISRAEL, AND IT IS SPIRITUAL! There is not a spiritual Israel and a physical Israel.

Israel always has been and always will be a spiritual entity. It has never been a physical entity. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, whether Hebrew or Chinese, is part of Israel and is an inheritor of all the unfulfilled promises made to Abraham and all the unfulfilled prophecies concerning Israel.

Do not let anyone cheat you out of your heritage. This was the subject of one of the messages at our Medford, OR, conference, on video tape, which you may well wish to get and view, or a six cassette audio album, from the same conference. It is entitled, “Alert - Don’t Give Away Your Inheritance.”

We all think of Esau as being rather dumb in giving away his heritage to Jacob. Well, many Christians are giving away their heritage for nothing in return.

It is time to put an end to the false teaching that the Hebrews living on the shores of the Mediterranean are Israel and for the Church to recognize and claim its’ heritage, THE CHURCH IS ISRAEL! You can begin by claiming your inheritance for yourself, as an individual Christian.

*Joshua 1:9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*