



Israel: The Center of Divine History

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Dr. McCall's *Israel: the Center of Divine History* details the historical events of the last century that led up to the establishment of the modern nation of Israel. This article originally appeared as installments in the *Levitt Letter* from May 1994 to February 1996.

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Part 1 — the following portion first appeared in the May 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

Introduction

Biblical history is the history of Israel. It is different from all other histories. Secular scholars consider the movements of nations and armies to be the core of world history. Church historians, on the other hand, consider the great ecclesiastical conferences and development of denominations and institutions to be at the heart of human history.

It is remarkable, but the Bible alone views history from the vantage point of Israel, especially from Genesis 12 through Acts 8. The prophet Isaiah, for instance, envisioned Israel as occupying “the center of the earth”:

In that day shall Israel be ... a blessing in the midst of the earth (Isa. [19:24](#)).

From Acts 9 through Rev. 3, the focus of the Bible is more on the church, local and world-wide. With Rev. 4, however, Israel resumes the center stage position and continues as such until the end of the Scriptures. Thus, the vast bulk of the Word of God revolves around Israel, the Chosen nation of God.

The Centrality of Christ In The Background / Israel In The Foreground

One also can say that the Scriptures center in Christ as well, because the entire Bible points toward the first and second comings of the Messiah. In many ways, though, the message of Christ is in the background, frequently apparent but often somewhat hidden in types, shadows and cryptic prophecies. Sometimes these great truths were not clear in their significance until the first coming of the Lord, when He and the Apostles explained their meaning in the Gospels and the Epistles.

Other Nations Mentioned In Bible Only As They Contact Israel

Israel, however, was always in the foreground, through the patriarchs, the kings, the prophets, the movements of the nation in and out of the Promised Land, and the various reactions of the Israelis to the first coming of Christ. The nation Israel was always center stage, and the Bible mentions Gentile nations only insofar as they had contact with the Chosen Nation.

The Scriptures present Egypt in relation to Moses and the Exodus; the Canaanites as the object of the Conquest; Babylon as it figured in the destruction of the Temple and in the Captivity; Persia as it brought about the restoration of Jerusalem; and Rome as it had an impact on the New Testament scene. Through all these contacts with the Gentile nations, Israel remains the nation around which scriptural history revolves.

Israel Suppressed By The Dispersion for 19 Centuries

For 19 centuries, though, the Dispersion has suppressed Israel, as the Jews have found themselves scattered throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. In reality, the religion of Judaism has reconfigured Israel in such a way that it practically lost its national distinctive. Israel is an anomaly, unlike any other people. It defies the common definitions of religion, race and nationality.

Furthermore, Israel has been adrift from its own Messiah. The Messiah who came first to Israel has become a stranger to most of His own Jewish people. Peculiarly, it is mostly Gentiles who worship Him on all the continents of the earth through a vast variety of congregations and fellowships.

The Remarkable Restoration of Israel

So it has been for almost 2,000 years, but in our time things have undergone a remarkable change. Jews by the millions have returned to the Land of Canaan, and Israel is once again a nation on the face of the earth. There is also a resurgence of faith in Jesus as the Messiah among a minority of Israelis.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of such a radical event. This is precisely what the prophets foretold would occur at the time of the Second Coming of Christ:

Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, to which they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land (Ezek. 37:21).

The New Testament also teaches that the Church Age would end with the Rapture of the Church. Following that, the Lord would prepare Israel and the world for the Return of Christ through the awesome days of the Tribulation, the 70th Week of Daniel. All of this assumes that Israel is a nation at the end of the age.

Israel Again The Center of The World As In The Bible

Once again the focus of history is back on Israel. If we are to look at the world the way the Scriptures do, we must now view all actions of all peoples from the vantage point of modern Israel.

If the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that we constantly affirm, then we must conclude that this is precisely how God views the world. It is not easy for us to do this because we normally view everything from our own perspective: our family,

our country, our church and our culture. How can we lift ourselves out of our shell and our circumscribed mold, and begin to view our world from the biblical point of view?

It takes considerable effort, concentration and faith to go against the grain and commit our minds to conforming to the scriptural perspective. It is also somewhat humbling, as well. In America, for instance, we tend to see everything in relationship to the power politics displayed by our armed forces, and our ideas of democracy and constitutional government. We must step down off this exalted cultural pedestal. We must understand that much of what God will accomplish on the earth between now and the Lord's Second Coming is going to be done in and through Israel.

How Did Israel Become a Nation Again?

How did the world get this way? How did Israel get back into the Land? It didn't just happen overnight. It has been a process, a lengthy one stretching back over 100 years. Great movements and ideologies have converged to bring all this about, and equally great movements have come along to attempt to frustrate the return of Israel to the Land. From this point on we must begin to view all modern history from the biblical perspective. We have to realize that all things are happening in the divine plan to bring about the restoration of Israel and the Second Coming of Christ. Everything else must be considered secondary.

Part 2 — the following portion first appeared in the June 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

Zionism — The Primary Vehicle of Restoration Out of The Dispersion

The primary tool God has used to bring about the restoration of Israel is the movement of Zionism. Zionism is the religious, sociological and political movement that promotes the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. There is something in the breast of most, if not all, Jewish people that is not complete outside the Promised Land:

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy (Psalms 137:4–6).

This attraction has been intact since the Dispersion began with the Destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70, shortly after Christ's first coming. The attraction, however, has been suppressed all these centuries by the reality of Jerusalem's subjugation. As our Lord predicted, Jerusalem has been "trodden under the feet of the Gentiles" (Luke [21:24](#)) all during this time.

The Treading of Jerusalem by The Gentiles

First it was the Romans who trod down Jerusalem, then the Byzantines, then the Moslems under the auspices of the Arabs, Mamelukes or the Turks. There were also the European Crusaders, who controlled Jerusalem for 100 years, and some other parts of the biblical lands for another 100 years. For most of this 19-century-long period, though, the Land has been under some type of Moslem control. Furthermore, the Moslems have firmly planted the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque on the Temple Mount overlooking Jerusalem.

The Jewish Dream of a Restored Israel

Throughout the Dispersion, there have always been some Jewish people living in the Land. Mostly they lived in Galilee, but sometimes they were able to get to the remaining shrine of their revered Temple Mount, the Western Wall in Jerusalem. There was always the religious conviction that the Jews would ultimately return to the Land "en masse" in the Days of the Messiah. Maimonides and other famous rabbis fostered this teaching. They had the firm belief that when the Messiah comes, there will be universal peace.

There were a few aborted and short-lived attempts at migration. For instance, many Jews attempted to return to Jerusalem during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate (4th century) and at the time of Sabbatai Zvi (17th century). However, there was no serious movement back to Israel until the Zionists began their organizing movements in the latter half of the 19th century. In the 20th century, Zionism has resulted in more than a million of the world's 15 million Jews now living in the Promised Land!

What Is Zionism?

As Israel is unique among the nations, so Zionism is unique among movements. It has many facets and is complex. The encyclopedia defines Zionism as “a movement aimed at establishing a national Jewish state in Palestine, the ancient Jewish homeland” (*World Book Encyclopedia*, 1969, Vol. 20, p. 499). It is even more complex than that definition suggests. Zionism is a religious, sociological and political movement that promotes the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel.

It is religious, because it is based on biblical promises and rabbinic interpretations about the restoration of Israel. In the beginning of Zionism, the leaders actually considered the idea of bringing the Jewish people of the world to one of the countries of Africa. The religious leaders soon weighed in with objections that the only country that would appeal universally to the Jewish people would be the ancient land of Israel. Four thousand years of religious and historical associations would attract them from all over the world to the Land of their ancestors. There was also the appeal of the hope of the Messiah. The biblical prophets had prophesied that the Messiah would one day come, bless the Jewish people in the Land, and bring peace to the whole world.

Zionism is sociological as well. The attraction of the ancient Land alone probably would not be enough to motivate the Jewish people. They would have to leave their homelands, businesses and professions to undertake the rigors of pioneer life in a harsh environment. The founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, realized in the Dreyfus trial in Paris in 1894 that anti-Semitism was an active force even in the enlightened country of France. It took ruthless and massive persecution in Russia, Europe and the Arab nations for the Jews to leave and seek a haven in a new land. Israel became a safe haven to which they could escape from age-old Gentile persecution. The motivating persecutions of the 19th century began with the pogroms of Russia and Eastern Europe and came to a horrendous head in the death camps of the Nazis. Millions of Jewish people became convinced that the only way they could survive was if they had the safety valve of a land of their own.

Zionism is a political movement as well. Once the Jews returned to the Land of Canaan, who would provide protection for them? Would the nations who had persecuted the Jews for centuries now become their defenders since they were back in the Land? Very unlikely! To be a valid return, there would have to be a new state of Israel, with its own government and army. This is political. Zionism could not be a permanent reality without the political element. It took all the organizational skills of the returned Jewish people to create an economy, a democratic government and a dependable army. To the astonishment of the world, the heretofore peaceful Jews forged a citizen army that has become a military wonder. This small but powerfully skilled army has waged four full-scale wars and many lesser conflicts in a hostile Arab environment that the Russian Communist empire supported for many years.

All three elements, religious, sociological and political, are important parts of Zionism. It has taken all these to motivate millions of Jews to return to the Land, build up the economy and protect Israel from its many enemies.

Part 3 — the following portion first appeared in the July 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

Responses To Zionism

In physics, there is a law that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The phenomenon of Zionism has stirred enormous reactions in the world, both positive and negative. If we are to think in the biblical mold, we must change our thinking patterns. We must begin to look at modern world history from the viewpoint of how Israel influences everything, and how everything influences Israel.

Two main areas of reaction have been in religion and politics. Christianity has been in the forefront of the debate about Israel in the modern world. Christianity may be considered the daughter of Judaism, and there has always been tension between the mother and the daughter from the time of the birth of the daughter. Judaism has looked upon Christianity as an unfortunate misinterpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, at best, and a dangerous and persecuting perversion of the Messianic hope, at worst. Christianity, on the other hand, has looked upon Judaism as a vestigial organ, like an appendix that has outlived its usefulness. It not only has considered the fall of Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple the fulfillment of prophecy, it also sees these as sure signs that God has forever abandoned and judged the Jewish people, and banished them into oblivion.

For many Christians, the idea of the Jewish people returning **en masse** to the Land as a restored nation of Israel is anathema. To them, it would be tantamount to the repudiation of Christianity. This view has been dominant in Christendom for at least fifteen centuries. Something remarkable, though, was happening about the same time as Zionism

was stirring in the hearts and minds of the Jewish people in the 19th century. An increasingly large minority of Christians began to re-discover the New Testament attitude of the early Christians toward Israel, which is far different from the prevailing attitude today.

Pro-Zionist Christianity

Instead of having a strongly negative attitude about the position of Israel, these Christians began to teach a very positive view about the future of Israel in God's plan. Rather than seeing the Jewish people forever cut off from the Lord, they were expounding the Scriptures that reveal a glorious future for both the Church and Israel. They believed that Israel would have an intimate relationship with Messiah, Christ Jesus, at His Second Coming.

These Christians came to be known as Pre-millennialists, which refers to the belief that Christ will return to the earth **before** the Millennium. This will be a period of a thousand years during which Christ will reign on earth with Jerusalem, Israel, as His capital and holy city.

They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years ... [in] ... the beloved city. (Rev. 20:4, 9)

They also call themselves Dispensationalists, because they interpret the Scriptures as portraying God as having arranged several dispensations throughout time, including Innocence, Conscience, Law, Grace and the Millennium. People would always be saved by grace through faith in all these dispensations. However, the way in which they live their lives and show their faith would differ from one dispensation to another.

These views became incorporated in a considerable movement in Evangelical Christianity in Europe and America, and became manifested in various gatherings, publications and institutions. Among these were the Keswick and Prophetic Conferences, the Scofield Reference Bible, Moody Bible Institute, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and Dallas Theological Seminary. Most of the mainline Christian Denominations did not embrace the Premillennial/Dispensational position. Many pastors and churches in most of the various Protestant denominations, though, began to preach and teach these views. They did not think they were inventing anything new, but were rather rediscovering what the Bible taught about Israel, the Church and the Second Coming all along. The Dispensationalists believed these great truths had been lost through much of the Church age.

In the Reformation, Martin Luther had re-discovered the long-suppressed doctrine of salvation by faith. In the same way, the Dispensationalists believed they were re-discovering the long-suppressed biblical truth about such doctrines as the Rapture of the Church and the Millennial blessings of Israel.

Few, if any, have noted, though, that Zionism and Dispensationalist Christianity both came on the scene at practically the same time, the latter part of the 19th century!

How is it that this teaching about the restoration of Israel began to flourish in both the Jewish and Christian cultures at the same point in history? Was this some peculiar coincidence? Did this just happen? Is it possible that the hand of the Lord was operating in both Israel and the Church to bring about just such a development?

Let us suppose that the Dispensationalists are right. In the end time, God intends to bring Israel back to the Land. He will prepare Israel for judgment (the Tribulation) and final blessing (the Millennium at the Second Coming of Christ). How would God do such a thing? After all, at the beginning of the 19th century, very few, if any, Jews or Christians were seriously thinking about a restoration of Israel. Nevertheless, the prophet Ezekiel, among others, predicted that such a thing would happen, and that it would be a process, perhaps a lengthy one:

Then He said unto me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off on our part.' Therefore, prophesy and say unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel'" (Ezek. 37:11-12).

In the vision, the upturned graveyard of bones came together into skeletons, developed flesh, and then at the end had the breath of God breathed into them. They became alive as a great army and nation. This was a prophecy of the gradual restoration of the Jewish people back to their ancient Land.

A vocal minority of Christians began to teach anew this doctrine from the Bible just as Jewish pioneers began to trickle back into the Land. Who influenced whom? Did Jews hear Christians talking about this, decide it was a good idea, and

start packing for Palestine? Or were Jews beginning to head back to the Land, and Christians, observing this, began to consult their Bibles to see if there was anything about it in prophecy?

In reality, these seem to be very independent movements. There was little direct communication between the two groups about the future of the Jews. After centuries of persecution and hurling of accusations one against the other, there was mostly mistrust between the rabbis and the ministers. While the leaders of these movements were not pen pals, however, it is likely that each group observed the publications and actions of the other. They probably had a mutual impact on one another.

While there was little direct communication between Zionism and Dispensationalism, it appears that neither would have flourished well without the other. If there had been no practical movement of the Jews going back to the Land, Dispensationalism would have appeared to most Christians as a highly unrealistic proposition. It probably would have returned to its long position of obscurity. On the other hand, what would have happened if the efforts of the Zionists had not met with the approving encouragement of the Dispensationalist Christians? The return of the Jewish people back to the Land, as we shall see, might have been even more difficult than it turned out to be. We believe that God was behind the development of both movements, and used both Zionism and Dispensationalism to accomplish the beginning of the fulfillment of the ancient scriptural prophecies.

Part 4 — the following portion first appeared in the September 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

Pro-Zionist Christianity, which developed in the latter part of the 19th century along with Zionism, played a significant role in the beginnings of Israel, as we shall see, at the time of World War I. They accomplished this mainly through the politics of the time in England and America. However, all Christian leaders did not espouse pro-Zionist Christianity, which was based primarily on the newly revived Premillennial/Dispensational theology. While they were energetic and vocal, the Premillennial/Dispensational Christians were (and continue to be) in the minority. Most professing Christians in Europe and in the American hemisphere have long held the opposing view of Amillennial/Postmillennial Christianity.

Anti-Zionist Christianity

While there are some subtle distinctions between Amillennialism and Postmillennialism concerning any future for Israel, they are essentially the same. They teach that any covenant relationship God had with Israel was cancelled at the time of the first coming of Christ. Therefore, God is through with the Jewish people as a nation, and there is to be no State of Israel, now or in the future. In addition, there is to be no Temple, and no Millennial Kingdom for Israel with Jerusalem as its capital. Any blessings to the Jewish people must be along with all other nationalities under the aegis of the Church. Furthermore, God has transferred and transformed to the Church all the blessings and promises He originally made to Israel. Thus, the Church is the New Israel.

Scholars sometimes call this view Replacement Theology, as it views the Church as replacing Israel in all aspects. In contrast, the Premillennial/Dispensational view is that, while the Church is the new creation of the Lord that proclaims the Gospel in this age, the Church does not replace Israel in its national covenant relationship with God. The covenant with Israel does not guarantee personal salvation for all Jews. It does, though, guarantee personal salvation for the “remnant” of Jewish people in all ages, including the Church Age. Also, it guarantees the preservation and restoration of Israel to the Land in preparation for the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ.

Because of these theological convictions, then, the Amillennial/Postmillennial Christians tend to look at any idea of a future for Israel with alarm, as an affront to Christianity, as a denial of the true position of the Church. The Premillennial/Dispensationalists, on the other hand, view the idea of a future for Israel with delight. Modern Israel is a welcome harbinger of the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ.

What does the New Testament teach — Premillennialism or Replacement Theology? There is not as much disagreement about this as one might suppose. Most of the Replacement Theologians and Amillennialists agree with the Premillennialists that the New Testament apostles believed in a future for Israel and the literal Second Coming of Christ — but they say the apostles were just mistaken! It took time for the Church to “mature” to the knowledge that Christ was not returning to the earth, and that Israel was to be replaced by the Church.

Part 5 — the following portion first appeared in the October 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

Augustine and Replacement Theology

It was Augustine around A.D. 400 who ultimately articulated the idea, principally in his well-known work, *The City of God*. Augustine admitted that at one time he had espoused the doctrine of "Chiliasm," the belief in a future millennium, in which the Church and redeemed Israel will be blessed by the personal return and reign of Christ on the earth. However, he had since come to the "more satisfactory" view that the Church has replaced Israel forever. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in fulfillment of prophecy, and the Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman empire. Judaism was branded in the New Testament as an imperfect religion that has been superseded by the Gospel of Christianity. Rome was in its ascendancy as the center of Christian thought and worship.

Rather than looking to some political renewal on this present earth, Augustine taught that we should look to the New Jerusalem, the eternal city of God. In effect, he "leapfrogged" over the Millennium as a future event and saw the Millennial promises fulfilled in the Church age. He further envisioned the Second Coming of Christ as not ushering in the Millennium, but the Eternal State of the New Heaven, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem.

Christendom canonized Augustine as an official saint, and theologians throughout the Roman Empire accepted his doctrines. The Chiliasts were branded as holding aberrant views, if not heresy, and Augustinian Replacement Theology became the cornerstone of Roman Catholic concepts. In the later developments in the Eastern Orthodox Church, the European Reformation and the Anglican split, Replacement Theology continued essentially untouched. It was an important part of the standard Christian view of Israel, the world, and prophecy.

The effect of all this on Christian attitudes about Israel was devastating. In actuality, Replacement Theology disenfranchised Israel from having a continuing covenant relationship with God. Instead of looking at Jerusalem as the "City of the Great King," in which Christ will reign for a thousand years upon His return, they saw Jerusalem's perpetual desolation as much as a confirmation of Christianity as the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea was a confirmation of Moses.

Dominance of Replacement Theology in Church History

This anti-Israel view continued as dominant in Christianity until the rise of Premillennial/Dispensationalism (along with Zionism) in the 19th century. Replacement Theology is still the majority view among professing Christian theologians, but Premillennialism is by and large considered a legitimate and vocal minority, at least in Evangelical Protestant circles.

Thus, in relation to the rise of Zionism and Modern Israel, Christianity has brought a divided message. Some (the Premillennial/Dispensationalists) have applauded the rise of the new State of Israel as evidence of the near fulfillment of the Second Coming of Christ. However, many representatives of official Christianity (the Replacement Theologians) are either neutral or antagonistic.

Christianity Both Pro- and Anti-Israel

Such organizations as the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have, for the last half-century, taken positions favoring the Arab and Moslem enemies of Israel. They have defended this bias partly by claiming representation in the various countries involved. But a vital part of this bias is based on the theological convictions that cannot abide the resurrection of Israel from the ashes of the Dispersion.

It is with considerable reluctance that the Vatican has recognized Israel, and the Church's primary interest is in asserting its influence in maintaining its Holy Places in Jerusalem. Similarly, the World Council of Churches has consistently pled the cause of Palestinians against the claims of Israel.

Thus, Christianity has, because of its differing theological views about the future of Israel, had a divided attitude about Zionism and the revived State of Israel. Part of Christianity has expressed delight with the modern Israel, while part has been very negative toward Israel's very existence.

Part 6 — the following portion first appeared in the November 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

The Balfour Declaration & The Decree of Cyrus

Over 75 years have passed since the Balfour Declaration was announced by the British Government in 1917, and its significance is fading into dim history. However, it was a turning point in the development of Zionism. There is no question in this author's mind that God used the Balfour Declaration in the modern restoration of Israel, much the same way as He

used the Declaration by the Persian King Cyrus in the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian Captivity. Compare the two documents:

Cyrus:

Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia: The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem.

And whoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1–4).

Balfour:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the right and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. November 2, 1917.

In both cases, the governments involved held political control over Jerusalem and the Promised Land, and were favorably inclined to see the Jewish people return to their homeland. In both cases also, there was considerable opposition from local governments in the Promised Land and in the countries surrounding it to the return of the Jews. In Cyrus' time, the opposition was led by the Samaritans; in our time the opposition has been led by the Arab Palestinians.

Importance of The Balfour Declaration

Jews in Israel and the Dispersion are routinely taught about the Balfour Declaration, much the same as Americans are taught about the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Most American Gentiles (including Evangelical Christians), though, know little about this remarkable document that was set forth in the waning months of World War I.

The Friendship of Balfour & Weizmann

At the core of the Declaration was the unusual relationship between the British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour and an active Zionist scientist named Chaim Weizmann, who later became the president of the World Zionist Organization and the first president of the revived state of Israel. Both of these men were powerful and effective in their own right, and together they forged a working relationship that changed the course of history, and resulted in the rebirth of Israel.

Balfour was a committed Evangelical Christian, and he wrote several books, including *Foundations of Belief*, in which he set forth the cardinal teachings of the Scriptures. He was a Dispensationalist, and believed in the future restoration of the Jewish people to Israel in connection with the Second Coming of Christ. He became British Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905, and was later the Foreign Minister under David Lloyd George during World War I. There were two reasons why Balfour was so attracted to Weizmann; one was secular and official, the other was religious and unofficial.

Acetone & World War I

The official reason for the friendship that developed between the two men was the critical development of an improved method of making *acetone*. This proved to be a quantum leap in producing powerful explosives, and played almost as important a role in concluding WW I as the atomic bomb did later in WW II. The German and Allied Forces were locked in mortal stalemate in trench warfare on the Continent for many months. Neither side could dislodge the other, and thousands were dying with artillery shelling and mustard gas rolling between the armed trenches.

It was the Jewish chemist Weizmann who labored in the laboratories and developed the new process for acetone production. With this new process for explosive production, the Allied Forces were able to tunnel under the German trenches and blow them apart. This was the capability that ended the stalemate and enabled the Allies to force Germany to sign the armistice agreement. The British Government in general and Foreign Minister Balfour in particular were very grateful to Weizmann for the part he played in the victory.

Weizmann & Daniel

While we are comparing Balfour to King Cyrus, we might also compare Weizmann to the prophet Daniel. It is clear from Scripture that Daniel prophesied the sudden capture of Babylon when he interpreted the mysterious “handwriting on the wall” to the shaken King Belshazzar and his guests at the blasphemous party described in Daniel 5. That night the army of the Persian King Cyrus captured mighty Babylon in an almost bloodless takeover through the famous under-the-wall strategy described by the Greek historian Herodotus. The Bible does not say, but it may well be that King Cyrus heard of this remarkable prophecy afterward, and credited Daniel with at least part of the reason for the success of his strategy.

Furthermore, Jewish history informs us that the Jewish leaders in Babylon approached King Cyrus after his victory and showed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, which mentioned Cyrus by name ([Isaiah 44:28–45:1](#)). Isaiah had written the prophecy over 150 years before, so the Jewish leaders and King Cyrus were amazed that the venerable prophecy had been fulfilled so literally. All of this would explain why King Cyrus was so willing, indeed eager, to issue the proclamation urging the restoration of Israel and funding the rebuilding of the Temple. His appreciation to the prophets Daniel and Isaiah for his victory may well have played a major role in his favorable attitude toward Israel.

Part 7 — the following portion first appeared in the December 1994 *Levitt Letter*.

Common Commitment to The Future of Israel

Now back to Balfour and Weizmann. It was not just high-powered explosives and the Allied victory that drew them together, there was also a common belief in the future of Israel. Weizmann was an ardent Zionist, and was in constant communication with the Zionist leaders, such as Theodore Herzl, in England and Europe. He was eager to further Jewish settlement in Palestine, which had already begun by the turn of the century as Jews escaped from the persecutions in Russia and Eastern Europe. They found refuge in the agricultural kibbutzim around Galilee.

Balfour, on the other hand (as we noted before), was a devout Christian, and had been exposed to the Premillennial and Dispensational teaching that had been rediscovered in the Scriptures during the previous century. He believed that the Jews must return to the Land as part of the preparation for the Second Coming of Christ, and was thrilled to think that he could have a part in it. Although Balfour accomplished many significant achievements in the British government, it is reported that, in his final days, he felt the most important thing he had accomplished in his life was the Declaration encouraging the resettlement of the Jewish people in their homeland.

Palestine as a British Mandate

Prior to WW I, Palestine had been ruled by Turkey for many years. During the war, Turkey was aligned with Germany, so Britain attacked Turkey from Egypt through Palestine. It was a dramatic time when the British General Allenby captured Jerusalem from the Turks. As the war concluded, Palestine was designated as a British protectorate. Thus, England had to decide how it was to administer the protectorate, and the Balfour Declaration promising a homeland to the Jewish people in Palestine was the apparent solution to the problem.

The Contradictory Pro-Jewish & Pro-Arab British Policies

A very serious problem, however, was that not only was there a pro-Jewish faction in England led by Foreign Minister Balfour, there was also a pro-Arab faction heavily influenced by “Lawrence of Arabia,” which was making contrary covert promises to the Arabs. This duplicity in the British government led to much confusion and ultimately bloodshed in later years. Nevertheless, the impact of the Balfour Declaration on the restoration of the Jewish people to the Land cannot be overestimated. It was brought about, in no small measure, by the convergence of Jewish Zionism and British Christian Dispensationalism in the persons of Weizmann and Balfour.

The Contribution of American Dispensationalism

American Christian Dispensationalism also appeared to be involved, to a lesser extent, at the time. The Balfour Declaration was not just drafted in one day by the Foreign Minister. It was carefully crafted with many revisions over a period of several weeks. It went back and forth between the British Cabinet and various Jewish groups. Some Jewish leaders were concerned that British recognition of a Jewish homeland in Palestine might negatively affect their status as citizens in England and other countries. When they had the wording they considered acceptable, it was sent to President Woodrow Wilson for approval. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister, had been president of Princeton University, and it might be assumed that he had been exposed to the Christian Dispensational teaching that was moving across America. At any rate, President Wilson readily agreed to the proposal, and indicated to the British government that it met with the approval of the American government.

The Hand of God Behind The Scenes

Thus, at the close of WW I it appears that a minority of Dispensational Christians influenced the British government, and to a lesser extent the American government, to accelerate the restoration of Israel during the 20th century in cooperation with the Zionist cause. In ancient times God used political events in the transition of power from Babylon to Persia in the time of Daniel to restore Israel to the Land. Biblical prophecies state that Israel must return to the Land in the last days. Can it be that He used similar political events at the end of WW I to further the present restoration? At any rate, the Balfour Declaration set in motion an exponential increase from a small trickle to a veritable stream as Jewish people began their serious return to the Promised Land. Dispensationalists believe that this was the beginning of the fulfillment of biblical prophecies, and this meant that the time for the judgment of Satan and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth was coming ever closer. It soon became clear that Satan and his willing accomplices were not going to stand by and watch the restoration of Israel and the ultimate Second Coming of Christ to occur without determined opposition.

Part 8 — the following portion first appeared in the February 1995 *Levitt Letter*.

The Nazi Holocaust: Satan's Counterplot Against Israel's Restoration

God's Plan of Restoration Begins

In the previous chapters of this series, we have seen how the Lord began the long process of fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy of the Dry Bones in the 19th century. He accomplished this both through the Jewish movement of Zionism and the encouraging Christian movement of Premillennial Dispensationalism, along with the cooperating governments of the League of Nations.

By the end of WW I, Britain gained control of the ancient Promised Land, which they called Palestine, and enunciated the Balfour Declaration. This gave official sanction to the migration of Jews back to Israel, which had already begun. The previous small trickle of migration then became a steady stream of thousands of Jewish people returning to the Land.

By the 1920s, a sizeable Jewish presence in Palestine had become an accomplished fact. The long divine process of returning the Dry Bones to the Land was actually under way.

The Satan Factor

Think, now, about how Satan would react to this process. Satan knows the biblical prophecy that the restoration of Israel will set the stage for the Second Coming of Christ. When Christ returns, Satan will be incarcerated and then ultimately cast into the Lake of Fire. Thus, with the restoration of Israel, Satan would realize that his days were numbered.

How does the Enemy react when he realizes that his time is short? We get a glimpse of this in Rev. [12:12](#) & 13:

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child.

During the yet future Tribulation, Satan will be cast out of heaven and realize that his time is short. He will then lash out against Israel, portrayed as the woman who produced the Messiah. I believe we saw a preview of this unreasoning hatred in the unfolding of the terrible Nazi Holocaust.

We have already seen how the Lord used men like Herzl, Weizmann and Balfour in promoting the Jewish return to the Land. Satan also had his willing accomplices in men like Hitler and his henchmen to accomplish the Devil's counter purposes. The Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917. Hitler did not publish his *Mein Kampf* until 1926. In 1919, though, he was already developing his ideas in which he blamed the Jews for all the problems of Germany in particular, and also of the entire world. His solution to what he perceived as this universal problem was the total destruction of all Jews everywhere.

Hitler: Satan's Agent to Stop The Restoration

It is doubtful that Hitler realized (as Satan undoubtedly did) the prophetic implications of the early stages of the restoration of Israel.

Nevertheless, Hitler eagerly (though perhaps unwittingly) cooperated in Satan's desperate effort to stop Israel from becoming a nation.

How better to stop Israel from being established than to destroy as many Jews in the world as possible? This would nip the work of the restoration of Israel in the bud, delay indefinitely the return of Christ, and protect Satan from the judgment of God. So might the twisted Satanic reasoning go.

How Do You Explain The Holocaust?

The Holocaust in many ways defies explanation. There have been many cruel purges and persecutions among human beings throughout the violent history of our planet. Nevertheless, how do you account for the diabolical and intensely systematic murder of almost three generations of Jews in Nazi Germany?

Here was one of the most cultured, sophisticated, educated, scientific nations on earth, with its rich (and generally benign) heritage of Lutheran Protestantism. Germany was also noted for its cultural tolerance. Jewish people, in particular, had attained high levels within business, banking, and artistic spheres, and considered themselves well assimilated in Germanic civilization.

How was it that such a country could become a literal hell on earth for all Jews within its grasp? Was it the hypnotic powers of Hitler ("the little corporal") or the docile yearning of the German people for strong leadership? Was it latent European anti-Semitism suddenly unleashed? All these explanations seem to fall short of a rational explanation for the Holocaust.

Hitler determined to destroy as many Jews as possible, even when the Allied army had crushed the Nazi war machine. To the very end, the Führer ordered the death camp personnel to keep on asphyxiating and cremating Jews. Such fanaticism is irrational from the purely human perspective.

The Holocaust only begins to make some kind of sense when we realize the Satanic purposes behind the Nazi movement. People just do not ordinarily mobilize so massively to destroy systematically those they have identified as scapegoats.

When you realize, though, that Satan was terrified by the realities of the early stages of a restored Israel, it makes some sense. With his supernatural powers, Satan could mobilize an elite corps of fanatics to gain political control. Once in power, they could proceed with their enormous effort to stop Israel from being created at all costs!

Satan's Plan Backfires

Satan's plan went a long way toward succeeding. Of approximately 18 million Jews in the world, he was able to kill 6 million of them. Hitler singled out the Jews for extinction, and they died along with millions of other civilians and soldiers through the Nazi-inspired Axis during WW II. Thus, the Nazis killed about one third of the Jewish people in the world in the Holocaust. This is a bitter foretaste of what the Antichrist (who makes Hitler look like a piker) will do to the Jews in the future Tribulation.

Nevertheless, Satan failed in stopping the creation of Israel. In fact, Satan's plan backfired. Instead of keeping the Jews from returning to the Land, the Holocaust convinced the Jews that there was an urgent necessity for them to have a safety valve. They must have their own sovereign state in a world in which anti-Semitism surrounded them.

The earlier steady stream of Jewish migration into Palestine between the two World Wars became a veritable flood after the Holocaust. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were now desperately striving to escape from Europe and other countries to get to their ancient homeland. The State of Israel was becoming a reality again after 19 centuries of dispersion.

Part 9 — the following portion first appeared in the April 1995 *Levitt Letter*.

The Re-Creation & Struggle of Modern Israel

Initial Broad Support for Israel

By the time World War II came to a close, the Evangelical/Dispensational Christian support for the idea of a revived Israel had been strong for over a century. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that this movement, although quite vocal, has always been a small minority within general Christianity. So the Jewish Zionists, together with their longtime moral supporters among the Evangelical Christians, constituted a relatively small movement of only a few million people, with virtually no official cooperating organization. How could a sovereign nation be brought into existence in a hostile environment with such a tiny support base?

It should be remembered that those were heady days at the end of World War II. The United Nations had been formed, and there was hope among the leading world powers that a lasting peace could be developed out of the ashes of the destruction of the Axis powers. Although there was some foreboding concerning the coming conflict of the Cold War, at this stage the U.S., Britain, France and the Soviet Union were cooperating in forging a postwar world. When the critical votes in the U.N. and issues of diplomatic recognition came in 1947–8, the major powers were prepared to back the infant State of Israel.

Liberals Join Conservative Evangelicals In Support of the New Israel

There was an interesting convergence of the liberal political and theological world together with the conservative Jewish and Christian public. Liberal Christian theologians, who were not at all impressed with biblical prophecy about the restoration of Israel, nevertheless felt strongly about the impact of the horror of the Nazi Holocaust. Their sense of social justice cried out against the inhumanity of Hitler's regime in singling out the Jewish community for systematic extinction, with six million Jewish people murdered in the most sadistic method imaginable. The liberals felt that the Jews must have a safety valve in the form of their own country in a world that had been so hostile to them.

The socialist groups also came to the defense of the creation of Israel. They were excited about the Kibbutz organization of the early Jewish pioneers, and felt that the new nation presented a working laboratory for socialist concepts. Out of this milieu of general support came the best selling book and popular film, *Exodus*. Herman Wouk deftly describes the story of the struggle of the Jewish people coming from Europe to the British mandate of Palestine, in the anxious years of misplaced persons following the war.

British Opposition to Jewish Immigration to Palestine

The British government felt that it was caught between the two forces of Jewish aspirations for restoration and the Arab interests in preserving their control over Palestine. Islam had possessed the land for the better part of thirteen hundred years, since the seventh century, except for the relatively brief period of the European Crusade occupation in the twelfth century. The Arab and Moslem nations were angry with the British for allowing the Jews to come to Palestine in such great numbers. Furthermore, the British were heavily dependent on petroleum from the Middle Eastern countries. London was under great pressure from the Arabs to limit the immigration of Jews into Palestine to only a few thousand a year. They were interdicting boatloads of Jews and holding them on the island of Cyprus. This dilemma was focused on the ship *Exodus*, a bedraggled vessel that contained hundreds of Jewish refugees struggling to escape post-war Europe and get to Palestine. When they arrived in the harbor, the British government forced them to turn around and forcibly escorted the ship to Cyprus. They were then put into concentration camps where they were held until a determination could be made. What tragic irony there was for the Jews to escape from the death camps of the Nazis only to find themselves in British detention camps in Cyprus!

The Jewish Resistance Movement

The Jewish forces in Palestine began an intensive campaign to remove the British army from the area, and to declare an independent State of Israel. This led to a situation in which they were waging a diplomatic campaign, coupled with a guerrilla warfare campaign to dislodge the British government from the region. After a period of time the British agreed to withdraw, and in 1947 the U.N. voted to partition Palestine into an Israeli section and an Arab section. Israel then declared independence, and the British lowered their flag, departing from the country. The new State of Israel was recognized by the United States and the Soviet Union, and was admitted as a full member of the United Nations. This age-old dream of a revived State of Israel was now a reality among the family of nations.

The New Satanic Agenda Against the Revived Israel: Islam & Communism

We have already seen that earlier the Nazis were determined to destroy the Jewish people, but that Satan had used the Nazis with the purpose of keeping Israel from being restored as a nation. The Nazis went a long way toward accomplishing their goal of genocide, and the reestablishment of Israel certainly was delayed during the process, but eventually the Nazi/Satanic plan was thwarted.

It was now 1947–8, in a different location and the Jews faced different human enemies, but the issues were similar. Now that Israel had actually become independent, Satan was fully determined that this new nation was going to die at its very birth. He had two very willing allies in the fanatical Muslim Arabs in the nations surrounding Israel, and in the Communist world dominated by the Soviet Union.

Part 10 — the following portion first appeared in the August 1995 *Levitt Letter*.

The Jews Survive the Satanic Nazi Holocaust and Create Israel

By 1947, we believe God had organized the restoration of the Jewish nation through Zionism, and its allies in Dispensational Christianity and the British Mandate of Palestine. In full and desperate opposition, Satan attempted to thwart the divine plan of the restoration of Israel. He used the enormous disruptions of World War II, and the Nazi Holocaust, which singled out the Jewish people as greatest enemy, destined for total extermination. However, the Chosen People miraculously survived all of this, were streaming into British Palestine by the thousands from Europe, and had come to the dramatic moment of declaring their independence before the world. Once again Israel would become a living nation among the family of nations after a Diaspora of nineteen centuries.

Arabic Islam Is The New Satanic Enemy of Revived Israel

The infant nation's immediate attention first had to be given to the Arab neighbors, and Arabic Islam became the next tool in the hands of Satan to keep Israel from prospering, now that it had survived the Holocaust to become a nation. The Arab nations did not recognize or accept the U.N. partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Arab sections. As soon as Israel declared independence, the surrounding Arab neighbors declared war on Israel, and in the first months of its existence the Jewish people had to defend themselves with the meager weapons they had against an onslaught of the combined armies arrayed against them.

The primary motivation behind the Arab objection to the fledgling Israel was religious. This was not just a political matter, it was, in fact, a "holy war" or "jihad." The Jewish state was an offense to the sanctity of the holy sites in Jerusalem and throughout the land, according to their viewpoint. The only way this could be rectified was by forcibly removing the Jews from the land and pushing them out into the Mediterranean Sea. This was the battle cry in the Arab nations, and a recurring theme for over forty years of discord.

The fanatical Muslims could not tolerate the idea of an official Jewish presence in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem. Islam considers the Temple Mount with its famous Dome of the Rock and Al Aksa Mosque as one of the most sacred holy sites in the world, ranking behind only the central sites of Mecca and Medina.

Islam Attacks Israel & The Gospel

The Arabs are the physical descendants of Ishmael, the first son of Abraham, and the vast majority of Arabs have adopted Islam as their official religion and have spread their religion to much of the world's population throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Islam expresses tolerance for Judaism and Christianity, but essentially it attempts to refute

the cardinal doctrines of both. It transfers to Ishmael the blessings that came through Isaac and Jacob, and disputes the deity and redemptive work of Christ. While the Muslims have generally neglected the development of Palestine throughout the centuries, with the exception of a few cities, they have jealously guarded their rights over the land from the time of the Crusades. It was one thing to dislodge the European Crusaders from the land, but the Moslems have discovered it is entirely another matter to dislodge the Jewish people who consider Israel as their religious and ancestral homeland.

To understand the hostility between these descendants of the patriarchal brothers, Isaac and Ishmael, it is necessary for the Jewish and Christian readers to understand something about the nature and history of Islam from our perspective. In some ways, the development of the religion of Islam in the seventh century was one of the great master strokes of Satan in the world. Before Islam, the vast Arab population, and much of Africa and Asia, was essentially neutral toward passive Judaism and evangelistic Christianity, although these areas had some bias toward various forms of polytheism. But with the religion of Mohammed came a conscious rejection of and negative attitude toward the unvarnished truths of the Old and New Testaments.

While giving lip service to the various biblical prophets, including Moses and Jesus, and claiming vehemently to be a religion of pure monotheism, Islam challenged most of the history and doctrine of the Scriptures. The Koran deliberately removes Israel from its historical and theological position as the Chosen Nation, and replaces it with the Arab peoples, the descendants of Ishmael. One of the major annual feasts of Islam, called ISHMAEL, demonstrates this. They actually twist the Scriptures and celebrate this feast as a commemoration of the willingness of Abraham to offer Ishmael (not Isaac). Thus, according to Islam, Ishmael (and the Arabs) displaces Isaac (and the Jews) as the Promised Seed. From that point on, Islam continues to denigrate the position of Israel, its historical possession of the Promised Land, the glory of the worship in the Jerusalem Temple, and the Messianic destiny of the Davidic dynasty.

At the same time, Islam undercuts the truths of the Gospel. The Koran considers Jesus to be a prophet, but denies the deity of Christ. Furthermore, it rejects the substitutionary atonement of the death of the Lord, as well as the validity of His resurrection. On the contrary, the Koran invents the theory that Jesus did not actually die on the Cross, but rather only “swooned,” or fell unconscious, and then later recovered and pretended to have risen from the dead.

Israel, Christianity & Islam Compete Over Jerusalem

Islam thus attempts to undermine most of the essentials of the Scriptures, and, when it became widely accepted through proclamation and conquest, the religion of Mohammed became a major problem for biblically based Judaism and Christianity. This difficulty was exacerbated when Islam occupied Jerusalem and made it one of its main holy places. Now there were three religions competing over the territorial rights to Jerusalem. Throughout fourteen hundred years, this has resulted in the Moslems wresting Jerusalem from the Byzantine Christians, the short Crusade period of European domination of Jerusalem for about 100 years, and the twentieth century phenomenon of the return of the Jewish people to the Land. Most of this time, Islam (in one form or another) has been in control of Jerusalem. Until recently, the Arabs have persuaded themselves that the Jews were no more permanent in Jerusalem than the European Crusaders. Some aspects of the current peace movement indicate that Moslem leaders, however reluctantly, may be coming to the conclusion that they will have to come to terms with a permanent State of Israel, at least for the time being.

In the next article, we will see how Satan used international Communism, led by the Soviet Union, to supply arms during the Cold War period to the Islamic Arabs. Thus, the father of lies appears never to give up in his determined effort to frustrate God's plan for the restoration of Israel.

Part 11 — the following portion first appeared in the September 1995 *Levitt Letter*.

Soviet Communism, Ultimate Enemy of Israel During Cold War

The thesis of this series is that for over a hundred years God has been laying the groundwork for the restoration of Israel in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ, and Satan has been fighting that restoration every step of the way. It is an amazing thing that at the same time God was organizing the early stages of the restoration of Israel in the first quarter of this century, Satan was organizing a counter movement to try to stop the restoration and, once Israel was a nation again, to destroy it. The Lord did His work of restoration through Zionism, the British mandate over Palestine, the Balfour Declaration, and Dispensational Christianity. Satan, on the other hand, worked through the Nazi German Holocaust, Arab Moslem hostility and Soviet (and international) Communism to thwart God's restoration plan for Israel.

In previous articles, we have seen the devastating impact of the Nazi German Holocaust and the Arab Moslem hostility to the Jewish aspiration of survival and the restoration of Israel. Now we turn to the other major player in Satan's grand

scheme against Israel's restoration: Soviet Communism. Once Israel began its renewed statehood in 1947–48, it was surrounded by its Arab enemies who were determined to drive every Jew into the Mediterranean Sea, a boast often made among themselves. In spite of Arab Moslem fanaticism, however, the Israelis always felt they could work out an accommodation with the Arabs if they were left alone. But the Arabs had a powerful benefactor: the Soviet Union. When the Arab nations waged war against Israel, it was with Russian planes, tanks and rifles. The Soviets were pouring billions of dollars worth of armaments into the Arab world so that they could fight three major wars against Israel in 1956, 1967 and 1973.

The Rise of Soviet Communism

How was it that Russia became such an inveterate enemy of Israel? Communism was developed as a philosophy during the last century (as was Zionism and Dispensational Christianity) by Marx and Engels, but it took Lenin to bring it to power in Russia in 1917, during WWI. Thus, in the decade following WWI, while the Jews were beginning their immigration to Israel in earnest, and the Nazis were getting organized for their conquest of the world and their execution of the "final solution" against the Jewish people, the Communists consolidated their control over Russia and what became the Soviet Union.

There was a great deal of controversy in Russia between the World Wars, with much internal warfare and many purges under Stalin. During WWII, Germany invaded the Soviet Union and came close to capturing Moscow before the Russian winter finally stopped the Germans in their tracks. Eventually, the Soviets were able to push the Germans back, as the U.S. and Britain were attacking the German army from the west. Following the "hot" war, the world found itself in the polarized situation of what came to be known as the Cold War, with Capitalism and Communism competing for power and territory. Europe was cut in half, with an iron curtain in between, shutting out all cultural exchange by which the West might influence the East. While all this was settling in, the nation Israel was reborn in 1947–48.

Early Soviet Support for Israel

Remarkably, when the crucial votes were being taken in the fledgling United Nations, the Soviet Union joined with the Allies in supporting the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab sections. Many of the leaders of the new independent state of Israel had come out of Russia and Eastern Europe, and had a socialist political/economic view. The kibbutz agricultural communities appeared to many Marxists as an ideal socialist building block for society. Thus the Soviet leaders initially found many areas of compatibility with the young Israel. This friendship did not last very long, however. As Israel developed, it became strongly attached to the West, politically, economically and militarily.

The Strange Alignment Between The Soviets and The Moslems

By the time of the Israeli-Arab conflict in 1956, the Soviet Union had become solidly aligned with Egypt and the other Arab nations. It is not difficult to explain how Communism was opposed to Christianity, but how is it that the atheistic Communists could cooperate so fully with the monotheistic Moslems, and vice versa? They would appear to be so antithetical that it would be impossible for them to work together.

The one thing that brought these two outwardly opposite geo-political groups together was their mutual antipathy to Israel. Millions of Jews live in Russia, and many of them wanted to emigrate to Israel. The Soviet government turned down their applications, and thousands of Jews came to be known as "refuseniks," because of the denials they were issued. Russia became the new Egypt, and the international cry arose once again, "Let My people go!" Tensions between Russia and Israel multiplied.

Soviet Military Support of the Arab Nations

The Arab nations thus became clients of the Soviet Union, who poured thousands of tons of military supplies, planes, tanks, rifles and support equipment into the Arab states surrounding Israel. These were used for all the decades of the Cold War, in the major conflicts of 1956, 1967 and 1973, and in the numerous terrorist activities by the PLO and other groups.

The PLO for many years was operating against Israel out of the previously peaceful Lebanon. When Israel mounted an incursion into Lebanon, they discovered huge caches of Soviet armaments in the PLO enclaves. It was clear that the ultimate enemy of Israel was the Soviet Union, working through the immediate Arab Moslem antagonists.

In the next article, we will observe how the Soviet/Arab warfare against Israel reached its height in the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The parallels between this war and the early stages of the conflict prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39 are remarkable, and they may have been a prelude of things to come. We will also explore how, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, these great prophecies might be fulfilled by the power to the extreme north.

Part 12 — the following portion first appeared in the October 1995 *Levitt Letter*.

Israel's Four Modern Wars of Survival — A Biblical View of Modern World History

Throughout this series we have been promoting an unusual view of the history of the last one and one-half centuries: a biblical view. A *secular* view would emphasize the rise and fall of various powers in the West and the East, resulting in the titanic struggles of two World Wars and the Cold War. A *biblical* view, however, would put the emphasis on the steps involved in the restoration and subsequent survival of the relatively obscure, tiny, and apparently insignificant nation of Israel. The Jewish nation has pitifully few battalions in their citizen army in the geo-political scheme of world power, but Israel's influence in the 20th century has been far and away greater than its small size and population would otherwise warrant.

Why do we call this a biblical approach? Because the Bible is Israel-centered. Since the initial promise of the Land to Abraham, there have been two restorations of the Hebrew people to Canaan: the Exodus and Conquest under Moses and Joshua, and the return from the Babylonian Captivity under Ezra, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. Contrary to the contemporary and current historical treatment, the Bible concentrates on these events in Israel's history. Now, after nineteen centuries of dispersion, we have the remarkable privilege of observing firsthand the beginnings of the predicted third restoration of Israel in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.

Secular history scarcely recognizes the Exodus or the return of the Jews from Babylon. Egypt, Babylon and Persia tended to sweep unfavorable information under the rug and ignore it, and the modern secular historians have followed their lead. World histories of the period concern themselves with the rise and fall of dynasties of Pharaohs and Emperors, with their great wars and conquests. The comings and goings of Jews in and out of their little land scarcely rate a mention in the broad histories of the world.

But the Bible concentrates on Israel as the Chosen Nation, the repository of the Covenants, the channel of the Messianic Hope, the custodian of the divinely approved Temple, the keeper of the oracles of God, and the capital nation of the returning crucified and risen King of Kings. Thus page after page, book after book in the Old and New Testaments deal with these issues that mean little or nothing to world powers or historians. Israel is the central theme of the Bible.

The Church Age Inserted In The Israel-Centered Prophetic Plan

But the New Testament seems to leave Israel behind, and the Church is the new center of God's plan. Thus, some might say that the Church has replaced Israel, and that Israel is no longer the center of the biblical plan. It is true that the Holy Spirit is currently concentrating on evangelism, church planting, pointing people to the Lord Jesus Christ, and growing the overall body of Christ. The Church age has lasted for almost two thousand years, and is very significant as a previously unrevealed mystery in which God is calling out believing Jews and Gentiles as a glorious bride for the Son of God. However, the Church age is in some ways just a biblical parenthesis.

The Church age has actually interrupted the previously revealed prophetic stream that has to do with the first and second comings of Christ, and His relationship to Israel and the nations. After the Lord has removed the Church through the promised Rapture, He will resume His activities of judgment and intervention that have to do with the Tribulation and the establishment of His kingdom in Jerusalem, Israel and the world. What is amazing is that, even though the Church age has not yet ended, we are already seeing the transition to the beginning of the third restoration of Israel, and the preparation for the events of the Tribulation.

The Four Wars

Therefore, in order to view modern world events in a biblical perspective, we have to take off the glasses provided to us by secular journalists and historians, and put on our biblical glasses that see the movements of the nations from the

microscopic vantage point of Israel. Modern Israel has fought four major wars during the last fifty years, and each one has played an important role in setting the stage for the prophesied events of the Tribulation:

1. 1947-48 War of Independence: restoration of Israel
2. 1956 Suez Canal: assertion of national sovereignty
3. 1967 Six-Day War: recapture of the Temple Mount
4. 1973 Yom Kippur War: solidified West Bank occupation

Through all these wars, which were relatively minor in comparison with the World Wars but major for Israel's survival, the Satanic strategy was to destroy Israel through the Arab armies, mostly armed by the Soviet Bloc. But God protected His Chosen Nation through the sacrificial dedication of the Jewish people, and the support of the United States and a handful of other nations. If we do not recognize this titanic supernatural background behind the observable struggle, we are not looking at recent history from a biblical viewpoint.

The four wars each played a significant role in the great struggle between the Lord and Satan over the preservation of Israel. The last one, the Yom Kippur War, illustrates how deeply committed Russia and the Soviet Union were to supporting the Arab nations against Israel.

Russia and the Yom Kippur War

Egypt and Syria completely surprised Israel when they attacked the Jewish nation on the most holy day of the year, Yom Kippur. All the reserve citizen-soldiers were in their synagogues fasting and praying. During the first few weeks of the war, Israel was in dire straits, and it looked for a while that the tiny nation might be destroyed by the massive onslaught. The U.S. was having great difficulty in re-supplying Israel with military equipment. None of the European nations would allow American planes to refuel at their airports because of the threat of an Arab oil embargo.

Gradually, the vaunted Israeli army began to turn the tide and repel the Egyptian and Syrian forces. Eventually, they were able to push the Egyptian army across the Suez Canal and surround them in the desert south of Cairo. Egypt called on its patron, the Soviet Union, to assist its beleaguered army. Amazingly, the Russian army declared a red alert and made preparations to send paratroopers to Egypt with relief supplies. The U.S. in the fall of 1973 was completely engulfed in the Watergate scandal, but nevertheless was able to announce its own red alert in response. It was a very tense time in Cold War politics.

The upshot was that Israel relaxed its stranglehold on the Egyptian army, relief was allowed in, and a cease-fire was accomplished. This was about as close as the world has come to a preview of the Gog and Magog war predicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39. That war and Armageddon are the two primary wars prophesied about restored Israel in the End Times in the Scripture. In our next article, we will examine how events are shaping up for these two devastating Israel-centered wars in the End Times.

Part 13 — the following portion first appeared in the December 1995 *Levitt Letter*.

Israel is not only the center of past history, but also of biblical prophecy, which is, after all, future history as revealed by God. The final restoration of Israel is a central part of biblical prophecy about the End Times, but it is only one of many parts. There are many good and exciting things the Lord has promised, including the Rapture of the Church, the return of Christ to the earth, the Millennial Kingdom, and the eternal New Jerusalem. However, there are also some very devastating events in the divine forecast, such as the War of Gog and Magog, the Great Tribulation and the War of Armageddon.

Preparation for Ezekiel 38–39

The war described in [Ezekiel 38–39](#) is predicted as occurring in the last days, and there are some similarities between it and the War of Armageddon. But there are enough differences that we must conclude it is a different conflict altogether, and there are indications that it must be seven years before Armageddon. Such timing would place it at the beginning of the Tribulation. One possible scenario is that this war, known as Gog and Magog, would occur between the Rapture of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation.

In the War of Gog and Magog, the nation to the extreme north of Israel (Magog) organizes an invasion of Israel. Magog has traditionally been interpreted as being what we know as Russia, which is to the extreme due north of Israel. But Russia does not act alone. The Bear of the north forms an alliance with several specific nations surrounding Israel at a distance: Persia, Ethiopia and Libya.

The Russo-Islamic Alliance

These countries are predominantly Moslem nations, so the resulting partnership might be called the Russo-Islamic Alliance, joined together to destroy Israel. One peculiarity about the Russo-Islamic Alliance is that it does not include the traditional enemies of Israel, the adjacent neighbors of Syria, Moab, Edom and Egypt. The absence of these enemies suggests that there is some kind of pacification between Israel and these neighbors, perhaps a peace accord that is in place at the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy. That may be why Israel considers itself to be secure ([Ezek. 38:8](#)) before the invasion.

At any rate, the Russo-Islamic Alliance determines that it must invade Israel to gain a spoil ([Ezek. 38:11–12](#)). What kind of spoil is the Alliance after? All that the text says is that there are “cattle and goods” in Israel that attract Magog, and that they dwell “in the midst of the land (earth).” One thing is certain: the strategic importance of Israel in the Middle East. Whoever controls Israel controls the land bridge between Europe, Africa and Asia. Whatever the attraction, the Russo-Islamic Alliance attacks Israel in an invasion with overwhelming forces. The Alliance is convinced that it cannot lose in a conflict with the relatively puny nation of Israel.

The Surprising Destruction of Gog and Magog

However, the Russo-Islamic forces have made a serious miscalculation. They have not reckoned that the Lord God of the universe promised over 2,500 years ago to protect Israel and repel this very invasion. It will not be the valiant citizen soldiers of Israel who will accomplish this victory, though, but the supernatural power of the Almighty. There will be earthquakes and fire from heaven, and the powerful invading armies will “fall upon the mountains of Israel” and will “fall upon the open fields” ([Ezek. 39:4–5](#)). To the astonishment of Israel and the world, the hostile invasion with overwhelming numbers and resources is a total failure. The invaders of Israel suffer an 85% casualty rate ([Ezek. 39:2](#)). Dead soldiers and military debris are spread out all over the country, while the relatively tiny army of Israel comes through the contest unscathed.

The Russo-Islamic effort to destroy Israel will collapse in a great dispirited heap. In the aftermath of the war, the Jewish nation will have to devote seven months to decontaminating the countryside of all the dead invaders’ bodies ([Ezek. 39:11–12](#)). Special note is also made of the use of the military debris left behind. Israel will use this accumulation of trash for fuel for a period of seven years ([Ezek. 39:9–10](#)). The length of time is not incidental. The seven years mentioned by Ezekiel is precisely the same amount of time indicated by his contemporary, Daniel, in the famous Seventieth Week. It is apparent that Ezekiel and Daniel are referring to the same period of future time, which is the Tribulation.

The Stage Is Set for The Tribulation

In this prophetic scenario, with the disappearance of the Church through the Rapture and the devastation of the Middle East in the collapse of the Russo-Islamic invasion (Gog and Magog War), the stage is set for the rise of the Antichrist and the dire developments of the Tribulation.

What we have witnessed over the past 150 years or so on the world scene has led us inexorably toward this scenario portrayed in the Scriptures. The nations have been pre-occupied with two world wars and numerous smaller conflicts and an expanding marketplace. On the other hand, the Lord and Satan have been engaged in a titanic struggle over the restoration of the tiny nation of Israel in preparation for the temporary reign of the Antichrist, and the glorious permanent return of the true Messiah, Christ Jesus.

The Danger of Post Soviet Russia

In our present generation during the Cold War, the mighty Soviet Union seemed to be the perfect vehicle for the fulfillment of Magog, with its experience in supplying the Islamic enemies of Israel in their several wars against the revived Jewish nation. In the Yom Kippur War, almost all of the pieces of the prophetic puzzle seemed to be in place for the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s predictions. But the event was delayed, and the Rapture, Gog and Magog, and the Tribulation were postponed for a later time.

The Soviet Union has collapsed in the ash heap of discredited international communism. How, then, will Ezekiel's prophecy about Gog and Magog be fulfilled? As we have seen, the sinister Russian bear is alive and well. In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russians show a disturbing political schizophrenia. Some desire the blessings of freedom, democracy and even Christianity. But there are many political and military leaders who miss the power and prestige of the old system. Some Russian generals and military hardware have actually found their way into such havens as Iran (Persia). Also, there is a rise in Russia of anti-Semitism, and the pressure on the several million Jewish people in Russia is growing at an alarming rate.

Thus, the new Russia could turn out to be just as dangerous to Israel as the old Soviet Union. It would not be unthinkable for the upcoming leaders in Russia to take their nation down the same path of cooperation with the Islamic countries against Israel. Whatever the near term developments, Ezekiel's prophecy is still on track, and the war of Gog and Magog will come to pass just as the Lord has predicted, in His time and in His way.

Part 14 — the following portion first appeared in the January 1996 *Levitt Letter*.

As we have seen throughout this series of articles, for at least 100 years God has providentially arranged for the restoration of the nation Israel. He has accomplished this using the energies of Zionism and Premillennial Christianity, along with the aftermath of World Wars I and II. Satan has fought this biblically-prophesied restoration every step of the way, through the pogroms of Russia, the death camps of Nazi Germany, and the fanatical wars and terrorism of Islamic Arabs backed by international Communism. The fury of Satan to stop this third restoration of the Jews to the Land matches all he did to keep the first restoration (under Moses and Joshua) and the second restoration (under Ezra and Nehemiah) from coming to pass. In all of this time, Israel has been the center of the divine scheme of history, while nations have risen and fallen, kings and presidents have come and gone, and the church has both evangelized and apostatized throughout the world.

We have now come to the 1990s. The revived state of Israel has been in existence for over forty years. The Iron Curtain and the Soviet Union have been dismantled before our eyes with the swiftness with which they arose on the scene of human history decades before. New conditions exist, so much so that politicians are calling this the New World Order. What of Israel now?

The Post Cold War Era

The U.S. has survived the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and stands today as the only superpower left on the earth. This has led many to believe the world is a much safer place. America is dismantling its armies, closing its military bases, and destroying its weapons of mass destruction. In some ways, though, the world has new and perhaps more dangerous causes of instability and warfare.

Russia, having lost its Communist empire, is in a great national debate over whether to join the western democratic societies in development, or revert to some super-nationalistic, threatening power. There are signs that the latter forces are winning out, and they are manifesting a strong anti-Semitic and anti-Israel bias.

There are rumors, confirmed and unconfirmed, about Russian generals chafing over their demotion in importance, bringing their nuclear weapons experience and even complete submarines to such nations as Iran. Leaders are coming to the fore who have a deep resentment against the West and against the Jewish people.

Islam Becomes More Prominent

Islam is now filling the vacuum left by the Soviet Union in much of the world. The southern republics, now independent from the Soviet Union, are reasserting their Moslem heritage, and are fast aligning with the Islamic nations of the Middle East. Iran (Persia), under its Ayatollahs, is one of the most virulent of the anti-Israel Islamic states and has a long history of cooperation with the Russians, even during the time of the Soviet empire. Bible believers are particularly interested in this cooperation between Iran and Russia since Persia is of one the nations specifically mentioned by Ezekiel as joining Russia in the war described in his [chapters 38–39](#).

Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, was the cause of the only mobilized warfare since the beginning of the Post Cold War Era. That fanatic dictatorship invaded Kuwait and was threatening eastern Saudi Arabia. If successful in his schemes, Hussein would have gained control of half the known oil reserves of the world. The nations of the earth would not tolerate Iraq to have such a stranglehold on the international economy. They banded under American leadership to oust the Iraqi army out of Kuwait. In an effort to rally the Arab nations to his cause, Hussein aimed his feared scud missiles mostly toward

Israel, a non-participant in the war. Once again, the Satanic hatred of Israel reared its ugly head in this conflict, and Israeli citizens had to run to shelters and don gas masks, not knowing what poisons the Butcher of Baghdad might be hurling at them, as the scuds rained on their cities.

The Rise of The Intifada

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the fanatic Islamic Arabs began and intensified a new tactic against Israel. They had tried to defeat and dislodge the Jewish state unsuccessfully in four wars. Those efforts ended in humiliating failure. At this point they began a new tactic called the Intifada. This was a public relations campaign for world opinion, in which the Arabs who lived in Judea and Samaria (the so-called West Bank) staged riots against Israel, coupled with terrorist attacks against civilians in Israeli cities.

Ever since the Six Day War in 1967, the Israelis had been constructing Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights for security purposes. These settlements were not glorified trailer parks, but beautiful suburban developments with lovely homes, schools and parks. Israelis live in these settlements and commute to work in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv or Tiberias. One of the primary goals of the Intifada was to stop the spread of these Jewish settlements. Gradually, the Intifada gained the sympathy and support of the world press and governments. Israel, the classic underdog of world history, was transformed in the eyes of the world into being the oppressor of the underdog Arabs, who assumed the name "Palestinians."

American Pressure on Israel

The United Nations and American Presidents Bush and Clinton all pushed hard on Israel to cease and desist the building of settlements. I, for one, am not at all proud of the part our government has had in forcing Israel to relinquish to its sworn Islamic enemies control over strategic parts of the Land that the Almighty has given to them. If the Jewish people wish to negotiate away their security and portions of the Land God has given to them, that is between them and the Almighty. Gentile governments, however, should not be engaged in forcing such measures on Israel. This comes dangerously close to cursing Israel, and God warns that He will curse those who do so. We who belong to the One called the Son of David should disassociate ourselves from the governmental policies that impose these burdens on Israel in the name of peace.

In our next article, we shall observe how the current events are moving the world ever closer to the prophetic events described in the Scriptures: the war of Ezekiel 38–39, the Tribulation, Armageddon, and the glorious return of Christ to redeem Israel and rule the earth. We will also consider the role of the Church at this time in world history, as we eagerly await our Blessed Hope, the imminent Rapture return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take us to be with Himself.

Part 15 — the following portion first appeared in the February 1996 *Levitt Letter*.

Throughout this series, my purpose has been to concentrate on the centrality of Israel in God's plan, not only in the ancient past, but in modern history — now. The modern state of Israel did not just happen; it is not an accident of history; it is the result of the creative power of the Almighty. Just as in ancient times, when the Lord used human agencies and nations such as Egypt, Babylonia, Persia and Rome to accomplish His will concerning Israel, so He has done in our time. During the last couple of lifetimes, He has used Zionism, Britain, the U.S., Europe and the United Nations to bring about a revived Israel. And just as Satan used Pharaoh, Nebucadnezzar and Titus to attempt to thwart God's ancient plan for Israel, so he has been occupied in using Hitler, Brezhnev, Nasser and Arafat to try to disrupt the modern divine plan for Israel.

Our Myopia Hides The Forest from The Trees

The sad thing is we are mostly too preoccupied with our own myopic concerns to realize what He has done. For most of us, our world revolves so much around our own affairs that we fail to see the big picture, especially the big picture from the divine standpoint. If we are self-centered, the only things we notice are those things that directly affect us — our jobs, our homes, our finances, etc. If we are politically motivated, our world revolves around who wins and loses on the political spectrum. If we are nationalistic, we are primarily concerned with the history of our country and its struggles. If we are spiritually oriented, our interests may spread no further than the events of our local church.

None of these preoccupations are wrong in themselves, but do they keep us from being cognizant of the great overall concerns of the Living God? After all, what has the Lord been preoccupied with throughout history? If the Scriptures are our guide, we observe that before the first coming of Christ, He was concerned about the preparation of His chosen nation, Israel, for that Advent.

The Primary Divine Activities for Two Thousand Years

Since His first coming, the Lord has been occupied now for almost 2,000 years with the development of His believing Church, the Body of Christ, in every nation under Heaven. Along with that, though, God has been involved in a parallel activity. There has been the careful preservation of the Jewish people through the long Diaspora, during which Satan and most nations have persecuted them relentlessly for every possible cause and for no cause whatever. The professing Church (I speak to our shame) has even been involved in this persecution, invoking the name of the Redeemer of Israel, Christ Jesus, to attack His own physical brethren.

The Diaspora, however, is coming to a close. In our time, even during the Church Age, the restoration of Israel is beginning to happen before our very eyes. It is something the world never expected or even dreamed would happen. The Church, even though it has possessed the Bible for all these centuries, has done much to suppress the oft-repeated biblical concept that Israel has a future in the plan and purpose of God. It's almost as though the Church has been jealous of Israel, and afraid that if it recognized Israel's future promises, it would somehow demean Christ and the Church. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Distinct Destinies of The Church and Israel

It is when the Church recognizes Israel that the true distinctiveness and glory of the Body of Christ become evident. This called-out Body, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles during the Church Age, is the highest entity the Lord has created, superior to the universe, all the angels, the nations, and Israel. Our Head, our Husband, our Friend, is the Son of God Himself. We shall reign with Him when He rules the earth, and our 12 Founding Apostles will rule over the 12 tribes of Israel. The angels themselves will study us forever as the greatest exhibit of God's grace, and we will actually judge the angels. This is our destiny and I, for one, would not trade my position in the Body of Christ with any creature in the universe! Why, then, be disturbed over what God has promised the Jewish people? Why be jealous over the future destiny of Israel? How shortsighted of us! Indeed, the Church's finest and most distinctive hour will be when Israel is restored nationally and spiritually to the Lord at the Second Coming of Christ. We will return from Heaven with Him as His glorious Bride to rule Israel and the world. What more could we ask?

So if we are not to suffer from spiritual myopia, we must recognize what the Lord is doing with Israel, not shrinking from it as though our own interests will be overshadowed. Rather, we rejoice in these developments, with full assurance that our own redemption draws ever closer. What, then, are we to expect in the future?

The Future Divine Schedule

The modern miracle of the restoration of Israel, although mostly in unbelief, is but the prelude of even more climactic developments. A brief outline of the events the Lord has revealed in the Bible is as follows:

- The Rapture of the true Church, our Blessed Hope
- The War of Gog and Magog
- Antichrist's Contract with Israel (7-Year Tribulation)
- The Abomination of Desolation
- The War of Armageddon
- The Salvation of Israel & Judgment of the Nations
- The Millennial Reign of Christ
- The Great White Throne Judgment
- The New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem

It is beyond the scope of these articles to go into the above subjects in great detail. May I suggest that you study the books that Zola and I have written on the above topics, including [Raptured](#), [Satan in the Sanctuary](#), and [Coming: The End! Russia & Israel in Prophecy](#). These will give you a good working knowledge about what the Scriptures teach concerning the great future events.

Suffice it to say that we are eagerly looking forward to the imminent return of Christ in the event called the Rapture, described in [1 Thess. 4:16-18](#) and elsewhere. He could come at any moment and fulfill the Feast of Trumpets, in which He will call the believing Church to be with Him and give us (both the living and already-dead Church saints) our glorified bodies. What a great day that will be!

Nevertheless, the world will continue on without the believing Church inexorably toward its time of judgment and the wrath of God. The first event on this timetable of judgment appears to be the war described in [Ezekiel 38–39](#), known as Gog and Magog. As we have seen earlier, the world is moving ever closer to the alignments there described. The scenario of the nation to the extreme north joining with Persia, Ethiopia and Libya, seems quite plausible with the Russo-Islamic alliance that is currently shaping up against Israel. It is well within the realm of reality that what Ezekiel described over 2,500 years ago could be mobilized quickly in today's world, and set the stage for the Antichrist and the Tribulation.

Thus, Israel as the Center of Divine History in the distant and recent past, prepares the way for Israel as the Center of Divine Prophecy in the future. We who love Christ the Messiah and believe His Word should be fully aware of the significance of these developments. It should spur us on all the more to proclaim the blessings of His Gospel to a lost world, as the days draw close to His return.

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