

God's Zionism

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What Was Promised to Abraham and the Jews?

TRAGICALLY pathetic is the story of Israel. Through many long centuries a God of infinite love bore with a people who rejected His word, despised His counsel, and would have none of His reproof. Time and again Israel, the chosen of God, decked herself in the Babylonian garments of worldliness and apostasy. Time and again the prophetic warnings were sent to a hardened and rebellious people. Reproofs, warnings, and pleadings were followed by calamities. Then would come the sackcloth and ashes of repentance, only to be followed by deeper apostasy and lower levels of wickedness.

God had chosen Israel to be a light unto all the peoples of the world. To them were entrusted the oracles of God. They were blessed by receiving the law, the covenant, and the promises. Through them God proposed that all the nations of the earth should receive the divine message. "What Abraham was in the land of his sojourn, what Joseph was in Egypt, and Daniel in the courts of Babylon, the Hebrew people were to be among the nations. They were to reveal God to man.

Israel failed signally in fulfilling the purposes of God. The nation followed after the heathen nations, and worshiped false gods. The people degraded themselves with every heathen abomination. They forsook the law of their God, and sought counsel of the spirits of devils. They set up altars to Baal and Ashtoreth. They made their children to pass through fire in the worship of Moloch. All the licentious heathen rites were practiced in the groves of Israel.

After the Babylonian captivity, idol worship was never again practiced by the children of Israel. The worship of Jehovah was restored, synagogues and schools were established. But their worship was marred by formalism and ritualism. There was an outward conformity to the will of God, but an inward poverty of spiritual grace. A great burden of rabbinical lore was rolled upon the soul of a weary people. There was no rest from the burden of sin, no peace to troubled hearts. Even the sacrifices and offerings which prefigured the Savior and symbolized salvation lost their spiritual meaning under the lifeless ministrations of priests and rabbis. The light of truth was extinguished by the formalism, the pride, and the hypocrisy of a professedly religious people. Spiritual apathy had brought decay and death to a nation destined to light and life. In the hour of the world's greatest need, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah. God sent forth His Son to be the Savior of men. Jesus came as the light of a sin-darkened world.

He was a manifestation of the love of God, a revelation of the truth of God. He was Emmanuel-God with us. Never man lived as Jesus lived; never man spoke as Jesus spoke; for He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. His mission was to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the house of sin, to deliver the world from the power of evil. Miracles were wrought.

Evil spirits trembled at His presence; death was defeated at His call. Jesus, the light of the world, had come. The hope of Israel, though dimmed by long, weary centuries of persecution and despair, had ever been the coming of the Deliverer, the Redeemer, the Savior. Every sacrificial offering prefigured the coming of the Lamb of God. Every prophetic picture was illumined by the hope of His appearing. All the light of sacred story centered in Him who was to be Ruler in Israel. And yout, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1: 11.

Israel loved darkness rather than light. The people would have welcomed a Jewish Caesar, for they rejected the lowly Jesus, the world's Redeemer. Their expectation was a kingdom of earthly grandeur, a king of regal splendor. They willingly closed their eyes to the prophecies. They cared not for the Messiah, whose mission was to "save His people from their sins." His purity they hated; His word they rejected; His love they scorned. They despised His ways and His words. They had mocked the messengers of God and stoned His prophets.

As a last opportunity God sent unto them His Son. "They will reverence My Son" (Matthew 21:37), thought the Keeper of the vineyard. But with intense hatred they sought His life. When the time was come, they nailed Him to a cross of shame.

In the gift of Jesus, God did all He could do for Israel. When they crucified the Son of God, the last thread of divine mercy for the rebellious nation was severed. As Jesus faced Gethsemane and Calvary, His heart of love reached out to Jerusalem, the center and symbol of the nation's glory. With aching heart, He exclaimed over the doomed city:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killed the prophets, and stoned them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:37, 38.

This word was the pronouncement of doom upon the Jewish nation. The leaders of Israel cried out in Pilate's judgment hall, His blood be on us, and on our children." They crucified the Lord of glory, the Author of salvation. In rejecting Jesus, they rejected all hope of salvation. The scenes of distress in the destruction of Jerusalem and the tragedy, of a wandering, homeless people are beyond the power of the historian to describe.

The Jews were rejected as a nation. But God did not cast away His people. The early Christian church was made up largely of Jews. All the apostles, the ministers of the Christian church, were Jews. Paul, "the apostle to the Gentiles," was a Jew. The Israel of faith are "chosen" because they have chosen God. But this Israel of God, to whom the promises are made, is not the nation of unbelieving Jews. The true Israel is gathered from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people by the acceptance of Jesus and salvation through His precious name.

In the parable of the householder, the Lord gave a forceful illustration of His rejection of Israel because of their rejection of Him. The kingdom of God was taken from the Jewish nation, which is numbered with the rejectors of God's grace. The Stone that smites the image and breaks in pieces the kingdoms of this world must break every nation, every people, who reject His mercy. Daniel 2:34, 35, 44; Matthew 21:44. Said the Lord: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matthew 21:43.

Modern dispensationalism denies that the kingdom of God was taken from the Jewish nation. According to this futuristic teaching, the Jewish nation will be restored, the Jews as a nation will be converted, and will have a "second chance" for salvation during a future millennial age. This teaching declares that when Jesus announced that the kingdom of God was at hand, He thereby offered to the Jews the Earthly kingdom of their expectation; but that when this offer was refused, God withdrew the offer and postponed the kingdom to a future "dispensation." It seems strange that such an error should have credence among those who believe that the judgment work is completed, that cases are decided for eternity, and rewards given and punishments meted out at the second coming of Christ. To believe the dispensational postponement theory is to abandon many of the fundamentals of the faith. In answering the fables of a future Jewish kingdom and a more favorable opportunity for salvation, our appeal must be to the Scriptures. What says the Bible in answer to the following questions?

1. Is there hope for Jews as individuals?
2. Is there hope for Israel as a nation?

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3. Will the promises made to Israel and the prophecies of her future glory be fulfilled?
4. Who are the people of Israel to whom the Scripture promises are made?
5. Will there be probationary time after the Second Coming of Christ?

Your Bible teaches that there is only one way, and one truth, and one life, and that this living way was opened to Jews and Gentiles alike when Jesus lived among men. At Calvary the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down. In Christ Jesus there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Jew nor Gentile. All are one in the faith of Jesus. The first preaching of Jesus and of His disciples was to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The apostles of the Christian church all Jews; the disciples of Jesus were Jews; the thousands converted on the Day of Pentecost were Jews; the Christian church at Jerusalem was composed of Christian Jews; and many of the converts in the Gentile cities were from among the Jews. Said Jesus: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:24.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 10:3, 6. With His nucleus of Jewish disciples and teachers, Jesus purposed to carry the gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth. Even then the witness must first be made in the city of Jerusalem, and the land of Judea.

"But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, in harmony with the divine plan, Peter preached the message of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins to the Jews assembled at Jerusalem. Three thousand souls were added to the church, and these were all Jews. Through the name of Jesus the promise of salvation that was made to Israel was fulfilled.

"For the promise," said the apostle, "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39.

"You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kingdoms of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts 3: 25, 26.

This ministry to the Jews was carried forward by all the apostles of the early church. While bringing the light of truth to the Gentiles, they did not forget their brethren in the flesh. There was no line of separation in the early church; there was no middle wall of partition. This truth is so fundamental to a right understanding of the subject of Israel that it is well to list several forceful texts that clarify this point.

"For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Ephesians 2:14.

"And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." Verse 16.

"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore you are . . . fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Verses 18 and 19.

"That the Gentiles should be fellow, heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." Ephesians 3:6.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16.

"But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." Romans 2:10.

"For there is no respect of persons with God." Verse 11.

If the Gentiles are "Fellow citizens" with the converted Jews, then both are citizens of the kingdom. If the Gentiles are "Fellow heirs, and of the same body" with the Christian Jews, then both are members of the church of Christ, and heirs of His promise. "You are all one in Christ Jesus." Any purported Gospel which divides God's dealings into dispensations, which claims that He deals differently with the Jews than with the Gentiles, is not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but is "another" and "strange" gospel, unknown to the Sacred Scriptures.

There are many precious promises which were made to the patriarch Abraham and to his seed. Not one of these promises has ever failed or ever could fail. God is faithful in fulfilling His word. The question is: Were these promises made to Israel in the flesh, or are they made to spiritual Israel, to those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life? The answer to this question is most vital, for the answer to this question is the answer to the error of dispensationalism. Again, we repeat, our appeal must be to the word of God. Let the Bible give its testimony!

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." Romans 2:28, 29.

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Romans 9:6-8.

"The children of the flesh," the hardhearted, unbelieving, gospel rejecting Jews, these are not the children of God. There is no promise of salvation, or life, or inheritance, that was ever made to anyone who rejects Jesus. The only promises ever made by the Lord were made to the children of faith. According to the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Samuel, and the prophets were "heirs" of "the righteousness which is of faith," but "these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise. God having provided something better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:39, 40.

Did Abraham look for a home in old Jerusalem, where sin and selfishness, and sorrow and suffering, were still in the land? No, the father of the faithful looked beyond this vale of tears to the New Jerusalem, the "city which bath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:10. This blessed hope of a new creation, with sin and sorrow forever past, with death and destruction not even memories, has been the hope of all the faithful of all ages of the world's history. We shall all be made perfect together. Resurrection, translation, immortality-these were the hope of Abraham, and the hope of Paul, the hope of prophets as well as of apostles. Did these men of faith look forward to an earthly kingdom of unbelieving Jews? No, indeed, for "these all died in faith, riot having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to he called their God: for He bath prepared fur them a city." Hebrews 11:13-16.

The dispensationalist looks for a future rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, and the resumption of animal sacrifices. Has he never read in the Scriptures that the entire system of Jewish ceremonial observance-the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices-were brought to an end when the Lamb of God was slain on the cross of Calvary? To bring them back is a denial of the incarnation, the death, the resurrection, and the priestly ministry of Jesus in the heavenly tabernacle. There was "one sacrifice for sins forever," and to teach a future dispensation with animal sacrifices and a human priesthood is to teach strange doctrines. Moreover, "the middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles was broken at the cross.

There is now no separation, no distinction. The Zion of Bible prophecy is spiritual Zion; the Israel to whom the promises are made is spiritual Israel; the Jerusalem to which Abraham looked forward is the heavenly Jerusalem; and the temple whose glory is pictured in prophecy is the temple of the New Jerusalem.

The Israel of God is the blood bought throng, gathered from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." There is no place in the kingdom of God for wicked and profane men. There must be a transformation of life, a change of heart, a new-birth experience. The name "Israel" illustrates this necessity for a new life in Christ Jesus. Jacob was a trickster-subtle, selfish, and scheming; cold, crafty, and calculating. Jacob had much to overcome before he could be numbered with the children of faith. What a wonderful transformation in the life of this man! Out of defeat came victory. In trial and tribulation character was born. The name of Jacob is in the roll of the mighty conquerors of the ages. Greater was he in the conquest of self than were the men who conquered empires.

The name of Jacob was changed. A new name, indicative of a new life, was given him by the angel of the Lord. The word Israel means "a God-ruled man." The Hebrew word for God is El. Jacob became a child of God and took his Father's name. Moreover, all the faithful of the ages, the overcomers, bear this same family name "Israel." All the promises of the Bible are made to the children of faith, the Israel of God.

In every age of this world's history there has been "a remnant according to the election, of grace," Even in the days of Israel's deepest apostasy there were "seven thousand men" who had not "bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Romans 11:4. These were the Israel of God within the nation of Israel. And in the days of the apostle Paul it could be said: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Romans 11:5.

It was always by grace, always by faith. This "remnant" who were true to God, who refused to bow the knee to Baal, who esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of earth, are the Israel to whom the promises are made. Said the Scriptures: "If you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29.

The Israelite tree has existed through the ages. Jesus is its life and its strength. The believers in Christ are its branches. This truth is forcefully presented by the apostle Paul in Romans 11:13-25, where he teaches that:

1. "Some" of the "natural branches" were broken off because of "unbelief."
2. Gentile branches, through an acceptance of Christ, were "grafted in among them," and with them partook "of the root and fatness of the olive tree."
3. The natural Jewish branches, "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again."*

By this grafting process-this acceptance of Christ "a remnant according to the election of grace" are gathered out of the world. These believers in Christ, these Christians, are the remnant of Israel who accept and receive the promises. "And so" by the grafting of Jews and Gentiles unto the tree of faith "all Israel shall be saved." Verse 26.

But does this mean that the dry and withered Jewish branches, which were broken off through unbelief such as King Saul, Jeroboam, Ahab, Caiaphas, and the innumerable others who rejected divine mercy-are to have another opportunity for salvation in a future dispensation? The very opposite of such a doctrine is taught by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans.

The words "and so all Israel shall be saved" are the conclusion to Paul's mighty argument that the salvation through Christ is a present salvation, and that Israel includes the saved from among the Gentiles as well as from among the Jews. The "all Israel" is the whole body of the saved-Gentiles as Jews! The words "and so" refer to the preceding verses of Roman's 11, as well as of chapters 9 and 10, and form the conclusion to the irresistible logic of the apostle that the redeemed of all ages are the Israel of God's grace who have received salvation and therefore receive the promise. Let us repeat the logic of the apostle from Romans 4 and 9, and Galatians 3.

1. To Abraham was the promise given that he should be heir of the world.
2. This promise was through the righteousness of faith and the election of grace.

3. This promise is sure, not only to Abraham, but also to his seed.
4. If we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
5. Abraham is therefore "the father of its all" and all "which are of faith" are the children of Abraham."
6. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel," but "the children of the promise are counted for the seed."
7. These faithful of the ages, Jews and Gentiles, all one body in Christ Jesus, fellow citizens and fellow heirs, are the Israel of God who receive the promised inheritance.

The apostle experienced much heaviness of heart for his kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites." They are not all Israel, which are of Israel," he declared. Romans 9:1-6. Excluded from salvation and, therefore, from the promises were all the natural descendants of Abraham, except the few who had the faith of Abraham. But there was a door of entrance into the kingdom of God for the Jews as well as for the Greeks. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall he saved." Romans 10:13. This includes Jews as well as Gentiles. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Verse 12. All may be "grafted" into the olive tree and partake of its root and fullness. All may be numbered with "Israel" if they will come to Christ through faith.

So then, who are the "all Israel" that are to be saved? The redeemed of the ages. How shall they be saved? By believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. When must they be saved? In this present, probationary time. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2.

The eternal Watcher keeps accounts with nations as well as with individuals. By their own choice they decide their destiny. Every nation has had its testing time. Successively the great empires of the past, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, were "measured by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake." "Righteousness exalts a nation." Sin brings decay, disintegration and death. There is no arbitrary sentence on the part of God. Nations, as well as individuals, accomplish their own ruin.

As it was with Egypt and Edom, so it was with Israel. God could not deal differently with Israel than with the other nations of antiquity. Israel multiplied transgressions and abominations. She debased herself below the level of the lowest of the heathen nations. Israel was bold in her wickedness, daring in her apostasy. "All day long," exclaimed Jehovah, I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Romans 10:21. But God could not and would not perpetuate evil.

Upon the last king of Judah the irrevocable sentence was pronounced: "Thus said the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Ezekiel 21:26, 27.

The crown was removed from Israel. Never again will it be restored. When He comes "whose right it is," then "the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." Daniel 7:27. It is the "saints" of God, not the natural Jews, who receive the kingdom. Those who have enthroned the Lord Jesus within *their hearts during this present, probationary time-these are the "saints," the "overcomers" who sit down with Jesus upon His throne at His coming.

What, then, of the prophecies in regard to the restoration of Israel, of her future glory, of her righteousness? God's word can never fail. His purposes are never defeated. God had only one plan and purpose for Israel-that through her the earth would be lightened with the glory of His truth. Has the plan and purpose failed? No, indeed! What the unbelieving Jews failed to do, believing Israel, under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, is gloriously accomplishing.

There were two classes of prophetic messages-first, the conditional prophecies made to Israel as a nation, and dependent upon her obedience to the commandments of God. And, second, the prophecies which pictured the triumph of God's truth, the lighting of the earth with His glory, and the gathering of His people into their eternal homeland. The conditional prophecies could not be fulfilled because the Jews broke the conditions of the covenant. We need never expect the restoration of an earthly kingdom and glory to the Jewish nation. This is the illusory hope that was held by the Jews in the time of Christ; it is the same phantom hope that is taught by the dispensationalists of our day. It is a will-o'-the-wisp that leads into the bog of error and unbelief. But the prophecies of the gathering of spiritual Israel from the north, the south, the east, and the west, and their "marching upward to heavenly Zion," the city of our God, can never fail. These are bound together with the promises of the new covenant-a covenant that is made with spiritual Israel.

Let us notice, first, one of the conditional prophecies. In Deuteronomy 28 is a long list of "blessings" and "cursing." They were conditioned upon the keeping of the commandments of God. "And it shall come to pass, thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments, that the Lord thy God will set you on high above all nations of the earth." "The Lord shall establish you an holy people unto Himself. Thou art called by the name of the Lord." Deuteronomy 28:1, 9, 10.

Holiness was always the condition of exaltation. Those who are "called by the name of the Lord" must bear the character of their Lord. With amazing accuracy the Lord pictures in this prophecy the results of disobedience. They would "be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (verse 25). They would "become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations" (verse 37); the Lord would bring against them "a nation . . . from far, . . . as swift as the eagle flies" (verse 49); they would be scattered "among all people" (verse 64). This prophecy spans the centuries to the very time when the nation with the ensign, the Roman Empire, razed the city of Jerusalem to the ground, and scattered the inhabitants of Judah into all parts of the world.

How differently the prophecies read which are dependent upon the fulfilling of the new covenant promises! Read Jeremiah 31:33 and then Hebrews 8:10; "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord. I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people."

Under this "better covenant, which was established upon better promises," all people from the least to the greatest" would know their Lord; all would be righteous. This covenant and these promises can never fail. If the ordinances of the sun, moon, and stars should fail, if heaven above can be measured, then only "the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever." Jeremiah 31:36.

This "nation," which is made up of the "seed of Israel," is "the righteous nation which keeps the truth." Isaiah 26:1 In the city of our God, the New Jerusalem, are found "the nations of them which are saved." Revelation 21:24. Those who believe and obey "enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart stands in the "holy place." Psalm 24:1, 3. The Hebrew word *goy*, (nation) has, according to Strong's Concordance, been rendered, "Gentile, heathen, nation, people." A comparison of Isaiah 9:1-3 with Matthew 4:14-16 shows that the words "nations" and "Gentiles" are used for "peoples." It is the nation of the saved, of those who keep the truth, who live forever in the presence of our God in His glorious kingdom. Jews and Gentiles, without distinction of race, make up the nation of the saved. Faith in Christ is their title to citizenship. Says the apostle Peter: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. That you should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

The book of Isaiah, the prophet of hope, is a panoramic picture of the glorious salvation of our God in the gathering of spiritual Israel from all parts of the earth. "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. Fear not: for I am with you: I will bring your seed from the East, and gather them from the West. I will say to the North, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back and bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; even everyone that is called by My name." Isaiah 43:3-7.

"Behold, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." Isaiah 49:12.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. My people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever." Isaiah 60:3, 21.

"And you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Isaiah 62:2, 3.

How does the Lord accomplish this gathering of the remnant of Israel to His holy mountain? His plan to lighten the earth with the glory of His truth through Israel the nation failed the first time. How does He accomplish this the second time? The prophecy of Isaiah 11 is very explicit. "And there shall come forth I rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

This gathering of the remnant of Israel, when the Lord sets "His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people," is not a far-off, futuristic, golden age gathering. It is a very present gathering which will be completed before the Second Coming of Jesus. The coming forth of the "rod out of the stem of Jesse," the coming of the "Branch," was the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, with His ministry for the salvation of men. Paul, in Romans 9:24-28, quotes the prophecies of Hosea 2:23 and Isaiah 10:21, 22 as being fulfilled in the gathering of Jews and Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel at this present time. This carrying of the gospel of salvation to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people is the very work which is finished and cut "short in righteousness" before Jesus appears the second time. He comes the second time to resurrect and translate and make immortal those who have accepted His salvation. He comes the second time to destroy the wicked, not to give them another probation.

That the gathering of Israel is completed in the resurrection of the righteous at the Second Coming of Christ is clearly shown from the thirty-seventh chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel. The valley of dry bones is a representation 'of "the whole house of Israel." What is the hope of God's people?

"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. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall put My spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one Shepherd. And they shall dwell in the land forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them. My tabernacle also shall be with them: Yes, I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

At the resurrection the righteous put on incorruption and immortality. At the resurrection the righteous are taken to the mansions Jesus is preparing for them. At the resurrection, death loses its sting, the grave its victory. Beyond the resurrection there is no period of probation. Only the righteous have part in this first resurrection. The wicked have their part in the second death, after the second resurrection.

The hope of Israel and the gathering of Israel is fulfilled in that glad day when the Lord brings His people out of their graves. His people are the righteous of all the ages, "the righteous nation which keeps the truth." The apostle Paul preached "the hope of Israel" in the "resurrection" from the dead. Acts 28:20; 23:6; 24:15. This was "the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." Acts 26:6, 7. The resurrection is the hope of Israel, the only hope that has ever been offered to the children of men.

A forlorn hope indeed is the hope of a future nation-wide acceptance of the Messiah. There will be a gathering of Israel, but it will be in the heavenly Canaan. Not in old Jerusalem, with its sin, sorrow, and suffering; but in the New Jerusalem, with its everlasting peace, will the Israel of God be gathered. There will be found those who are numbered in the nation of the saved. The Israel of God, black and white, bond

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and free, Jew and Gentile, will come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their faces, with the song of salvation upon their lips. 'We're marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.'

Glorious entrance into the city of God! Over the gates are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Revelation 21: 12. There are no Gentile gates to the New Jerusalem! The Gentiles have become fellow citizens and fellow heirs with the believing Jews. Gates of character are these gates of pearl.

This is God's Zionist movement. This is the Bible truth on the subject of Israel. This truth is a shield and buckler against the deception of a more favourable opportunity for salvation in a supposed "golden age." God's truth harmonises with the other fundamentals of the faith found in the Bible.

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