**Middle East Peace**

**How? When?**

**Chapter 1**

**Your House Left Desolate (1)**

**The House of Israel Left Desolate at Christ’s First Coming**

*Therefore*, *indeed*, *I send you prophets*, *wise men*, *and scribes*: *some of them you will kill and crucify*, *and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city*,

*that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth*, *from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah*, *whom you murdered between the temple and the altar*.

*Assuredly*, *I say to you*, *all these things will come upon this generation*.

*O Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem*, *the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her*! *How often I wanted to gather your children together*, *as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings*, *but you were not willing*!

*See*! *Your house is left to you desolate*;

*for I say to you*, *you shall see Me no more till you say*, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD*!” (**Matthew 23:34-39**)

When God called Israel out of Egypt under Moses, one central purpose was in view. The nation, God’s firstborn son (**Exodus 4:22**, **23**), had been called out of Egypt to enter another land — a land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — and exercise *the rights of the firstborn*, *the rights of primogeniture*, *in that land* (**Exodus 19:5**, **6**).

And *everything* that has occurred within Israeli history down through the years, from Moses’ day until the present day, has had its roots within *Israel*’*s calling as God*’*s firstborn and that which Israel has done relative to this calling*.

A theocracy, with God’s firstborn son realizing the rights of primogeniture within that theocracy, was in the offing during Moses’ day. But, because of *unbelief*, the people refused to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea and conquer the inhabitants, as God had commanded.

And, as a result, the Israelites entering the land and realizing a theocracy within the land was delayed until that entire unbelieving and accountable generation (those twenty years old and above [**Numbers 14:29**]) had passed off the scene.

As well, because Moses subsequently struck the rock in **Numbers 20:8-11**, in direct disobedience to God’s command, he was also numbered with that generation and was not allowed to lead the Israelites into the land. The Lord, instead, subsequently appointed Joshua for this task (**Numbers 20:12**; **27:12-14**; **Deuteronomy 34:1-12**).

Thus, once all those having a part in the unbelief exhibited at Kadesh-Barnea had died, along with Moses, Joshua was allowed to lead the nation into the land. And the theocracy, which had come into existence at Mt. Sinai thirty-nine years earlier when *the Glory of the Lord “filled the tabernacle”* (*Exodus 40:34*), first existed in the land under Joshua’s leadership and lasted for about eight hundred years.

The theocracy lasted until the time of the Babylonian captivity, when *the Glory departed from the Temple* (**Ezekiel 8:4**, **6-9**; **9:3**; **10:4**, **18**; **11:22**, **23**).

The theocracy though, throughout the centuries of its existence — because of continual disobedience on the son’s part — never came anywhere near the heights that God’s calling for His son involved.

Then, when Christ came about six hundred years following the Babylonian captivity and the end of the theocracy, a remnant had returned to the land (a return that had begun under Zerubbabel over five centuries earlier). And though a remnant was in the land at this time, forming an Israeli nation, *there was no restoration of the theocracy*, *for there was no Glory*.

The Glory would not return until following Israel’s repentance and the restoration of the complete nation to the land (cf. **Ezekiel 36:16-38**; *39:21-29*; **43:1-5**).

The Times of the Gentiles

The Times of the Gentiles has to do with *that period of time during Man*’*s Day when the Gentiles hold the scepter*, when the Gentiles exercise control in the government and in world affairs.

The Times of the Gentiles has to do with *that period of time during which there is no Glory in the camp of Israel* (though there may be an existing Temple); or, another way of stating the matter, *this period has to do with the time lying between the departure of and the subsequent restoration of the Glory*.

The Times of the Gentiles was running its course when Christ was here the first time. Rome was the world power, and Rome not only possessed governmental control over the remnant in the land but also over the Jewish people scattered throughout the Roman world of that day.

And, though a Temple existed in the land, *there was no Glory*, as had filled the Tabernacle during Moses’ day and had filled the Temple during Solomon’s day. *Thus*, *there was no theocracy*.

Israel had been called into existence to exercise governmental power and control over the Gentile nations, for purposes involving God’s blessings (**Genesis 12:1-3**; **22:17**, **18**; **Exodus 19:5**, **6**). Israel was to dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy, at the head of the nations; and God was not only to bless Israel but God was to bless the nations of the earth *through* Israel. All spiritual blessings were to flow *to and through Israel* in this manner.

But events transpired that resulted in *a complete reversal* of the position that Israel had been called to occupy relative to the nations. The Gentiles had been allowed to invade the land of Israel and take the Jewish people captive (the northern kingdom by the Assyrians about 722 B.C., and the southern kingdom by the Babylonians about 605 B.C. [beginning the Times of the Gentiles]).

And centuries later, when Christ was upon earth, the Gentiles still exercised control over world affairs, something that has continued down to the present day and time.

Why had this been allowed to occur? Why had matters been allowed to go in this direction, with the Gentiles exercising governmental control after this fashion — control that included both *the Jewish people* and *their land*? Why had God dealt with Israel in this manner?

And not only was Israel under Gentile dominion when Christ came the first time, but the nation, in its unbelief and disobedience, wanted nothing to do with the One announced by the wise men to be their King; nor did they want anything to do with the proffered kingdom.

Why? After all, acceptance would have freed them from Rome’s control and Gentile dominion in general. But, in spite of this, *there was only rejection on Israel*’*s part*.

1) The Offer and Reoffer of the Kingdom

God went to great lengths in both *an offer of the kingdom preceding Christ*’*s crucifixion* (an offer lasting about three and one-half years) and *a reoffer of the kingdom following Christ*’*s resurrection and ascension* (a subsequent offer lasting about thirty additional years). But Israel rejected the proffered kingdom both times.

*In the first offer of the kingdom*, the Jewish people, in their rejection, went so far as to crucify the One making the offer. The religious leaders, even though they knew Christ’s identity — One who had come from God, *the Heir* of the vineyard — were not going to have this Man reign over them. Thus, they not only cast Him out of the vineyard but slew Him (cf. **Matthew 21:33ff**; **John 3:2**).

Then, *in the reoffer of the kingdom*, Israel’s religious leaders reacted to the message the same way they had reacted in the original offer. They began to threaten, beat, imprison, and even kill the ones proclaiming the message (cf. **Acts 5:40-42**; **7:54-60**; **8:1-3**; **9:24**, **29**).

They still were not going to have *the Heir* of the vineyard reign over them (which would, during the reoffer of the kingdom, have necessitated His return from heaven [cf. **Acts 3:19-21**; **7:56**, **57**]).

The entire nation, save “*a remnant according to the election of grace*” (**Romans 11:5**), followed the downward course set by its religious leaders; and this resulted in God eventually ceasing His dealings with Israel (about 62 A.D.) for the remainder of what can only be seen as a new dispensation (no longer a Jewish dispensation, but now a Christian dispensation [moving from the typology of **Genesis 23** to that of **Genesis 24**]).

Jerusalem was then destroyed by the Gentile world power of that day (by Rome, in 70 A.D.), and the Jewish people were subsequently scattered among and left at the mercy of the Gentile nations.

(Israel was set aside in 33 A.D. at the time of Christ’s crucifixion, at the end of the sixty-ninth week in Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy [**Daniel 9:24-27**]. God, so to speak, stopped the clock marking off time in the prophecy, and set the nation aside until time in the prophecy again resumes [seven years remain in the prophecy, which will be fulfilled during the coming seven-year Tribulation].

Then, fifty-three days later, on the day of Pentecost, God called into existence *the one new man* “*in Christ*,” to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected, which had been taken from Israel [**Matthew 21:43**; **1 Peter 2:9**, **10**] — the proffered kingdom, *the heavenly sphere of the kingdom*, not the earthly sphere [the kingdom covenanted to David, which can never be taken from Israel].

And though Israel had been set aside, with the kingdom taken from Israel and *a new man* called into existence to be the recipient of this kingdom, God still dealt with Israel in a special and particular way relative to the kingdom for about the next thirty years, reoffering the kingdom to the nation.

As *the Twelve* and *the Seventy* had been called to carry the message to Israel during the original offer [**Matthew 10:1ff**; **Luke 10:1ff**], *the one new man* “*in Christ*” was called to carry the message to Israel during the reoffer [**Acts 2:14ff**; **3:12ff**; **4:8ff**; **5:12ff**; **6:8ff**].

Aside from recognizing Israel’s position as God’s firstborn son, along with a saved generation of Jews remaining in existence beyond the events of Calvary [to which a reoffer of the kingdom could be made], attempting any explanation of the “why” of the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel [as seen in the parables of the marriage festivities in **Matthew 22:1-14**], would lead one nowhere. Scripture simply deals with the matter as something that occurred. No explanation is given; nor is one needed.)

2) Blessings and Curses

But even though Israel had been set aside, allowing God to deal with a separate people for a dispensation (those forming *the one new man* “*in Christ*”), principles established by God relative to Israel and the nation’s calling still remained in effect. And these principles centered on *blessings* and *curses*, not only for Israel but for the Gentiles as well. Israel, because of disobedience, would fall into the latter category (curses); and the Gentiles, depending upon their attitude toward and treatment of Israel, could fall into either category (blessings or curses).

(God, through Moses, had outlined this entire matter in graphic and minute detail to Israel after He called the nation out of Egypt. There are two long chapters in the revelation given through Moses — **Leviticus 26**; **Deuteronomy 28** — where God went to great lengths to relate that which would occur if the Jewish people were *obedient* to His commandments or that which, on the other hand, would occur if they were *disobedient*.)

Israel had chosen *the latter path*. Israel had been disobedient to the Lord’s commandments. And, true to His Word, God had allowed Gentile powers to come into the land and uproot the Jewish people (**Leviticus 26:33**; **Deuteronomy 28:64**).

And throughout the remainder of that dispensation and the ensuing dispensation, during the time when Israel was out of favor with God, one thing could not occur — the Gentile nations could not be blessed in the manner that God had intended by and through Israel’s calling, for *these blessings had to flow by and through Israel dwelling in the land within a theocracy*.

Blessings of this nature would have to wait for a time when Israel was once again in favor with God. They would have to wait for Israel’s future restoration, which would, of necessity, have to include the restoration of the theocracy to Israel.

The picture is that of *God*’*s firstborn son*, *Israel* — whom the Father had called into existence to be the channel through which He would bless all the Gentile nations — being out of favor with the Father (through disobedience). As a result, chastisement has befallen this son, with the Father allowing the Gentile nations to subdue and control His son, resulting not only in the son being chastened by the Father but also in the numerous blessings that God had reserved for the Gentile nations being withheld from these same nations.

However, some of the Gentiles (nations and individuals) — not really understanding that which has happened — have brought curses upon themselves by seeking to help God chasten His son.

. . . *And I will curse him who curses you* . . . . (**Genesis 12:3a**)

. . . *I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy*.

*And I am very sore displeased with the heathen* [the Gentiles] *that are* *at ease*: *for I was but a little displeased* [with my son], *and they helped forward the affliction* [anti-Semitic actions of the Gentiles]. (**Zechariah 1:14b**, **15** [KJV])

Others (nations and individuals), on the other hand — some understanding, some not understanding that which has happened — have brought blessings upon themselves by being a friend to the Father’s son (though not the abundance of blessings reserved for the Gentiles, with Israel in favor with God).

*I will bless those who bless you* . . . . (**Genesis 12:3a**)

 3) Recognizing Israel’s Place in God’s Economy

The entire world conditions down through the centuries has revolved around God’s plans and purposes surrounding Israel in the preceding respect —i.e., *His dealings with Israel relative to the nation*’*s calling*, *and His resultant dealings with the Gentile nations relative to Israel*’*s calling*.

*Everything in this respect has revolved around and continues to revolve around Israel. ISRAEL ALONE IS THE CENTERPIECE*.

And, apart from the Gentile nations of the world occupying their proper place in God’s plans and purposes surrounding Israel, *there cannot even be a beginning of a solution to any one of the problems that confront these same nations*.

*That*’*s how IMPORTANT the nation of Israel is in the affairs of world history* (**Deuteronomy 32:8;Isaiah 43:1-10**; **Acts 17:26**, **27**).

Nor can that which has happened to Israel over the centuries — from the brickyards in Egypt to the crematoriums in Auschwitz, typified by the ever-burning bush in Arabia during Moses’ day, or the three Hebrew men in a furnace heated seven times hotter than normal during Daniel’s day — be explained in any way other than that which is set forth in Scripture relative to the nation’s calling.

The Father is *chastening His son*, *because of disobedience*. And, at times, the Gentile nations have stepped in and “*helped forward the affliction* [the chastisement],” *something which God has allowed in order to effect His purpose for uprooting His people from their land and scattering them among the nations* (though these same Gentile nations have paid or will pay dearly for their part in the matter [**Genesis 12:3**]).

As long as God’s son continues unrepentant, the chastisement will continue. And not only will it continue, but in the latter days, through the Gentiles seeking to help “*forward the affliction*,” conditions will become so tumultuous that “*unless those days were shortened*, *no flesh would be saved*” (**Matthew 24:22a**).

But in That Day

But in that day, God is going to intervene in man’s vain attempts to help chasten His son. God is going to supernaturally shorten those days, and He will do this for the sake of His son.

And it will be following this time that all of the past chastisement will bear fruit. The son will ultimately be brought to the place of repentance, allowing God to send the Deliverer, restore a converted Jewish people to their land, bring the Times of the Gentiles to an end, and restore the theocracy to Israel.

There is that which *Scripture has to say* about the matter, and there is that which *man may think or say* about the matter. *The two are worlds apart*.

The Creator has stated the matter in no uncertain terms, and He has stated the matter to both *inform* and *warn* His son. *Obedience results in blessings*, *and disobedience results in curses*.

God’s disobedient son *must* be brought to the place of repentance. *Only then* can God bless Israel and the Gentile nations through Israel.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s books, Israel—From Death to Life and Distant Hoofbeats.)