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| **"Never Again!" or "Yes, Again!"**By Arlen L. Chitwood**Foreword** This book is about Israel and the nations in the Middle East — a subject which has increasingly attracted the attention of many of today’s Bible teachers.  And an interest in and study about Israel and the nations is exactly as conditions should exist, for we can only be living very near the end of the present dispensation, portending the nearness of events which must transpire on the earth before Man’s 6,000-year Day ends (events concluding Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy, *the time of Jacob’s trouble*) and the Lord’s 1,000-year Day begins (the time into which Daniel’s prophecy leads, *the Messianic Era*).But there is *a problem*, *A MAJOR PROBLEM!*Numerous Bible teachers, rather than remaining with the Word, teaching that which the Word clearly states about Israel and the nations, often find themselves taking liberties with the Word, teaching things completely contrary to the Word.  And numerous Christians, who should know better, but don’t, are being misled on every hand.The crux of the matter can be set forth in a twofold manner, asking two interrelated but antithetical questions:*1)  Is the present existing nation of Israel the result of God, since May 14, 1948, progressively fulfilling any or all of His numerous promises to one day restore the Jewish people to their land?**2)  Or, is this present existing nation to be seen and understood as something else, something completely separate from the fulfillment of any of God’s promises to one day restore His people to their land?*And how a person views this matter is *no small thing*.  Rather, this is something *MAJOR, VERY MAJOR!*As will be clearly shown throughout this book, the correct Biblical position can only be seen in *the second part of the preceding*, not in the first part, though that seen in the first part is far more widely held and taught throughout Christendom by those dealing with the subject than that seen in the second part.If a person sees and teaches that the existence of an Israeli nation in the Middle East has resulted from God, during the past sixty-nine years, progressively restoring the Jewish people to their land in accordance with any or all of His numerous promises to one day do so, *he can only do this in the face of a huge volume of Scripture, clearly telling him that he has gone in a completely wrong direction.*(Numerous parts of this “huge volume of Scripture” are dealt with in different chapters of this book.  References to corresponding Scripture, not dealt with in this book, can be found in Chapter VIII, “Seventy Years, Four Hundred Ninety Years,” in the author’s book, *Israel — What Does the Future Hold?*  Or, see the author’s article by the same title.)A section of Scripture regarding Israel and the nations which many Bible teachers turn to as a base section in order to teach the things being taught is Ezek. 37:1-14.  And they, more often than not, find themselves doing strange things with these fourteen verses. *They invariably interpret the Lord’s Own interpretation in verses 11-14 (an interpretation of Israel’s restoration seen in vv. 1-10).*  *And they not only interpret the interpretation but they do this relative to current events.*They, through this means, attempt to see and teach that the present existing nation of Israel, at least after some fashion (different Bible teachers teach different things), is either a fulfillment or a beginning fulfillment of the restoration set forth in this chapter.Then, error of this nature *will always negatively affect an individual’s understanding of related Scripture*, *for that seen in related Scripture must then be made to align with the previous error.*  In this case, contextually, an erroneous understanding of Ezek. 37 throws a person completely off on any correct understanding of the following two chapters (38, 39).This though is only part of something *MUCH LARGER.*  Only three chapters from Ezekiel are being referenced, but Scripture related to that dealt with in these three chapters can be found throughout Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.  And continuing to bring related Scripture elsewhere in line with previous error can only eventually result in large parts of *the whole of prophetic Scripture being skewed, often beyond recognition.*But, to illustrate the point, note just the three chapters under discussion, seeing what going wrong in Ezek. 37 does to a central area of interpretation in the succeeding two chapters (38, 39).Events in the latter two chapters, to maintain the erroneous interpretation in chapter 37, must then be seen occurring during a time when they cannot possibly occur (during Man’s Day) and involving a people which they can’t possibly involve (the present Israeli nation), for the restoration seen occurring in chapter 37 is *the same restoration* referenced in chapters 38, 39 (38:8, 11, 12; 39:9ff).And there is more, far more, in just these two chapters — things which are simply being glossed over, made to fit the erroneous interpretation in chapter 37 (*ref*. Chapters XVIII-XX in this book).And that would somewhat illustrate the existing problem, which, far more often than not, results from error being taught by Bible teachers who deal with the subject.  *Sound exegesis, paying attention to exactly what the text states, comparing Scripture with Scripture, allowing Scripture to interpret itself, is simply thrown to the winds.*The remainder of this foreword relates the only recourse to correct the existing situation.  But, for the most part though, matters have moved beyond the point where individuals would be able to or would even consider correction.  Many would not possess the necessary Biblical foundation to make corrections even if they wanted to do so.  Many would be too proud to do so.  Then many would have to re-vamp their entire ministry, re-doing sermons, written material, etc.Few can or will do any of the preceding.  But there are, at times, individuals — one here and one there — who will look at the matter, study it out in the light of Scripture, and make the necessary corrections.So, what does one do when finding himself in a situation of this nature?  He simply does what he should have done in the beginning, which would have prevented the existing situation.  *He simply follows that which the Word has to say, allowing the Word to make corrections for him.*Note, in this respect, two verses out of the second chapter in John’s gospel:    “And there were set there six waterpots of stone…Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water.  And they filled them up to the brim” (John 2:6a, 7).The preceding quoted verses are taken from the first of eight signs in John’s gospel.  The complete sign (2:1-11) foreshadows that future time following Israel’s national repentance, salvation, and restoration to their land *when God again takes Israel as His wife (an adulterous, divorced wife restored).*This sign points to events which will occur *on* *the third day* through one means of reckoning time (2:1), or *on* t*he seventh day* through another means (1:29, 35, 43; 2:1).  Both culminate *at* *the same time* — *that time to which the sign of the Sabbath points* (Ex. 31:13-17), seen in the initial, foundational structure in Gen. 1:1-2:3, upon which the whole of Scripture rests.  Both culminate *at* *the end of Man’s Day, in the Lord’s Day, at the end of 6,000 years, in the seventh 1,000-year period, in the Messianic Era* (*ref*. Appendix II in this book).This first sign in John’s gospel foreshadows events which will occur not only following all seven seals of the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five being broken but, as well, following the completion of all the judgments connected with these seals being broken.This will be necessary because this scroll contains God’s redemptive terms for the inheritance (that territory [the earth] presently under Satan’s dominion and control, which is to come under Christ’s dominion and control).  And that foreshadowed by the marriage in John 2:1-11 is part and parcel with the redemption of the inheritance.This takes matters to the time not only following Christ’s return at the end of the Tribulation but following that time when a repentant and converted Israel will have been regathered from the nations and restored to her land.  *At this time, Gentile world power will come against Israel, be destroyed, and complete all the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll* (which have to do with the time and events seen in Ezek. 37-39).The material in this foreword though is not about the overall nature of the first sign in John’s gospel.  Rather, it is about a vital teaching drawn from a statement in the sign: *“Fill the waterpots with water.”*And the material is being used and presented in this manner to illustrate “the why” of an existing problem in Christendom.  The waterpots are not being filled with Water drawn from the Well, at least, *NOT with pure Water.*  And all too often they are being filled with things which have no connection or association with the Water in view.**Drawing from the Account**Jesus and His disciples had been invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee.  Sometime following their arrival, the wedding party ran out of wine.  And Jesus set about to rectify the situation by commanding that the servants fill an existing “six waterpots of stone” with “water” (waterpots holding “two or three firkins apiece” [about ten to twenty gallons]).Then note something and note it well!  The preceding is *WHAT* the servants were to do.  On their part, nothing preceded and nothing followed.  They were simply *to FILL THE WATERPOTS WITH ”WATER,” and that was ALL they were to do.*Action beyond that point was entirely out of their hands.  *DIVINE ACTION ALONE* *FOLLOWED.* *It was Christ Who then continued the work, taking the water which had been poured into the six waterpots, changing the water to wine* (v. 8).And this wine *was not just any wine.*  It was “the good wine,” which had been “kept…until now” (v. 10).This could only have been a type wine which man cannot make today, evidently similar to the type wine which man could have made prior to the Flood, but could no longer make following the Flood (because of changed atmospheric conditions produced by that which resulted in the Flood [*cf*. Gen. 9:20, 21; Acts 2:15]).But, more particularly, because of that which the sign foreshadowed (events regarding Israel on the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period), this could only have been the type wine which will be available during the future Messianic Era (*cf*. Isa. 25:6; Joel 2:22; 3:17, 18).(For differences in wine which could have, can, and will be made during these three different periods of time, refer to Chapter IX, “The Days of Noah,” in the author’s book, *Prophecy on Mount Olivet*;  refer also to Chapter VI, “The Wedding Festivities,” in the author’s book, *Signs in John’s Gospel*.)**Water**“Water” is used in Scripture referencing *cleansing*, pointing, for example, to great spiritual truths seen in the Levitical priesthood in the camp of Israel (bathing of the priests, the brazen laver in the courtyard of the Tabernacle [Ex. 29:4; 30:17-21; 40:12]) and in Christ’s present ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, as depicted by “water” in John 13:2-17.  And, correspondingly, Christ’s present high priestly ministry is in view through that seen in the way John opens his first epistle (1:1-2:2).“Water” is also used in a metaphorical respect referring to *the* *Word*.Note Eph. 5:25-27 in this respect (*cf*. Titus 3:5):“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it;That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;  but that it should be holy and without blemish.”First though, there is the symbolism of *the six earthen vessels into which the water was/is to be placed.*  “Six” is *man’s number*, and man was created in the beginning, on the sixth day, from a piece of the earth which God took and used as He formed man.Then, the symbolism seen in Christ’s command to the servants at the wedding in Cana in John 2:7, having to do with filling the six earthen vessels with “Water,” symbolizes a filling with *the Word.*Thus, the earthen vessels into which the Water, the Word, was/is to be placed *can only symbolize man, into which that symbolized by the Water is to be placed.*And it is not just any man which would be in view.  *Saved man alone* can be in view, for only saved man has a saved human spirit into which the Word can be placed, can be received.  That which is spiritual (the Word) simply cannot be placed/received into that which has no connection with spiritual matters, particularly as seen in the text — the earthen vessels *filled* “up to the brim.”*One (saved man) is completely incompatible with the other (unsaved man).* One is living, the other is dead (spiritually).  An individual *MUST* pass “from death unto life” (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) before that seen in the symbolism of John 2:6, 7 can occur in his life.  *UNTIL THEN*, everything is foreign and foolishness to such an individual (I Cor. 2:9-14).Now, note again that *ONE THING* and *ONE THING ONLY* is to be placed in the earthen vessels.  And, these earthen vessels, as seen in that from which this teaching is drawn, are to be *FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH WATER, WITH THE WORD*.It is not the Word plus something, it is *THE WORD ALONE!*The Word is the only thing living, completely compatible with and forming nourishment and sustenance for one’s spiritual life.  All else is non-living, incompatible with, and can furnish no nourishment for one’s spiritual life, only for his natural life.Thus, if one wants to feed the spiritual man, it *MUST* be done by an intake of that which is itself spiritual — *the God-breathed Word, given through the instrumentality of the Spirit.*Or, on the other hand, if an individual wants to feed the natural, *anything other than the Word will suffice.*With the preceding in view, note how much of that being proclaimed to and written for Christians today — particularly what can often be found on so-called Christian web sites — falls into the category of the latter (something other than the Word) and not the former (the Word), *material that CAN NEVER feed the spiritual man.*And this has been occurring for years, for decades.  Is it any wonder that we have a generation of Christians filling the Churches of the land who can’t tell their right hand from their left in a spiritual respect?A generation of Christians is on hand whose lives are filled, not with the Word, but with about everything but the Word.  They don’t know the Word, leaving them unable to deal with matters as instructed in Isa. 8:20.“To the law and to the testimony;  if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”And the reason that they can’t do this, leaving them an easy prey for the cults and about anything else that comes along, is *because individuals whom God has placed in charge of the flock throughout the dispensation have, over the years, particularly during the latter years, not followed the command in II Tim. 4:2:*“Preach the Word…”The waterpots have, over the years, been filled with *something other than Water.*Those to whom the flock was entrusted in time past have “sown the wind,” with Christian leadership today, in many instances, negatively affected and following suit.And Christians in the world today, near the end of the present dispensation, are reaping the end result.  They are reapin*g the only thing which could be reaped*, “the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7).**Wine**But, let’s look at the other side of the matter in order to complete the picture of that seen in Jesus’ actions at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.Once Jesus’ instructions had been carried out, once the waterpots had been filled with Water, He then changed the Water to Wine.  And, again, *not just any Wine*, but “the best Wine.”Now, note a few things and note them well!*THE* *ONE AND ONLY THING* which the servants at the wedding were instructed to do was “fill the waterpots with Water.”  And that was it!  That was all!  They were not to go beyond this point!Once they had filled the waterpots as instructed, they were to step aside.  *They had done as instructed, and there was nothing more for them to do.  Actually, there was nothing more that they could do.* Then, bringing matters over into that being foreshadowed, the Lord’s servants today have been told to do *ONE THING ALONE* in the preceding respect:  “Fill the waterpots with Water”  “Proclaim the Word…” (any reproving, rebuking, exhorting, as seen in this verse [II Tim. 4:2], is to be done, over time, *through proclaiming the Word*).*Moving beyond that point is to be left entirely in the Lord’s hands, as the Spirit takes the proclaimed Word and effects results, changes the Water to Wine.*And it has to be *THE WORD ALONE* which is to be proclaimed, not the Word plus something, or something other than the Word.The Spirit simply *DOES NOT and CANNOT use that which is not Water, which is not the Word, to bring about changes.*  *He DOES NOT/CANNOT use that which is non-living to deal with that which is living.**The Spirit uses THE LIVING WORD ALONE to deal with individuals, either effecting life or nourishing and sustaining a life which has already been effected.* |