

**IS ISRAEL'S RESTORATION
STILL A SIGN OF THE LORD'S RETURN
and
CAN WE STILL ACCEPT 1948 AS A FULFILLMENT
OF EZEKIEL 36, 37?
All Rights Reserved**

A
Paper
Presented
at the
**DALLAS-FORT WORTH
CONFERENCE AND COLLOQUIUM
ON
BIBLE PROPHECY**
December 1-3, 1992

By
James (Jim) Combs
Editor of the Baptist Bible Tribune
and The Baptist Preacher
P.O. Box 309
Springfield, Missouri 65801

**IS ISRAEL'S RESTORATION STILL A SIGN OF THE LORD'S RETURN
AND
CAN WE STILL ACCEPT 1948 AS A FULFILLMENT OF EZEKIEL 36, 37?**

By
James O. Combs, D. Mm. Litt. D.
(All Rights Reserved)

INTRODUCTION

In the light of the literally earthshaking events now occurring in Asia, Europe and Africa, changing forever the Post World War II status quo the time has come for a thorough reevaluation and restatement of biblical prophetic truth, as it relates to the end times.

Political developments over these final years of the Twentieth century have both confirmed and brought into question much of what we prophecy speakers have been saying during the 1900s.

The unanticipated rapid collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics into a multiplicity of smaller nations, although Russia is still the largest country in the world, necessitates a restudy of the Gog and Magog prophecies of Ezekiel 38, 39.

The approaching culmination of a de facto United States of Western Europe, a dream cherished by John Foster Dulles in the American Eisenhower era, demands a new thorough study of eschatological thought on the final stages of Western, Greco-Roman civilization, as described by the Old Testament prophet Daniel and the New Testament prophet and apostle John in the Apocalypse.

Certainly, the recent Middle East War, a response to the military and imperial designs of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, has relevance to the ancient prophecies of the Scriptures about Babylon and other nations surrounding the land of Israel. He is still in power in 1992.

Israel itself, still technically at war with certain Arab nations, remains perched precariously on the western edge of the Asian continent, arguing, negotiating, reasoning with America and with her Arab neighbors, unsure about what the long term future may be. One amazing outcome of the recent war has been the ongoing dialogue with Arab neighbors about their mutual future, talks which thus far have produced millions of words and practically no action.

With these concepts in the background and with the overarching truth of the prophetic word ever paramount in our thinking, the purpose of this paper is to explore and discuss some of the major prophecies concerning Israel in the end times, and to raise anew the question as to whether or not eschatologists have been on target in focusing on the modern restoration of Israel as being, in part, a direct fulfillment of Ezekiel 37's vision of the valley of dry bones.

If some of you are of that theological genre who believe that no specific signs exist of the Rapture of the Saints and that Israel's present status is not to be considered eschatologically significant, I promise not to hector you, nor to claim that we who find much prophetic fulfillment of prophecy related to Israel today, constitute an elite spiritual cognoscenti. We are students together. Let us learn!

This paper will focus on three primary areas: first, Christ's Predictions about Israel's future; second, Ezekiel's Prophecies about Israel's restoration; and third, America's Place in Israel's past, present, and future.

I. CHRIST'S PREDICTIONS ABOUT ISRAEL'S FUTURE

I draw your attention to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 21:20-24:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation there of is nigh.

Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into.

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

And THEY SHALL FALL BY THE EDGE OF THE SWORD, AND SHALL BE LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS: AND JERUSALEM SHALL BE TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES, UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED."

Few would dispute that these words uttered by Christ in about 30 A.D., shortly before His crucifixion, were literally fulfilled some 40 years later when the Roman general Titus besieged, conquered and destroyed the metropolis of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. From then on throughout this Dispensation, successive non-Jewish, Gentile regimes have "trodden down" the city, beginning with the Romans and later the "Byzantines," to be followed by a series of Muslim religio- political powers for more than a thousand years with the exception of the ninety year era of the European Crusaders and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem eight centuries ago.

This went on until the winter of 1917-18 when General Allenby marched into Jerusalem and the British Empire began a mandate, later endorsed by the League of Nations, over the Holy Land.

Even the birth of the modern state of Israel in 1948 did not include the ancient Holy City under its control, until 1967 and the Six Day War.

And even yet, the Muslims hold sway over the Solomonic-Herodian temple area.

Since Luke's summary of Christ's Olivet Discourse is not set forth in direct chronological order, but arranged topically, the words concerning the FIG TREE and THE GENERATION THAT SHALL NOT PASS AWAY TILL ALL BE FULFILLED, appear after the profound pronouncement of Luke chapter 21:27,

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory," a description of the glorious appearing, as in II Thessalonians 1:7-10.

Notice carefully verses 29-32:

"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves, that summer is now high at hand.

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled."

We are well aware that many solid dispensational Bible scholars view the word generations, (genea-Gk) as indicating the family, race or people of Israel. Thus, as explained by Lawrence O. Richards, "Jesus is here promising the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people until the time of the time of the end foretold by Old Testament prophets." An alternate view is also suggested by Richards, "This generation as a class is unbelieving and perverse" (Mt. 23:36; Luke 17:25), as in the case of the Jews who rejected Christ or in the historical fact of persistent unbelief throughout human history. Both concepts have wide acceptance.

However, commonly taught among many premillennial and dispensational scholars and students is the belief that genea here means a people alive during a specific and somewhat definable time period. The word occurs forty-two times in the New Testament and can be interpreted in the light of each passage's context.

Undoubtedly, the term genea can be understood as applying to people living over a span of time, as is evident from a careful examination of Matthew one, where the Hebrew and Davidic ancestry of Christ is traced over a period of nearly 2,000 years.

Look at Matthew 1:1:

"The book of the generation (geneos-Gk) of Jesus Christ ... the son of David, the son of Abraham

We shall not here read these ancestral names, but focus, if you please on verse seventeen.

"For all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon to Christ are fourteen generations."

Now the interesting fact about this in the light of biblical chronology is that three different over all time periods are indicated, even as the life spans of the individuals listed likewise varied in length.

From Abraham to David (a very general expression, since Matthew may be referring to either a time of birth in each case or to the period during which they lived) is a time span of about 180 years. Bear in mind that Ussher's chronology may or may not be exact and accurate, to the specific year.

Dividing 14 into 980 results in a "generation" of 70 years. This compares with David L. Cooper's assertion that a - generation could mean a human life span, as in Psalm 90:10:

"The days of our years are three score years and ten: and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow ..."

Cooper believed a generation was therefore from 70 to 80 years in maximum length.

Now notice that the period between David and the carrying away to Babylon was approximately 420 years, from say, 1026 when the Davidic Kingdom was at its peak and before Absalom's rebellion, to 606 B.C. and the beginning of the 70 year captivity (Daniel 1, etc.). That would make a genea equal to about 30 years, slightly longer if the period began with David's birth (circa 1065 B.C.)

Last, the period from about 606 B.C. to the birth of Christ in say, 6 B.C. (calendars and chronologies are not accurate on that point) figures out about 40-43 years for a generation. That matches well with the 40 years in the wilderness, during which the ancient Israelite "generation" that came out of Egypt all died off, that is, those over 20, with the exceptions, of course of Caleb and Joshua.

Many of us have made much ado over the "40 year generation," due to the Israelites' experience, but this whole subject must be rethought in view of the aforesaid observations.

The point is, a generation, a genea, if a time period is intended, is of varying length. It could be as little as 30 years or about 40 or as long as 70, possibly even 80 years.

When Jesus spoke of a certain genea not passing away, he can indeed be referring to huge numbers of people alive over a period of many decades.

Now if that is what Jesus meant, then what event would signal the beginning of this last generation?

Look now again at the "fig tree," as used prophetically in the Old Testament (Hosea 9:10) and specifically by Jesus when on earth. In Luke 13:6-9, the typology is incontrovertible: Israel is the fruitless fig tree. When Jesus performed his only negative

miracle, He cursed the barren fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20, 21), that on the very day of His triumphal entry and his almost immediate repudiation prior to the Crucifixion. While Christ taught the principle of faith from this miracle (Mark 11:22,23), the visual object lesson as related to Israel cannot be ignored.

In fact until modern times, the "fig tree," representing Israel's national existence, remained "barren." In this century, in my judgment, the "fig tree," Israel becoming a nation, has budded, with a resurgence of Judaism and a dream of a new temple in Jerusalem. Just when "the budding" started (Luke 21:30) we shall explore.

I continue to assert that the budding of the fig tree is a specific sign of the end times and that the generation alive or beginning with that event shall be in progress when "all will be fulfilled," including the coming of Christ, the parousia.

A careful consideration of all facets of Jesus' apocalyptic messages in the Gospels in the light of contemporary events should be a continuing priority among premillennial and dispensational advocates, but extremism, date-setting and bizarre theories are to be avoided.

II. EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES ABOUT ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

With all of the foregoing information in mind, let us revert to the Old Testament and focus on Ezekiel 36 and 37. An in-depth analysis of chapter 36 reveals the promises of God for national restoration and the prophecy of spiritual rebirth and a golden age. In keeping with a literalist view of Old Testament prophecy, these events must take place. This does not preclude, of course, spiritual applications suitable to our times, especially in the "new heart" passage (vs. 26), but the basic hermeneutical approach must be based on the historical and prophetic message meant by Ezekiel and directed to Israel.

Chapter 37, the vision of the dry bones is especially significant. A careful study of the entire chapter in English and in Hebrew is warranted, but beyond the scope of this paper.

In summary, Ezekiel is transported in a vision to the midst of a valley, which was full of bones. This signified, as God said in vs. 11: "These bones are the whole house of Israel." That the passage deals with the end times is evident from the contextual promise of vs.-22 and 24: "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all ... And David my servant shall be king over them: and they all shall have one shepherd ... "and my servant David shall be their prince forever" (25). The ultimate outcome of the fulfillment of this vision is the Messianic reign of Him who will sit on the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:31)

Commanded to prophesy to "the bones," Ezekiel obeys:

"So I prophesied as I was commanded and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them from above: but there was no BREATH IN THEM ... Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. So

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." (Ezekiel 37:7-10)

I see seven stages in this process:

First, the noise

Second, the shaking

Third, the bones coming together

Fourth, the sinews appearing

Fifth, the flesh coming upon them

Sixth, the skin covering them

Seventh, there is no breath in them ... but the breath, the life, will come.

Now let us compare these seven stages of restoration as forecast by Ezekiel with events over the last 115 years in connection with the rise of Zionism and all events leading up to 1948 and into our times.

Again, we are well aware that some prophetic scholars doubt that what we have been seeing over the last century is the actual fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies relative to Israel's evolving status. This writer does not share their opinion.

Here is how I view it:

FIRST, THE NOISE. Among the dry bones of dispersed Israel there began a noise about 1878 with the embryonic beginnings of Zionism. Throughout Jewry worldwide there began to be an increasing desire to regain the ancient Holy Land and to reestablish the national identity of Israel. By 1882 a book by Leon Pinsker entitled "Auto Emancipation" began to be circulated. The idea advocated was for Jews to begin to move to Palestine, buy property and begin settlements, to seek to influence governments to encourage this process, to spark a worldwide movement, which would become known as Zionism.

This "noise" increased during the 1880s and was enhanced by a widely disseminated book in 1896 called "The Jewish State," by Theodor Herzl, who strongly urged the creation of a Jewish settlement in Palestine with a self-government. "On August 27, 1897, a great congress was convened in Basle, Switzerland, attended by over 200 delegates from all over the world ... they adopted Zionism as a program and gave the following definition: 'The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.'" (Gaebelein)

This meeting was the first in a series of what became known as the World Zionist Congress. The "noise" was increasing in volume.

After the First Congress Theodor Herzl wrote, "At Basel I created the Jewish state. If I stated that in public today, it would be received with laughter all over the world. Perhaps in five years time, however, and certainly within fifty, the whole world will understand."

On November 29, 1947 - fifty years after the First Zionist Congress - the General Assembly of the United Nations voted in favor of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

SECOND, THE SHAKING. While persecutions had plagued the Jews for many centuries, those which occurred in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century and the first part of the Twentieth had a profound effect. In Russia where hundreds of thousands of Jews had settled, fierce pogroms, organized massacres and violent persecutions, commenced in 1882. Again in 1887 and in the 1890s and in 1905, the programs continued. Over 25,000 Jews a year left Russia with many going to America and a few to Israel.

THIRD, THE BONES COMING TOGETHER, BONE TO HIS BONE. The first Aliyah, literally, an "ascent," the migration of Jews to Palestine, began about 1882. They would continue through 1918. There were about 100,000 Jews in Palestine when it then became a British "mandate." Bones came together, people of all walks of life and backgrounds over the decades, each capable of finding a niche in a society, which would evolve into a whole nation. Farmers mostly at first came, then tradesmen, teachers, professionals, people with a dream. The Zionists Congresses held every two or three years or oftener, greatly encouraged the "bones" to come together. In 1922 the City of Tel Aviv, an all Jewish city, was founded.

On November 2, 1917, during this period, a policy statement contained in a letter from Lord Balfour, Foreign Secretary of Great Britain to Lord Rothschild, one of the mega-rich Jewish bankers of England and Europe, was issued:

It is known as the BALFOUR DECLARATION:

"His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors 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 rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

Behind the scenes this was the result of the negotiations of the great Jewish chemist, Chaim Weizmann, inventor of acetone, smokeless gunpowder and many other amazing formulas. Dr. Weizmann provided invaluable service in his scientific contributions to the British war effort in World War I. In response, the Balfour Declaration became the announced policy of the British Empire.

By 1947 there were 600,000 Jews in Palestine, "bones had connected with bones."

FOURTH, THE SINEWS APPEAR. These sinews speak of muscles and strength. So it was that in the 1948 war for independence, 600,000 Jews held back the Arab armies, representing a hundred million people.

FIFTH, THE FLESH CAME UPON THE BONES. A Solidity, an infrastructure had been developing in earlier years that finally showed itself substantial and powerful when Israel became a full fledged nation in May of 1948.

SIXTH, THE SKIN COVERED THEM. The skin is the border of the body. By 1950 the partitioned borders were relatively secure, but in 1967 during the six day war Israel gained control of most all of the territory west of the Jordan River, which constituted the lands of the ancient tribes of Israel, land held now for twenty-five years in spite of internal and external pressures.

SEVENTH, THE BREATH OF LIFE. This is still future. When the "wind" of the Holy Spirit's power finally blows upon Israel in the future, "all Israel will be saved," that is all living Israelis will behold their Messiah coming in power and great glory. And it will be Jesus. But that is yet to come.

But 1948 remains the key year in my judgment, the birth year of modern Israel.

Now, thinking again of the length of generations, God seems to deal with Israel in forty and seventy year periods both in biblical times and in modern times. Remember the forty years in the wilderness, the 40-year reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, the seventy years of captivity, the seventy years from the Holy Family's return from Egypt to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Here are the most significant dates in the restoration of Israel as a nation since 1878.

Notice the time spans between some of these dates:

*1878_1948 - from the beginning of the roots of Zionism until the culmination and nationhood. In 1976 when I ran for the United States Congress, the Israeli Embassy sent me a book entitled "Seventy Years of Nation Building," documenting the whole period!

*1878_1918 - from the beginning of Zionism until the Balfour Declaration, the conquest of Jerusalem by General Allenby in the winter of 1917-18 and the beginning of the British Mandate. A period of forty years. Next notice:

*1897_1967 - from the First Zionist Congress to the control of the entire "Promised Land and Jerusalem," following the six day war, seventy years.

*1897..1937 - from the First Zionist Congress to the full scale Anti-Semitic drive by the Nazis in Germany, ultimately resulting in the slaughter of 6,000,000 Jews, forty years. The next significant date is the winter of 1917-18.

*1918_1988 - from the British takeover of Palestine to the Intifada, the uprising of Palestinians under Israeli control, seventy years.

*1948_1988_ from the birth of the nation Israel to the Intifada, se years.

Now if these same time periods continue to be significant, and each one could be considered "a generation" by comparison with Matthew 1, then what bearing might this have on this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled? Has that terminal generation begun and is it process?

What I am now saying is confessedly speculative, but nevertheless most interesting.

If 1948 is the pivotal date and that is when "the fig tree" budded, then a forty year generation could not be the case, although some of us became perhaps unduly excited in 1988 and even back in 1981, seven years prior to the forty year mark. Christ did not return then.

If the terminal generation began in 1948 and a 70 year generation is considered, that carries us to 2018. But what if the maximum period of Psalm 90:10 is a "generation?" That would move us forward to 2028.

Suppose in the mind and plan of God, the budding of the fig tree did not begin with 1878, 1897, 1918, or 1948, all of which dates have been suggested by various

writers and commentators, but rather in 1967V when Jerusalem was no longer "trodden down of the gentiles?"

The end of "the times the Gentiles" is to be heralded by the resumed control over Jerusalem by the Jews, as Luke 21:24 seems to say. Yet, they do not control totally the temple area, and all Arab neighbors contest their claims to sovereign rights over the ancient city.

To add, for the sake of speculation, 40 years to 1967 brings us to 2007; to add 70 years brings us to 2037

Again, any such generation does not have to run its full course of years, but it simply will not "pass away."

My opinion is that 1948 remains the pivotal date and that the final generation prior to the Second Advent is now in process, although I do not rule out processes that themselves cover a considerable span of time, and therefore do regard 1967 as equally important.

Only in our times have so many events of seeming prophetic and apocalyptic significance come together to form a backdrop for the imminent return of Jesus Christ for His saints.

While no one knows the day or hour or time, we continue to WATCH, as Jesus commanded.

III. AMERICA'S PLACE IN ISRAEL'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

In conclusion, it is appropriate to discuss "the untold story of America's 150 year fascination with the idea of a Jewish state, and of the complex role played by this country in the creation of modern Israel."

Now I do not see America specifically mentioned in Bible prophecy, totaling disagreeing with the relatively recent speculation that America is the Babylon of which Jeremiah wrote in his last chapters. If there are references to the United States, then America might be one of the young lions of "Tarshish," mentioned in Ezekiel 38:13, since this country and the western hemisphere have roots in England and Spain, which may be meant by "Tarshish."

In addition there is a theory that one of the seven heads of the Beast in Revelation 13 and 17 connotes the world wide spread of Anglo-American civilization, the seventh in a series of powerful civilizations (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, being the first six, and a revived "Roman Empire" being the "eighth, but of the seven.")

Nevertheless America has played a dynamic part in the development of the nation Israel.

We will take some significant dates and explain what happened.

*1814 - Pastor John MacDonald of the Albany Chapel Street Presbyterian Church in Albany, New York, began to preach on Bible prophecy and Israel's right to the promised land. Among his views, not shared by this writer, was that Isaiah 18 depicted the United States as "the land shadowing with wings." America was only twenty-five years old as a nation, but he and others believed this country's destiny was to help the

Jews again gain nationhood and thus fulfill many Old Testament prophecies of their ultimate return.

MacDonald, who died in 1821, sparked an interest in the literalist interpretation of Old Testament prophecies about Israel, a concept which gathered momentum among Christians throughout that century, flowering in the last decades into prophecy conferences, Bible conferences and prophetic preaching among Presbyterians, Baptist, Congregationalists, Interdenominationalists, and many others.

*1841 - W. E. Blackstone is born in upstate New York, a person destined to exert enormous influence as a speaker (he was a Methodist evangelist at first), writer and educator, eventually becoming a vice president of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. He departed to be with Christ in 1935.

*1878 - That date is most significant – Blackstone published his book JESUS IS COMING, which sold over a million copies and has been translated into forty-eight languages. I believe it is still in print. American Bible-believing Christians began to be more aware of the destiny of Israel, as the Scriptures set forth.

*1891 - Blackstone, aided by D.L. Moody and C.I. Scofield, among many, composed a document, not overly religious in content, but strongly humanitarian, calling for America to back the desires of Jews to return to their ancient homeland. No less than 413 prominent Americans joined in his appeal, among them John D. Rockefeller, Cyrus McCormick, J. Pierpont Morgan, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Speaker of the House, many senators, clergymen, newspaper editors and other prominent citizens. This was in the wake of the Russian pogroms of the 1880s and increasing anti-Semitism in Europe. It became known as THE BLACKSTONE MEMORIAL.

One paragraph read: "If they could have autonomy in government, the Jews of the world would rally to transport and establish their suffering brethren in their time-honored habitation. For over seventeen centuries they have waited patiently for such a privileged opportunity ... Let us now restore to them the land of which they were so cruelly despoiled by our Roman ancestors."

The BLACKSTONE MEMORIAL was presented to President Benjamin Harrison on March 5, 1891. This was five years before Theodor Herzl's call for "Zionism." A Bible Blackstone sent to Herzl, with prophecies of Israel's marked, can be seen today at Herzl's tomb in Jerusalem. Modern Israelis have designated a small area of trees as "The Blackstone Forest," and convocations are occasionally held there in his memory. In America, little notice was given to THE BLACKSTONE MEMORIAL.

*1800-1900s - Tens of thousands of Sunday schools were teaching millions of people of all ages that Canaan was the "promised land" for the ancient Israelites, outlining in detail the history of God's earthly chosen people. A mindset was being created throughout American Christianity, a concept, a zeitgeist, that the Jews really still ought to have their "promised land." This contributed over the decades and generations to broad based support for the nation of Israel.

*1900s - In the first decade of this century no less than 300 pogroms were perpetrated against the Jews. Hundreds of thousands came to America. As the century

continued, American Jews like Louis Brandeis (later a Supreme Court Justice) and hundreds, later thousands of others, joined in supporting Zionism.

*1916 - President Woodrow Wilson, a Bible reader and spiritual Presbyterian, took note of Zionism partially through the influence of Blackstone, and once said, "To think that I, the son of man, should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people." Any such goals he might have had were lost after his severe stroke, following the end of World War I.

*1900_1940 - The founding and proliferation of Bible Institutes with a Dispensationalist perspective; the growth of evangelical churches in spite of the modernist- fundamentalist controversy; the beginning of Dallas Theological Seminary with its premillennial, literalist view of Israel's future; the influence of powerful, politically active Baptist pastors like J. Frank Norris of Fort Worth, a strong premillennialist with a total church membership of 25,000; a wide radio ministry and a major paper; the rise of radio ministries led by Dispensationalists who believed in Israel's right to Palestine, involving such men as Charles B. Fuller, M.R. DeHaan, Theodore Epp and many, many others ... all of this enhanced the increasing mindset of America toward support of the Jews' aspirations and claims.

*1947 - J. Frank Norris with a special letter from President Harry S. Truman takes Luther C. Peake of Dallas, G. Beauchamp Vick of Detroit and Wendell Zimmerman of Kansas City on a trip to Palestine. Norris, a close friend of House Speaker Sam Rayburn and Texas Senator Tom Connolly and a political activist, is asked to make a special report to President Truman about his October-November trip to Palestine. The British are pulling out as the Mandate is ending. A war seems imminent. Dr. Norris sent a detailed and biblically-based appeal to President Truman to support Israel and received a courteous and appreciative personal reply.

*1948 - The Jews and Arabs are in conflict. Recognition of a Jewish state by the United States and the United Nations is vital, the Jews believe, to their success in founding a nation. America stalls. Secretary of State George C. Marshall is totally opposed, not wanting to antagonize a hundred million Arabs. Most of the State Department shares that view. America should have a hands off policy. Prominent Zionist leaders wish to see President Truman, but cannot gain access. But the Jews remember that Harry Truman is a Baptist (notwithstanding his colorful language). In fact young Harry read through the Bible twice before the age of twelve.

Remember the brilliant chemist and diplomat Chaim Weizman? He is old now and full of days, but his mind is keen and quick. The Jews believe that Weizman could influence President Truman as he did the British government thirty years earlier, but no appointment can be made. Truman wavers. George Marshall hints he will quit if Truman deals with the issue. A great majority of America's diplomatic corps want America to stay out of the matter for now, but support a U.N. trusteeship over Palestine.

But Truman had a Jewish business partner back in the 1920s in a Kansas City haberdashery. Their ongoing friendship was so close that he could walk into the president's oval office WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT. He was contacted and sent to Washington to appeal to the president on behalf of Weizman and the Jews' goal. After

that Jewish friend Eddie Jacobson makes a strong appeal, Truman agrees to see Chaim Weizman. That was March 13, 1948.

*March 18, 1948 - Chaim Weizman visits the White House incognito. No one knows for sure what he said, but some kind of deep understanding must have ensued.

*March 19, 1948 - U. S. delegates to the United Nations indicate that a trusteeship over Palestine would be American policy, no recognition of the Jewish State.

*April 23, 1948 - the eve of Passover, Chaim Weizman is summoned to the home of Judge Rosenman in New York, a man close to President Truman.

The judge excitedly tells Weizman that secretly the president still had "the little doctor" on his conscience that "if a Jewish state were declared and the United Nations stalled in its drive to establish trusteeship, the President of the United States would immediately recognize the new State." But no word must get out. Only Dr. Weizman would be Truman's point of contact with any of the Jews. Should word get out, the deal was off.

*May 14, 1948 - The Jews are determined to go ahead to proclaim their state. the United nations is still debating the idea of a trusteeship with America's spokesman supporting that idea. Consternation and disappointment have been rising among American Zionists. Chaim Weizman among a group of Jews in New York remains strangely quiet.

At 6:00 p.m. Washington time, the proclamation of the Jewish State of Israel is to come into effect, announced both in New York and Tel Aviv. That happens.

At 6:11 p.m. the White House announces:

"The government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof.

"The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel."

Truman had kept his word, that Bible reading (and cussing) Baptist from Lamar, Missouri, had participated in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

The dream of Pastor MacDonald, the vision of W.E. Blackstone and thousands of others, the desires of Jews around the world, the age-old predictions of the ancient prophets had come to pass.

* May 15, 1948 - The 30-year British Mandate and rule of Palestine is finally officially terminated.

* May 16, 1948 A message arrives from Tel Aviv for Chaim Weizman at his New York hotel, referring to him as the new Head of State. Later, news comes that he has been named President of the Provisional Council. In effect Chaim Weizman was the President of the State of Israel.

* May 25, 1948 - President Harry Truman welcomes President Chaim Weizman to the White House through the front door for a state visit. Weizman stays at Blair House, the official lodging for dignitaries. He presents Truman with a scroll of the Torah, symbolizing Jewish tradition.

For the first time since 63 B.C., when the Roman General Pompey ended the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty of kings and made Judea a vassal of the empire, an

independent Jewish nation exists. Over 2500 years had elapsed since the last monarch of the Davidic dynasty had sat on a throne.

Later, President Truman will response half humorously to an introduction by Eddie Jacobsen, saying that he helped create the State of Israel, before a crowd of Jews.

"What do you mean 'helped create'?" he replied. "I am Cyrus! I am Cyrus!"
Modern Israeli history continues.

We Christian Zionists watch with keen interest and strongly support the people of Israel from our dispensational perspective.

BUT THERE IS MORE, MUCH MORE, YET TO COME.

PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Time considerations have preempted extensive footnoting in the initial versior1 of this paper. This material will be published in future issues of THE BAPTIST PREACHER and/or THE BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE. These observations are drawn also from nearly fifty years of extensive study.

Blackstone, W. E. JESUS IS COMING, 1878

Eban, Abba, HERITAGE: CIVILIZATION AND THE JEWS, Summit Books, New York, 1984

Feinberg, Charles L. ISRAEL IN THE SPOTLIGHT, Scripture Press, Chicago, 1956 and numerous other works by this writer

Gaebelein, HOPELESS, YET THERE IS HOPE, Our Hope, New York, 1935 and numerous other works by this writer

Grose, Peter, ISRAEL IN THE MIND OF AMERICA, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1984

Hefley, James and Marti, ARABS, CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, Hannibal Books, Hannibal, Missouri, 1991

Kac, A.W. THE SPIRITUAL DILEMMA OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, Moody Press, Chicago, 1963

Kurtzman, Dan, BEN-GURION, PROPHET OF FIRE, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1983 and GENESIS, 1948 by this author

Pike, Theodore, ISRAEL: OUR DUTY ... OUR DILEMMA, Christian Research, Eureka Springs, Ark., 1984

Rose, Norman, CHAIM WEIZMAN, Viking, New York, 1986

Simon, Merrill, JERRY FALWELL AND THE JEWS, Jonathan David Publishers, Middle Village, New York, 1984

And various other magazine, newspaper and periodical accounts, plus commentaries and historical studies read over the last fifty years.