

*"America's Future in Light of Bible Prophecy"*

**PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATIONS**

It is the custom for our newly elected presidents to lay their hand on a Bible while they take the oath of office. On many occasions, the newly elected president has had the Bible opened to a particular verse or passage. Bill Clinton for example had the Bible opened to **Galatians 6:8** which reads, *"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."* Such a passage became prophetic as we witnessed Clinton's shenanigans, his trial and impeachment, supported by the House of Representatives, and falling one vote short in the Senate. The President had reaped what he had sown, not merely due to his sexual indiscretions but because he had committed perjury: putting his hand on the Bible and promising to *"tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth"* and then lying to cover up his actions.

President Reagan, the last President who commanded the support of the majority of the American people for all of his eight years in office, had his Bible opened to **2 Chronicles 7:14** for both of his inaugurations. It says: *"If my people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my Face, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."* Though President Reagan was far from perfect, I believe that the Lord blessed our nation greatly during the Reagan years. He was a man of godly convictions and understood that we live in a world of right and wrong, and of black and white. It was a fitting passage for his time in office.

It is interesting to note that both Presidents George W. Bush and Barrack Obama put their hands on a closed Bible as did some of our previous presidents - last being John F. Kennedy.

**GEORGE WASHINGTON AND GENESIS 49**

The practice of putting one hand on the Bible to take the oath of office began with our nation's first president, George Washington. According to the historical record, the Bible was opened in haste and turned to **Genesis 49** during Washington's first inauguration. At first glance it may seem insignificant but when you look at the content of that chapter you will find that it was no accident at all. In fact, I believe it was God's way of showing us how the USA would play a major role in accomplishing God's divine plan for our world.

Please turn with me to **Genesis 49**. What is found in that chapter? A prophecy of blessing - Jacob (also known as Israel) who is near death blesses each of his sons, whose descendants would become the twelve tribes of Israel. He was simply reaffirming the promise of blessing given to his grandfather Abraham by God when He made a covenant with Abraham many decades earlier. Especially take note of **Genesis 49:10**: *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."* The word, "Shiloh" is an untranslatable word in the English. It literally means "To whom it belongs." In other words, out of the tribe of Judah will come a ruler who will rule until the one to whom it belongs comes. And it will be this One to whom will be the obedience of the nations. This is a messianic prophecy that finds fulfillment in Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David of the tribe of Judah and who is King of kings and Lord of lords!

Recall what God told Abraham in **Genesis 12:1-3**: *"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."* God will bless all the nations through Abraham. How? Jesus Christ is a descendant in the flesh of Abraham!

### A BLESSING AND A CURSE

*"I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you."* We know that God promised Abram a son. He first had a son, named Ishmael through his wife Sarah's maid servant Hagar. This was their attempt to help God out, but they were disobedient. God had mercy on them and then blessed Abraham and Sarah with their own son, Isaac. And the promise went through Abraham's son Isaac, who was the father of Jacob who is given the name Israel and whose sons' descendants become the twelve tribes of Israel. But Moslems believe that Jews and Christians are wrong. According to *the Koran*, the Moslems' holy book, the promise really is through Ishmael. So who is the heir of the promise? The descendants of Isaac or the descendants of Ishmael? Both can't be right. Considering that the Koran came 600 years after the time of Christ and 1000 years after the Old Testament was completed, I think the prophet Mohammed, among other reasons, got it wrong. In fact, in many Moslem lands the children are taught to curse Jews because they are on Islamic land. Drive them into the sea is the call of the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Iranians. By cursing Israel they are in fact cursing themselves.

Now some will ask, "Aren't Christians now the true children of Abraham? Didn't Paul say there is no Gentile or Jew in Christ? Aren't we are children of Abraham by faith? Yes, Paul and the Word of God teaches this truth. But Paul also said in **Romans 9-11** that God has not forgotten the promises He made to Israel. Turn with me now to **Romans 11:25-27**: *"For I do not want you to uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written (Is. 59:20-21), The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." And this is My Covenant with them, when I take away their sins."*

You see there is coming a time when Israel will return to the Lord. However, in many churches a new theology developed especially following the Protestant Reformation. It was called Replacement Theology. In other words, the church replaces Israel as God's chosen people. So every time we see Israel now in Bible prophecy, it really should be viewed as the church. But what does the Biblical witness really teach? Please turn with me now to **Zechariah 12:1-14**:

<sup>1</sup>*The <sup>(A)</sup>burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who <sup>(A)</sup>stretches out the heavens, <sup>(B)</sup>lays the foundation of the earth, and <sup>(C)</sup>forms the spirit of man within him, <sup>2</sup>"Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a <sup>(D)</sup>cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against <sup>(E)</sup>Judah. <sup>3</sup>"It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy <sup>(F)</sup>stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be <sup>(G)</sup>severely injured And all the <sup>(H)</sup>nations of the earth will be gathered against it.*

<sup>4</sup>*"In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. <sup>5</sup>"Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.' <sup>6</sup>"In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a <sup>(I)</sup>firepot among*

*pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the <sup>(D)</sup>inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem.*

*<sup>7</sup>"The LORD also will <sup>(K)</sup>save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of <sup>(L)</sup>David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. <sup>8</sup>"In that day the LORD will <sup>(M)</sup>defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who <sup>(N)</sup>is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like <sup>(O)</sup>God, like the <sup>(P)</sup>angel of the LORD before them.*

*<sup>9</sup>"And in that day I will <sup>(Q)</sup>set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>"I will <sup>(R)</sup>pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have <sup>(S)</sup>pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one <sup>(T)</sup>mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.*

*<sup>11</sup>"In that day there will be great <sup>(U)</sup>mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. <sup>12</sup>"The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup>the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup>all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.*

So what is Zechariah saying? When Christ returns, there will be an Israel and a Jerusalem. What is interesting is that this passage mentions Judah. Why? The present day Jews of Israel are predominantly descendants of the tribe of Judah. Judah was the southern kingdom of Israel. And the term Jew originated from the word Judah.

## **THE REBIRTH OF ISRAEL**

Now for hundreds of years you could see why many fell into the trap of Replacement Theology. There was no Israel. The Jews were scattered across the world. But something happened some 60 years ago. On May 8, 1948 by UN decree the Jews had their nation back. For the first time in over 2000 years the Jews controlled their own land. Then in 1967, Israel defeated the Arabs by a preemptive surprise attack and retook all of Jerusalem. They made it their capital for the first time in 2500 years even though most of the world does not recognize Jerusalem and have their embassies in Tel Aviv, including the United States.

So what does the Bible teach concerning Israel? Again looking at **Zechariah 12**, and also note **Zechariah 14:3-8**, before Christ returns there will be an Israel in control of Jerusalem and the nations of the world will be arrayed against it.

Now where does the United States fit into all of this? There may be no direct mention of the US in the Word of God, but I believe from the study of Bible prophecy, history, and current events we can begin to grasp the role the US will play. The question that cannot be answered, however, is this, "*In the end, whose side will America really be on?*"

Will we be on the side of God? Will we be on the side of Israel? Or will be on the side of Lucifer? On the side of the Antichrist? On the side of the Moslems? Whose side will we be on?

And really when you think about it, isn't that the question for every man woman and child? Whose side are you on? God's, your own, or someone else's?

## FOUR REALITIES

Now when you look at American history up until the present day, you will find four things that are true when it comes to Israel. **First, our Founding Fathers had a deep respect for the Jewish people.** When American troops were starving, lacking clothing and needed weapons, a Jewish Banker from Philadelphia, Hyman Salomon went to Jews in America and Europe and raised \$1 million for Washington's army. In response to this act of generosity, Washington had the engravers of the US \$1 bill place 13 stars in the form of the Star of David over the head of the American Eagle. Around the star there was included a cloudburst representing the glory of the tabernacle in Jerusalem. It is still on our \$1 bills today! President Washington specified that this was to be a lasting memorial to the Jewish people for their help in winning the war.

Both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson wanted some reference to God's deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt to highlight America's dependence on Divine Providence. The Continental Congress agreed to the final design including a pyramid (Egypt), eagle (protection) and rays of fire and a cloud (divine leadership). While President, Washington wrote these words in 1790 to the Jewish community living in Newport, Rhode Island, *"For happily the Government of the United States, which gives bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens...May the Children of the stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while everyone shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid."*

Our second president, John Adams, also supported the Jewish people. To Jefferson, he wrote, *"I will insist that the Hebrews has done more to civilize man than any other nation."* Near the end of his life Adams said, *"For I really wish the Jews again in Judea independent nation."* The Founding Fathers respected the Jewish people. And this genuine sentiment leads us to **the second reality.**

That is, **during the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a growing movement in the United States to help the Jews return to their homeland.** During the 1800's many Jews came to the United States and saw it as their new promised land. Recall that at the time Palestine, was under the control of the Ottoman Empire – the Turks who were and still are Moslem - it was a desert wasteland and Jews were not welcome there. One man did more to raise the issue than other in America during this time. His name, William Eugene Blackstone. He was born in 1841, in upstate New York into a Methodist home. While not an ordained minister (he was founder of a construction and investment company), he was an ardent student of Scripture. He wrote a book in 1878 called *Jesus Is Coming*. It sold more than one million copies and was eventually translated into 48 languages and is still in print today. In his book he looked at hundreds of Bible passages and showed how the restoration of Israel is necessary before Christ's return. He writes, *"Perhaps you say, "I don't believe the Israelites are to be restored to Canaan, and Jerusalem to be rebuilt." Have you read the declarations in God's Word about it? Surely nothing is more plainly states in the Scriptures."*

He likened Israel to God's sun-dial and asserted, *"If anyone desires to know our place in God's chronology, our position in the march of events, look at Israel."* This one book and Blackstone's efforts did more than any other to move American religious and political leaders to begin to consider the reality of helping the Jews return to their homeland. He initiated a conference in 1890, November 24-25, bringing Jewish and Christian leaders together. Held at the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago, the theme of the conference was *The Past, Present, and Future of Israel*. The conference passed resolutions supporting Jews who were being oppressed in Czarist Russia and copies were forwarded to the Czar and leaders in Europe. But more important Blackstone wanted world leaders to grant Jews permission to return to Palestine so they could establish their own state. As a result of the conference, there came forth a document that became known as the

Blackstone Memorial, the first paragraph simply began with "What shall be done for the Russian Jews? and the second, "Why not give Palestine back to them again? Filled with the prophecies pertaining to the return of the Jews to Israel it was signed by 413 prominent Americans including John D. Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, Cyrus McCormick, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, heads of several major newspapers, the Speaker of the House, members of Congress, the mayors of Chicago and Philadelphia, and other prominent businessmen, clergy and ministers. It was sent to every European head of state at the time and given to every US President from President Benjamin Harrison through FDR was familiar. The document ended with these words:

*"That there seem to be many evidences to show that we have reached the period in the great roll of the centuries, when the ever-living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is lifting up His hand to the Gentiles, to bring His sons and His daughters from far, that he may plant them again in their own land. Not for twenty-four centuries, since the days of Cyrus, King of Persia, has there been offered to any mortal such a privileged opportunity to further the purposes of God concerning His ancient people. May it be the high privilege of your excellency, and the honorable secretary, to take a personal interest in this great matter, and secure through the Conference, a home for these wandering millions of Israel, and thereby receive to yourselves the promise of Him, who said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee."*

And yet, due to the influence of Alvey Adee assistant secretary of state from 1886-1924, the US State Department did little to help the Jews. The US was afraid to offend the Ottoman Turks. That changed in World War 1 when the Turks were driven out of Jerusalem and Palestine by the British. But in the 1930's Roosevelt did little to help Jews being persecuted in Nazi Germany and in the later Nazi controlled nations. It wasn't until 1944 that something he finally started to acknowledge publicly that there was a problem and created the War Refugee Board. As a result of World War 2, and with the aftermath of the Holocaust, enough will was found in the world to allow a new Jewish nation. In fact, President Truman quoted from the Blackstone Memorial when on behalf of the US, and the first nation to do so, he formally recognized the new Jewish state. Due to Blackstone's work, he is the most famous American in Israel today with a forest being named after him and his name mentioned in history textbooks in Israel.

Thankfully, **the US has been a strong supporter of Israel since 1948 - the third reality.** We have politically, economically and militarily backed Israel since it became a nation once more. But we have also tried to placate those who hate Israel.

But this leads us to **the fourth reality: while we have supported Israel, we have become bedfellows with the descendants of Ishmael.** We have tried to play both sides. We have tried to have it both ways. How? By getting in bed with the Sheiks of Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam because of oil, and by trying to promote the Palestinian cause even though the Palestinians have been used by their Arab and Moslem brothers to try to drive the Jews from the land.

A recent example is what happened concerning recent comments our Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made concerning Israel and the Palestinians. Secretary of State Clinton praised Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's for his "unprecedented" move to restrain -- though not freeze -- Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Well this infuriated the Arab World and she ended up having to meet up with U.S. Mideast peace envoy George Mitchell in Cairo to deal with the outrage. Arab officials who once hailed Obama in June for speaking of the Palestinians' "daily humiliations" under occupation said Clinton's words echoed those by previous U.S. administrations that sided with Israel. On this past Monday, she read a statement reiterating that "the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements."

The fact is America is married to two sons - Isaac and Ishmael. One that is the father of Jesus in the flesh, and who one day will accept Him as their Messiah and Lord. The other who is an imposter and wishes not only for the destruction of Israel but for total world control.

In a world of nuclear and biological weapons, when there is an ideology that is apocalyptic and controlling (Islam), a people who view Jews and Christians as the enemy, we are indeed living in dangerous times.

You see our nation's future is linked to Israel's future. In fact, every nation's future is linked to Israel's because that will be the place of our Lord's return. And if our nation ever turns its back on Israel, it will be the end.

We stand at the crossroads. We are living in dangerous times. We must remain vigilant. Jesus said in **Lk. 21:34-36**, *"Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; <sup>35</sup>for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. <sup>36</sup>"But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

We must pray for the Lord to raise up godly leaders to know the difference between truth and error, who know the difference between good and evil, who know the difference between God's ways and the ways of the world, men and women who understand the Word of God.

The truth is we can be alert. We can understand the prophecies of the Bible and the signs of the times. We can be ready and we can do our part by proclaiming the gospel in word and in deed until our Lord returns. Yes, He is coming back, the question is are we ready? In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN!

**NOTE: Much of the detailed historical information and quotations came from the book, *The American Prophecies*, by Michael Evans, published in 2004 and a New York Times Bestseller. I highly recommend it to be read by all believers.**