

# The Lamp of Prophecy

or

Signs of the Times

by

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## CHAPTER SIX

### WILL ISRAEL BE REGATHERED?

AS YOU KNOW, I am trying to answer some questions that have been raised and answered negatively in some recent books that have had for their object the shaking of our faith in what some of us believe to be the dispensational teaching of the Scriptures.

We have already seen (I hope clearly) that GOD has dealt with man through a series of dispensations; that we are living in the dispensation of the grace of GOD, or the dispensation of the mystery, when GOD is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. He is gathering out a company to be for all eternity the Body and Bride of His Son. We have also seen (I hope clearly) that in due time GOD is going to fulfill the promises made to Israel.

Will the fulfillment of those promises involve the return of the nation to the Land of Palestine? Must the Land of Palestine again become the acknowledged home of the people of Israel, and will Mount Zion, the actual city of Jerusalem, become the seat of the throne of the King in the coming day?

Let us first turn to the Book of Genesis and see what promises GOD made in regard to the land. Genesis 12:7:

**"Unto thy seed will I give this land."** There is the first promise. It is very short and very clear. There are no conditions made. GOD simply appears to Abraham and says, "I am going to do a certain thing." He does not say, "If you do so and so, I will do so and so. If your seed after you prove faithful to me, I will confirm this," but **"unto thy seed will I give this land."**

He amplifies that promise in 13:14: **"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."**

This is an added word to the promise, and it seems at least to imply that GOD will never revoke this land grant to the nation of Israel, to the seed of Abraham:

**"Unto thy seed will I give this land for ever, And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."**

Abraham has both a spiritual and a natural seed.

- when GOD speaks of his seed as numberless as the dust of the earth, that necessarily refers to the earthly seed.
- when GOD speaks of his seed as the stars of the Heaven, that refers to the heavenly seed.

Here is distinctly the earthly seed, as numerous as the dust of the earth.

Verse 17: **"Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."**

In 15:18, we have the limits of the land divided in a fuller way:

**"In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."**

Those of us who are thoroughly familiar with ancient geography know where these "-ites" lived; at any rate, the limits of the rivers tell us - from the river of the Euphrates on the one side to Egypt; that is all the way from Egypt on the west to the Euphrates on the east. Israel never possessed that much of the land. Even in the day of King Solomon, the land Israel possessed was not so great as that here promised to Abraham. So I take it that in the coming day, GOD will confirm this promise.

Genesis 17:7-8: **"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."**

Now, to one who did not have a theory to maintain, it should seem perfectly clear that GOD meant what He said, when He declared that He would give this land to Abraham and his seed, to be their inheritance forever. The term "**forever**" means forever, as long as the world stands. Yet for nineteen hundred years they have not dwelt in their land. GOD foresaw all this.

He warned Israel through Moses (Deuteronomy 28) that if they were not obedient to His Holy Word, the day would come when He would bring a nation against them from the ends of the earth. Italy was the very extreme of the world on the west in the days when Moses uttered these words:

**"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand."**

They had no difficulty in understanding the tongue of the Chaldeans. That was almost like the Hebrew; very much as the Swedish is similar to the Norwegian, and the English to broad Scotch; but GOD was going to bring against them a people with a tongue altogether different, the Latin-speaking Roman, and these people were to destroy the sanctuary, and as a result of this desolation, **"the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind."**

So at present, they are scattered, due to their disobedience to GOD.

Does that invalidate, does that cancel the unconditional promise that GOD made to Abraham? It does not. We are told in connection with the Abrahamic covenant of grace, that the law which came 430 years after could not make that promise of none effect, so all the experiences of Israel through the centuries cannot suffice to annul the promise GOD made.

We have been told by some that the land would have been theirs if they had been faithful to the Law; but GOD said nothing to Abraham about keeping the Law. The Law was not given at that time. But the inheritance was forever. They have forfeited the present possession of the land, but Scripture contains abundant promises that in due time they will return to that land and possess it again.

Let us turn to some of these promises.

Jeremiah 30:18:

**"Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them."**

*This precludes the thought of the return under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah being the fulfillment.*

It was not true of the time after they came back from Babylon, because they came back subject to the Medes and the Persians; then later, to the various divisions of Alexander's empire; and, at last, to the Romans. In the days of the Romans, Pilate, the representative of Caesar, exercised authority in Jerusalem, and Herod was king in Galilee. It is clear that the return in the days of

Ezra and Nehemiah could not be the return contemplated when GOD opened up the way for as many as would to come back, for they didn't have faith to take hold of the promise and very few returned.

See the next chapter (31:7):

**"For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame. the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."**

Notice the spiritual blessing that is to accompany their return in the latter days to Palestine - such spiritual blessings as they knew nothing of in the days of the former restoration. They will return in heart to GOD, as well as to the land.

**"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."**

In verse twenty-three we have further instruction in regard to this return. In these two great chapters - Jeremiah 30 and 31 - we have GOD's covenant with them concerning the land and His promise to fulfill all He has spoken concerning it.

**"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."**

Evidently GOD said this to Jeremiah while he was asleep, for in verse 26 he says:

**"Upon this I awakened, and behold; my sleep was sweet unto me,"** in other words, "I was refreshed by the good news GOD gave me concerning the testimony of my people."

Now, GOD continues to enlarge upon the return.

**"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge."**

That is, GOD will exercise judgment. He will clear the land by judgment and restore the faithful remnant to Himself in that day. For with the restoration of the people to the land, a new covenant will be confirmed to Israel. The Blood of this covenant has already been shed. Our blessed Lord held the communion cup in His hand and said, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood."**

This is the basis of all blessing both for Jew and Gentile. In this age all who believe are united in the one body of CHRIST. After the church age ends, GOD will take up the nation of Israel again and the New Covenant as such will be made with them. We come under the blessings of it because it is a covenant of pure grace, but you could hardly speak of the New Covenant being made with us, inasmuch as the Old Covenant was never made with us. The Old Covenant was made between GOD and Israel at Mount Sinai, which covenant they broke.

The New Covenant will some day be confirmed to Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah goes on in chapter 31, verse 31:

**"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord."**

GOD never made any covenant with our fathers, nor took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. He is referring here to literal Israel, Israel after the flesh. **"Which covenant they brake."** This covenant was made with the house of Israel. **"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."**

This is already true of believers in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. We who have been born again have a new nature, and we delight in the will of GOD.

Permit me to add an illustration as to what it means to have the law written in your heart.

Some years ago I had a small school for Indian young people. I brought them up from the desert of Arizona to educate them in order that they might go back to their people as missionaries. John C - was a bright young Navajo. The first Sunday we brought him home to Oakland, John was with us in the morning meeting, and then he went home with one of the ladies for dinner and came back to the young people's meeting. We sat down in the back seat. They were just having a discussion on law and grace, and, frankly, they didn't get on very well. Finally the leader turned to the Indian and said, "John, what do you think about this subject?"

John got to his feet and, slowly and methodically, said, "Well, you know I think this is a lesson to you all. I come here to try to learn things to go back and tell my people. I think if I tell my people what you were saying here, they look at me and wonder what it is all about, because I have been wondering what it is all about. I don't know whether you know what it is all about."

Of course they were all rather taken aback.

"Now," he continued, "this business of law and grace - let me tell you something I think make it plain to me so I can explain to my people. I come away from the desert with Mr. Ironside. I never take so long journey on the train before. It is wonderful. Every time the train stopped, I get out and walk around and look at everything, rubbernecking, very much interested. At Barstow I get out and see the great hotel that the Santa Fe railroad put up. I walked down to one end of this great hotel and on the nice cement wall I see a sign there, 'Please do not spit here.' I look at the sign and then look down at the cement walk, and I see many people spit there. Before I think what I am doing, I spit there myself. Then I hurry and walk away from the sign. I think a lot about it. That is quite a thing. If there was no sign, nobody pay attention to it. I come here to Oakland this morning for the meeting, and Mrs. A. take me to a beautiful home. I have never been in such a home before. I am led into a room, such a wonderful room. I put my foot on the carpet; it is so beautiful and soft, and then I sit down in a big chair. My, I have never been in such a comfortable chair. I look all around at the beautiful pictures and at the grand piano. I just looking all the time till I am ashamed to be looking so much. By and by they all go out of the room, and I am sitting there thinking about something, and I get up and look all around. I look at the walls in those two big rooms, and I look for signs, 'Please do not spit here.' I look for that sign, and I can't find that sign, and I say to myself, Too bad, such a beautiful home and no sign here, 'Please do not spit here.' Then I think, 'Let me look and see,' and I walk all around through those two rooms and look everywhere, and by and by I find that nobody has spit here. Then it comes to me in a moment, 'Now I understand this law and grace business. Outside there, there is the law, "Do not spit here," and some see it and it stir up the very thing it say don't do, but inside here it is grace. They love the beautiful home, and because they love it, they want to keep it pure and sweet and clean, so they do not need any sign on the wall. Nobody even think to do that. They love to keep it nice.' I think that is law and grace."

You see, GOD puts in the hearts of those born again a delight in His holy will. That is the very opposite to the "**Thou shalt**" and "**Thou shalt not**."

The law stirs up everything corrupt within our hearts. The soul won by the love of CHRIST delights in His holy will.

So, by and by, it will be with Israel. They shall be restored to their land, but they will not only be restored as a nation; they will be regenerated and as a people they will be restored to GOD Himself, and He will put His law in their hearts, and He says, "**I will be their God and they shall be my people.**"

Verse 34:

**"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother,**

**saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."**

Ah, but if something goes wrong, if in the meantime they sin and grieve Him, may not GOD cancel all this? Does He not reserve the right to Himself to close the way to the Land of Palestine and leave them still scattered among the Gentiles? Oh, no!

**"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever."**

Could you get any stronger affirmation? As long as the sun and moon and stars remain, so long will Israel remain as a nation, a separated nation, a nation of His favor.

Verse 37:

**"Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."**

Oh, well, maybe He only means spiritual blessings. No, lest anyone think that, something very literal follows:

**"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever."**

Jerusalem was destroyed again and again; it was practically dismantled over twenty-eight times, but when these words are fulfilled, it will be restored, never to be demolished again.

I think it is very striking that GOD refers to this corner of the land for us to realize how literally this promise will be fulfilled. In Zechariah 14:9, we have another reference to the same corner. Zechariah describes the return of the people to the land, the coming of the King, and he adds, **"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."**

I wonder if you are familiar with this fact. Sometime before the breaking out of the World War, I read a letter published in the "*Christian Herald*."

A party of German capitalists made an arrangement to open up a new subdivision outside the wall of the ancient city of Jerusalem. When they sent a surveyor to run the lines and divide the lots, etc., the very first stake he undertook to drive down hit something so hard that he couldn't drive it deeper than a very short distance, so he cleared the earth away and found the top of an ancient stone, a surveyor's mark, one of the landmarks of olden days. He cleared away more of the earth until the whole stone came into view and found some Hebrew characters quite different from the square letter in use today. He sent for an expert, and when he read these characters, to the surprise of all concerned, they explained that this was the corner of Hananeel.

They had come to the very place referred to in Zechariah. **"The measuring-line shall go forth from the corner of Hananeel."**

GOD leaves an old surveyor's stone that He might prove to the people who would not believe that He would fulfill His Word to the letter when the day should come. I saw a photograph of that stone.

I mentioned this fact at a lecture I gave at Lake Geneva. When I was through, a man came up and said, "I was most interested in what you told us about the stone of Hananeel. I am a native of Jerusalem. I was born in the city of Jerusalem and I was a Mohammedan until about six years ago. After my conversion I emigrated to America. I was present the day they dug up that stone of Hananeel and with a great company of people went out to see it."

This shows that GOD's Word can be depended upon.

Now, someone may say, "Well, these passages do not convince me that there will be any future restoration of Israel. I do not see anything more than the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. Just as GOD gave them the land in the first place, then fulfilled His promise and gathered them back to the land, may they not again have forfeited it, and may we not say that possibly GOD's patience has been exhausted and they will never again be restored?"

Let us turn to Isaiah 11:10, which is clearly the Millennial chapter. The chapter begins:

**"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,"** etc. This gives us the seven spirits of the Lord. How can there be seven spirits if there is only one Holy Spirit?

Second verse: **"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."**

- the spirit of the Lord is one;
- wisdom, two;
- understanding, three;
- counsel, four;
- might, five;
- knowledge, six;
- the fear of the Lord, seven.



Of course there is one Holy Spirit. Now, verse ten, **"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Greeks seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left."**

Oh, but He has done that already! Yes, He brought them back once, but they forfeited the land again and crucified the Lord of glory. GOD in infinite grace will set His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people. Where are they coming from? They are to come from Assyria, Egypt, Elim (Persia), Sinim, Mesopotamia, the islands of the sea. This expression as used by the Hebrews included all the indefinite lands of which they knew very little, beyond the limits of the Roman Empire. Of course Great Britain and all the Western Continent were unknown at that time.

The Lord was to recover His people from lands to which they had never traveled when they came back the first time.

**"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."**

**"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away."**

It is restored Israel, who had been scattered so long, eventually returned to GOD and His land.

They are singing, **"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation . . . Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."**

Now, I have only touched this subject. There are scores of other passages just as clear and definite as these that declare that He that scattered Israel will gather them. If I can't trust the promises GOD made to His earthly people, how can I dare trust the promises that He has made to His heavenly people?

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST said to Nicodemus, **"If I had spoken to you of earthly things and ye believed not, how can ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"**

We come thus to the Book and see the promises that GOD made to His earthly people and we look back over the centuries and find that not one has failed that should have been fulfilled up to date. Everything has been fulfilled in exact accord with the prophetic Word, and so we may be quite certain that the last promises will be fulfilled.

I shall read one more passage as I close.

We have the whole history of Israel for nineteen hundred years epitomized for us in one verse (Hosea 3:4), and we have the promise for the future in the next verse:

**"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."**

Has not verse 4 been fulfilled to the letter? For nineteen hundred years Israel has had no king, no pretender to the throne, no sacrifice. Think of it!

When Hosea wrote these words, the sacrifice was the very center of their ritual. The Roman Catholic Church is built around the sacrifice of the mass. Take the mass away and the church will go to pieces; take the sacrifice away from Israel, and one might suppose the nation of Israel would go to pieces! But no, they abide in the world today as a witness to the unity of the Godhead. Without sacrifice, they would be very likely to go into idolatry, but they abide without images. In all Israel today there is no priest, and yet the nation abides. Truly as verse 4 has been fulfilled, so verse 5 will be - **"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."**

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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