

Prophecies

Concerning

Israel

BY

RAY BRUBAKER

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GOD'S NEWS...BEHIND THE NEWS

**RADIO and TELEVISION
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Box 10475 St. Petersburg, Fla. 33733

INTRODUCTION TO PROPHECIES CONCERNING ISRAEL

A Guide from the Israeli Government Press Office says: "The Bible is really your best guide to this land. When the Bible says something is located so many paces from a certain place, it is."

Quite a declaration concerning the Holy Scriptures.

Some may ask: Why study Prophecy?

There may be several reasons.

First, it is a confirmation of one's faith to know that all that is contained in this book is true. It is God's Word.

If God declared the black race would one day return to Africa, you could believe it. It has not. It has declared, however, that Israel would return to her land in the last days. This we have seen happen in our day.

Second, a study of Bible Prophecy is a stimulant to a holy life. Prophecy mainly relates to the coming of our Lord and the kind of life we should be found living when He comes. As Peter declares, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God . . .?" (2 Pet. 3:11-12a)

Third, it is not only appropriate that we study prophecy but that we recognize that this is the day in which many of these prophecies are being fulfilled. As Hal Lindsey says, "We are the Terminal Generation." We read in Ezekiel 36:8, "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.

Today Israel is shooting forth its branches. And in the chapters of this book you will see evidence that these are the last days and that our Lord's Return hastens. Along with the evidence of His coming in His very own admonition, "therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:44)

A reminder . . . this worldwide radio and television ministry is sustained by the gifts and freewill offerings of God's people everywhere. Without your love and dedication to the task of proclaiming this end-time message of our Lord's soon return and the need of readiness for that event, we could not carry on. So please take time to write us today. Include your prayer requests when you write and believe God for the answer.

Prophecies Concerning Israel



A bipartisan coalition of 24 congressmen joined in sending a letter to the president protesting Soviet influence in Syria.

The letter stated, "The Soviet-Syrian threat has alarmed us all."

It went on to declare, "The Soviet Union has provided the Syrians with an unprecedented arsenal. Without a strong U.S. response, Syria will continue to obstruct Middle East peace and imperil U.S. interests throughout the region."

During his tour of the Middle East, U.S. envoy Philip Habib warned, too, of the dangers that might be ahead in the Middle East. His trip followed Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens' statement that the Soviets could become involved in the event of a war between Israel and Syria. Arens was quoted in the JERUSALEM POST as saying, "In case of an outbreak of hostilities with Syria, which Israel is trying to prevent, it would be unlikely that the Soviets would not be involved."

Meanwhile, the action between Pres. Hafez Assad of Syria in expelling PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, brings to mind the Scripture which speaks of "brother against brother."

Arafat's expulsion came after he accused the Syrians of helping the rebels take several key positions in the Beka'a area of Lebanon, enabling them to seize effective control of the main Beirut-Damascus highway.

The Syrian government newspaper, in explaining the expulsion, accused Arafat of "using the language of violence, blackmail, lies and slander." (Jerusalem Post, June 26, 1983)

The struggle between Arafat and Assad was an unexpected blow to the president's peace plans.

Our U.S. secretary of state, touring the Middle East, was promoting an Arab plan that would have provided for limited Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank in a Federation with Jordan. In return, the PLO would have recognized Israel's right to exist.

King Hussein of Jordan was the only one to listen to such a plan. He was preparing to negotiate with Israel on the PLO's behalf.

For eight months, Arafat pursued that diplomatic road to peace. But under pressure from PLO hardliners and Arab states, he suddenly withdrew his support for the negotiations.

Then came the rebellion in Beka'a, and the ouster from Syria, leaving Arafat with the biggest leadership crisis since he became PLO chairman in '69.

The Bible speaks of endtime leaders who would play a prominent role in mideast affairs and students of Bible Prophecy have watched Arafat and the PLO to evaluate their actions.

Dr. Daniel Fuchs writes his observations in THE CHOSEN PEOPLE magazine (July, 1983) saying, "We don't defend all of Israel's acts, but the Palestinians are still at war with Israel. They continue to make terrorist attacks on the Jewish people." Thus, he suggests "the PLO is not looking for a homeland for the Arabs, but it is adamant in its plan to drive Israel into the sea."

In Psalms 83, the enemies of Israel are also said to be the enemies of God. We read, "For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."

Then we read concerning the enemies of Israel, "Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame and perish: That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth."

Wait and see, and you'll find the nations of earth will one day discover that God is the Lord. How? By watching the defeat of those nations, including Russia, that come against Israel.

Look at Ezekiel 38 where armies from the north, led by a leader called Gog, pounce on Israel. This is believed to be a reference to the leader of the Soviet Union.

As a result of that invasion, we read: "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. 38:23)

Witnessing marvelous victories against great odds should cause Israel, too, to recognize that the Almighty has been fighting on their side. Look at Chapter 39 of Ezekiel, verse 22. "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward."

And the reaction of the nations to the defeat of Russia and nations allied with her is expressed in verse 23, "And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hands of their enemies: so they fell all by the sword."

The tragedy is that many today do not know who is their Messiah and even the most devout demonstrate in opposition to the truth that could save and free them.

Isaiah prophesied that there would come a time when Israel would

harden its heart, and close its eyes, to the truth of divine revelation. Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 13:14 when He said, "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed: lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Did you hear it?

When Isaiah asked, "How long . . ." before Israel's conversion, he was told, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return . . ."

Beloved, that is what we are seeing today.

In the history of Israel there has always been a "remnant—a spiritual Israel within the nation Israel. And, as the Scofield Bible notes suggest, "During the church-age the remnant is composed of believing Jews (Rom. 11:4, 5). But the chief interest in the remnant is prophetic. During the great tribulation a remnant of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah . . . Some of these will undergo martyrdom (Rev. 6:9-11), some will be spared to enter the millennial kingdom (Zech. 12:6-13:9)."

The Apostle Paul comments on those who have not as yet recognized their Messiah, saying: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

We are living in the "times of the Gentiles." Actually, we are in a transition time when God is dealing graciously with Israel while at the same time He is wooing all men unto Himself.

Not until Christ returns as the prince of peace will the world receive Him. He is coming as the Messiah to Israel. And to all He will be recognized as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Speaking before the United Nations, Yasser Arafat spoke of himself as a peacemaker. Said Arafat, "I have come here with a gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other. He warned the world not to let the olive branch of peace fall from his grasp. For if it did, there could never be a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem.

But Arafat could not bring peace. Two years later, the Palestinians were fighting again in Lebanon.

In Lebanon, the PLO found a deeply divided society. They sided with leftist Lebanese against the right-wing Christian factions. Civil war broke out and, paradoxically, the Syrians intervened against the PLO to end the conflict.

Ever since, the PLO and the Syrians have been at loggerheads.

A clash between Syria's Pres. Assad and Arafat was inevitable. Syria wanted Lebanon as a buffer zone between Israel and itself. The Syrians also wanted greater control over PLO activities from their territory. This is because Syria is now the only Arab state bordering Israel in which the PLO is allowed to operate.

Syrian interference in PLO affairs hasn't improved relations between the two.

However, the objective of both Syria and the PLO is the destruction of Israel.

Arafat has boasted, "Peace for us means the destruction of Israel." Not to be misunderstood, the PLO chief repeated, "The destruction of Israel is the goal of our struggles, and the guide-lines of that struggle have remained firm since the establishment of the Fatah in 1965."

There is no doubt that Arafat may have mellowed in recent years. The challenge to his leadership came with Syria wanting to establish firmer control over the PLO.

The PLO is now Syria's responsibility. Pres. Assad realizes the implications: Jordan in 1970 - Lebanon in 1976.

Wherever it is based, the PLO brings trouble. This is why the PLO inside Syria could bring instability at home, or war with Israel.

The challenge to Arafat's leadership of the PLO resulted largely from Soviet infiltration into Syria.

And, as Drew Middleton, in a copyrighted article in the NEW YORK TIMES, notes, President Assad of Syria is "slowly becoming a prisoner of the Soviet Military, which, in addition to introducing the surface-to-air missiles, has established a radar network in Syria linked to air bases in the southern region of the Soviet Union."

As it appears, Russia is running the show in Syria, and to compromise means death.

Take Issam Sartawi, a close friend of Arafat, who was gunned down in Portugal. His offense? He was working for peace and openly advocated recognizing Israel's right to exist.

Sartawi's death is only one example of the hatred and the violence that this whole question of Palestine creates.

In Ezekiel 38 when Russia seeks to invade Israel, we read where the Lord says, "I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother."

In the PLO offices in Beirut when a bomb went off, twenty people were killed and 100 were injured. The bomb was planted by PLO opponents. Bombs against PLO men are being planted by other PLO men. This is the house of one commander. He was killed because he went over to the rebels.

The present struggle in the PLO is finding man's sword against his brother.

Regardless of man's attempt to end the struggle and find peace, we repeat, there is no peace until we trust Christ as our Saviour and Lord who gives a change of heart.

President Assad observed that Israel's territorial "ambitions" extended all the way to Turkey.

Said Assad, "This is not a false claim or conclusion, but is based on what is contained in the documents of our enemies . . ."

To what document was he referring? Actually he was speaking about the Bible.

Testified Assad, "They teach them that Israel must extend from the

river of Egypt to the Great River. And they mean from the Nile to the Euphrates."

Indeed, that is the title deed God gave to Abraham, saying, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Gen. 15:18)

It is not God's intention that Israel lose the land she has gained, but that she gain more land.

In Genesis 13, God told Abraham, "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 forever."

Although Israel was driven from her land because of her sins and disobedience, we read in Isaiah 14:1, "The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land."

This we have seen happen. And all of the attempts of men like Arafat and Assad to destroy Israel has met in failure.

We might ask, what assurance does Israel have that God will keep His promise to give this land for perpetual generations?

Turn yet to Jeremiah 31:35-37 where we read, "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:"

Notice what we read, "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."

Did you hear it?

My friend, God keeps His Word.

Again we read, "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." (Jer. 31:35-37)

These verses tell us that the nation of Israel will survive the attacks of men like Arafat and Assad, and will withstand the pressures of Syrian armies and Soviet armies, and the armies of the whole world.

For God hath said, "If the enemies of Israel can blot out the sun, the moon and the stars, then they can also cut off the seed of Israel from being a nation before me forever."

Yes, tribulation is ahead! It's referred to as the "time of Jacob's trouble!" But Israel will be spared through it.

Writes Jeremiah, "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."

This is what we have seen in our day—Israel returning to her land.

Then notice what we read, (v. 7), "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

Now verse 11, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee . . ."

Here the Lord is saying there is the possibility destruction will come to all nations to which the Jews have been scattered, but Israel will never be destroyed.

Verse 16 says, "Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured."

That includes the United States. We have harbored Jews and have treated them kindly and God has blessed this nation.

But when this day of awful tribulation comes—when Israel faces her "time of trouble," we, too, will experience calamity. It will be great tribulation such as the world has never seen, nor shall ever see, said Jesus.

No wonder He urges us, saying, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

How wonderful there is a message of hope—the possibility of escape from coming judgment seen befalling this earth on account of its sins.

That escape is the coming of Jesus Christ for His own.

Are you ready for that event?

Make sure by giving your heart and life to the Saviour.

Pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I do here and now receive you as my Saviour and Lord. I invite you to come into my heart to save me and forgive me of all my sins. Cleanse me with your precious blood and make me yours to do your will until you come."

Pray that prayer and mean it.

"And, be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!"

Hebron . . . City of Refuge or City of Rage



Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kolleck has noted in the past 16 years the city of Jerusalem has been comparatively quiet and peaceful.

Said Kolleck, "We were warned in 1967, when the city was united, we would have rape and murder and communal clashes. We didn't. In a period in which many civilized cities experiences clashes, Jerusalem remained quiet."

A city that has been experiencing violence has been that of Hebron.

David Richardson, reporter for the JERUSALEM POST, notes: "The nerve endings of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians are most exposed in Hebron." (July, 1983)

An article in TIME magazine (3/31/80) explains, "Situated in the Judean hills 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem, Hebron is an ancient site revered by both Jews and Muslims. Jews believe it was the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Muslims also revere Abraham as a prophet and call the town Al-Khail, (meaning 'Friend of God') after him."

Hebron, once a city of refuge, is more like a city of rage. Reports of vandalism abound as a result of Jewish-Arab strife. Grapevines of Arab farmers are cut. Tires of Arab-owned vehicles have been slashed and windows smashed. Homes of Hebron residents have been demolished.

As a city of refuge it was meant to be a place of safety. These cities of refuge, and there were six altogether, were designed to shelter any person who had accidentally committed manslaughter. If a person had slain a fellow creature by accident or in self-defense, he could flee to a city of refuge where there was protection. No part of Palestine was far from a city of refuge.

In Numbers 35:6 we read, "And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer . . ."

BIBLE PATHWAYS has this comment: "God provided cities of refuge to protect those who had unintentionally killed someone. If the manslayer could escape to one of these cities, he would be safe until a fair trial could be held.

If the crime was proven to be justifiable or accidental, he was to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. As long as he was there, he was protected against the avenger. But if he left the city before the high priest died, he could be legally put to death.

However, if the crime was proven to be deliberate murder, the guilty person was given over to the avenger to be put to death.

To spare the life of a guilty murderer would defile the nation. For the murderer had destroyed another who was created in the image of God.

Ray Saidel, Mideast Correspondent for the MANCHESTER UNION LEADER, comments on an article in the NEW YORK TIMES which made reference to "the Arab city of Hebron." He calls this "a strange description" for Hebron was a city mentioned in the Bible in connection with Abraham and a Hebrew culture.

He writes, "According to history, tradition and the Bible, Hebron is the burial place of the Hebrew Patriarchs and their wives; they were interred there 4,000 years ago; it's where Abraham pitched tent after traveling from Bethel: it was Judah's capital until David united the Kingdoms. Current Jewish claims in Judah and Samaria (the West Bank) are grounded in antiquity."

He notes, "It's ironic, fascinating—as if he expected future Hebron problems—that the first Hebrew, Abraham, insisted on buying the land (he refused to accept it as a gift), establishing exceptional title forever. Later, in Genesis 49, a dying Jacob (who has been renamed Israel) reiterates the claim: "Bury me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Machpela, facing Mamre, in the land of Canaan, the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite . . ."

Says Saidel, "Even to a non-religious type—the Bible is a pretty impressive deed."

The ancient site of Hebron is revered by both Jews and Muslims since it is believed to be the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

What is the truth concerning Hebron? The headlines shriek out the news, "Israel Seizes Arab Land," referring to Jews wanting to occupy Hebron.

Knesset Member Meir Cohen says, "The situation today in the areas prove that stones are more effective than bullets. Our soldiers know how to deal with bullets, but they stand helpless when stones are thrown at them."

PLO leader Yasser Arafat paid tribute to what he called the "rock kids" who are at the forefront of the "Palestinian resistance" in these areas.

Because of the difficulty in catching stone-throwing youths, who disappear into the narrow alleys, it is hoped that such tactics as the employment of a water cannon with an indelible dye will help identify offenders.

Hebron, incidentally, was one of the cities of refuge that is mentioned in Joshua 29:7.

Once again Hebron needs to become a city of refuge where Jews and Arabs can get along with one another.

Benny Shalita, a member of the Israeli Knesset, declared: "Peace will come when the Arabs of Israel understand that the Jews of Israel are their real brother."

Tewfik Zayyad, as communist mayor of Nazareth, commented on the road building that is promoted by the Ministry of Tourism. Said the mayor, "Unless we build a future for the two peoples in their common land, all those roads will go nowhere."

What is the solution?

It would solve the problems of both Jews and Arabs if they were allowed to settle and get along one with the other.

Looking back to Abraham, we have a perfect example of cooperation and harmony between two peoples.

Remember how God told Abraham that this land would be his for perpetual generations. Yet, when Sarah died, we see him offering to buy the land that was already his by divine covenant, and which was offered him at no charge. Listen to the conversation.

See Abraham as he stands before the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." We hear the reply, "Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead."

Here Abraham is offered the land as a gesture of friendship. He bows respectfully, but requests the cave of Machpelah "for as much money as it is worth." Ephron, who apparently owned the cave, replied, "Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee."

Abraham responds by saying, "But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there."

Why didn't Abraham take the field and the cave when they were offered to him? After all, the Lord told him repeatedly that the land would be his to possess.

Knowing Abraham's kindness to Lot, he probably was kind to these people as well. He had done many favors for them. Why could they not give him the land?

But instead, Abraham insists, "What is your price? I want to pay."

Notice how quickly Ephron changed his tune. Instead of wanting to give Abraham the land, he now asks an exorbitant price. He says to Abraham, "The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver."

Abraham did not bicker with him which is so common in that part of the world. You don't buy anything without realizing the merchant has put a high price on the commodity, expecting to barter with you.

But without bickering, without bartering, Abraham weighs out the silver.

Dr. Leslie Madison, president of Calvary Bible College in Kansas City, Missouri, says that is a lesson here for all of us. He writes, "Many a

believer would do well to follow in father Abraham's example." He notes, "Abraham demonstrates the good qualities of a Godly, perceptive business man. The believers should not be caught in the philosophy. 'The world owes me a living' or the mentality of 'Everyone else is getting a government handout; why shouldn't I?'" He adds, "It is a shame that many believers are caught in the trap of the "freebies" that are offered today.

Abraham, a man of faith, proves that God blesses and rewards honesty with integrity.

Remember the time Lot was taken captive with the loss of all his goods. Abraham armed his trained servants and rescued Lot. The king of Sodom wanted to reward Abraham, saying, "Give me the persons and take the goods to thyself." After all, Abraham deserved to be rewarded.

Abraham replies, "God is the possessor of heaven and earth." Said Abraham, "I have vowed that I will not take from a thread to a shoe latchet, and I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abraham rich."

What an example!

Abraham is a perfect example of one whose trust was in the Lord. We might ask—where is our trust today?

Are we trusting our job? our Social Security check? Medicare? All of this is great, but let's make sure our trust is in the Lord.

How easy it is when we feel a pain to call the doctor, or buy some medicine, when maybe the Lord would like for us to search our hearts, pray, and even call the elders of the church to pray. For this is God's prescription.

Could it be that funds that are desperately needed to support missionary ministries often find their way into insurance programs or hospital bills? Perhaps some operations are necessary, but it is well known that our trust is not in the Lord as it should be.

"Do we not know, without faith it is impossible to please God?"

The Psalmist declares, "some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God!" (Psa. 20:7)

We would not for a moment belittle the work of doctors who are trained to cope with man's ills. On the other hand, we would honor the Word of God which says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." (James 5:13)

While admitting it is easier to take a pain pill than to pray, the aspirin may not have lasting results, whereas prayer works and glorifies God in the process of working.

For we read. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." (James 5:15)

Did you hear it?

We don't like to think that our condition may relate to sin in our lives, but the Scripture relates the two. It is possible that our physical condition may be the result of worry, disobedience, or some habit or lust that overwhelms us.

God's will is that we be healed, but in the process He wants us to be spiritually revived and blessed.

In Hebrews 12 we read, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Thus, God's best for us is that we be healed rather than be lame; that we walk on "straight paths" rather than live crooked lives.

The reason for His chastenings in this chapter are set forth as follows:

First, for our profit, James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers testings." As gold tried in the fire, we are purified by our afflictions, for we are made to pray. When everything goes well, we are apt not to pray. So there are things which we go through "for our profit."

Second, we are chastened "that we might be partaker of his holiness." (Heb. 12:10)

It is in view of the coming of the Lord that we have this call to heart purity: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

In 1 Thes. 4:7 we're reminded, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." Here holiness is the opposite of sexual immorality.

And, third, chastening produces the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." In Heb. 12:11 we read, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

God is constantly at work trying to purge, purify and perfect His holiness within us.

The writer of the Hebrews testifies, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12:6-8)

These verses remind us that if we are children of God, and living in sin, it is evidence that chastening is coming or it is evidence that we were never "sons," never saved.

May God help us!

What will it take for many to be ready for the coming of the Lord? While God speaks to us from a heart of love, and through His Word, it is clearly taught that chastening is ahead for the world.

For example, God says to Israel, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." (Jer. 30-11).

God's purpose in the Middle East is to prepare the way for the coming of His Son, the Messiah. And, a time of chastening—of correction is ahead!

Likewise, the Laodicean Church, which many believe represents the last church age of which we are a part, finds our Lord promising to spue out those who are neither hot nor cold but lukewarm. Then we have the Lord saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Rev. 3:19)

God's call today is that we repent. We need to turn from our sins to trust the Saviour and get ready for His coming!

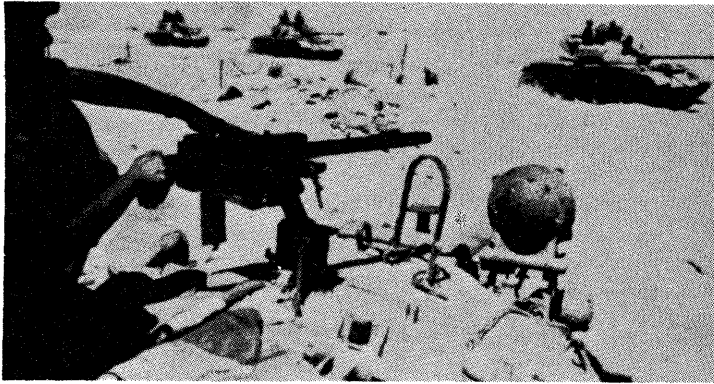
We need to pray and invite the Lord to come into our hearts. To the Laodiceans, he says: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Have you opened the door of your heart?

Right now, invite the Saviour to come in. Pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. Forgive me of all my sins. Make me yours to do your will, and keep me ready for your coming, I pray. Amen."

"And, be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Future of the West Bank



U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT states: "Despite U.S. efforts to mediate a settlement, the West Bank seems certain to remain a major roadblock to peace for many months, if not years, to come." (Apr. 11, 1983)

It is further maintained that because of Israeli policy, "The face of the West Bank—or Judea and Samaria, as many settlers call it—is being dramatically changed."

Declares this publication, "Behind current West Bank tension is the relentless expansion of Israeli settlements." (Mar. 21, 1983 *Worldgram*)

Of course, one reporter comments, "Jews always had settlements in the West Bank."

Declared I.L. Kenen, "I saw them when I traveled with the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine in 1947. They were at Etzion. They were at Hebron, where David was crowned king."

But it is noted: "All these settlements—and Jerusalem—were occupied by the Jordanians in 1948. They were liberated by Israelis in the Six-Day War."

Declares Kenen in the **NEAR EAST REPORT**, "Those who call them 'occupied' territories, and call for a freeze, ignore history."

TIME magazine reported back in May, 1976 how 40,000 marchers, most of them Orthodox Jews, came from all over Israel in support of occupancy of the West Bank. They descended upon the ancient city of Jericho for a 24-mile march to the town of Bethel. At Bethel, ten miles north of Jerusalem, they erected a large white banner which read, "The Lord said unto Abraham . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it: for I will give it you."

Said **TIME** of these marchers, they "take Jehovah's commandment from the Book of Genesis with fanatic literalness. To them, it means that Jews, as Abraham's descendants, have a God-given birthright to the West Bank of the Jordan. For it was at Bethel that the Lord is said to have commanded Abraham." (**TIME**, 5/3/76)

As already mentioned, Jews speak of the West Bank as Judea and Samaria.

Samaria, you may recall, was Elisha's headquarters.

Josephus, the historian, said of the district of Samaria that it

occupied central Palestine, between Galilee on the north and Judaea on the south.

He said that when the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans claimed that they were allied to them in blood relationship; but when they saw them in adversity, they declared they had no relationship with them, but were descended from the Assyrian immigrants.

Remember when Jesus met a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, he asked her for a drink.

She replied, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?"

Later on in John 4:25 the woman testified, saying, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he cometh, he will tell us all things."

Our Lord could turn to her and say, "I that speak unto thee am he."

Because of her witness we read how "many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him."

We might ask, What kind of witness are we? Because of our testimony do we influence others to let them know that Jesus came to be their Saviour? And He is coming again as Israel's Messiah and as our Lord and King.

A biblical scholar at Jerusalem's Hebrew University confirms that "the Promised Land always includes Judea and Samaria . . ." On that basis, Prime Minister Begin believes Jews have a right to occupy the land.

When asked by Pres. Jimmy Carter to refrain from new settlements on the West Bank, Begin replied: "We stand on the right of Jews to live in any part of Israel."

Israel has just celebrated its 35th anniversary.

A look back to the founding of the modern state of Israel found David Ben Gurion declaring this to be "one of the greatest miracles of modern times."

Ben Gurion read from Amos 9:14-15, where the Lord declared: "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; and they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."

Thus, Israel's establishment as a nation back in her land is one of the greatest fulfilments of Bible Prophecy, reminding us of Isaiah's words: "The Lord will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." (Isa. 14:1) And in Ezekiel 37:21 we read: "Thus saith the Lord, behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone . . . and bring them into their own land."

The NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC reported the return of Jews to their homeland as "the greatest exodus since Moses led their ancient ancestors out of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land."

This magazine went on to say "Jews left their homes on five continents to converge on a small new country, Israel. A 2000-year-old

dream was coming true. They left New York apartments and the deserts of Iraq and Yemen. They sailed from Indian villages, Polish ghettos and Brazilian cities. From Australian farms and Moroccan towns, from Displaced Persons Camps in Germany and Chinese hamlets came the humantide. They are white-skinned, yellow-skinned, black and brown-skinned. Their faces reflect world-wide origins." (May 8, 1971)

Since the rebirth of the state of Israel the population has increased over six-fold, from 650,000 to nearly four million. The early Zionist pioneers had to absorb thousands of destitute refugees, some escaping the holocaust in Europe, and others expelled from Arab lands, to find freedom in Israel.

One of the many interesting passages which refers to Israel's Regathering is found in Isa 43:5-6 where we read: "Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth."

The word for "south" here is really the word in Hebrew for "Yemen." So what God was saying was, "I will say to Yemen, Keep not back." More than 40,000 Jews walked through desert sands for days and weeks to reach Aden from Southwest Arabia. There they were flown to Israel. It's recorded that Jews would return on "eagles' wings" so that the airplane is believed to have had prophetic significance as well.

NEWSWEEK magazine wrote of those early days of Israel's development, saying: "Today . . . resourceful Jews have forged an amazing success story in the Biblical desert." It noted further, "The Israelis have cultivated the fertile valleys of Galilee and brought sections of the vast Negev into bloom . . ."

We're reminded of what the Bible says in Isaiah 35:1-2, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly . . ." Although this is a prophecy relating to the Kingdom Age, we're seeing a preview of its fulfillment today.

These developments were not without hardships. Malaria-infested fields were transformed into an Adamic paradise—a reminder of what we read in Ezekiel 36:35. "And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden . . ."

Incidentally, it was at a meeting of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, on July 9, 1947, that the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem was questioned about the Jews' right to occupancy of the land. Rabbi Fischman was asked, "According to the Jews, was their return to their country to take place with the appearance of their Messiah?" His reply: "No, in accordance with the Jewish tradition, the Jews should return to Palestine before the Messiah comes, and Jerusalem should be a part of Palestine. Only then, (declared the rabbi . . .) the Messiah will arrive."

Since that conversation Israel has been re-established as a nation, and Christ's return hastens.

Our Lord, in the parable of the fig tree, stated: "When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near. So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors."

Although the Scripture here doesn't identify Israel as the fig tree, we see significance in identifying her politically as a fig tree, and spiritually as an olive tree. Thus, witnessing her appearance politically makes us wonder if Christ's coming is not at the "doors."

I hope you notice the word "doors" is used by Jesus to identify, we believe, the two aspects of His coming. For we see Him coming first for His own in the event we call the rapture. Then we see Him coming back to reign upon this earth as "King of kings and Lord of lords."

William E. Blackstone, in his book, **JESUS IS COMING**, relates: "If Israel is beginning to show signs of national life and is actually returning to Palestine, then surely the end of this dispensation is nigh, even at the doors."

Did you hear it?

How exciting to live in these days when the coming of our Lord is imminent.

As the Psalmist writes, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." (Psa. 102:16)

Israel is back in her land, and momentarily we anticipate our Lord's coming.

Witnessing Jews trickle back to their land one at a time makes us think of what we read in Isa. 27:12-13. "Ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown."

In one of the **WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA** it is stated concerning the shophar, or ram's horn, "It was believed that it would be blown on the last day, to summon men before God."

Whether there is significance to the blowing of the ram's horn, we know there is coming a time when the Bible says, "The trump of God shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord!"

Is this your hope?

It is to be lamented that Jews in Israel cannot receive Christ the Messiah and be accepted. There is violent reaction when a Jew turns to the Saviour.

As Shlomo Hizak, director of the Mount of Olives International Bible Center, has stated, "A Jew can be a criminal Jew, an atheist Jew, a Communist Jew, and still be accepted. Why don't the people accept a Jew who believes in the Messiah?"

Today Israel is blinded to the truth of Christ's appearance as their true Messiah. But there is coming a day when every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

Why not bow to Him now? If you have never received the Saviour, do it now. There is no salvation apart from Him.

Pray this prayer: "Lord, I do here and now receive you as my Saviour. I believe you died on the cross for my sins, rose again, and that you're coming again for all who are ready to meet you.

Pray that prayer and mean it. Live for Jesus every day.

And, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!"

Mideast Division

WILLIAM KAREL—SYGMA



Maale Adumin is a Jewish settlement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, one of many now appearing all over the area.

Settlements like this are part of a new Israeli push to colonize the West Bank with thousands of settlers as quickly as possible. The reason? At present, the West Bank belongs to no one legally. The Palestinians claim it and want to have it as their homeland. The Israelis are against that. They also claim the West Bank as their own.

The West Bank is central to Israel's way of thinking. The Israeli government doesn't want a Palestinian state parked on its doorstep at any cost. And that's why Israel is pouring its people on to the West Bank. The Israelis don't believe any state the PLO or the Palestinians set up could live peacefully by their side.

All of this is a provocation and a challenge to the Palestinians. Led by Yasser Arafat, they are out to have it changed.

The Israelis are busy creating facts right under their noses, and there's little they can do about it. A response might have come from the PLO, but Israel has dealt with that, too.

Israel's invasion of Lebanon was not just to create security for Northern Galilee. It was to hit the Palestinians in Lebanon. By attempting to crush the PLO, Israel also crushed any immediate Palestinian hopes of a homeland on the West Bank.

In Beirut, Israel achieved its aim. The PLO was crushed and scattered to the four corners of the Arab world. Now defeated and in the wilderness, the PLO is no longer a military threat to Israel.

There is no doubt that Yasser Arafat has mellowed since he became part of an Arab gang in Jerusalem in the late 1940s.

A member of that gang recalls what happened when they came under fire from the British police. He comments, "Yasser pulled out his gun to shoot back, but pulled the trigger too soon. He shot himself in his thigh."

The wound was superficial—a flesh wound that soon would heal.

However, Arafat went on to boast, "The goal of our struggle is the end of Israel, and there can be no compromise."

Although Arafat may be on his way out, in the West Bank and Gaza area the support of the PLO leader has increased.

An opinion poll conducted by an Arab newspaper asked the question, Do you support the continuation of Yasser Arafat as leader of the Palestinian march?

According to the poll, 92 percent said yes, 5.4 percent said no, and 2.4 percent had no opinion.

Meir Cohen, a member of the Israeli Knesset, says the best answer to the unrest in Judea and Samaria and the West Bank is for Jewish towns to be built next to Arab towns.

At a meeting in Tiberias, attended by both Jews and Arabs, the purpose stated was to reduce tensions and increase understanding between the two groups.

For after all, are not both Jews and Arabs descendants of Abraham?

When Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him, saying, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

This is what God is saying to each of us today. If we want to merit God's blessing, it is needful that we walk by faith in a life of purity and holiness before Him.

Then the Lord said, "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations." (Gen. 17:4)

Again He repeats His oath, saying, "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." (v. 6)

Now remember, Isaac was not yet born. Only Ishmael was born to Abraham of Hagar, Sarah's handmaid.

Although there was the promise of many nations to come from Abraham, we read, "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant, and with his seed after him." (v. 19)

So Isaac is specifically mentioned as the true heir through which the everlasting covenant has been given concerning the land. For the Lord had said to Abraham, "I will give unto thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession . . ."

Did you hear it?

But what about Ishmael? Will he, too, become a great nation?

Look at verse 20 (Gen. 17), "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee, Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."

Did you hear it?

Later, when Isaac was born, Sarah said that Hagar and her son must leave. This saddened Abraham. But we read: "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; FOR IN ISAAC SHALL THY SEED BE CALLED." This clearly established the offspring of Isaac as the seed of Abraham.

What about Ishmael?

The next verse says, "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." (v. 21)

It is not God's intention that Jews and Arabs remain apart. There are many Christian Arabs today who love the Lord. And there are attempts at Jews and Arabs to live and work and play together.

The mayor of Afula, one of the initiators of the Tiberias meeting, declared, "We have our differences of opinion, differences in our view of the world. What we must look for is common ground, consensus. In the development of Galilee, when a road is built, both Arabs and Jews drive on it." So both must work together now, he stressed.

Well, God has ordained that in Jesus Christ we are one. This is true between Arabs and Jews. However, some denominations have not recognized that Christ unites us as we come to know Him as Saviour and Lord. And, testified Jesus, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, explains it so well how that Israel was God's chosen seed, and all who were not of Israel were outcasts.

But we read in Eph. 2:12-14, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

We surely were a poor, helpless people, whether Gentiles, Greeks, Chinese, Arabs—what have you.

Verse 13, "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Yes, through Christ's death and resurrection we are united in Him as one.

Verse 14, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."

Whether Jew or Arab, the cry in the Middle East is for peace.

But, the Bible tells us that by coming to know Christ as our Saviour and Lord, we find peace. The walls that divide us are broken down. The partition is no longer there.

If you cannot meet with another believer, and choose to fellowship only with your own denomination or your own church, you have missed one of the greatest truths in the Bible—that we are one in Christ.

In fact, that's what the Holy Spirit is doing today. He is uniting believers. For the fruit of the Spirit is love exhibited for one another.

Jude warns of those who would come in the last time, mockers, "who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. THESE BE THEY WHO SEPARATE themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

Beloved, is this what God sees when He looks at us today? Do we separate ourselves? Are we like those at Corinth who said, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ"?

Asks the Apostle, "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1:12-13a)

The answer is "No."

Beloved, is this what God sees when He looks at us today? Do we separate ourselves? Are we like those at Corinth who said, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ?"

Asks the Apostle, "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1:12-13a)

The answer is "No!"

It's time we stop going around identifying ourselves according to some man-made label and identify ourselves as true blood-bought followers of Jesus Christ.

We don't go around checking the label of the shirt you are wearing—Arrow, Pilgrim, Van Heusen. Rather, the importance is that you have on a clean shirt. So, it is important that you have been cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ. For "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

That's the important part of this message. Have you been cleansed from sin?

Don't allow another moment to go by without making sure you are cleansed from sin.

When John, in Revelations, introduces Jesus, He writes, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:5b-6)

Accept Christ as your Saviour who loved you and washed your sins away, and become a member of royalty. You can be a king and a priest unto our God in a relationship that is more real than any earthly relationship.

We hear the term, "born again," used to describe all kinds of experiences. But in the Word of God it is a description of what happens when a person leaves the family of Satan and becomes a member of the family of God.

To the Pharisees our Lord said, "Ye are of your father, the devil," for they sought to kill him.

But when you invite Christ into your heart and life, you become a child of God. You are born into the family of God.

If you've never done so, pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. But I believe you died on the cross, shedding your precious blood to save me. I here and now receive you as my Saviour and Lord, to live for you. By the help of your Holy Spirit fill my heart with your love so that I love everybody and no longer have hatred and bitterness in my heart. Forgive me of all my sins and make me yours to do your will until you come. Amen."

Peter says, "Being born again . . . by the word of God," so read your Bible and pray everyday.

Ask the Lord to be with you. When you wake up in the morning, pray, "Lord, guide me today. Keep me from sin and wrong. And help me to live for you." At night, thank the Lord for watching over you and protecting you. Ask forgiveness if you have done wrong and claim the promise of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Ask forgiveness of anyone you may have wronged—your wife, your husband, your children, your parents. Get everything right between you and God and between you and your fellowmen.

Jesus is coming, and He bids us to be ready."

For, He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Tribute to Begin



A poll conducted by U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT placed Menachem Begin, premier of Israel, as third in its list of "most influential foreign statesmen."

Quite an honor for a man who has served his country as prime minister!

NEWSWEEK once said of Mr. Begin, "He is a twentieth-century zealot who puts his faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and his trust in F-16s and Sherman tanks."

Mark Segal, correspondent for the JERUSALEM POST, said it was significant that the premier's birthday should fall on Shabbat Nahamu when the solemn phrase is uttered, "Nahamu, nahamu, ami" from Isaiah 40, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, O my people, saith your God."

Continuing, we read: "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

Jerusalem, city of peace, has suffered much. Her days of grief are not ended.

Addressing Jewish leaders in New York City, Mr. Begin said, "Israel would go to war for the sake of Jerusalem, to keep this city an undivided capital of Israel."

He added, "Jerusalem will remain for all eternity, the capital city of Israel; it will never be divided." This brought Begin a standing ovation.

"There are things for which we would fight," he again noted, "and one is Jerusalem."

Menachem Begin's career really started when Israel was a part of the British mandate in Palestine. At that time he was ruthlessly dedicated to the forced eviction of the British: And he was set upon the creation of an independent Israel.

With his guerrilla group, the Irgun, Begin seized every opportunity to achieve this end.

They bombed the King David hotel, killing a hundred, and executed British security personnel. As a result of this campaign of terror he became one of the most wanted men in Israel. With his guerrilla group, the Irgun, Begin saw violence as a legitimate means to win respect for the rights of Israel. Begin saw himself as a freedom fighter and not a terrorist. With a passionate belief in the righteousness of his cause, he became a rather dangerous enemy. For him, it was the Biblical "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

A look back into Begin's past found he was born in August, 1913, in Brest-Litovsk, a city—then in Poland, and now in the Soviet Union.

He became aware very young that being a Jew meant discrimination and persecution.

At the age of 16 he joined Betar, a Zionist youth movement of which he became the head. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Russians arrested him and sent him to Siberia. Released in 1942, he joined Polish contingents in Palestine.

The following year he assumed command of the Irgun and began his anti-British activities. His passionate belief was almost a Bible-based conviction that the land of Israel should become a haven for all Jews. It was to be a refuge from persecution where all could live in peace and security. The guerrilla struggle finally culminated in the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. But without the glamorous image he found no place in the new Labour party. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion disliked him. And although Begin was elected to the Knesset, he became known as an extremist until the late 1960s.

Finally, it was the Six-Day War which brought Begin closer to the government. In June, 1967, he joined National Unity as a minister Without Portfolio.

However, he wasn't happy. He believed all lands captured from the Arabs should remain a part of greater Israel.

As concerns the West Bank, Prime Minister Begin went before the Israeli Parliament to declare it will be for "the Jewish people for all generations."

The West Bank is Judea and Samaria, integral parts of greater Israel.

In an interview with CHRISTIANITY TODAY, former President Carter said, "There is no doubt that Begin used the ancient Biblical promise as a basis for his claim that Israelis have a right to all the disputed territory."

Said Carter, "Recently he expanded his area of boundary on both sides of the Jordan." He added, "I've always disputed Begin's claim that this fulfills ancient prophecy."

Testified Carter, "I've never really gotten into an argument with Begin on theology or the New Covenant, but I have criticized him because he looks upon the Jews as special people..." (CHRISTIANITY TODAY (3/4/83))

When it comes to the West Bank settlements as fulfilling a Biblical promise to the Jews, Carter testified that Begin "has a single-minded commitment to annex permanently all the other occupied territories."

Some may ask — What about Lebanon? Is Lebanon a part of greater Israel? Was the invasion of Lebanon justified, or was this Begin's Waterloo?

The NEAR EAST REPORT sees Menachem Begin as "an Old Testament warrior, one who is quick to attack when Israel's interests are at stake." Begin is known in Israel as "an honest man, a man of integrity."

Naturally, Mr. Begin would like to be remembered as a man of peace as evidenced in the Camp David accords which he helped to initiate.

Sol Linowitz, who served as President Carter's special Middle East peace negotiator, said of Begin, "There is almost the fervor of an Old Testament prophet about him as he talks about the dangers confronting his small country. He sees in every threat from his Arab neighbor, in every hostile criticism, another reason for fear or concern." He noted, in the Camp David negotiations he would say, time and again, "everything is negotiable except the destruction of Israel."

Faced with harassment on her northern borders, the Israeli army entered Lebanon. The declared aim of the operation was to neutralize Palestinian guerrilla bases threatening northern Israeli settlements.

The sheer ferocity of Israel's attack on Beirut shocked even some of Israel's friends. And Israel's enemies dubbed Begin a war criminal.

However, a search of West Beirut later found 4½ miles of underground tunnels with enough military supplies and ammunition to launch a successful invasion against Israel. In fact, documents were found which reportedly gave instructions for the destruction of Israel's northern cities.

By right, Begin should go down in history as having helped prevent Israel's annihilation by a surprise attack.

The massacres in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps were blamed on Begin. Actually they were carried out by Lebanese Phalangists, although Israeli troops stood nearby.

The question was: Did Begin know? And if he didn't, why not?

When asked where he was during the time of the massacre, he replied that he had spent the day in the Synagogue.

Under pressure Begin set up a commission of inquiry into the massacres. Defense minister Ariel Sharon was blamed but not removed from the cabinet.

The commission accepted that Begin did not know in advance that the Phalangists were going into the camp. As might be expected, they did try to share the blame with him and, as a result, his popularity in the opinion polls suffered greatly.

Because Begin is a man of the Bible, he is a target of those who do not believe the Bible, even from those of his own people.

According to the MEGIDDO MODERN DICTIONARY, the name "Menachem" means "consoler, comforter, and . . . the Messiah."

Yet, Begin has never paraded as a king or political dictator. He has not sought power.

In Jeremiah 30:3 we read, "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."

Begin believed the land that God gave to Abraham was rightfully Israel's to possess. So, when the government considered withdrawal from some of the occupied territories, he resigned from the government to create a new alliance of parties which he called the Likud.

Israel has returned to her land, but she is not in possession of all the land given by divine right.

NEWSWEEK comments: (Aug. 24, 1981) "Begin has given up stealth for speed in the attempt to make the West Bank an inseparable part of 'Eretz Israel'—land of Israel, the studiously vague Biblical term Begin applies to cover all of the Jewish state and much of its disputed territory." In the elections that followed Begin won at the polls because Labour failed to deliver on its socialist promises and the Israelis liked what he had to offer.

With Israel only in partial control of the land God gave to Abraham for an everlasting possession, the Begin government refers to itself as "Western Eretz-Israel." Begin knows there is more to biblical Israel than the land now occupied:

With Israel's religious zealots in power the question was asked whether Begin may go too far, for example, in halting public transportation on the Sabbath.

Writes William Safire in the N.Y. TIMES of Begin: "As a religious Jew, he may sympathize with the strictures of orthodoxy, but as the elected leader of the state of Israel, his duty is to assert the secular power that makes it possible for a Jewish state to survive."

Although elected on a platform of opposing concessions on the occupied territories, Begin did yield on the surrender of Arab land back to Egypt.

In Genesis 15:18 we read: "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." So the covenant included the land from the Nile river to the river Euphrates.

President Anwar Sadat went to Israel in the interest of peace and changed the nature of Middle East politics. Israel was willing to yield control of captured lands, so Begin and Sadat signed the Camp David accords which became the foundations of peace between Israel and Egypt. Thus Begin became the first Israeli Prime Minister to negotiate with an Arab nation. And, for their efforts the two men were given the

Nobel peace prize. However, in Oslo, only Menachem Begin was present for the award ceremony. President Sadat preferred to stay away. Real peace had not yet been signed.

For President Carter an Israeli-Egyptian treaty was the key to peace in the Middle East. For Prime Minister Begin, peace mattered only if Israel won recognition from an Arab nation in the process.

Finally, in March 1979, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat signed the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. President Carter, quoting from the Beatitudes, said in praise for such action, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

On the other hand, Muammar Qadhafy of Libya said Camp David was a sell-out to the Arab cause.

Peace with Israel cost President Sadat his life. He had been condemned by almost all Arab nations. And Egypt became largely isolated from the Arab world.

Prime Minister Begin, who once said he would never give up any part of Biblical Israel, did just that. At great sacrifice, Israel withdrew from the Sinai.

Richard DeHaan, in his book, ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS IN PROPHECY, comments on the future role of these nations. He says, "The Bible expressly declares that Egypt shall some day turn to God, and along with Assyria and Israel enjoy great prosperity in the millennial kingdom." We read, "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance." (Isa. 19:24-25)

In recent months his own health has been a cause for much concern.

Begin's wife Aliza had been a comfort and support to him throughout his embattled career. But when she died, it was a terrible blow—one he still feels keenly.

Then he suffered the loss of his close friend and deputy prime minister, Simcha Ehrlich, who died following a stroke. He had been almost like a brother to Begin.

Comfort is something we all need. but as Dr. Jowett would say, "God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters."

Who have we comforted today?

Eventually we see where Israel will have to go it alone.

Jeremiah, after declaring that Israel would return to her land and they shall possess it, reminds us of troubles and trials that will follow.

We read, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:7)

Then comes the word, "All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not." (Jer. 30:14a)

Have you been forgotten? Are you forsaken by one who was once your lover?

How many tragic letters we receive of marriages that have fallen apart, of mates who have left home, of sadness and bereavement.

Yet our Lord could say, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Heb. 13:5)

And, to His disciples our Lord could say, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Mt. 28:20a)

How sad for those who do not know the Lord and have not this comfort!

Our Lord, facing Calvary and a cross where spikes would be driven through hands and feet, and a sword pushed into His side, could say to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1)

Again in that same chapter He said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." (v. 16)

Do you know this comforter who is the Holy Spirit?

You see, our Lord could not be everywhere at the same time, so upon returning to heaven, He sent His Spirit, saying: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Beloved, if you have never received Christ as your Saviour, you are without this comfort.

But by inviting Christ into your heart and life, you also receive of His Spirit. For said Jesus, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (V.17b)

The word for "Comforter" is the Greek word, "Parakletos," meaning "one called along side to help."

The Holy Spirit is ready to help you, to comfort you, to instruct you.

Again our Lord says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Is this what you want? Do you want peace? Do you long for comfort? Then receive Christ and invite the Holy Spirit to take over in your life.

Why not pray this prayer if you have never done so:

"Dear Lord, I believe you died on the cross for my sins. I do now receive you as my Lord and Saviour, to forgive me of all my sins, and come into my heart to live by your Spirit. I do here and now surrender my life to you completely to do your will and live for you until you come."

Pray that prayer and mean it. Get started in your Christian life by reading your Bible and asking the Lord each day to bless your life, keep and protect you and your loved ones.

You will find He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Live for Jesus every day, for He is coming soon. For He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."