

The Signs of Israel Zechariah 7:1 to 8:13

Introduction

Zechariah Chap 8 begins with 10 promises of blessing, each beginning with the phrase "The Lord says..." This predictive prophecy takes place during the reign of Darius the great king, thought by many at the time to be the embodiment of an empire destined to last many generations. His son Xerxes (of "300" fame) presided over the decline and disintegration of the empire and was eventually murdered.

When God speaks, though all the evidence is to the contrary, God's word is true.

1) Gathering and Blossoming of Israel

The gathering

The most frequently repeated prophecy in the Old Testament is the prediction that the Jewish people will be regathered from the "four corners of the earth" in the end times (Zech 8:7,8; Isaiah 11:10-12). The Bible states that a consequence of this regathering will be the re-establishment of the state of Israel (Isaiah 66:7-8).

The blossoming

The re-establishment of the state of Israel occurred on May 14, 1948. The Scriptures say that once the Jews are back in their land, the land itself will experience a miracle of restoration (Isaiah 35). The desert will bloom and people will exclaim, "This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden" (Ezekiel 36:35).

Another end time miracle is the revival of the Hebrew language. Most people are not aware of the fact that when the Jews were dispersed from their land in 70 A.D., they ceased to speak the Hebrew language. The Jews who settled in Europe developed a new language called Yiddish — a combination of German and Hebrew. The Jews who migrated to the Mediterranean basin created a language called Ladino — a combination of Hebrew and Spanish. The language of Israel today is Hebrew.

2) Jerusalem

Other significant signs of Israel that we are told to watch for in the end times include the reoccupation of Jerusalem (Luke 21:24), the resurgence of Israeli military strength (Zechariah 12:6 *On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a brazier in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.*), and the re-focusing of world politics on Israel (Zechariah 12:3 *On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.*).

This key event was prophesied by Jesus in the same speech, as recorded by Luke: (Luke 21:24 *They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*). The first half of this prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D., forty years after Jesus spoke the words. In that year the Romans under Titus conquered Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews among the nations. Jerusalem remained under Gentile occupation for 1,897 years — until June 7, 1967, when Israel won the city back during the Six Day War.

3) Gathering of the Enemies

In the end times the focus will be on the re-established state of Israel (Zechariah 12:2-3). It will be besieged by a menacing nation from the "remote parts of the north," the nation of "Rosh" — believed by many to be modern day Russia (Ezekiel 38:2,6). There will also be a threatening nation to the East that will be capable of sending an army of 200 million — China? (Revelation 9:13-16 and Revelation 16:12). A third source of danger to Israel will be the Arab nations that immediately surround it. They will covet the land and will try to take it from the Jews (Ezekiel 35:10 *'Because you [Edom] have said, These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them, even though I the LORD was there,* and Ezekiel 36:1-5)

Another key player on the world political scene in the end times will be a coalition of European nations that will form a confederation. Perhaps it will be centred in the area of the old Roman empire or perhaps it will be Roman in its nature (Daniel 2:41-44, Daniel 7:7,23-24, and Revelation 17:12-13). This confederation will serve as the political base for the rise of the Anti-Christ and the creation of his worldwide kingdom (Daniel 7:8).

Conclusion

Many these signs have been fulfilled in the 20th century, but not all. The nation has been re-established, the land has been reclaimed, the ancient language has been revived, the Jews are back in Jerusalem, and Israel is the focal point of world politics.

Jesus says in Luke 21:28 that when these signs begin to happen, we should "straighten up and lift up our heads" because "our redemption is drawing near."

Where are we headed?

- God with us now Heb 13:1-6
- The city to come Heb 13:14-16