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A God's-Eye View of Israel

by Charles E. McCracken

Against all odds and to the chagrin of many, the modern State of Israel once again inhabits a portion of its ancestral homeland. Since its rebirth in 1948, the tiny nation has faced three unsuccessful attempts of annihilation through military aggression, continuous terrorizations and untenable censure.

Some people may view Israel as just another country struggling to exist on the world stage. But, the Bible describes Israel as the only nation in the world to enjoy a singularly unique relationship with God.

GOD CHOSE ISRAEL

There is no question that God took the initiative in establishing a relationship with Abraham, Israel's patriarchal progenitor. It was God who called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees promising to lead Abram (later named Abraham) to a new land. God's call also incorporated a covenant guaranteeing Abram

not only a land, but also a seed and a blessing (Gen 12:1-3). It is a unilateral covenant, commonly called the Abrahamic Covenant, based on God's determination to choose Israel.

In obedience, Abram said goodbye to his extended family, left his home, turned his back on the prevalent culture and followed the only true God. In subsequent generations, God's covenant with Abraham was reaffirmed with his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob whom God renamed "Israel" (Gen. 26:23-24; 28:13-15). Jacob's 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel—God's Chosen People.

God's relationship with Israel is based on His autonomous choice made independently of Israel's merit, descent or cooperation. God is accountable to no one for His choices (Isa. 46:10). And, God chose Israel—it is that simple.

Though man may bristle at God's choice of one people group over another, it is within His right (as

Sovereign of the universe) to choose whomever He wishes for whatever purpose He desires. God testified,

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth (Deut. 7:6; 14:2).

It was a choice integral to God's redemptive plan made before Israel ever became a reality. This is borne out in the Song of Moses found in the book of Deuteronomy, which beautifully describes God's sovereign choice of Israel:

When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.

For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance (Deut. 32:8-9).

Even God's initial placement of people groups on the planet revolved around His ultimate intention to choose Israel.

When God gathered the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai, He underscored His choice of them as a people saying,

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers (Deut. 7:7).

GOD PROTECTS ISRAEL

Moses recounts not only God's choice, but also His protection of Israel stating:

He [God] found him [Israel] in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye (Deut. 32:10).

God's care for Israel is articulated in the tenderest of terms. The word translated "encircled" conveys the idea of surrounding with a defensive shield (cf. Ps. 125:2). Shortly after leaving Egypt, the children of Israel came to *Pi Hahiroth*. Camped in a canyon opening onto the Red Sea, they saw the dust of Pharaoh's chariots approaching behind them. Protected on three sides by the canyon walls and the Red Sea,

the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them (Ex. 14:19).

Providing the fledgling nation with protection on all sides, God miraculously delivered the children of Israel from Pharaoh's army by creating a path through the Red Sea.

Moses also refers to Israel as "the apple of His [God's] eye." This Hebrew idiom describes the pupil of the eye and communicates the highest level of God's care and protection. It is not difficult to visualize the imagery.

King David used the same idiom in a prayer recorded in the book of Psalms where he cried,

*Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,
From the wicked who oppress me,
From my deadly enemies who surround me (Ps. 17:8-9).*

The context again illustrates the focused protection associated with the apple of God's eye.

While many biblical examples could be cited, the fact that there are over

6.2 million Jewish people living in the land originally promised to Abraham is undeniable proof of God's protection through four millennia.

GOD AVENGES ISRAEL

An essential part of the covenant God made with Abraham is the phrase, "I will curse him who curses you" (Gen. 12:3). The grammar denotes that God will bitterly curse all who so much as trifle with Israel.¹ God reiterated the force of that statement some 1,400 years later in His words through Zechariah the prophet: *He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you [Israel] touches the apple of His eye* (Zech. 2:8).

Here, a Messianic prophecy is a powerful reminder of God's determination to avenge Israel. The Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Messiah) is speaking and assures Zechariah that, "the Messiah, after His glorious appearing, is sent to chastise the

nations in executing God's judgments upon them."² Referencing the judgment of the sheep and goats described by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, Gentiles are judged on the basis of their treatment of Israel, the apple of God's eye (Mt. 25:31-46).

There are few things as painful or as infuriating as intentionally being poked in the eye and doing so inevitably brings negative consequences. How much more when the One being poked is the God of Israel?

God warned the people groups claiming the land of Israel as their own during the Babylonian exile that they would suffer the consequences of their actions (Ezek. 36:5, 7). That warning also applies today. **Terrorizing Jewish populations around the world, mercilessly attacking Israel in a nihilistic delusion to remove it from its historic homeland and pressuring Israel to give up land to achieve peace not only has consequences; it is also an exercise in futility.**

Isaiah the prophet says,
*It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams,
And look—he eats;
But he awakes, and his soul is still empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
And look—he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed he is faint,
And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the nations shall be,
Who fight against Mount Zion (Isa. 29:8).*

Expending vast amounts of energy and finances to satiate an unquenchable desire to remove the nation from

the map, God calls those who provoke Israel delusional dreamers.

The message is straightforward. God holds men accountable for their actions toward Israel. History effectively demonstrates the cause and effect of blessing or cursing Israel (Esth. 1-10). Many nations and empires have mistreated Israel and Jewish people over the centuries. Predictably, they have ceased to exist or no longer exercise influence in world affairs.

The modern State of Israel stands as a powerful testimony of God's enduring relationship with His Chosen People. His sovereign choice of Israel is reiterated throughout the pages of the Bible; His tender protection of Israel is documented throughout history; and, His determination to avenge Israel is observed not only in Scripture and historical accounts, but also in modern reality. **Israel is not like other nations of the world—Israel is the apple of God's eye!**

ENDNOTES:

¹ See the online edition of the *Canadian Communiqué*, Summer 2005 for more information.

² Charles Lee Feinberg, "Exegetical Studies in Zechariah Part 4", *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1941 <<https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac098-389-04>>.



**FOR HE WHO TOUCHES
YOU [ISRAEL], TOUCHES
THE APPLE OF HIS EYE.**

ZECHARIAH 2:8



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ISAIAH 29:8

The ALL-SEEING GOD

During the 2014 conflict with Gaza to defend its citizens from continuous rocket attacks, there were many stories demonstrating God's care for Israel.

One such account appeared in the digital edition of *Israel Today* reporting an unnamed Hamas commander being questioned about the inability of "Gaza-based militants" to hit their targets. In response, he is said to have exclaimed, "We do aim [our rockets], but their God changes their path in mid-air".¹

Corroborating God's ability to change the course of Hamas missiles, an Iron Dome battery commander recounts the terrifying moment when a missile from Gaza was screaming toward a densely populated area of Tel Aviv. In his own words, he explained,

"We fired the first [interceptor]. It missed. Second [interceptor]. It missed. This is very rare. I was in shock. At this point we had just four seconds until the missile lands. We had already notified emergency services to converge on the target location and had warned of a mass-casualty incident. Suddenly, Iron Dome (which calculates wind speeds, among other things) shows a major wind coming from the east, a strong wind that . . . sends the missile into the sea. We were all stunned. I stood up and shouted, 'There is a God!'"²

ENDNOTES:

¹ "Iron Dome Operator: God Moved Missile We Couldn't Hit", *Israel Today*, August 3, 2014 <<http://www.israeltoday.co.il/Default.aspx?tabid=178&nid=24811>>.

² Ibid.



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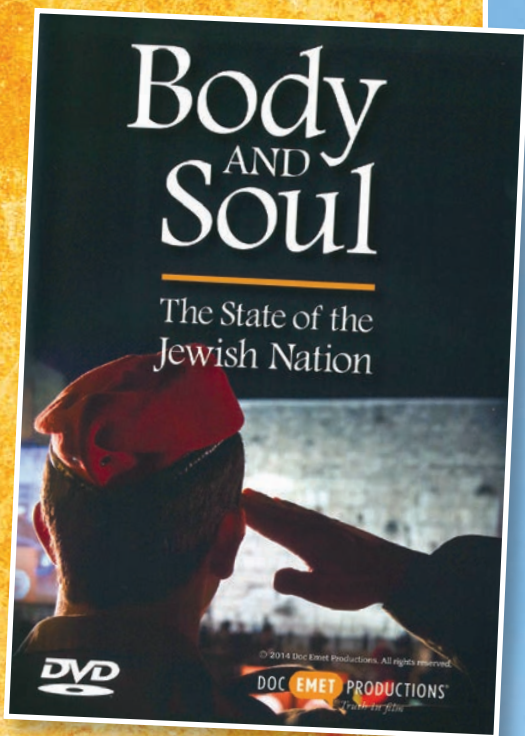
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