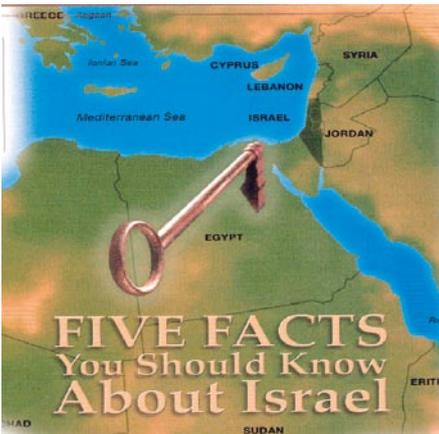


FIVE FACTS **You should know about Israel***

by Dr. Renald E. Showers



Have you ever wondered why Jewish people have been scattered throughout the nations of the world more consistently than any other people? Why anti-Semitism persists in rearing its ugly head repeatedly throughout history? Why Nazism specifically targeted the Jewish people for genocide in the Holocaust of World War II? Why the Jews have endured despite all their persecutions? Why they tenaciously hold on to the land they presently occupy in the Middle East? Why the modern State of Israel, despite its small size, is repeatedly the focus of the world's attention?

The answers to these questions are found in certain basic facts about the nation of Israel. And knowledge of these facts is essential if you want to understand not only these issues, but God's plan and purpose for history.

FACT ONE: Israel Has Had a Unique Relationship With God

Early in Israel's history, God placed the nation into a relationship with Himself that no other nation was privileged to enjoy. In conjunction with that relationship, Moses made the following statements:

"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". (Dt. 7:6; Cf. 10:15;14:2).

"Also today the Lord has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments.

And that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honour, and that you may be a holy people to the Lord your God just as He has spoken." (Dt. 26:18-19).

This unique relationship involved a number of special privileges. First, it involved Israel's adoption as God's firstborn son (Ex. 4:22-23; Rom. 9:4). Second, Israel was permitted to hear God's voice at Mount Sinai (Dt. 4:10, 12, 32-33). Third, Israel saw and enjoyed a unique association with the Shekinah glory of God (Ex. 24:16-17; 40:34-38; Dt. 4:36; 1 Ki. 8:10-11; Rom. 9:4). Fourth, God established covenants with Israel that He never established with any other people (Rom. 9:4). Fifth, God gave the Mosaic law to Israel alone (Dt. 4:5-6, 8, 13; Ps. 147:19-20; Rom. 9:4). Sixth, only Israel had the worship structures (the Tabernacle and Temple) where God dwelt in a unique sense and the divinely ordained priesthood and sacrificial system of those structures (Ex. 25:8-9; 29:43-46; 1 Ki. 6:11-14, 17; Rom. 9:4; Heb. 9:1-10). Seventh, God made promises to Israel that He made to no other nation (Dt. 1:11; 6:3; 12:20). Eighth, Israel had unique, intimate access to God (Dt. 4:7). Ninth, God intervened into history in an unparalleled, supernatural way to deliver Israel from its slavery in Egypt (Dt. 4:32, 34). Tenth, God gave Israel permanent ownership of the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18-21; 17:8). Eleventh, God made Israel's land and capital city (Jerusalem) holy, or unique, because He dwelt there in a unique sense (Neh. 11:1; Zech. 2:10-12; Rev. 11:2).

It is important to note that God established His unique relationship with Israel forever. He intended that relationship to be permanent.

King David declared,
"And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land – before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God" (2 Sam. 7:23-24).

FACT TWO: A Unique Reason Exists for the Special Relationship Between God and Israel

God did not choose Israel to be His special people because they were better than any other people. They were not better. They were descendants of Adam and Eve as were all other people; thus they were born with the same corrupt human nature and tendency to rebel against God as were the Gentiles. Even David, Israel's greatest King, recognized that he was shaped in iniquity and conceived in a state of sin (Ps. 51:5). Moses repeatedly warned the people of Israel that they would



tend to stray from God and His ways, and he told them, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any people; for ye were fewest of all people" (Dt. 7:7-9)

If God did not choose the people of Israel because they were better than other people, why then did He choose them for a unique relationship? According to Scripture, He did it based on His own sovereign will. On the basis of His sovereign will, God performed two special deeds for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Israel's ancestors (Rom. 11:28). First, He made those ancestors the special objects of His love (Dt. 4:37; 10:15) and second, He established a special covenant (the Abrahamic Covenant) with them (Dt. 7:7-9).

The fact that God chose Israel, not because that nation was better than any other but because of two special deeds He performed based on His own sovereign will, seems to imply that God had a sovereign purpose for the nation.

FACT THREE: God Has a Unique Purpose for Israel

At least two details indicate that God indeed has a unique purpose for Israel. First, God declared that He created Israel for His glory (Isa. 43:7). The word *glory* refers to what is impressive, demands recognition, or gives a person influence. Thus God's declaration indicated that, in a unique sense, He has purposed through Israel to impress the world with Himself, to obtain the world's recognition, and to gain influence in the lives of His human creatures.

Second, when God established the Abrahamic Covenant, He not only promised to make a great nation (Israel) of Abraham's physical descendants (Gen. 12:2), but He also vowed that all families of the earth would be blessed through that nation (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 28:14). God thereby indicated that He purposed Israel to function as a unique channel of His blessing to the whole world.

How does God through Israel, bring blessing to the world and glorify Himself before it, thereby fulfilling His unique purpose for that nation? He does so in several ways.

Through His Historic Dealings with Israel. Early in Israel's national history, Moses promised the Israelites that if they heeded

God's Word and obeyed Him, He would do the following for them:

"The Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.....

The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them". (Dt. 28:1,7,13).

Moses also promised that if the Israelites rejected God's Word and disobeyed Him (Dt. 28:15), then the following would happen to them.



"The Lord will send upon you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me....

Therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.

Then the Lord will scatter you among all the peoples from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known – wood and stone.

And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you

a trembling heart, falling eyes and anguish of soul.

Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear the day and night, and have no assurance of life. (Dt. 28:20,48,64-66).

The result of God blessing Israel above all other nations if it heeded and obeyed His Word would be as follows:

"And all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of You". (Dt. 28:10).

The result of God chastening Israel more severely than other nations if it rejected and disobeyed His Word would be this:

"And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among the nations to which the Lord shall lead you and they shall be upon you for a sign and for a wonder". (Dt. 28:37,46).

These statements indicate that God intended to make Israel an object lesson to the rest of the world. His dealings with Israel are designed to impress the world with two facts about God: (1) God blesses those who heed and obey His Word; (2) God will severely judge those who reject and disobey His Word.

Through a Unique Book. A second way God brings blessing to the world and glorifies Himself through Israel is through the unique book He has given to the world. The Bible is the only book that has been divinely inspired. In it God has revealed ultimate reality, the purposes of history and life, the origin and destiny of man, how sinful man can be made right with a holy God, and how people are to live. Over the centuries, God's book has brought untold blessings to great multitudes of people. God gave the Bible to the world almost exclusively through the nation Israel (Dt. 4:5-6, 8; Ps. 147:19-20; Rom. 3:2). This fact indicates that God purposed Israel to be the instrument through which He would give the world its most significant book.

Through the Messiah-Saviour. A third way God has glorified Himself and brought blessing through Israel has been through the Messiah-Saviour, Jesus Christ. When Adam, who had been appointed by God to function as His representative to administer His rule over the world, yielded to Satan's temptation to rebel against God (Gen. 1:26-28;3:1-6), Satan thereby usurped the rule of the world system away from God (Lk. 4:5-6). This angelic enemy of God has been

dominating the world system ever since (Jn. 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 5:19). In addition, man's original sin of rebellion against God brought tragic consequences for the earth and himself. For example, man experienced a radical spiritual change (spiritual death) and became subject to God's eternal judgment (Gen. 2:16-17; Jn. 3:18; Eph. 2:1-3).

Immediately after man's original sin of rebellion, God announced that the key to His crushing of Satan and his evil rule in the world would be the coming and work of a special Redeemer who would be born of a woman (Gen. 3:15). Through the Old Testament prophets, God revealed two major lines of truth concerning this coming Redeemer (1 Pet. 1:10-12). First, the Redeemer would be the Saviour of the world (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1-18; Isa. 52:13-53:12). Second, the Redeemer would crush Satan and his world rule, would re-establish God's rule over the world system, and would be God's Messiah-King, His last representative to administer His rule over the entire earth (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 3; Isa. 9:6-7; 11; Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14).

Since the Messiah-Saviour was to be born of a woman, He obviously would come into the world through the nation the woman belonged to. Through the Old Testament prophets, God revealed that Israel was the nation through which the Messiah-Saviour would come. (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 9:6-7; 11; Mich. 5:2).

The Messiah-Saviour, Jesus Christ, did indeed come through Israel (Acts 13:22-23; Rom. 9:4-5). He was born of Mary a young, righteous Jewess (Lk. 1:26-38; 2:1-7). Through His suffering and death on the cross, He took away the sin of the world and thereby provided salvation for man (Mt. 1:18-21; Jn. 1:29). At His Second Coming, He will crush Satan and his rule (Rom. 16:20; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 19:11-20:3), re-establish God's rule over the world system; and be God's Messiah-King, the last Adam to administer God's rule over the entire earth (Mt. 19:28; 25:31-34; Acts 3:19-21; 1 Cor. 15:23-25, 45; Rev. 20:4-6).

Thus God purposed that Israel would be the channel through which the key figure of all time would come – the Messiah-Saviour through whom God fulfills His purpose for history and brings great blessing to the world.

Through Repentance. There is a fourth way God will glorify Himself and bring

blessing through Israel. The Scriptures indicate that the Messiah will not crush Satan and re-establish God's rule over the world system until the nation of Israel repents of its rebellion against God (This repentance will involve accepting Jesus Christ as the Messiah-Saviour, (Dt. 30:1-10; Jer. 31:16-40; Ezek. 36:32-38; Hos. 3:4-5; 5:15-6:3; 14:1-8; Zech. 12:10-13:1, 9, 14; Acts 3:12-21). For this reason, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles preached the gospel of the Kingdom ("Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand") to Israel only (Mt. 3:1-2; 4:17; 10:5-7; 15:21-26; Mk. 1:14-15). These facts indicate that God has purposed Israel to be a significant key to the future fulfilment of His purpose for history.

FACT FOUR: Israel Has a Unique Future



According to the Scriptures, Israel's unique future will have a twofold nature. First, it will be characterized by unequalled suffering. Satan has attacked Israel many times throughout history. Because the Redeemer (God's key to crushing Satan) was to be born through Israel, Satan repeatedly stirred up anti-Semitism against that nation in the Old Testament times, hoping to prevent the Redeemer from coming. Because Messiah will not crush Satan and re-establish God's rule over the world system until Israel repents, Satan has attacked that nation ruthlessly since Christ's First Coming, trying to destroy it before it can repent. (The Holocaust of World War 2 is one such example).

Despite how terrible these past assaults have been, Israel's worst days are still ahead. During the last three and one half years prior to Christ's Second Coming, Satan realizing

this time is growing short, will try to annihilate Israel in a manner unparalleled in history (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 12). This period will be so bad that Scripture calls it "The time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), describes it as an unprecedented time of great tribulation (Jer. 30:4-7; Dan. 12:1; Mt. 24:21), and indicates that two thirds of the people of Israel will die (Zech. 13:8).

Second, Israel's future also will be characterized by unequalled blessing. God will permit Satan to cause Israel's worst time of suffering as His means of bringing that nation to repentance. The survivors (one third of Israel) will repent when they see Jesus Christ in His glorious Second Coming and recognize that He is their true Messiah (Zech. 12:10-14; 13:9; Rom. 11:25-26).

In response to Israel's repentance, God will forgive the nation's sin (Zech. 13:1; Rom. 11:27). Messiah will crush Satan and his rule (Ps. 2; Zech. 14:1-5, 12-15; Rev. 10:11-20:3) and will re-establish God's rule over this earth's world system for 1,000 years (Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14:6-11; 16-21; Rev. 20:4-6).

During this future rule of God through the Messiah, Israel will enjoy unique blessing. The nation will be in a right relationship with God and obedient to Him (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-27). Israel will be the spiritual minister of the world, leading the Gentiles in the worship of God (Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 61:6; Zech. 8:23). A magnificent Temple will be built in Jerusalem as a centre of worship (Ezek. 40-46). All nations will come to Jerusalem to worship God, receive instruction and have judicial matters settled (Isa. 2:1-4; 60:14; Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-21). The people of Israel will be restored permanently to their homeland, and God will prosper them abundantly (Ezek. 34:11-14, 22-31; 36:24, 28-38; 37:21-28).

FACT FIVE: Israel Has Been Given Permanent Ownership of a Unique Land

In light of God's unique purpose for Israel (to glorify Himself before the world and to bring blessing to the world through Israel), it was essential that God place the nation in a unique location where it would have attention and influence out of proportion to its size. God did exactly that. He gave Israel the land of Canaan, perhaps the most strategic location in the world for attention



(Dt. 9:4-6). Therefore, Israel's ownership of the land does not depend on the nation's merit.

Moreover, the fulfillment of Israel's unique God-ordained future requires that it own the land of Canaan forever. This is so because that future involved Israel's permanent restoration to the land. And, in line with this requirement, God through the Abrahamic Covenant, solemnly guaranteed Israel's permanent ownership of the land (Gen. 12:7;13:14-15;15:18-21;17:8).

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and influence. Canaan is the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe; and for centuries the major trade and military routes of the ancient world passed through the land. Because of Israel's location, the major powers have had to deal with that nation.

Moses clearly taught that God gave Israel the land. It belongs to the Jewish people. He gave it, not because the nation deserved it, but because of His own sovereign purposes

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Ministry Itineraries & Prayer Diary September – December 2009

September - The Philippines

2nd – Overnight flight, Sydney to Hong Kong, then to Cebu City, Cebu.

5th – Prophecy Conference, Holiday Plaza Conference Centre, Cebu City.

6th – AM (2) & PM Services, Cebu City.

7th to 11th – Baptist Theological College Chapels and Graduate Seminar (12th).

8th – Christian Business Men's Committee Banquet, Cebu City.

13th – AM & PM Services, Cebu City.

14th – Afternoon flight to Hong Kong, then overnight to Sydney (15th).

October - Victoria*

2nd to 4th – Drive to Prophecy Camp, Crystal Creek,
in conjunction with Heritage Baptist Church, Ballarat.

* **Details:** Deane Woods (0400 777 660) or Pastor Steve Shaw (0403 161 522)

October – South Australia, Sydney & South East Queensland*

6th to 9th – Fly to Adelaide; At Friends of Israel Office.

11th – AM Service at Dundas Baptist Church.

15th – Fly to Cooloongatta/Surfers Paradise.

16th – Radio interview, LIFE FM, Southport.

17th – Minden Baptist Church. Afternoon/Evening Prophecy Seminar.

18th – AM & PM Services, Eiser Street Baptist Church.

19th – Dalby Church of Christ. "Christ in the Passover" (Seder Presentation).

20th – Chinchilla Baptist Church.

21st – AM Meeting, Margate Baptist Church;

PM Meeting, Maroochydore Presbyterian Church.

22nd & 23rd – Meetings To Be Advised.

25th – AM and PM Services, Caboolture Baptist Church. (Seder Presentation, PM).

26th – Burleigh Heads Home Group Meeting. (including Middle East Update).

27th – Pacific Palms Retirement Village (Redcliff Brethren Assembly).

28th – Southport Home Group Meeting.

29th – Mt Cotton Home Group Meeting (Cleveland Baptist Church).

1st November – AM & PM Services (To Be Advised).

***Details:** Deane Woods (0400 777 660) or ...

Noel & Trish Newton (07 5531 4353/0417 784 820)

November/December – West Australia, South Australia & Sydney Area

14th to 25th – Meetings in Perth, The Great Southern and the N-E Wheat Belt
(Meetings To Be Advised).

26th & 27th – Meetings in Adelaide; At FOI's Adelaide Office.

29th – PM Service, West Beach Baptist Church. (Details: FOI Office 08 8276 1333)

December's Meetings – To Be Advised (Details: Deane Woods: 0400 777 660).