



1948 - 2008 ISRAEL AT 60

PART 2 OF 4: THE JEWS - GOD'S TRUE WITNESSES

May 14th 2008 marked 60 years since the state of Israel declared its independence. In this four part series, we are looking at Israel and why they are such a significant nation.

On this occasion we are considering the significance of the Jewish people, described as God's witnesses.

- Two important principles

Before proceeding any further, we need to reiterate the two key principles of the series made in part one (see that fact sheet for more information):

- Everything put forward is based on one source only - the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God (2 Pet 1:19-21, 2 Tim 3:14-17), something which the Jews are a 'witness' to as we shall see. This makes it 100% accurate and reliable.
- This consideration of Israel is not a celebration of the nation's achievements, for they are far from perfect. This imperfection is what makes the Jews such a powerful witness.

- What is a witness?

The Oxford English Dictionary gives a number of meanings for the term 'witness', the most interesting of which is:

4. (witness to) evidence or proof of.

- So the Jews are evidence or proof of God's existence.

- Why do we say this?

Because God says so:

Isaiah 43:1, 10-12 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD: and beside me there is no saviour. 12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange [other] god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.

God chose the Jews as his special people over all the other nations because they were a small and fragile nation, and this made them a better witness than a greater, more powerful one:

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers,... 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

- In what way are they a witness to God?

Right back at the birth of the Jewish nation, God made a prophecy about their future:

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

Israel were faced with two situations - if they obeyed God they would reap the great benefits this would bring; alternatively, if they turned their back on him they would suffer great hardship. All too often they took the latter route, and their history reveals the great troubles they endured as a result, in keeping with God's prophecy. Many further prophecies of persecution followed, and their fulfilment is there for all to see.

- The history of the Jews

The following table lists some of the events to befall the Jews throughout their history, and how they fit in with Bible prophecy:

Reference	Description
Genesis 15:13	Abraham told his descendants (the Jews) would spend 400 years in a foreign land
Deuteronomy 7:8 Exodus 3:7, 8	After 400 years of bondage in Egypt, Israel were delivered by God through Moses - prophecy fulfilled!
Jeremiah 25:2-9	Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be taken captivity by the Babylonians
2 Kings 24:11-14	Israel taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon - prophecy fulfilled!
Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10	Jeremiah also prophesied the length of the captivity - 70 years
Ezra 1:1-5	70 years later in the time of Cyrus, king of Persia, the Jews were allowed back to Israel - prophecy fulfilled!

Reference	Description
Deuteronomy 28:25, 63-66	In the time of Moses (~1500 BC) God said that the Jews would be scattered across all nations of the earth
Luke 21:24	Christ reiterated the same prophecy over 1500 years later
Deuteronomy 28:53	The same prophecy says that at this time circumstances would be so dire that Jews would be eating their own children
Micah 3:12	Micah prophesied that Jerusalem would be 'plowed as a field'
-	In AD 70 The Romans, ruled by Hadrian and led by Titus, besieged Jerusalem before overthrowing and completely destroying it. Hadrian issued an edict banning Jews from the land, and they were scattered around the globe. Historians tell us that circumstances at this time were so dire people were eating their own children - prophecy fulfilled!
Jeremiah 31:10, 32:37 Ezekiel 36:24	Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied that the Jews' scattering would not be permanent - one day they would be regathered to Israel
-	In 1856 the edict of Hadrian was rescinded, allowing Jews to enter the land of Israel for the first time in around 1800 years
-	On May 14th 1948 the state of Israel declared its independence - the Jews were back in the land after 1900 years - prophecy fulfilled!

Time and time again, prophecies about the Jews have been fulfilled precisely, providing evidence of the hand of God at work and underlining the accuracy and authority of the scriptures!

- Two extraordinary facts concerning Israel's regathering

The regathering of the Jews after hundreds of years highlights two extraordinary points about the nation:

- They have retained their identity and have not been integrated into other countries of the world.
- The land could potentially have been taken over by any number of other nations in the Jews' absence - it passed through the hands of several nations in that time - but it remained desolate all those years, allowing the Jews to regain it again.

Both these points provide further evidence of how God is outworking his purpose amongst the Jews!

- Life after restoration

The miraculous nature of the Jews didn't end in 1948. Even though they have been restored to the land they have continued to face persecution from their neighbours, and multiple efforts to wipe them out.

There are many examples of occasions when the Jews have been under attack with the odds often stacked well against them, yet they have continued to resist all efforts to destroy them or remove them from the land. For example:

- 1956 - The Sinai campaign
- 1967 - The Six Day War
- 1973 - The October War
- 1987 - First intifada
- 2000 - Second intifada
- 2006 - Lebanon War

Had Israel been destroyed on any of these, or other, occasions, God's prophecies would have been proved incorrect, and his promises to Abraham (see part one) would have been broken.

We established in part one that God never breaks his promises, so it is clear that God is overshadowing events amongst the Jews to bring about the final fulfilment of his promises.

- Summary

Clearly then, the land of Israel is indeed at the centre of God's purpose, and events that befall the Jews are of great significance because of the evidence of God's purpose that they provide. There is far more to be said than has been possible here, and you are urged to investigate these things further (see the contact details at the bottom of this page) - later on in this series you will see how these things are relevant to yourself.

To sum up our consideration of the Jews as God's true witnesses:

- To witness to something means to provide evidence or proof of it.
- God chose the Jews to be his special people because they were the 'fewest of all people'.
- He declared them to be his witnesses because of this.
- Events throughout their history have involved them repeatedly avoiding destruction despite the odds.
- Many of these events were prophesied in advance with amazing accuracy.
- The Jews' return to the land in 1948 is one such example of fulfilled prophecy.
- The miraculous survival of the Jews and their continued success in the land provide compelling evidence of God's existence and purpose.

THERE IS ONLY ONE EXPLANATION FOR THE MIRACLE OF THE JEWS - GOD'S CONTINUAL GUIDANCE AND INTERVENTION:
JEREMIAH 30:11 FOR I AM WITH THEE, SAITH THE LORD, TO SAVE THEE...