

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ISRAEL

A message given by Lance Lambert in 1978

Zechariah 12:10-13:1—And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

Ezekiel 37:7-14—So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord.

Let us bow together in a word of prayer:

Beloved Father, we do want to thank Thee that we are gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus, and we thank Thee that Thou hast made provision for us. As we turn to Thy word we thank Thee for the provision that Thou hast made of grace and anointing, both for the speaking of Thy word and for the hearing of Thy word. Into that provision we stand by faith. We ask Thee, Lord, that we might know in our experience Thy grace and Thy power both in my speaking and our hearing so that Thy will may be done in this day. We thank Thee for it, Lord. We thank Thee for this coming together and our being able to pray and fellowship and share together over this whole matter of Israel and the Jewish people. Now, Lord, we commit ourselves to Thee as we come to the end of the day and pray that Thou wilt crown it with Thy presence, with Thy glory, with Thy working, and we

shall give Thee all the praise and honor and glory in the name of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Amen.

This year a rather remarkable coincidence took place. The celebration of the 30th year of Israel's independence coincided with Pentecost. It was this occurrence that made me think about the Holy Spirit and Israel. Although it is a very complex and somewhat difficult subject, I want to share some thoughts with you about it. We will together consider the hidden work of the Holy Spirit, the future work of the Holy Spirit, and the present work of the Holy Spirit, as it regards Israel.

THE HIDDEN WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

First of all, we will consider the hidden work of the Holy Spirit as it regards the State of Israel. Generally speaking, amongst the Lord's people, this subject of Israel is a subject of great controversy and much confusion. There are those who tell us that there is no future for Israel and that in spite of all that has taken place, it is merely coincidence. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the prophetic Word of God; indeed it has nothing whatsoever to do with the Word of God.

A brother was telling me recently that after some lectures on prophecy at a certain Bible college, the question was asked of the lecturer—a very well-known and revered evangelical who is now with the Lord: “Has Israel any significance as far as the Word of God goes?” The lecturer replied lucidly and concisely, “None whatsoever!”

I think most of us know that this subject of Israel is one of controversy. People have said to me: “How on earth can a movement called Zionism, led by many who are agnostics or self-confessed atheists, be used by God? How can anyone believe that such a movement as this can be found within the Word of God or as a fulfillment of the prophetic Word?” But I believe that this is the hidden work of the Holy Spirit.

A Nation Born In a Day

In Isaiah 66:8 we read these wonderful words: *Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? shall a nation be brought forth at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.*

There are those who believe that this verse has yet to be fulfilled and that in a single moment of time the whole Jewish people are going to be born again. I have no doubt that in the future there is going to come a tremendous awakening amongst the Jewish people. The veil that is on their heart is going to be stripped away, and the hardness in part, which has befallen them, is going to be done away by the Spirit of God. However I believe that this prophecy in Isaiah chapter 66:8 was fulfilled on the 14th of May, 1948, when after 1,900 years of exile and dispersion a land was born in a day and a nation was brought forth at once. It happened in a moment. No one believed it could happen; but it happened to the great embarrassment of many believers who had been confidently saying for years that there would never be a recreated Jewish state or an Israel in the Middle East. Nevertheless, it came to pass in a single day when, suddenly, it happened. A land was born amongst the other lands of the world, and a nation was brought forth at once to take its place amongst the other sovereign nations of the world.

The prophecy goes on to say, *For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.* There had been almost 1,800 years or more in which Zion (a term I am using now for the Jewish people) had taken everything, more or less, lying down. Their dispersion, the loss of statehood, the loss of nationhood, the loss of national sovereignty, the loss of national territory, the loss of national well-being, was considered by Jews as a judgment of God upon them. That is the reason why they said: “We must take this as from the Almighty and bear it.” It was also the reason the Rabbis said that the Jewish people must never forget their lost Zion. No Jewish bride in an Orthodox wedding could ever wear a gold or silver piece of jewelry on her wedding gown. No home could ever be built by a Jew unless near the entrance a portion was left unfinished which would remind them always of the destruction of Zion. Orchestral music was not allowed except on specific and particular occasions. All these little regulations were to remind the people of a lost Zion. The Jewish people lived as if they had only lost Zion yesterday.

All through those 1,800 years, for the Jewish people it was as if it was only yesterday that this tragedy came upon the nation. It was rather like Lot’s wife—the whole nation was frozen into an immobility by something that happened years ago in the past.

The Birth of Zionism

How did Zionism come to birth? I know it is a dirty word in some circles, which has now been defined by the United Nations General Assembly as racism. [Since 1978 this has been officially dropped by the UN, author’s note]. How did it come into being? There were two streams of understanding. In the last century there was a Rabbi called Rabbi Zwig Kallishev who led a congregation in a synagogue in East Prussia, who began to teach that the redemption of the Jewish people would come in two stages. The impact of this was absolutely electrifying. Until that time Jews believed that the redemption that was to come to the Jewish people was to be wholly supernatural, wholly divine, and was going to come, as it were, out of Heaven with the Messiah. This Rabbi began to preach and publish tracts and pamphlets proving from the Old Testament and from the Talmud that, in fact, this redemption would come in two stages. He said that the first stage would be when the Jewish people themselves shook off their sloth, returned to the Promised Land, reclaimed the land and rebuilt the cities. This would end in a reconstituted state and would be the first stage of redemption.

The second stage of redemption would be supernatural and divine, coming to pass when the Messiah came down from Heaven. These two stages of redemption were presented by him; He was excommunicated, and all those who read his pamphlets and believed them were shunned. He was an Ashkenazi Rabbi, but there was also a Sephardi Rabbi, leading a congregation in Semlin near Belgrade, in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He also taught the same thing, although they had no connection with each other. This teaching caused a great ripple throughout Orthodox circles.

On the other hand, there were a large number of Jews all over Europe, who were what we call assimilated Jews. An assimilated Jew is one who really wants to be like the nation in which he is found and to be identified totally with it—in dress, in habits, in everything except that he or she was of Jewish stock.

Now amongst many in the higher middle class and the higher classes, to be assimilated became very much the “in thing”. And there were so many Russian Jews whose one great goal in life was to be Russian—to speak and write Russian, to contribute to Russian

society and national life. It was the same in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in France, and in Germany. These assimilated Jews did not believe in a Zion. They believed that their Zion was Russia, Germany, France, or Britain and, in fact, the onward march of humanity. The exclusive particularism of the Jewish people must be lost in the onward march of humanity into an enlightened age, into a golden millennium, in which all men would be one. They thought that to go back to anything exclusively “Jewish” was ridiculous! “Why can we not be Jews and also contribute to our national life.”

We know from history that all of this was changed by the Russian pogroms which began at the end of the last century. Suddenly, out of the darkness would ride a whole bevy of men and simply beat people senseless, rape women, burn houses and shops, loot everything, and leave children mentally retarded for the rest of their lives by the things they witnessed and the things that were done to them. Overnight, all the Jewish intellectuals in Russia realized that their idea of an onward progress of humanity was shattered. One of their great writers said, “Now we understand that anti-Semitism is not just something from the Middle Ages or from the Dark Ages but is based on anthropological and sociological foundations. Therefore, the Jewish people will never be given the dignity of human beings until they are once again a nation amongst the nations and a state amongst the states.”

So we see two streams, as it were. One was amongst the Orthodox who had this view of a two-fold redemption—one that would come about by the Jewish people doing something for themselves and the other by a supernatural intervention by God. Then there was the assimilated position in which they became so disillusioned that for the first time they began to wonder whether the answer was not a recreated Jewish state.

Theodore Herzl's Vision

All through the 1,800 years nothing had been done. It was toward the end of the last century that Theodore Herzl came onto the scene. Now Theodore Herzl, like so many others, was an agnostic. He had broken away very early from all religious observances. He was born in Pest of Budapest to an assimilated Austro-Hungarian Jewish family. In furthering his education he went to study at the University of Vienna. There he would argue in the debating societies that all Jews should take their place with Christian citizens in either the Austro-Hungarian Empire or in the German Reich as fellow citizens. He went on to say that if it meant getting christened or confirmed in either the Roman Catholic or the Lutheran Church, let us do so, but let us take our place beside our Gentile brethren.

Some of you may have heard of the famous speech he made about how he envisaged at one time an honorable mass conversion of the whole Jewish people in central Europe. It would be in a great service at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna with a solemn pealing of bells midday on a Sunday!

However, it all died when one of his closest friends committed suicide. He was a brilliant young man who had graduated from the University of Vienna; but had discovered that through sheer anti-Semitic prejudice he could not get a job anywhere. As a result he shot himself. That had a profound effect upon Theodore Herzl, and he began to think and rethink his ideals. In fact one could say that shot was the opening shot that led to the recreation of Israel.

At that point Theodore Herzl was sent to Paris as a journalist to cover the famous Dreyfus trial. Captain Dreyfus was a Jewish captain in the French army who had been made the scapegoat of every kind of problem in the French army at the time. He was sentenced to life imprisonment upon Devil's Island in the Caribbean. He was stripped and publicly degraded and drummed out of the French army. The whole of Europe was in uproar over this because many knew that Dreyfus was an innocent man. But the thing that so appalled Herzl was that suddenly the people took to the streets and began to scream at the top of their lungs: "Death to the Jews! Death to the Jews!" Suddenly, Herzl realized that in a country as sophisticated and educated as France, if a sudden thing like this could be engineered where people could take to the streets crying: "Death to the Jews," what hope was there in the rest of Europe?

It was then that he said a vision came to him. So tremendous was it that he said, "Whether I slept or walked, or stood, or sat in my work as a journalist, it completely overpowered me." It was the vision of a reconstituted Jewish nation. He wrote in his diary, "I am engaged upon a work of indescribable greatness. I do not know whether it will come to pass but I do know that somehow or other for me life has ended and history has begun." He envisaged a Congress in which all the leaders of Judaism would gather together to discuss the possibility of somehow or other buying honorably a territory somewhere in the world—preferably in the Middle East—the Promised Land for this Jewish state.

Everywhere Herzl went they laughed him to scorn. German Jews said to him, "We are more German than the Germans." French Jews said to him what they had said to Napoleon many years earlier, "Paris is our Jerusalem." He was looked upon as a kind of vulgar rabble-rouser by many of the Jewish aristocratic families or at the best as a kind of mystical Jewish seer-of-dreams and a thinker-up of legends or visions, almost like science fiction. Herzl pleaded with them: "If you do not give yourselves to this whole matter of the recreation of the Jewish state, sooner or later you will all be destroyed, and even those who are sympathetic to you will turn their back on you and will not help you when it comes to the crisis." His words were prophetic. Their children and grandchildren died in the millions in the Holocaust of Nazi-occupied Europe. Those who heeded Herzl have lived.

In November of 1897 the first International Congress was called, and it is a very interesting fact that it was the first congress in which Jewish leaders had come together since the destruction of the state in 70 AD. Herzl wrote in his diary that night after the congress finished: "This day I have founded the Jewish state. If I were to say it publicly it would be greeted with howls of derision, but in five years, certainly within fifty, the whole world will know it." It is worthy of note that within fifty years, almost to the month, in November of 1947 the United Nations passed a resolution by two-thirds majority recognizing the right of the Jewish people to a sovereign state of their own. It had come to pass. Who gave Herzl this vision of a recreated state? Who spoke in his ear like a trumpet? Who enabled him to prophesy, both of himself, and of Israel, if it was not the Holy Spirit?

My point is this: For one thousand, eight hundred years nothing happened, but as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth. Within fifty years it happened. They were the bloodiest years of Jewish history and the most turbulent. In many ways they were years of anguish and suffering that even the Jewish people, with all their story of suffering, had

never known before. Within those years between six and eight million Jews died in the most horrific circumstances. Nevertheless, within those fifty years the moment Zion travailed, she brought forth. The Holocaust was to be the womb in which Israel was born. It was not at the strongest point in Jewish history, but at its weakest.

When Theodore Herzl was dying at the age of forty-four of a broken heart— much labor and intense work had broken him, as also rejection and sorrow had taken its toll— he said to his doctor, “You see those young Jewish men guarding the door? One day they will enter the Promised Land as surely as I lie on this bed.” And so they did.

The reason I am telling you this is to state the simple fact that Zionism is considered a dirty word, especially among Christians who will not even mention it. But I would like to say this: It is the hidden work of the Holy Spirit. Who put this into the minds of those two Rabbis? Who disillusioned the assimilated Jews in their positions in the academic and intellectual world of Europe? Who did it if it was not the Holy Spirit? And is it not an amazing thing that Theodore Herzl spoke of something far bigger than himself? He had been known to say: “It looks over my shoulder, it whispers in my ear, it carries me, it causes me to dream when I am asleep.” What was that if it was not the hand of God, if it was not the Spirit of God?

When he died, Reuven Brenning told this story which, of course, has been challenged in some quarters even though, normally, he had told the truth in every other anecdote that he told of Herzl. He said that shortly before Herzl died, he opened his heart to him and said, “I have told no other person this, but when I was twelve years of age—I do not know whether it was a dream or a vision—I was carried in the arms of the King Messiah to the Ancient of Days.” And he said, “I saw Moses, and he was so like that statute of Michelangelo that I remember when I was a boy. When I was brought to the Ancient of Days by the King Messiah, He said to Him: “For this child I have prayed.” And then he said to me: “Go to my Jewish people and tell them that I will soon do great things on their behalf.”

In my humble estimation, it was the hidden work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was taking hold of this one and that one and the other one to produce something that was to end in the fulfillment of the prophetic word of God. Even the might of Nazism could not destroy it. Indeed, God used the very wickedness of the Nazis to make the State of Israel an absolute necessity.

It was because they would not listen to Herzl that God allowed evil itself to drive the Jewish people to a place where they at last recognized that Herzl was right. There was no hope for the Jewish people while they were amongst Gentile majorities; nor would they ever be accepted as equals in Gentile society. The only hope for the Jewish people was that they might become a sovereign state amongst the states of the world once again. I say that this is the hidden work of the Holy Spirit.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda: the Prophet of the Hebrew Language

I think of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda whose earlier name was Eliezer Isaac Perelman. Now Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was not a believer; he was an agnostic. Very early in his life he turned against all religious observances and was kicked out of his family for reading *Robinson Crusoe* in Hebrew. They considered it a most dreadful thing to have put *Robinson Crusoe* into the holy language. This was the work of the assimilated movement,

the enlightened Haskalah, as it was called. It was a movement which wanted to put all of these works into Hebrew, but it was a very stilted Hebrew. Nevertheless, Eliezer Perelman read *Robinson Crusoe* in Hebrew, and this gave him the idea that one day, perhaps the Jewish people could speak Hebrew again. That is where it all began. Can you believe that *Robinson Crusoe* was used of the Lord as well! It is most remarkable.

Eliezer Isaac Perelman even changed his name to Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a Hebrew name, because he thought that this would further encourage people to only speak Hebrew. He saw that if the Jewish people were to go back to their ancestral land and home they must speak one language. Should that language be Yiddish or Ladino, or a revived and reborn Hebrew? “Otherwise, he said, “knowing the Jewish people they will be split into a thousand fragments. We must speak one language.”

In his own words he said: “When the news came to us of the uprising of the Romanians and the Bulgarians against the Turks, it was as if an incandescent flash of light came before me and I heard these words in my ear: *The Renaissance of Israel on its own ancestral soil, speaking Hebrew as their mother tongue.*” In that moment Eliezer Ben-Yehuda became the great prophet of the Hebrew language. He gave himself lock, stock and barrel to it and was considered even by the Jewish people to be a weird eccentric for many years because of this one vision and aim to renew the Hebrew language.

This happened in the last century. In the whole history of the world there has never been a language—which has ceased to be a spoken language and only used as a liturgical language such as Latin—that after some 2,000 years has been recreated, reborn as the spoken language of a volatile, virile people. Yet this happened. In his own words while he was an agnostic he said: “I saw an incandescent flash of light before me and these words in my ears: *The Renaissance of Israel, the Jewish people, upon their own ancestral soil, speaking Hebrew as their mother tongue.*” Is that the devil or was it the Spirit of God? I say it is the hidden work of the Spirit of God, working here and there quietly and strongly, knowing exactly what He was doing to recreate the Jewish nation. When Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was near the end of his life, he sat in a synagogue and, with tears running down his face, heard the official pronouncement of the End of the Second Exile of the Jewish people, in beautiful revived Hebrew. It had not been easy for Ben-Yehuda; the years he gave single-handedly to the recreation of Hebrew had been painful and anguished. He had even been excommunicated for making the holy language modern. The longest Exile in Jewish history had ended with the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate given to Great Britain by the League of Nations to watch over the building up of the Jewish Homeland. Ben-Yehuda had lived to see it.

Outcasts for 1,800 Years

In the prophecy of Jeremiah it says this: *For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they have called thee an outcast, saying, It is Zion, for whom no one cares* (30:17). That is exactly true of the history of the Jewish people. They were people for whom no one cared. If a Jewish person was murdered, who thought anything about it? Who took up representation with the government? Nobody! What did it matter if a few worthless Jews died? They were swindlers anyway and the great exploiters of Europe; the poison of European society. “Who cares about what

happens to them? They are expendable.” No one fought for the Jewish people. For 1,800 years the Jews were outcasts, and everyone looked down upon them and treated them as such. However the Lord Himself said: “I have seen this; I Myself will restore health unto thee. I Myself will heal thee of thy wounds because they have said, It is Zion which is an outcast for whom no one cares.”

Notice what the prophet Micah said about these outcasts in Micah 4:7: *And I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation.* How do you spiritualize that? The Lord says, *I will take that which was cast far off and I will make it a strong nation.* Is that not exactly what has happened? This little nation of three million people [now in 2011 seven and a half million, author’s note] has become a strong nation, and the world has marveled at them. This is the nation of the Entebbe Rescue—a strong nation that is prepared to stand up for itself and defend its nationals and its citizens. How could it have happened after 1,800 years when they had been trodden down, when they had that haunted look, when they actually made themselves look miserable and eccentric in order to help God? They felt that if God had judged them they should look as if He had judged them. They said, “Let us put into our liturgy a sob and quaver and into our psalms a mournful lament when we sing them. Let our prayer be one dirge because God has judged us and let it be seen that we are judged.”

Israel—A Strong Nation Once Again

Nevertheless since the recreation of the state of Israel this nation has thrown off the dirge, and suddenly a strength has come into Hebrew music. Suddenly a dance has come in and the notes are strong. Furthermore, the quaver and the sob have gone out of the psalms. The Lord said, “I will make all those who are cast far off a strong nation.” It is the work of God in my estimation.

Of course, I do understand that some will find this rather puzzling because it is what I call the enigma of Zionism, and I never fail to be amazed at it. On the one hand, you see them going back to Israel and rebuilding the cities—the waste places and desolations of many generations. They put Scriptures in the rebuilt squares, such as in Ashkelon where they have engraved in stone the words of the prophet Zephaniah in Hebrew: *And the remnant of the house of Judah shall come again and the seacoast shall be for them and for their flocks, and they shall lie down in the evening in the houses of Ashkelon* (2:7).

I once said to a prominent citizen in Ashkelon: “I do not understand this; you just told me Ashkelon is the most irreligious place in Israel, and you yourself are a confessed agnostic.” “Oh yes,” he said, “we do not believe anything.” I said, “Then why have you put the Scripture there?” And he said, “It is rather remarkable, isn’t it?”

You go into some of these big new buildings and there in the corner stone you see these words, *Fear not for I am with thee, I will bring thee 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 ends of the earth* (Isaiah 43:5-6). I asked these people who are agnostics or atheists: “Why do you put these Scriptures here?” Their response is this: “Well, it is like Shakespeare, isn’t it? It is our literature, you know.” “But do you not think it is rather hypocritical? Why not use something else other than Scripture?” Then they look embarrassed and have nothing to say. It is an enigma, because deep down in the Jewish heart there is a deep awareness of God, even with the agnostic

and the atheist. Many of the Jewish atheists and agnostics that I have known have become like that because of what they have seen of suffering and anguish. I remember one friend of mine who went through Auschwitz—he still had the tattoo on his arm—and the only reason he lived was because he was the strong man of the Hungarian State Circus. He was made with others to dig the graves for the bodies, because the incinerator could not cope with the number of people being gassed, toward the end of the war. Some days before he was liberated by the Russians, his whole family— his maternal and paternal grandparents, his uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, his wife and five children were gassed. He had said to me: “Many times as the people queued up and went into those gas chambers they sang psalms.” Then he said, “Why didn’t God break out of heaven and save them?” On another occasion he said: “I saw the Hasidic people dancing as they waited to go into the gas chamber. They were welcoming death.” Then he said, “If they had such faith in God, why did God not do something for them?” Once he had asked me, “What peace you have in your face, how do you have it?” I had replied that I believed in God and knew the Lord Jesus. Then he stood up and seemed to forget me, he looked up to the ceiling and said, “I will never believe in you, God.” With that he brought his huge fist down on the oak table and it split into two.

What answer do we have for that? Deep down in the Jewish heart there is an awareness of God and, one day, it will be this deep-seated awareness of God that is going to be ignited into glorious and dynamic faith. It is there, but there will come a day when God will give them faith. And then the whole thing will ignite and become the dynamic for the last stage of human history, however short it may be.

Israel’s State Emblem

I wonder how many know what the emblem of the State of Israel is and how it was chosen. The official emblem of the State of Israel is a seven-branched menorah—lampstand—with two olive branches on either side, and underneath is written, “Israel.” It was chosen by David Ben-Gurion on the basis of Zechariah chapter 4 where the prophet saw a lampstand all of gold with seven bowls on the top, all of them alight and an olive tree on either side. Then Zechariah saw branches of the olive tree coming down on either side, and gold emptied from them into the lampstand. After that he heard the words: *Not by might, nor by power, but my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts* (Zechariah 4:6). In English it is rather long, but in Hebrew it is only seven words. According to Rabbinic tradition, when Zechariah saw the lampstand alight, he saw in the flame of each of the seven lights, one Hebrew word: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Who led David Ben-Gurion, who knew his Bible, to choose this vision as the state emblem of Israel, if it was not the Holy Spirit?

Now I know that people do not believe that the recreation of the State of Israel is in fact the work of the Holy Spirit. But how else did it come to pass? People often give this explanation: “It is one of the great accidents of human history, or maybe one of the great coincidences of human history.” I have to say: If it is an accident, it is some accident; if it is a coincidence, it is some coincidence. I know that we are to take that Scripture spiritually and for our comfort; and thank God, we can appropriate it in the building and completion of the house of God and of the body of the Messiah. Nevertheless, it has a literal meaning as well—the restored and recreated Jewish nation has not been by might,

nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Furthermore, God is working a work in such a way that this nation of Israel becomes a testimony to the absolute authority and relevance of His Word. That is true of its recreation, its regathering, its rebuilding, and the restoration of its fertility and ecology. However it is in the immediate years that lie ahead of it, that its greatest witness to the faithfulness of God will be revealed to the nations.

THE FUTURE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

They Shall Look Unto Me Whom They Have Pierced

What is the future work of the Holy Spirit? We see it in Zechariah, chapter 12: *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as for an only son, and be in bitterness for him, as for a first-born. (12:10).*

Anyone, who knows anything about Jewish mourning habits, knows that they are not brief events. There are seven days of absolute mourning in which the whole of life is disrupted and thirty days of mourning in which life is abnormal. One cannot live a normal life during that time.

In my personal view, I do not believe that the Jewish people are going to be saved in a day. I believe that it is going to be over a period of time on the basis of this Scripture. In the King James or Authorized Version it says: *they shall look "upon" Me whom they have pierced.* However, whilst the Hebrew can be translated "upon," or "on," it is normally elsewhere in the Old Testament translated: "unto," "in the direction of," "toward," "to." I understand that to be something more moral or spiritual. If I look *on* or *upon* someone it is always physically seeing them. If I look *to* a person or *unto them*, it has a more spiritual or moral significance. I respect them, or honour them.

It seems to me most wonderful that when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon the Jewish people, upon Israel, they will look unto Him whom they have pierced! It is not only that, but *they will mourn for Him as for an only son.* Now if Jewish mourning is somber and awesome for anyone in the family, it is terrible when it is an only son. Who is this only son? It is Jesus. Who is this first-born? It is Jesus. Who else that is famous and known worldwide has been pierced in Jewish history? No one but He! In that day the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, will be the key that unlocks the whole of Jewish history for every believing Jew. He will be the key to the suffering and the glory. The words of that godly old Jew Simeon will have been fulfilled, "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

A Fountain Opened for Sin for the Jewish People

It says a fountain shall be opened for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in that day for sin and uncleanness! (Zechariah 13:1). Now they are not going to have a special fountain opened for them; it is the same fountain that you have come to. It is the finished work of the Messiah. Is that not marvelous! There are those who say, "There is no future for the Jewish people whatsoever, and you are being led on a sidetrack and are going to end up

in a dead end or a cul-de-sac. I am perfectly content to leave this matter with the Lord. The Lord will prove this thing. As far as I can see from the Word of God, something glorious lies just ahead of us in this generation and age.

Pentecost was the most tremendous thing that happened at the beginning of the early church. There have been some mini Pentecosts since, but that first outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem came upon those 120 people and resulted in 3,000 people being saved in the very first day and 5,000 within months. Then the whole of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria was turned upside down and it went right through the Roman Empire until it came to Britain, to Gaul, to Spain, to South India, to Armenia, to Ethiopia, to Sudan, to Mauritania. By the year 44 AD Jewish hearts and Jewish lips had taken the Gospel throughout the known world.

Life From the Dead

That was a tremendous thing, and we are waiting now for an even greater thing. What does this marvelous passage mean: *If the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what will the receiving of them be but life from the dead?* (Romans 11:15). Does this mean that something can happen and no one will know it? When someone gets raised from the dead that is something of which most people take notice of. It is not something that is done in a hole or a corner; everyone will know and talk about it. They know they were dead, and that they have come alive. The prophet Ezekiel says that when they have become a nation—they have the skeleton, the bones are back in place, the flesh and sinew come upon them, but there is no spirit—when the Spirit of God comes into them, they will stand up as an exceeding great army! (see Ezekiel 37:1-10).

This is a great prospect we have before us, and we should be more involved. It is something to be excited over. This is not going to be one of those three months' Billy Graham campaigns—tremendous as they are. Certainly, I am not disparaging Billy Graham for one single moment; I thank God for him and for the work that God has done through him. However, this is going to be something that will be the campaign of all campaigns in the history of the church. It will not be with human personalities but a sovereign action of the Holy Spirit. When the word goes forth from the throne of God—“accept them”—in that moment something will go right through Jewry that has never gone through it in 1,900 years.

The Gentiles Came in Through the Witness of the Jewish People

I have often wondered what happened that day when dear Peter went to a Gentile city called Caesarea. There is no doubt that Peter was very Jewish. He was so Jewish that he got into trouble with the apostle Paul once or twice. It was certainly not because the apostle Paul was not Jewish, but Peter got so mixed up on the kosher laws—whether to be kosher or not be kosher. It was a real problem that had come between them at one point.

When that vision came to him while he was meditating on the rooftop in Jaffa, he saw all those unclean non-kosher things in the sheet, and then he was told, “Rise; Kill and eat!” He said, “Never, Lord! I have never touched a non-kosher thing in my life.” Then it was lifted up; but it came three times. Following that vision, there was a tap on the door and a girl called out to Peter and said: “There are people here who have come to see

you.” When he came down, there were Gentiles waiting to talk to him and they said, “We have a big meeting taking place in Caesarea, and we have been sent to ask you to come over and talk to us” (see Acts 10:20-22). Peter went like a lamb. The interesting thing is that if he was going to live in Caesarea amongst the Gentiles, he was going to have to eat non-kosher food. He had said three times to the Lord: “Never will I eat anything unclean;” but he went like a lamb. There he was surrounded by Gentiles and he spoke to them and rehearsed all that God had done through the Messiah Jesus, and the Holy Spirit fell upon them. They spoke in tongues and prophesied. It was the same as what happened at Pentecost. These were uncircumcised Gentiles, those who were outside the Commonwealth of Israel, and considered by many Jews as unclean dogs.

As he was relating this to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, some of these Messianic Jews who were leaders, who had been Pharisees, challenged what had happened. They took him to task for accepting uncircumcised Gentiles into the community of the Redeemed. I can imagine his reply: “What else could I do? If the Spirit of God fell on them, and they showed the signs that they were redeemed, how could I say that they were not? I did not give an altar call, I did not ask them to come forward to the mercy seat, I did not ask them to make a decision, but as I was speaking to them the Holy Spirit fell upon them.”

As we think about that little meeting in Caesarea—probably about sixty or seventy people jammed into the largest room in that house—we would not have thought of it as the most significant meeting in the history of the church. But may I say: there is not a Gentile Christian in the world today that is not a result of that meeting. Until that time, the key had not been turned in the lock; the door had not been opened. But in that moment it was as if God said: “Accept the Gentiles! Accept them!” And then maybe He said: “It is no good saying that to my servant Peter because he would choke. So this is what I will do. I will pour the Holy Spirit upon them and then he will have to accept it. And when he goes back to Jerusalem and gets hauled over the coals, he will be able to say to them: “I did not do it; the Lord did it.”

I believe there is going to come a day when the word will come forth from the throne and God will say, “Accept them!” However, it will be the Jewish people this time. I do not know how it will happen. All I know is that somehow the Holy Spirit will work in such a powerful and magnificent way that thousands upon thousands upon thousands of Jewish people will look unto Him whom they pierced. And they shall mourn for Him as for an only son and be in bitterness for Him as for a firstborn. Now this will also be national because this reference to Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon was to the national day of mourning in the time of the godly King Josiah when he died and the whole nation mourned his passing (see II Chronicles 35:22-24).

Where else in the history of the world has there been a nation that has looked back over its history and put its finger upon an event that took place 1,900 years before and said, “This is the key to all our anguish! This is the key to our dispersion! This is the key to our sorrow. This is the key to our sadness and loss.” This mourning is not the mourning of Judas who went out and hanged himself. It is the sorrow of Peter who wept himself into a living union with the Messiah.

The Mystery of Israel

Paul records something of this work of the Holy Spirit in Romans 11: *For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (see vv. 25-26).*

This is very interesting because it is a quotation from Isaiah 59:20 which in the Hebrew says: *And a redeemer will come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob.* Where did the Apostle Paul's version come from? Someone will answer it came from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint. The Septuagint version, which is the oldest Greek translation of the Old Testament, was written at least two hundred years before Christ. It was the one version which the early church used. Maybe there was another Septuagint translation of which we do not know, and which has disappeared. Or did the Holy Spirit cause the Apostle Paul from memory to write this version? Whatever is the explanation the fact is we have this Greek version of the Hebrew.

The Hebrew of Isaiah 59:20 was fulfilled when the Redeemer did come to Zion, to those who turned away from transgression in Jacob. All those first believers were Jewish. They turned from their transgression in Jacob, and the Redeemer saved them. Thus they became that godly remnant which constituted the Church at the very beginning of this age.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle writing to the Romans in Greek, quotes the Hebrew with an extraordinary change. Speaking of the end of the age, when the full number of the Gentiles has come in he writes: *There shall come out of Zion the deliverer and He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* The Messiah came to Zion; now He comes out of Zion. When He came at first it was to those who had turned from transgression in Jacob; now He turns away ungodliness from Jacob. Furthermore in the original he was the Redeemer and still is, but Paul writes of the "deliverer" coming out of Zion. All of this, it seems to me, is contained in the words "The Mystery of Israel." It seems to me that the finished work of the Lord Jesus encompasses the whole of Jewish history from its beginning to its end. Is it any wonder that Paul as a result of this breaks into one of the greatest doxologies in the Word of God? (see Romans 11:33-36).

I do not know what will happen to the many who died in unbelief and never found the Messiah; I leave that to God, who is the Righteous Judge. However I do know that the work of the Messiah encompasses the whole of Jewish history. Therefore, in some marvelous way at the end of the age, when the purpose of God has been fulfilled in saving those great numbers of Gentiles from every tongue and kindred and people and nation, God will turn back to the Jewish people and say, "Let the hardening melt and disappear!" And then all Israel shall be saved.

How will they be saved? They will be saved by the work of the Redeemer in the same way that you and I have been redeemed. Have you not been to the fountain opened for uncleanness in the blood of the Messiah? And so shall they. How wonderful!

Israel will be an Instrument of God to Instruct the Nations

Ezekiel also says something very wonderful about this people. Before He actually saves them, He is going to use them as an instrument in which He gives the nations the evidence for His presence, His being, His throne, His purpose, His Word and His Messiah. Think about this: We could take a great internationally known evangelist and have great national campaigns in Britain and different countries in Europe or in different parts of the world, but the governments of the world will never listen to a man like that. They will say that he is paid as an evangelist. He is in the pay of a particular movement or some kind of evangelical movement that is run by the denominations or charismatic movement. But God is taking a little nation of three million people, [seven and a half million in 2011] who seem to be the weakest of all the nations of the world with an incredible story of sorrow and anguish behind them, who are coming back to the land in unbelief and blindness, and He protects and guards them. Every time it seems they will be snuffed out, He causes them to triumph. Every time it seems as if it will be their end; instead it becomes a further stage in the fulfillment of the divine program. I would think in the end the nations might begin to say, “What is this? What is going on with this little nation? We cannot snuff them out.”

From Metulla in the north to Eilat in the south—260 miles long—there are three million people [seven and a half million in 2011]. And the width of it is not more than 60 miles even if we took in Ammon (modern day Jordan). How can this little plot of ground—260 miles long and 60 miles wide with such a small population—overcome 280 million Arab Muslims in 21 states? Every time the Jewish people are threatened with such words as: “We will snuff them out; we will drive them into the sea; we will bathe the ground with Jewish blood,” God steps in; and even when Israel becomes cocky and believes that it is her strength and ingenuity that has won wars, God allows them to suffer as He did in the Yom Kippur war, until they know for themselves: “It could have been the end of us but God stepped in and saved us!” (see Psalm 124).

It is all in Ezekiel: *And my holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel; neither will I suffer my holy name to be profaned anymore: and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel (39:7)*. Now we should not think this means of necessity they are saved at that point, because he says in chapter 38:16: *And thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring thee against my land, that the nations may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog*. How on earth can God be sanctified in Gog? Does it mean Gog, the antichrist, will be saved? Certainly not! What it means is this: God will take the antichrist and that whole antichrist system and will reveal it as just demonized flesh. In other words, this word *sanctify* means God will put things in their proper place. He will say that is that and this is this. It is as if He says to the nations: “Do you think you can come against Israel politically? Do you think you can come against them militarily? Do you think you can come against them economically? I will protect them!” And so this little nation of Israel becomes the means by which God will instruct the nations.

We have seen something of this in the United Nations’ resolution of 1975 defining Zionism as racism, and Israel as an Imperialist, Colonialist regime occupying Palestine. [Although this resolution was rescinded it still represents the attitude of nearly all the Islamic nations.] This resolution and the attitude that it represents is in my eyes as serious

as Hitler's Beer Hall manifestos which Christians took very little note of. In the end the nations of the world will band together as a result of this attitude and seek to destroy what they call a racist and Colonialist regime in "occupied Palestine."

However I have no fears for little Israel; I just hope I am there. Someone said to me a while ago, "Are you not afraid of being blown up?" And I said to them, "Look at it in this way: I think I will get to the Lord more quickly!"

Not long ago a famous authoress in mission circles came to Jerusalem and someone was instructing her very carefully on how to look for bags left in foyers or on buses. They said to her: "As soon as you see one, get out."

And she said, "Why?"

They said, "It may have a bomb in it."

And she said, "Oh, really! Am I supposed to be afraid?"

"Well," he said, "you do not want to be blown up, do you?"

And she said to me: "I would much rather be blown into the presence of God than end my days in an old-age home."

And I said: "Good for you. It is much better to be blown into the presence of the Lord, except, of course, to be left half maimed or disabled on this earth. Once we are in the presence of the Lord, we will say, "Was that not a wonderful little trip? Just like that, and we are here! Thank You, Lord, for doing it that way."

Israel Will Not be Defeated

We know, of course, there is going to be war, and there will be problems as far as Israel is concerned, but we have no fears for Israel. Our fears are for the British nation, for the European nations, and for the United States of America. After all the Word of God clearly tells us three times that in the last days all the nations of the earth will come against Jerusalem. That may seem fearful but He says: "And I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (see Zechariah 12:1-3, 9; 14:2-4). Our fears are for the so-called great superpowers of the world—these will be broken upon Israel. *They* will be devastated, desolated, and broken—not Israel. Israel may suffer, may lose much life, but Israel will never be defeated until the Messiah comes. Until those blessed, pierced feet stand again upon the dust of the Mount of Olives and walk again within the streets of that old walled city, Jerusalem is invincible. According to the prophet Zechariah, when half of the city of Jerusalem falls, at that moment the Messiah will stand upon the Mount of Olives and the kingdom will come in fullness.

I do not worry about the future of Israel because I know that God is behind this little nation. He has said, *I will lead the blind by a way that they know not, in paths that they have not known, will I lead them, this will I do and not forsake them* (see Isaiah 42:16). They are blind and He has led them. They have been brought in paths that they knew not, and it led to the Holocaust of 1939-1945. These things He has done and has not forsaken them; thanks be to God!

I have just touched on a few glorious things that are in front of us. I only know that I want to be a witness to Israel being "life from the dead" (see Romans 11:15). I pray that my eyes may see it and that God will allow me to be a spectator of this marvelous event that is yet ahead of us. I would die content if I could see the Jewish people restored to God.

THE PRESENT WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Intercessors

The last matter we ought to mention is the present work of the Holy Spirit. People often say, “Oh, we need more missionaries.” (This is nothing against any who are in this work.) “We need workers or more servants of the Lord.” No; what we need at the present time is intercessors—not people who would mouth a few petitions, but people who know how to intercede in the secret place. This is the call. In Isaiah 62 we are told of the present work of the Holy Spirit where the Messiah says, *For Zion’s sake, I will not hold my peace and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth ...I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers, take no rest, and give him no rest, until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth* (vv. 1, 6-7).

Many people want to go and live in Israel, others want to get involved in practical, physical ways, and I am not disparaging that. However, I believe the highest and most vitally necessary call of the Holy Spirit today is to intercession. We need people who are prepared to lay down their lives that God may fulfill His purpose concerning the Jewish people. Is it too much to ask? Those early Jewish believers risked excommunication and derision and alienation. They became the off-scouring of the world that they might bring the good news of the Messiah and the salvation of God to Gentiles. And when they found in synagogue after synagogue the Jewish people turning away from them, they turned to the Gentiles who gladly heard the good news.

Needed—People with a Longing to be Involved

If we believe church tradition, not a single one of those early apostles died a normal death. We know that thousands upon thousands of those early Jewish believers died in the arenas of Rome and elsewhere. Why did they die? They died that the good news of God’s salvation might go to the whole creation! And we are the fruit of their labors. Is it too much to ask that at the end of the age there might be those who would lay down their lives for the Jewish people? If I were to ask you to do it out of sheer love for the Jewish people, there would be those who feel a little qualm about it: “Do I love them enough? Do I love them enough to lay down my life for them?” But if I were to appeal to a more selfish instinct I might say, “Wouldn’t you like to be involved in the purpose of God? Wouldn’t you like in some way really to be involved in what the Lord is doing at the end, for it will be your and my blessing.” I think we need both. I think we need unceasing pain and sorrow in our heart, and a heart’s desire that will never be quenched until God performs His Word. We need a longing to be involved.

Some people think that by going to Jerusalem or to Israel they are going to be involved. But I can tell you from bitter experience that there are many people in Jerusalem who are far out of the will of God. And so far as getting this whole matter fulfilled, they are not even involved; they are deceived. They think they are involved because they went there. That is not the way we get involved. The way we truly get involved, first of all, is inwardly.

Maybe some will have to go, but inward revelation is the first thing. Whatever country we may be in, we can be so led into intercession that we can be a vital strategic part in that instrument of intercession for the fulfillment of the purpose of God. May the Lord help us. Remember: *“It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

