SESSION THREE / WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2011

This study will center on the tiny land of ISRAEL. Why is it the focal point of prophetic scriptures? Why have the Jews been mercilessly persecuted for thousands of years? What is the future of that Holy Land? What does the Bible say about Israel?

Rev. 5:1-7

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. [2] And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? [3] And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. [4] And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. [5] And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. [6] And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. [7] And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

This phenomenal drama plays out at the throne of God. Shortly following the Rapture; of the church, all the redeemed saints of God stand before our Creator, adoring Him in worship and in our glorious song:

Rev. 4:11

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Suddenly our worship is interrupted as God holds out His right hand in which we see a great scroll, written on both sides, and sealed with seven seals. One of the massive four seraphim (angels), flying over the throne, cries out, “Who is worthy among you to come to the throne and take the book from God’s hand and unloose the seals?” No one! We hardly dare breathe in that holy place. But suddenly, Jesus appears to take the book from God’s hand.
We now learn that this book contains all the divine judgments that are about to be hurled
at the earth. And as we turn to chapter six of Revelation, the Lamb (Jesus) opens the
seals one at a time. We shall learn that the seals, seven of them, will be the first
judgments upon the earth (to be followed by the trumpet judgments and the vials).

SEAL NUMBER ONE AND SEAL NUMBER TWO

Rev. 6:1-4

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the
noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. [2] And I saw, and
behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given
unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. [3] And when he had
opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. [4] And there
went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon
to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was
given unto him a great sword.

THE FIRST SEAL JUDGMENT ON EARTH WILL BE
THE COMING OF ANTICHRIST

We will study him later in this series in some detail. Suffice it for now to day that the
Antichrist will not be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church (although the “spirit”
of Antichrist is prevalent even now).

But note this: Antichrist will come riding on a white horse (signifying peace) and
though he carries a bow, no arrows are mentioned. “And a crown was given unto him.”
The nations of the world will soon succumb to the charms and persuasions of Antichrist
who preaches “peace and safety.”

Israel will buy into his lies and soon become a non-fortified nation (as we shall see in
Daniel 37-39). But now, as we look at the second seal, we will see how quickly
Antichrist turns as he gains nearly full power over the earth: FOR THE SECOND
SEAL IS THE RED HORSE RIDER WHO TAKES PEACE FROM THE EARTH.
This early battle in the Tribulation Period will be an all-out war attack on Israel. It will
be a time of horrendous bloodshed.

God showed EZEKIEL how this war would come about, and he narrated the story to us
in:

Ezekiel 38:1-9
And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, [2] Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, [3] And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: [4] And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: [5] Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: [6] Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. [7] Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

[8] After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. [9] Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

Ezekiel prophesied that Israel would be attacked by:

Gog – Gog was king of the land of Magog and chief ruler over Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. In Genesis 10:2, Magog, Meshech and Tubal are the names of the sons of Japheth. Ethnologists who have traced the lineage of Japheth place them in the land we know today as Russia. Under former President Vladimir Putin (who still wields the power in that nation) Russia has shown real hostility to Israel while extending its arms to Israel’s enemies such as Iran.

Persia - known today as Iraq and Iran

Ethiopia - today would be recognized as the northern tier of African states, strongly Islamic and controlled by dictators who have great antipathy to the West

Libya - today controlled by Moammar Kadafi - one of the true “loose canons” in world leadership, strongly Muslim and anti-Israel

Gomer - became known later as the Galatians and inhabited great parts of Turkey. In the last 18 months, Turkey, once a key ally of Israel, has sharply turned in its policy and must be clearly rated as an enemy of Israel

Togarmah - Gomer was the oldest child of Japheth and his son was Togarmah. Some scholars now believe that the Gomer-Togarmah combination takes in Germany as well.

So God showed Ezekiel that an amalgamation of nations would come against Israel “like a storm” (v. 9) with all their armies.
But - Isn't Israel Heavily Armed?

Yes, today it is. There are several factors that make the troops of one army more effective than others. The most obvious modifying factor is weapons and equipment. Closely related to this are the “combat support” elements. The most important of these are logistics (being able to move troops and their supplies long distances in a timely manner) and maintenance (keeping weapons operative at all times and in all conditions.) Apply these factors to the raw number of troops and you get the top ten by combat power in the world today:

1. USA
2. China
3. Israel
4. India
5. Russia
6. South Korea
7. North Korea
8. United Kingdom
9. Turkey
10. Pakistan

The mobilized Israeli armed forces number over half a million troops. In addition, the Israelis have world class equipment and weapons as well as exceptional intangibles.

But the downside of this is that for this tiny nation all this military strength drains, if not cripples, the economy. This will be a major factor in Israel’s buying into Antichrist’s initial lie of peace.

So Ezekiel tells us that when the united forces unleash their attack on Israel (Seal # 2), they will come upon a nation of “unwalled villages - having neither bars nor gates.” (Verse 11) Israel will have largely disarmed itself in order to live under the covering of Antichrist’s global peace initiative.

Israel Has Always Been Under Satan’s Attack

Why?

Rev. 12:1-6

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: [2] And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. [3] And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. [4] And his tail drew
the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. [5] And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. [6] And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Chapter 12 of Revelation presents four great conflicts between God and Satan: (1) Satan’s conflict with Christ and His work of redemption; (2) Satan’s conflict with the Israel; (3) Satan’s conflict with heaven; and (4) Satan’s conflict with believers.

From the very beginning, Satan has attempted to annihilate the Jewish race, for, from it, comes the Messiah and the ultimate redemptive plan for the world. The “woman waiting to be delivered” is Israel. The “man-child” is Christ Jesus. Attempts to annihilate the Jews and Israel have been made by:

1. The Persians, led by General Haman (which resulted in Esther becoming Queen of Persia a few hundred years before Christ was born in Bethlehem.)

2. The Greeks under Antiochus Epiphanes. It got so bad the Jews finally revolted under the leadership of the Maccabees. They led a very successful fight against the Greeks and ousted them from Israel. The Jewish celebration of Hanukkah comes from that time.

3. The Romans did attempt genocide against the Jews, but kept them so severely restricted that the Jews revolted starting in the late 60's AD. This brought the Roman army, led by Vespasian and Titus (his son) into the country and resulted in the utter destruction and ruin of the nation.

4. And, of course, in the lifetime of some of us who are older, Hitler’s genocidal attacks on the Jews resulted in millions being gassed and cremated in his hellish death camps.

Today much of the world is again turning against the Jews and Israel. Those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ must remember God’s promise to Abraham thousands of years ago: “I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.” History has proven over and again that those nations and individuals who bless the Jews are themselves blessed of God. Let us pray that our national leaders do not forget that divine principle from Scripture.
HOW DID THE CURRENT STATE OF ISRAEL COME INTO BEING?

As succinctly as possible, I am going to attempt to create for you on these next few pages how the nation of Israel came into existence. Many today would try to re-invent history and tell you that the Jews have no place there and should not be there. Some journalists such as Helen Thomas (herself Lebanese) said on national television, “The Jews should get the ____ out of Palestine.” First of all, it’s not Palestine. It’s Israel, and by all known laws it is their land. I will prove it to you from not only the Bible, but from secular history.

God Promised It To The Jews

Genesis 13:14-18

And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: [15] For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. [16] And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. [17] Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. [18] Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.

Now note the geographic scope of God’s promise as given in chapter 15:

Genesis 15:18-21

In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: [19] The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, [20] And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaim, [21] And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

We have even more information about the divine gift to the Jews in:

Numbers 34:1-9

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:) [3] Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward:
[4] And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon: [5] And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. [6] And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border. [7] And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor: [8] From mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:

[9] And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border.

In short, God promised the Jews the land from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in Iraq. The Jews have never had much more than about 20% of this inheritance (and that was in the days of Solomon).

Note: In none of these scriptures did God ever place a “condition” upon His gift of land. It was an eternal, binding covenant. Any person believing in the authority of Scripture must concede the land to Israel.

THE HISTORY

Throughout the Middle Ages (also known as the Dark Ages) the Jews suffered greatly at the hands of both feudal lords and the Roman Catholic Church. The Church wrongly accused the Jews as being the “killers of Christ.” This, of course, is not true - either scripturally or historically. Around 1500 A.D., under such men of faith as Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, the reformation came about which brought Protestantism into being. But even some of these men, among them Martin Luther, were anti-Semites and cut no slack for the Jews.

The Age of Enlightenment in Europe in the 18th and 19th century began to see some let-up of Jewish persecution. For example, in 1791, the French Revolution led France to become the first country in Europe to grant Jews legal equality. However, in Russia, no such enlightenment was coming. In Tzartist Russia, the government actively encouraged pogroms (organized massacres) in an effort to drive out the Jewish population. At that time, a small percentage of the ousted Jews fled for what was then known as Palestine. European nationalists generally considered the Jews as aliens and this led to the infamous phrase, “The Jewish Question.”

ZIONISM
Zionism simply means an organized effort to establish a Jewish homeland in Israel. I am a firm Zionist in heart, mind and action. In our Assemblies of God Sixteen Cardinal Doctrines, #14 clearly states that there will be a wave of salvation during Christ’s Millennial Reign of NATIONAL ISRAEL.

In 1897, the first Zionist Congress proclaimed the decision to establish a homeland for the Jewish people in what was then Palestine and to do so under public law. Prior to World War II (1914-1917), not much progress was made for Zionism. But some Jews made it to the Holy Land and legally acquired land and began working on it in what was known as “collectives” or today as “kibbutzim”. This was accompanied by the revival of the Hebrew language.”

At the end of World War I, the Turkish hold over the Holy Land was ended as British General Allenby led the English successfully into the land. This started “the English Mandate” in Palestine. The British could have made their occupation a blessing to the Jews and to themselves by giving the Jews favor; however, their many ties during the days of the British Empire to Arab nations caused them to favor Arabs over Jews in decision after decision. This despite THE BALFOUR DECLARATION in 1917 which stated that the British government “viewed with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

When the British conquered the Middle East in 1917, they created two states: the first called “Palestine,” was in an area including modern Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza and Jordan. The second state, called “Mesopotamia,” comprised several Ottoman (Turkish) regions around Baghdad. It was later renamed Iraq. AFTER WORLD WAR II, THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS FORMALLY ASSIGNED THE PALESTINE MANDATE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM, ENDORSING THE BALFOUR DECLARATION AND ADDITIONALLY REQUIRING THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT JEWISH AGENCY THAT WOULD ADMINISTER JEWISH AFFAIRS IN PALESTINE. It is very clear from history that a Jewish state in that part of the world received endorsement from much of the then-governing nations of the world.

The Arab response to this was predictable! Violence. Attacks. And because of Arab pressure, the Brits relinquished their goals and began to make life tough for the Jews already in the land and for it to be virtually impossible for other Jews to come in to the land. An exception was made for Jews with over 1000 pounds in cash (that was a lot of money in those days) who would be allowed in despite quotas.

Note: It was at this point in 1921 that a decision was made to remove Transjordan (now called Jordan) from the British Mandate and create a semi-independent state there.
Continued Arab attacks on Jewish communities and the British failure to protect the Jews led to the creation of Haganah (Defense) a mainly Zionist militia. Even this slight increase of Jews coming into the land led to a large-scale Arab rebellion in the land from 1936-1939.

JERUSALEM'S GRAND MUFTI

I tell you now the story of Hajj Muhammed Effendi Amin al Husseini, the Grand Mufti (leader) of Jerusalem who lived from 1895 to 1974. I never met Husseini; however, I knew members of his family and have been in their homes in Jerusalem. Husseini was a radical pro-Nazi Palestinian and Muslim leader. Though with a prison record, upon his release Husseini was elected Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in an election rigged by Sir Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner. The Mufti had a fortune at his disposal, much of which was used to finance terror campaigns. He made his position very clear: “You Zionists will be massacred to the last man. We want no progress, no prosperity. Nothing but the sword will decide the fate of this country.”

It is known that Husseini met not only with Hitler (shown above) but with Adolf Eichmann (later hanged by the Israelis for mass deportation of Jews to the gas chambers)
to see about setting up a Nazi death camp in Israel itself. During WWII, Husseini went
to Nazi Germany where he broadcast propaganda on behalf of Hitler. He lobbied
extensively to prevent Jews from escaping German plans for their annihilation. At the
War Crimes Trial for Nazis in Nuremberg, following the war, this testimony was entered
into the official record about Husseini:

The Mufti was one of the initiators of the systematic extermination of European Jewry
and had been a collaborator and adviser of Eichmann and Himmler in the execution of
this plan. He was one of Eichmann's best friends and had constantly incited him to
accelerate the extermination measures. He visited incognito the gas chambers of
Auschwitz.

I relate this story to you to show you the parameters of hatred against the Jews by Arab
leaders in Palestine during WWII. When I was invited to the Husseini home in
Jerusalem in the early 1980's, I was shocked to see a very large photograph of the Grand
Mufti still hanging on the front wall of the home (a few years after his death) and was
told by the family how proud they were of their famous relative.

FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II

The war left the surviving remnant of Jews in central Europe as displaced persons. A
survey showed that 97% of them desperately wanted to migrate to Palestine. Those who
were successful, for the most part, had to enter the land illegally. Those Jews already
there organized under the 1939 edict known as THE WHITE PAPER, a provision most
hated. This was a policy paper issued under British authority that formed a geographic
division in Palestine, part Jew, part Arab. Finally, the United Nations had to do
something to stop the mayhem in the Holy Land.

The UN appointed a committee to decide what to do. It was recommended that there be
a PARTITION in the land creating two states, one Arab and one Jewish with Jerusalem to
be under the direct administration of the United Nations. The Arabs States declared
emphatically that they would greet any attempt to form a Jewish state with war. Dr.
Izzat Tannous, the Palestinian Arab representative to the United Nations made their
position clear: We are now at war, a war in which no quarter will be asked and none
will be given. It will be a battle of life and death and woe to the vanquished.
Meanwhile, the British were withdrawing from the land.

On May 14, 1948, the last British forces left Haifa and the Jewish Agency, led by David
Ben-Gurion, declared the creation of the State of Israel IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
1947 UNITED NATIONS PARTITION PLAN. Both superpower leaders, U.S.
President Harry S. Truman and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, immediately recognized the new state. But Arab League members Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq declared for war and announced their rejection of the UN partition decision. The War for Independence was now on and it lasted from 1947-1949.

I have given you this information so you may understand fully that Israel was formed by the United Nations. The War for Independence would be only the first of the wars the Jews would have to fight. There was the 1956 Suez War, the Six Day War in 1967, the Yom Kippur War in 1972 and the 1982 War in Lebanon.

But the big war is yet to come - the second seal of Revelation 2. We have already read the prophecy in Ezekiel 38.

I sat in the Knesset interviewing the Undersecretary of Defense for Israel. He told me that it would be most helpful if Israel held all the land originally promised to Abraham by God. I asked him, “In what way?” He replied without hesitation, “Having that much land to the north would give Jerusalem a buffer when Russia attacks our country.” He had no question whatsoever about Ezekiel’s prophecy.

The nations of the world will not come to Israel’s aid. Our current U.S. administration is certainly not in Israel’s camp at the present time. Our president has encouraged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to give up land to the Palestinians for peace. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter has strongly favored the Palestinian position and has written books indicating policy clearly opposed to scripture. No nation will back Israel when the second seal judgment comes to pass. So - will no one help Israel?

Oh - yes! Israel will have help!

Ezekiel 38:18-23

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. [19] For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; [20] So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. [21] And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. [22] And I will plead against him with pestilence and with
blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. [23] Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

The attacking nations will become Sodom and Gomorrah re-visited. God will come to Israel’s aid:

Ezekiel 39:1-13

Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: [2] And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: [3] And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. [4] Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. [5] Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. [6] And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. [7] So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

[8] Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken. [9] And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: [10] So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God.

[11] And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamon-gog. [12] And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. [13] Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God.

- It will take Israel seven years just to burn the weapon debris of the enemies.
- It will take Israel seven months just to bury the dead.
- And it will trigger a revival in Israel such as the world has never known, out of which
will come 144,000 sealed Jewish witnesses who will evangelize every nation under the sun.

God’s promise to Abraham comes clearly to mind: “I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.”

Friend, keep your eyes on Israel. I truly believe the fulfillment of all these things will soon be upon us. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.