

# Following Israel

A brief history of the Jews

By Leon King



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## PREFACE

**P**eculiar among all peoples ever to inhabit a portion of the earth's surface are the Jews – the Israelites. Unlike the ancient Egyptians, the "Ageless" Chinese, the Greeks and Romans, these descendants of Abraham of the Chaldees have survived the ebb and flow of centuries come and gone since the cradle of civilization. The author of this short paper considers this fact as extraordinary and miraculous. Jews, unlike most other peoples of the world, past or present, seem to maintain their identity regardless of their particular geographical boundary or lack of it. There are, today, American Jews, Russian Jews, English Jews, and the list goes on and on. This has been the pattern through the many years of western civilization. Hated and persecuted wherever they went, they have somehow managed to survive, and today exist as a state, a nation, a people; all of which somehow crowns all the travels, troubles, and persecutions that have been theirs. Trace with me the travels of this wondrous people from their birth to our time through the pages of history.

## Beginning of the Nation.

**A**lmost everyone agrees that civilization had its beginning somewhere in the area of Mesopotamia (modern Iraq); those who disagree say that civilization began in Egypt. It is strange, actually funny, how the history books always describe a people coming from somewhere else to establish a nation, an empire, or a kingdom. The Normans came from somewhere to England, the Barbaric Hordes from Asia to the continent of Europe, the Hellenists from somewhere to begin the long reign of what was Greece.

“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. 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;<sup>1</sup>” are words Moses used to explain God’s relationship with the nation of Israel. The Creator’s choosing of this people for his own purpose began where men say that history began – on the plain of Shinar (Sumer), when God called Abram (later Abraham) out of Ur of the Chaldees. “And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go unto the Land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.”<sup>2</sup>

God had thoroughly instructed Abram in his call to separation from his country and family, telling Abram that He would make of Abram a great nation, and through his seed would all nations of the earth be blessed. A very interesting part of the unconditional covenant God made with Abram was the promise to ‘bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Deuteronomy 7:6

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Genesis 11:31-32

thee." God did not tell Abram, in the beginning, just where he would be led, but that he was going to a land that God would show him.

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land;"<sup>3</sup>

God's leading to the land to show and promise as an inheritance to Abram ended in the biblical land of Canaan. The Almighty then outlined the plight of future generations of Abram's seed – the nation of Israel. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."<sup>4</sup>

This promise served as God's telling the father of the Jews that they would live in the land of Egypt for four-hundred years, then, brought out of the land of Egypt by the judgment of God upon the land of Egypt. This promise and call of God to Abram occurred about 1920 – 1913 B. C. With this promise and all else that was happening in Abram's life, he had not yet a son, an heir, to whom these promises would fall after his death. He was fast becoming an old man.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Genesis 12:4-6

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Genesis 15:13-14

“Now in a little time Abraham had a son by Sarah, as God had foretold to him, whom he named Issac, which signifies Laughter; and indeed they so called him, because Sarah laughed when God said that she should bear a son, she not expecting such a thing, as being past the age of child-bearing, for she was ninety years old, and Abraham an hundred; so that this son was born to them both in the last year of each of these decimal numbers.”<sup>5</sup>

Issac, the promised son of Abraham, then became the heir of God’s promise to his father. Isaac was married to Rebekah, who was chosen by the servant of his father, Abraham. To this union, twin sons were born, Esau and Jacob. Esau was a man of the field, a great hunter, and became father of the Edomites, also dwellers of the middle-east. Jacob married Leah and Rachel, and became father of twelve sons. God changed the name of Jacob to Israel. “And he [God] said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the sons of Jacob (now Israel) became known as the children of Israel. The families of these twelve sons have carried the name through centuries come and gone as Israelites. God’s word to Abraham concerning the dwelling of the Jewish nation in a foreign land began to materialize during the days of Jacob, when his favorite son, Joseph was hated of his brothers, and was sold to a band of travelling Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites took Joseph down to Egypt and sold him into slavery in the house of Potiphar, captain of the Guard. During the thirteen years that followed his entrance into Egypt, Joseph endured many hardships and trials. He was eventually to emerge as prime-minister of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh. Some authorities place this Egyptian-Israeli co-habitation during the reign of Hyksos. “Some of the tribes—belonging to the Joseph group—settled on the borders of Egypt, probably during the Hyksos age.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Antiquities of the Jews, Flavius Josephus, Kregel Publications, 1960, page 36.

<sup>6</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Genesis 33:28

<sup>7</sup> A History of Israel, by Theodore H. Robinson, Vol I, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, page 45.

Famine extending into the land of Canaan had forced the other sons of Israel to make a trip to Egypt seeking food. Joseph's wisdom, with God's providence permitted the family of Israel (Jacob), to eventually move and settle in the land of Egypt in the land provided by the Pharaoh. Exactly according to the promise of God to Abraham, the people of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt and had been afflicted for four hundred years – four hundred and thirty years, to be precise, for they left Egypt – the host of them on the self same day as the ending of the four hundred and thirty years.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 12:40-41

## THE EXODUS

“**N**ow there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.”<sup>9</sup> Blessing and prosperity brought severe hardship and persecution to the Israelites in the land of Egypt. The new Pharaoh had strong thoughts concerning this great multitude of people, and great fear arose in his mind. The Israelites were employed in almost every phase of Egyptian life. They made bricks, built great structures, and worked in every phase of agriculture. They were treated harshly and made to serve ‘rigourously’ under the new regime. Still they flourished.

The pharaoh became so worried that he decreed that all male children be killed as soon as they were born. Divine providence intervened in protecting the life of the future leader of the nation of Israel – Moses. Moses was educated in the ways of the Egyptians, and in effect had become the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He became involved in a fight between one of the Egyptians and an Israelite, and slew the Egyptian. He fled for his life from the face of Pharaoh into the land of Midian where he tended sheep for about forty years. The desert of Midian is where God appeared to Moses and made Moses’ calling known as the leader of the nation of Israel. Though we shall not dwell on the Exodus but briefly, the story of this journey of Israel out of Egypt is known in nearly every home in America and around the world. Suffice us to say that God kept his promise and delivered them with a mighty hand. God judged the nation of Egypt as he had promised Abraham hundreds of years before. Using Moses as his instrument, God sent ten

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<sup>9</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 1:8-11



great plagues upon Egypt consummating with the slaying of the first-born – from the lowest of men to the house of Pharaoh.

The actual beginning of the Nation of Israel began with the Passover, as the blood of the Passover lamb was smeared on the lintel and doorpost of the houses where they dwelt. The shedding of blood marked their deliverance from the harsh Egyptian bondage – not the blood of martyrs, but the blood of innocent animals, smeared upon the lintels and doorposts of their houses.

“This month (Abib) shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”<sup>10</sup> “And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”<sup>11</sup>

This was the Passover and the beginning of the Exodus. The nation of Israel crossed the Red Sea upon God’s parting of the waters, which allowed the teeming masses of the Israelites to cross on dry land. After their crossing, they wandered about in the Sinai Desert for forty years. The men of war of the generation which came up out of Egypt all died during the wandering in the wilderness, but their children were permitted to cross over into the Promised Land – the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). Israel’s leader, Moses, also died before the nation crossed Jordan to occupy the new land.

Joshua, who had been Moses’ servant, became the new leader of the nation of Israel upon the death of Moses. Joshua led the nation across the

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<sup>10</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 12:2

<sup>11</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 12:22-23

Jordan River into the new land – the land of Canaan about 1451 B. C., and began the conquest of the land. Under the leadership of Joshua, the land of Canaan was divided among the twelve tribes of Israel. Just prior to the death of Moses and the conquest of Canaan, the Bible records one of the most significant prophecies ever uttered regarding a nation – the nation of Israel. This is the thought to keep in mind throughout the study of the Nation and the Jewish people to the present time.

“<sup>12</sup>And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:” This announcement of Almighty God coupled with His words through the Prophets who prophesied later, outline the entire history of the “peculiar people” – the Israelites.

They would be scattered among the nations of the world, but would be re-gathered in the latter days. “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.”<sup>13</sup> “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will

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<sup>12</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Deuteronomy 28:63-66

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Jeremiah 23:3

bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country."<sup>14</sup> "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, Ezekiel 34:12-13

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Ezekiel 36: 23-24

## POST-EXODUS UNTIL AFTER CHRIST

Following the conquest of Canaan and the death of Joshua, the nation of Israel lived through a period of ruling Judges – thirteen in all – in which there was violence and chaos. Seven different periods of servitude befell the Israelites during the rule of the Judges. The period was characterized as that in which “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”<sup>16</sup> Israel, then cried out for a king so they could be like the nations around them. Saul, son of Cis was the first King of Israel, followed by David, Solomon and forty others in succession which finally ended in a split kingdom. Under Rehoboam, son of Solomon, the Nation of Israel was divided into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. The northern kingdom was subsequently known as Israel while the southern was called by the name of Judah.

The northern kingdom, Israel's capital city was Samaria and the kingdom consisted of ten of the twelve tribes. Judah and Benjamin, the remaining two tribes made up the southern kingdom whose capital remained in Jerusalem. In about 721 B. C. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria conquered the northern kingdom and carried the people away into Assyria. The southern kingdom ended with Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem. He deported the people from the southern kingdom to Babylon beginning about 599 B.C. “At last, in 597 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar himself came to invest the little capital, which quickly submitted. Not only was the city sacked and plundered, but the king followed the Assyrian policy of transporting the most important elements of the population and carried away with him the warriors, the artisans, the craftsmen, and all who could give vitality to the State. The miserable remnants were left, amidst the lonely ruins, under Zedekiah, the last of the Hebrew kings.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Judges 21:25

<sup>17</sup> A History of the Jews, by Abram Leon Sachar, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed, Alfred Knopf, Publ, page 59.

The exiles, for the main part, lived out their seventy years of captivity in Babylon; then returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel to rebuild the wall of the city and the temple. The temple was indeed rebuilt in troublesome times – as some built, others watched and stove off the enemy. Although dominated by rule of the four great world powers in succession, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece (under Alexander and the subsequent division of his kingdom), and Rome, the Jews were by and large permitted to stay on their land. The time of the great dispersion prophesied by Moses hundreds of years before was closing quickly on the Jews during the time of Christ. Jesus, himself, added to the awesome words of his Heavenly Father spoken through the lips of Moses, when he said, “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh—And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish War, during which Titus, son of Emperor Vespasian, eventually destroyed Jerusalem, took place from 66-70 A. D. “The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple made a break in the history of the Jews which can be compared only with the catastrophe of 586 B. C. The untold number of those who had perished during the four years’ war, and the many thousands, who had been taken prisoners and sold as slaves in different parts of the world, had left a mere remnant of Jews in Judaea. Hitherto the Jews all over the world had looked to Jerusalem and the Temple for instruction guidance, and inspiration. With the disappearance of the religious centre it might well nigh have seemed that Judaism was doomed, and that the Jews would be absorbed in the nations of the world. But it was not so, as the subsequent history will show. To this we must now turn.”<sup>19</sup>

Persecution – to live in doubt of life – to be scattered among the nations of

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<sup>18</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Luke 21:20, 24

<sup>19</sup> A History of Israel, by W. O. E. Oesterley, Vol II, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, page 451

the earth, until the time of God's re-gathering. A pronouncement well outlined, in which we attempt to fill in some detail.

## DISPERSION AND PERSECUTION THROUGH THE CENTURIES.

### During the Roman Empire

**H**istory begins to spin the stories of blood woven around the dispersed Jews. It is said that in Rome, the Coliseum was built (at least in part) with Jewish slave labor from Palestine. Roman persecution really got down to earnest things under Emperor Hadrian (117-138 A. D.). A Hebrew uprising was strongly suppressed during his reign in 135 A. D. "On invading the city (135), the Romans carried out a massacre. Bar Kokhba and all his warriors were killed; all the peaceful citizens were either killed or taken captive. Little by little, Severus put an end to the remnants of Jewish detachments in hiding. The war lasted three and a half years, and, according to legend, cost half a million lives."<sup>20</sup> "The long war left a devastated and thinly populated Judaea. Many captured Judaeans were sold as slaves, and it was said that on the market day in Hebron, near the Abraham oak, so many Judeans had been rounded up that each was exchanged for one horse."<sup>21</sup>

"Having suppressed the revolt, Hadrian could realize his objective—to transform Jerusalem into a pagan city by establishing a Roman colony there.—But Hadrian was not content with humiliating the Judaeans. He wished to exterminate them. He resolved to erase that spirit which isolated them from the pagan world, and gave them strength to resist."<sup>22</sup> Toleration and persecution seemed to alternate throughout the remaining years of the Roman Emperors and into the Byzantine Empire. It is interesting to note that the Roman Catholic Church [the organized 'church' of profane history],

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<sup>20</sup> *History of the Jews*, Vol 2, From the Roman Empire to the Early Medieval Period, by Simon Dubnov, page 55.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, pages 55-56.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, page 56

outwardly representing Christianity and the fanatical monarchs of Rome, were together determined to wage war against Judaism (the Jews).

Jewish colonies sprung up throughout the continent of Europe during the Roman Period; the peoples of Palestine having migrated, or enslaved and deported to the other lands. These peoples and their descendants were to deal with other nations in later years as Europe came to be divided into States and establish national (political) boundaries.

### **Early & Medieval Europe**

b. Oppression of the Jews continued into and during the "Middle Ages." Volumes of material could be copied that would serve to magnify the misery found on the European continent among the Jewish population. In Spain, during the reign of Sisebut (612-620), he decreed that Jews who declined to embrace the Catholic faith must leave Spain. This seemed to establish a Spanish precedent that was to repeat itself in later years. The Age of the Crusades that followed in 1096 to 1291 began a stepped-up campaign to exterminate the Jews from the earth.

"To a degree, modern anti-Semitism and the centuries-old persecution of the Jews can be traced back to the Crusades. The crusades ushered in a nightmare for the Jews of Europe. The High Middle Age of the Christian world became the Dark Age of the Jewish World. As the mob in the initial contingent of the First Crusade swept over Europe, its members sought to kill every Jew within reach. Their slogan was "Kill a Jew and save your soul."—Many thousands were slaughtered. In dozens of cities and towns, entire Jewish populations were exterminated—Starting in Norwich, England, in 1144, the frenzy spread to the continent and, like a malignant disease, proceeded to infect much of Europe. In 1171 the Jewish community of Blois, in France, was exterminated. In Germany, anti-Jewish "pogroms" (organized mob attacks) became an annual event. European Jewry was



struck another blow by Pope Innocent III. In 1215, he obtained from the Fourth Lateran Council of the Church a decision that all Jewish males from the age of thirteen and all Jewish females from the age of eleven wear a yellow patch, front and back, on all outer garments. The yellow badge was first introduced in France. Similar methods of degrading Jews were adopted in other countries.—The picture of the stooped, furtive Jew, always seeking but never finding a sanctuary, comes from this period. At least a hundred thousand Jews were killed in Europe during the two hundred years of the Crusades.”<sup>23</sup>

These “unfortunates” were then, as now, and as before, reaping the judgment pronounced by God – “your life will stand in doubt – you will be a proverb.” The Jews were driven back and forth across the face of Europe. In England, they were bankrupted, and in 1290, when they had become destitute, Edward I expelled them. Philip Augustus of France expropriated the property of all French Jews in 1182 and drove them from the country. In 1198, he invited them to return and fleeced them until he died. In 1306, Philip the Fair, again, confiscated everything they owned. Again, they were expelled.—The long years of wandering, which eventually took much of the Jewish remnant to eastern Europe, began at this time.”<sup>24</sup>

1492 is a memorable year to America, and for Spain – and it is, indeed, a memorable one for the Jews as well. The Spaniards took Granada, the last Moslem province from the Moors, and the Jews were expelled from the country. The Spaniards followed the old established precedent established eight hundred years before. “This was a difficult period for the Jew. When referred to, he was usually depicted as the diabolical oppressor, the ritual murderer, the poisoner of humanity. Every act against him could therefore be rationalized and justified.—The Jewish experience varied from country to country. They suffered least in Italy. There, the Jews were second-class

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<sup>23</sup> *A History of the Western World*, Vol I, by Solomon Model, pages 410-411.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, page 412.

citizens, but no mob attacks occurred at this time. Few Italian Jews had engaged in money-lending, and there was no great Jewish wealth.—The Jews of France, however, were not as fortunate. In 1320, accompanied by mass suicides, a pogrom wiped out more than one hundred and twenty Jewish communities. In 1321, as a result of a well-poisoning rumor, about five thousand Jews were killed. In 1394, on the Jewish Day of Atonement, when the French king, Charles VI, signed a decree for the final expulsion of all Jews more than one thousand years of Jewish life in France were brought to an end.—In Germany, tears and blood flowed together. From 1336 to 1338, a band of assassins calling themselves Judenschlager (Jew Slayers) swept through the country, killing people by the thousands.—Although a few Jews were retained by various German rulers in special positions, most of the German-Jewish communities were destroyed and the “Wandering Jew” became a reality by the end of the fifteenth century—They were permitted to enter all occupations and helped develop the Polish economy. For a time, Poland became a Jewish haven.”<sup>25</sup>

“I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you;” God’s promise to Abraham always resounding with utmost authority and unerring fulfillment. “From the late Middle Ages, Poland served as a Jewish haven. There the Yiddish language, a form of medieval German with an admixture of Hebrew and Slavic, using Hebrew characters, developed and flourished.—They prospered, and by 1648, Poland contained about half a million Jews. But the policy of toleration came to an end. Suddenly, they found themselves being accused of child-murder, witchcraft, robbery, swindling, and treason. German merchants and Jesuits fanned the flames of hatred. Popular passions were aroused. Anti-Jewish laws were passed. Then, just as the Thirty Year’s War ended in the West, a furious struggle broke out in the East. In 1648, a huge army of Cossacks, peasants, and Tartars, led by a man named Bogdan Chmielnicki (c. 1593-1637), rose in revolt against the Polish landlords. Many thousands of Poles were killed, but the Jews were his

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pages 484-485.

prime target. They were hated because of their identification with the landlords, and they were ideal scapegoats. For two years the Jews of Poland and the Ukraine were subjected to uncontrolled violence. Men, women, children, and babies were brutally murdered. Estimates of the number of dead range from 100,000 to 250,000. Hundreds of Jewish communities were exterminated; Jewish life in Poland was almost destroyed. The wandering Jew began to move back from East to West."<sup>26</sup>

It becomes obvious that through the centuries in Europe that the Jew was driven to and from among the nations, seeking refuge – occasionally finding it, only to eventually reap the harvest of hatred that somehow found them out wherever they went.

### **The American Jew**

c. Let us consider the American Jew. "The history of the Jews in America is the history of three distinct tides of immigration. Soon after the New World was opened to European adventurers, the Sephardic<sup>27</sup> group came, some directly from Inquisition-ridden Spain and Portugal, others by way of doughty little Holland, and still others by way of the South American settlements. This first group was not every large, however, and for more than three hundred years the Jewish element in America remained negligible. With the dawn of the nineteenth century a steady German immigration began, swelling perceptibly after the reaction of the post-Waterloo era and the failure of the liberal revolutions of 1848. Finally came the Polish-Russian-Romanian group; a thin stream in the sixties, and then a veritable flood after the May laws in Russia in the eighties. The Slavic immigrants, who numbered more than two and a half million by the

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<sup>26</sup> *A History of the Western World*, Vol II, by Solomon Model, pages 71-72.

<sup>27</sup> Sephardic (from the OED): A Spanish or Portuguese Jew, a Jew of Spanish or Portuguese descent. Also *attrib.* Hence **Se"phardic a.**, pertaining to the Sephardim.

outbreak of World War, completely submerged the other groups and deeply influenced American Jewish life."<sup>28</sup>

The Hebrews have found a haven in America. By and large, they have enjoyed prosperity and freedom from persecution in the United States. Jewish people have proven themselves quite adept for the most part, in financial matters – somehow having a knack to prosper. In America, as in the nations of Europe, Jews find themselves in places of financial advisors in private industry and in the government as well. History seems to repeat the story of Joseph in the house of Potiphar in Egypt, when all that was in his hand prospered. It is significant, that in century 20, in a time when "Jerusalem (began to be) a burdensome stone for all people," that the Jews have only one ally in the entire world – the United States of America.

### **The Russian Jewish Nightmare.**

d. "Until the outbreak of the World War, nearly half of the Jews in the world lived in the vast Russian empire. Their history as the subjects of the Romanovs is a record of constant misery. No people had so many tearful associations, so little reason to cherish rulers and country-side as worthy of devotion and sacrifice. Even in the twentieth century, when nearly all of western Europe had shaken off the primitive brutalities that had long disgraced it, Russia still clung to her Tartar traditions. She climaxed her outrageous legal disabilities and savage economic restrictions with pogroms and massacres which horrified the civilized world. In the very year in which the Tsar Nicholas II called for a world peace conference, bloody riots were being planned and perpetrated in the unhappy Jewish pale. The benighted policy of Russia was partially due to the colossal ignorance of the masses, to the bigotry of the Church, and to the stupid incompetence of the rulers. It was assuredly complicated by the fact that the five million Jews of the

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<sup>28</sup> *A History of the Jews*, by Abram Leon Sachar, Alfred A. Knopf Publ, 1960, page 299.

empire refused to fall in line with the Russification policy of the pan-slavists. They demanded the right to live their own lives in their own way. The clash was, consequently, inevitable, but the ruthlessness with which the tsars conducted their warfare on the helpless little people made the name of Russia a synonym for barbarism and inhumanity."<sup>29</sup>

The Alexanders and Nicholases of the Romanov Dynasty almost repeated themselves to the man, perhaps with the exception of Nicholas II, who was all but a puppet. Early in the reign of each, a period of toleration toward the Jews seemed to prevail, but later in life, the hatred toward all Hebrews seemed to boil to the top and persecution was called for in all points.

### **The Hitler Experience.**

e. Perhaps the crowning experience of our generation in Jewish persecution was during the Nazi regime in World War II. This seems to be a thing of common knowledge that haunts the entire human race even until this hour. Human beings snatched from their homes, their lands, in a policy of genocide that would be difficult to repeat. "The deportations themselves were on the lowest animal level. Thousands died in the sealed trains for lack of food, lack of water, lack of air. Those who arrived to reach the extermination points were held only brief periods before consignment to the gas chambers. Children were often torn away before their mothers. One survivor said later with icy bitterness: 'Even a cat is led away before her kittens are taken.' The bodies were pushed out of the gas ovens like so much garbage and then burnt in huge crematoria or buried in long common graves. The liberating hosts later found piles of baby shoes, gold teeth, spectacles, toys, all sorted out meticulously. For the Germans, even horror had to be methodical. These were stories usually told dully, sullenly, at the war trials, by the guards in charge of the camps and the ovens. Some of them were pathological creatures, congenitally unable to understand the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, page 309

enormity of their crimes. But the evidence made it plain that the German people were also deeply implicated. They may not have condoned sadism, but they could not have been unaware of the mass murders. Perhaps they were helpless to protest in a tightly controlled Fascist police state. But how could they have rationalized that Jews deserved their fate? By what psychological perversity could they have carried over their hatred beyond the fall of Hitler? The names of the great horror camps—Treblinka, Buchanwald, Owsiecim, Maidanek, and others—remain not only as enduring symbols of the Jewish tragedy; they remain as irrefutable witnesses of deeply rooted German folk guilt.”<sup>30</sup>

Upon seeing the atrocities committed in these death camps, the supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower instructed his subordinates to take pictures, pictures, and more pictures. Said he, “Somebody will undoubtedly, in the future, deny this every happened.” It is fitting only to say that the Jews continue until this century, everywhere the soul of their foot has rested – to be hated and persecuted.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, page 414-415.

## THE RE-GATHERING.

**O**n the 14<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1948, independence was proclaimed at Tel Aviv. For the first time in nineteen centuries, the Jews had a homeland—a nation implacably opposed by the Arabs, the centuries-long resident residents of Palestine. The nation of Israel was established in the very same land, albeit restricted, that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a land promised to their seed. No student of the Bible can help but recall these prophetic words from the Old Testament book of Ezekiel: “Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel.”<sup>31</sup>

That all of the Jews scattered among the nations have not yet returned is admitted by every candid person, but we marvel at the singular fact that this nation was re-born in the twentieth century out of a people scattered to the four winds among all the nations of the earth. We marvel that they have retained their identity in all the places where they were driven.

Why did they return? Why to that land that they had been driven from so many times? and finally deported and scattered among all nations at the hands of Titus, son of Vespasian in 70 A. D.? and have wandered, been persecuted, hated, killed, and enslaved of all men (the United States of America) excepted since 70 A. D.? Jerusalem, the capitol of the southern Kingdom had been taken down stone by stone and sowed with salt. To paraphrase Josephus, “It could not have been recognized that people ever inhabited that city.”

“On the fifth anniversary of the capture of the Old City, during the six-day war in 1967, jubilant Israelis gather at the Western, or Wailing Wall, sole

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<sup>31</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Ezekiel 37:21-22.

remnant of the Temple, the lodestone of Judaism. Amid the hum of prayer and the stir of song from men dancing the hora, a supplicant presses a bit of paper into a crevice. It bears a prayer of petition or perhaps the name of a loved one lost in the flames of World War II. Built by Solomon and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, restored by Herod and razed by the Romans, the Temple once contained the Tablets of the Law, the Commandments given to Moses. In the shadow of its wall, Jews discover the rapture of return after two millennia of dispersion and persecution."<sup>32</sup> "Birthplace of Judaism and Christianity, battleground for Roman, Turk, Crusader, and caliph, the ancient land of Palestine contains the modern state of Israel. On May 14, 1948, independence was proclaimed at Tel Aviv, and for the first time in 19 centuries, Jews had a home-land—a nation implacably opposed by the Arabs, the centuries-long residents of Palestine."<sup>33</sup>

"The light faded under a silver-gray sky that seemed all of one cloud, and a thin rain polished the stones of the Old City's congested lanes. As I neared the Jewish Quarter, an Arab boy emerged with palms outstretched. 'Show you the way to the Wall!' he pleaded of a thin man walking near us. 'I know the way,' said the man, 'I have known the way for 2,000 years.'"<sup>34</sup> The response of that thin man to the little Arab boy reflects the attitude and desires of Jews the world over. They know the way—they want to return to the land, and indeed many have in unprecedented numbers. "Since independence more than 1,300,000 have come from dozens of countries, more than tripling Israel's population."<sup>35</sup>

"Israel exists for the 'ingathering of the exiles.' Under the Law of Return, every Jew has the right—denied only for security reasons—to become a citizen upon arrival. Since 1900 almost two million Jews have returned to

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<sup>32</sup> *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol 142, No 6, Dec 1972, page 818.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, page 821.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, page 820.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, page 832.



their ancient homeland in waves of immigration known as Aliyahs—'ascents to Jerusalem.'"<sup>36</sup>

A census conducted in 1995 in Israel reflected that 5,548,523 persons lived in the new nation. An estimate in 2008 is given as 7,282,000.<sup>37</sup>

The population includes a mixture of Arabs, Jews, and others. Some writers have said that many of the "Jewish" people claim no roots back to Ancient Israel. Probably true, for the greatest influx of the children of Israel to that land is apparently yet to occur. That the nation of Israel exists in modern times is another monument to the faithfulness of God. That the obvious hatred and disdain of them by all nations on earth (the United States excepted) exists, is mute testimony before our very eyes that God continues to chasten them in their dispersion and unbelief.

The innate hatred of the Arab world for this tiny nation of people is remarkable and, for some, bewildering. Why do all Arabs hate them so? Has this question every come up in your mind? And, why do not the teeming millions of the Arabs simply attack and wipe them from the face of the earth as they say they desire to do? They tried in 1967 and came away shamed and embarrassed – with their armor columns and airfields smoking in ruins. Why are the nations of the world so quick to criticize the Israelis who respond with decisiveness when they are attacked by their enemies? The news is certainly slanted toward the Arabs as people might correctly expect given the world-wide hatred of this little nation on the Mediterranean.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, page 830

<sup>37</sup> Wikipedia @ <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

## CLOSING PERSONAL OBSERVATION.

**T**he author has barely skimmed the surface of the promises, times, places, and people involved, but he sits in starry-eyed amazement that such wondrous events have taken place in the lives of this people and still – they have managed to survive all the holocausts that have been theirs – then again to be planted, at least nominally, on the very land promised to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees (modern Iraq) so many centuries ago.

In this generation, it seems that people everywhere claim they are looking for something absolute which they can really cling to. I seriously doubt that men are truly looking for that, but are, for the most part, following the lusts of their own flesh and living in them. The Word of God, the Holy Bible, still stands as the absolute truth amidst all the lies of professing Christianity and the chaos of an unbelieving world. What God has purposed shall come to pass – and who is able to hinder him? Not one! The hearts of the kings, presidents, tsars, and potentates are still in the hand of the LORD, and as the rivers of waters, He turneth them whithersoever He will.

Amazing it is that this little, insignificant nation claims the front pages of the newspapers of the world. Hardly a day passes, except there has been some discussion and analysis of the conflict in the middle east. If there were no Israel, would there be a conflict? Why is this so? Is it not that God continues to place before the eyes of an on-looking world his workings? Many nations – most of them much larger and more populous than Israel are never heard from, but everybody knows about Israel!

The writer is not a Jew and certainly has never professed Judaism. He is a Bible-believing member of a very small Baptist church in a sparsely populated area of the largest state in the union – Alaska. This cursory study

of the plight of the Jews has proven, for him, the truth of God's pronouncement to Abraham: "I will bless him that blesseth thee and curse him that curseth thee." Yes, the kings and nations have persecuted and killed the Jews – but where are those nations now? They have come and gone, but the Jews still remain. Is it because they are worthy? Not in a million years, but it is because God determined to do with them what they have and are experiencing.

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."<sup>38</sup> "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."<sup>39</sup> This study has added credence to the view of the author that the Bible is literally true. The experiences of the Jews through the centuries are a continuing proof of that fact!

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<sup>38</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Matthew 24:35

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Ecclesiastes 3:14