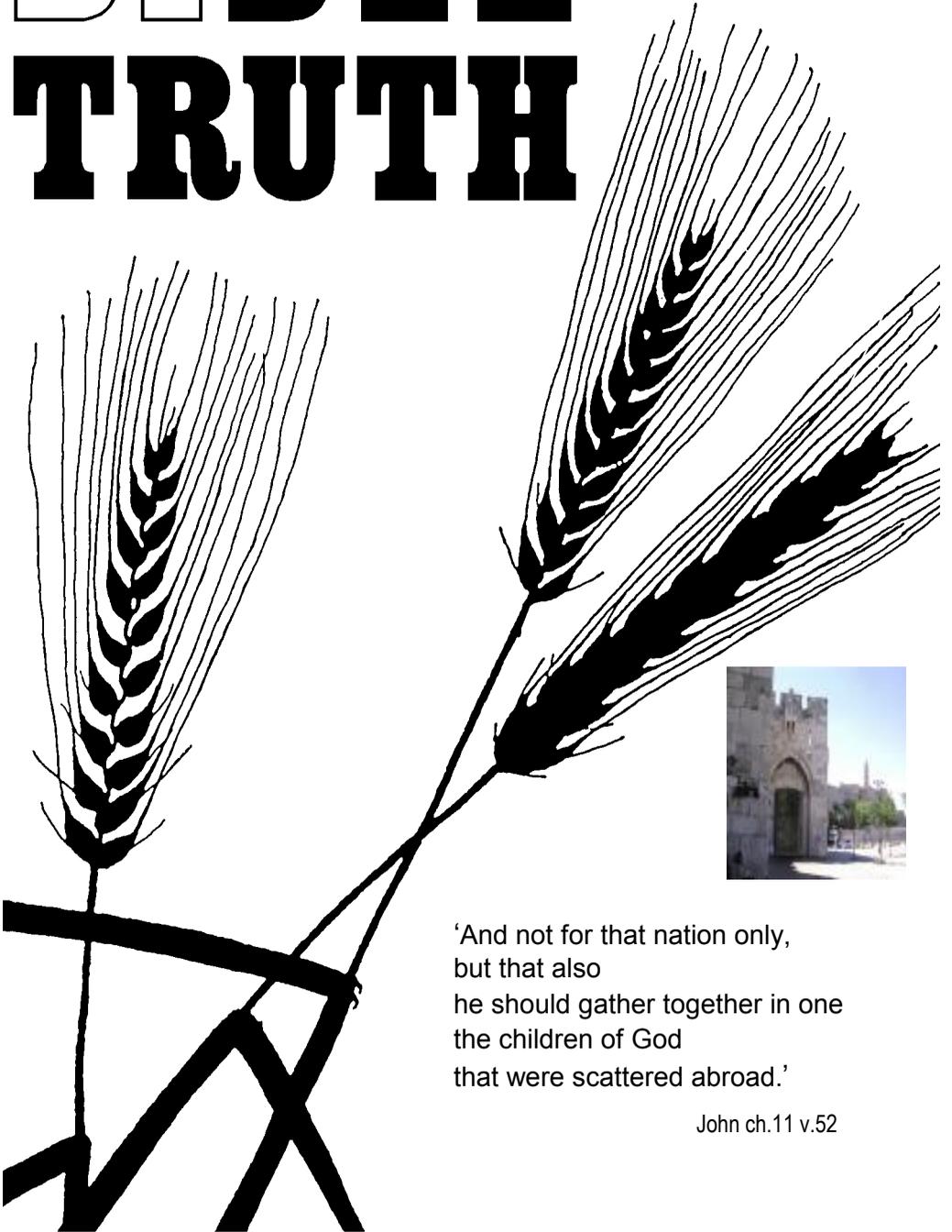


# BIBLE TRUTH

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'And not for that nation only,  
but that also  
he should gather together in one  
the children of God  
that were scattered abroad.'

John ch.11 v.52

# AMAZING PROPHECY FULFILLED



by Revd Jonathan Willans

*Many people have been alarmed by recent events in the Middle East which once again shows just how fragile global peace and stability really is. The Middle East is the focus of world attention and it is understood by even the casual observer that if war should break out in that area it has the potential to engulf us all in conflict. When we see nations in that region in turmoil, governments being overthrown and the rise of radical fundamentalism it is all too easy to forget the promises of Scripture which assure us that God will never allow the human race to destroy itself.*

‘And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.’

Matthew ch.24 v.22

When studying for my degree in Theology we were taught that about one-third of the Bible was composed of prophecy. The reason for predicting future events long before they took place was to show that Scripture was no ordinary book and that its writers were indeed being inspired by God.

Studying fulfilled prophecy calms fear and strengthens faith, so with this in mind, I want to look at one fascinating example which clearly shows that God is in control of the future of this world and nobody else!

The example I have selected relates to a famous historical event in the last century which was clearly foretold in Scripture literally thousands of years earlier. It concerns the deliverance of Jerusalem in 1917 during the 1st World War. It was this liberation from the

Turks which ultimately paved the way for the rebirth of Israel as a nation so it is of major prophetic, historical, political and religious significance. It was a defining moment which has shaped the Middle East right down to the present day.

Scripture not only predicted the year in which Jerusalem would be delivered but also the manner by which this deliverance would be achieved.

First of all let us examine two prophecies relating to the actual year of its liberation.

i) When speaking about punishing the nation for immorality God warned Judah and the Jews, ‘... if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins’ (see Leviticus ch.26 vv 27-28).

Any Jew or Israelite reading this would have understood that a ‘Time’ meant an actual number not just some vague measurement. To them a ‘Time’ represented 360 years and so if God stated that a punishment was to be seven ‘Times’, then it was 7 multiplied by 360 which comes to 2520 years.

Their understanding of a ‘Time’ came from their belief that one portion of Scripture must be cross referenced with another part in order to get its full meaning. Using this principle they held that there were 360 days in a ‘prophetic year’ and unless otherwise stated each prophetic day represented a full calendar year. An example of this day / year principle can be seen in Ezekiel ch.4 v.6 where God said to the prophet ‘... thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year’. It is interesting to notice that their measurement of a ‘Time’ as representing 360 ‘units’ is the same as that used in the New Testament. For instance, in Revelation ch.12 v.6 it states that God will take care of the woman (Israel) for ‘1260 days’. Later in v.14 this number is identified as being the same as 3½ ‘Times’. 3½ ‘Times’ equalling 1260 is of course the same as a seven ‘Times’ punishment equalling 2520 years.

ii) The other prophecy relating to Jerusalem’s year of liberation is found in the Book of Daniel. Daniel the prophet refers to the ending of this seven ‘Times’ punishment of Jerusalem in this manner; ‘Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days’ (Daniel ch.12 v.12).

## **So what happened and what do the figures 2520 and 1335 mean in practice?**

History reveals that Judah and the Jews ignored repeated warnings from God about their corrupt belief and behaviour. Finally, God allowed Jerusalem to be delivered into the hands of a succession of foreign powers. In 604 BC Judah began to come under the influence of the 'Gentile' King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and in 603 BC the theocracy of Jerusalem was changed so it became fully subject to 'Gentile' control. From this year onwards history shows that Jerusalem was indeed ruled by a succession of foreign empires for exactly 2520 years (or seven 'Times') as predicted in Leviticus ch.26. Its liberation from Turkish control in 1917 marked the end of this punishment and paved the way for the rebirth of the Jewish nation so bringing us to the present day.

What of Daniel's 1335 days / years? Before the liberation of Jerusalem in 1917 the Turks had controlled the region for four hundred years and before them, the Arabs controlled it for six hundred years. Both these two powers used the Moslem calendar. Using the same principle of interpretation with a day representing a year we find that the year 1335 in the Moslem calendar is simply 1917 in the Christian calendar.

The year of Jerusalem's release from bondage is so specific in Bible prophecy that the theologian and scholar Dr Grattan Guinness highlighted it decades before its fulfilment. In his famous work on prophecy called *Light for the Last Days* (published in 1886) he wrote,

'The year 1917 is doubly indicated as a crisis date ... in connection with Israel. There can be no question that those who live to see this year of 1917 will have reached one of the most important of these terminal years'.

But Scripture not only predicted the actual year of the deliverance of Jerusalem, it also predicted the peculiar way this deliverance would be achieved. Using the language of his day the prophet Isaiah described a strange vision God gave him concerning the deliverance of the City. He stated,

'As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it'.

Isaiah ch.31 v.5

Clearly he had seen something similar to birds flying over the city which brought its deliverance.

## So what happened in 1917 and what was Isaiah actually describing?

In November 1917 the British government made the following historic announcement called the 'Balfour Declaration'. It stated that

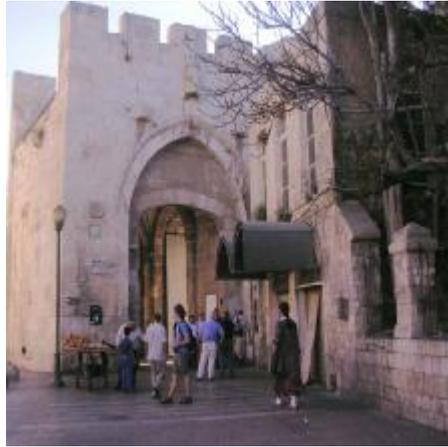
"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

General Edmund Allenby who was in charge of the British forces in Palestine was given orders to liberate the City. Being a committed Christian he was reluctant to undertake a full scale military attack because of the damage it would cause to such a sacred place. Seeking advice he wrote to King George V only to receive a one word telegram saying 'Pray'! Calling his staff together for a prayer meeting, Allenby opened his Bible. It opened at Isaiah ch.31 and as he read the prophecy he knew what God wanted him to do. He ordered a squadron of the Royal Flying Corp (the forerunner of the RAF) and they flew over the City dropping leaflets calling for surrender. The next day the City surrendered without damage or bloodshed. Jerusalem had been preserved from military attack 'as birds flying' yet at the same time delivered from the Turks who had been in control of the City since the Crusades. It was exactly as Isaiah had predicted over 2,500 years earlier.

On 11th December 1917 General Allenby, at the head of the British Forces, rode up to the Jaffa Gate, dismounted and humbly led his men on foot, as the deliverer of the City.



Outside



Inside

The Jaffa Gate Jerusalem in modern times, through which Allenby passed

It was exactly 2520 years since the proud Nebuchadnezzar had humbled the City. The seven 'Times' punishment of 2520 years had expired and Daniel's figure of '1335' (1917) had arrived. Jesus predicted Jerusalem would be downtrodden by the Gentiles until the Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (see Luke ch.21 v.24). Beginning in 603BC it had been downtrodden by the Babylonians followed by the Medo-Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and finally the Turks. The 'Times of the Gentiles' were over and the way opened for the rebirth of the nation which had been long predicted in other prophecies. (See Ezekiel ch. 37 vv 21-22).

While all this was happening in Jerusalem a remarkable 'worldwide event' took place which again reveals God's Providential timing and control. The Church of England (or Anglican Church) has particular Scripture Readings appointed for each day of the year outlined in its *Book of Common Prayer*. Incredibly, at the same time these events were unfolding in Jerusalem the appointed Scripture Readings in every Anglican church across the world were the relevant prophecies from Isaiah.

On December 8th the appointed reading was Isaiah ch.31 v.5 which states 'As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem....' On December 9th Allenby's planes flew over

Jerusalem dropping leaflets calling for surrender. Then on December 10th the appointed reading was Isaiah ch.40 vv 1-12 which stated 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ... Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins'. (The Hebrew word translated 'warfare' literally means 'the appointed time').

Finally, on December 11th General Allenby led British Forces into the City liberating it from Turkish control. These Scripture Readings were appointed in 1552 in the Prayer Book of Edward VI and had survived the revisions of 1662 and 1872.

The purpose of this short article has been to show that God is firmly in control of the future of the world rather than any 'terrorist organisation' or actual 'nation' (no matter how powerful they may seem). Bible prophecy can be totally trusted and relied upon to be fulfilled because as Jesus stated in John ch.10 v.35 '... scripture cannot be broken'. Just as prophecy predicted the deliverance of Jerusalem followed by the rebirth of the nation of Israel, so likewise it promises that one day Jesus Christ will return in His glory to establish peace and justice over the entire planet. The world will not be destroyed. These are prophecies of great comfort for those who really follow and obey the Lord and for them He returns as their Saviour and Friend. But for those, who love darkness, stifle their conscience and refuse to deal with the sin in their lives He returns as their Judge. Let us all make certain that when the prophecy of 2 Corinthians ch.5 vv 10-11 is fulfilled,

'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences'.

He will say to us '... Well done, thou good and faithful servant; ...' (Matthew ch.25 v.21), and not '... depart from me, ye that work iniquity' (Matthew ch.7 v.23). Sadly those who wilfully refuse to accept the witness of fulfilled prophecy are sleep walking to judgment.

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