

THE LORD WILL RETURN THE CAPTIVITY OF HIS PEOPLE

There is a prophesised exodus of the children of Israel, the Body of Christ, and the church of God from the world into the land of Israel according to the Holy Scriptures. This migration will come to pass suddenly as it was in the days of Moses. Are you aware of this prophecy? If you are, is your mind set on obeying the call to move from your nation in obedience to the Lord as Abraham did when he was called to remove from his father's house?

A conversation that took place before the creation of the heavens and the earth, dominions and principalities, between God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, holds the keys to understanding the will of God. In that conversation, God the Father established His will for the heavens and on the earth. From the day the Lord our God called for light during the six day restoration of the earth, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ have been working tenaciously behind the scenes to establish God's will on earth. All prophecy stems from this passage of Scripture:

Psalm 2:1-9 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? ²The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed saying, ³"Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

⁴He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. ⁵Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: ⁶"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

⁷"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

God the Father has determined to set His King on His holy hill of Zion. From that time until now, and with every passing day, the earth is slowly moving towards the fulfilment of God's King sitting on His holy hill which marks the beginning of the next age. We have to be sure in our minds that God has already spoken of His plan for the earth. It is now up to us to find out the truth, for that is our duty and it is one of the reasons for our existence.

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To fulfill His promise of setting His King in Zion, which we understand to be present day Jerusalem, God called Abraham and blessed him:

Genesis 12:1-3 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ²I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

When Abraham got to where the Lord had determined, the Lord appeared to him and promised to give that land as a heritage to his descendants.

Genesis 12:7-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

The Lord reiterated His promise to Abraham that He will give the Land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants when He made a covenant with him:

Genesis 17:1-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to Him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. ²And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." ³Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: ⁴"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

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The Lord magnified His promise to Abraham even further so we can be in no doubt whatsoever, when Abraham obeyed the voice of the Lord when the Lord asked him to offer his only son as a burnt offering.

Genesis 22:10-19 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁰ *And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.*

¹¹ *But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"*

So he said, "Here I am."

¹² *And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

¹³ *Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."*

¹⁵ *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." ¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.*

The promise of the blessing to the nations was to come through Abraham's seed and that blessing was the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord our God made another covenant with King David, a descendant of Abraham. At this stage, the descendants of Abraham were in the land God had promised to give to them as a heritage for ever.

Jeremiah 33:14-21 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁴ *'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:*

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¹⁵ *'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which He will be called:*

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

¹⁷ *"For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; ¹⁸ nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.' "*

¹⁹ *And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁰ "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, ²¹ then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers.*

This promise to David came when King David spoke to the prophet Nathan of his intention to build a house for the God of Israel. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David with this message:

2 Samuel 7:4-17 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁴ *But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁵ "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶ For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. ⁷ Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' " ' ⁸ Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. ¹⁰ Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, ¹¹ since the*

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time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.

¹² “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. ¹⁵ But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.” ’ ”

¹⁷ According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

The one who will build a house for the name of God and establish His kingdom forever is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the reasons why the Lord who was in heaven and through Him the heavens and the earth was created, had to be born as a man on earth and to fulfill all these prophecies.

When we consider what is happening in the land of Judea, the present day Israel, we can clearly see that what the Lord had promised has not yet been fulfilled because the throne of David has not yet been established forever.

The Branch of David which the Lord has promised to grow is the seed of Abraham. He will execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. The Lord Our Righteousness will sit on the throne of David ruling over the house of Israel. From the above passage of Scripture, the Lord has also promised that He will establish priests, the Levites who will be performing sacrificial offering continually before Him. Since no one can alter the set pattern of day and night, then this prophecy will be fulfilled at the appointed time. But there is one important missing element; there is no temple of God in the land of Israel and at the moment, only the Jews, some of the descendants of Abraham are in the land not the whole house of Israel.

The seed of Abraham is the Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified for our sins. We must come to the understanding that, sin is the transgression of the laws and commandments of God which leads to death. The Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed us, the whole world from the curse of sin, which is death. When we repent and believe the gospel of the Kingdom of God,

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it qualifies us for the gift of life which is in the Lord Jesus Christ our redeemer. The Lord came into the world and built His church which came alive on the day of Pentecost. On that day, the house of Israel became the spiritual house of Israel.

Acts 2:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This happened in fulfilment of what the Lord had said during His ministry that:

John 4:21-24 New King James Version (NKJV)

²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father."²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The prerequisite requirements for us to be able to worship God the Father from the time the Lord Jesus Christ returned to heaven till this day are: we must first acquire the Spirit of God and secondly have knowledge of the truth. Only after then can we be able to worship God in spirit and truth. Israel had to be converted to become the spiritual house of Israel to empower them and us today, to be able to worship God the Father in spirit and truth. This was made possible on the day of Pentecost when God the Father made available His Spirit to the sons and daughters of men:

Acts 2:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of

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fire, and one sat upon each of them.⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Both Jews and Gentiles who believed and followed the path set by the Lord through His apostles were converted into the Kingdom of God, which is also called the body of Christ, by the Lord, spiritually. This body is also known as the commonwealth of Israel as the apostle Paul was inspired to write:

Ephesians 2:1-22 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.¹⁷ And He came and preached peace

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to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The church the Lord Jesus Christ built was persecuted from the very beginning as the Lord had prophesied. This persecution escalated after the death of Stephen. Many in the body of Christ fled Jerusalem where it started to the rest of the world preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God:

Acts 8:1-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹ Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

³ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. ⁴ Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. ⁵ Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.

When the Lord entered Jerusalem to present Himself as the Lamb of God, He gave a prophecy that was in keeping with the word God gave the prophet Jeremiah:

Luke 19:38-44 New King James Version (NKJV)

³⁸ saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

³⁹ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

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⁴¹ Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Lord authorised the desolation of Jerusalem. We have to be clear on the fact that, it was not the Romans who decided to destroy the temple of God, Jerusalem and the land of Judea. The command came from God which took away the restrains that led to the desolation of Jerusalem and the Jews where driven away from their land.

Israel became a recognised nation again in 1948. Before then, the Jews where disperse throughout all the nations on earth. In 1967, after a brief war with its neighbours that lasted six days, Israel took control of the city of Jerusalem. From the time Israel became a recognised nation in 1948 to this day, there has always been wars or rumours of war between Israel and its neighbours. God has not given them rest and there is no temple God in Jerusalem, the city of God. This is the reason why:

Zechariah 1:12-17 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹² Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?"

¹³ And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words. ¹⁴ So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I am zealous for Jerusalem And for Zion with great zeal. ¹⁵ I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; For I was a little angry, And they helped—but with evil intent."

¹⁶ 'Therefore thus says the LORD: "I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it," says the LORD of hosts, "And a surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem."'

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¹⁷ “Again proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; The LORD will again comfort Zion, And will again choose Jerusalem.” ’ ”

God has not allowed His temple to be built in Jerusalem because He is angry with the inhabitants of the land of Israel. They have not looked to the Lord as their Lord and saviour despite the fact that it is God who gave them the land He had promised to their fathers. It is for this reason God has not authorised the construction of a temple in Jerusalem. This was prophesied by Hosea when he was inspired to write:

Hosea 3:4-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁴ For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. ⁵ Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

This is the subject of this study. We are in the latter years in which the children of Israel, the people of God will return to seek their God and the David their King, who we know is the Lord Jesus Christ since He is the one who is going establish and sit on David’s throne.

Today, only the Jews and a mixed multitude dwell in the land of Israel. The rest of the tribes of Israel and the spiritual children of God are still scattered throughout all the nations of the world. But the Lord has promised that:

Psalms 14:7 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁷ Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

This prophecy was recorded again for emphasis, so we can be in no doubt that:

Psalms 53:6 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁶ Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

There are three important facts from the above passage of Scripture that carry profound implications which we have to seriously consider:

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- The salvation of Israel can only come out of Zion.
- It will be the Lord who will bring back the captivity of His people.
- The Lord must be in Jerusalem for it to become Zion, the holy temple of the Lord.

This means the Lord Jesus Christ will have to be here on earth and He will be active in an obvious manner. We have already been given an example of what will happen during the days of Moses when the Lord was active here on earth.

Exodus 3:3-10 New King James Version (NKJV)

³Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."⁴ So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he said, "Here I am."⁵ Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."⁶ Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

⁷And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.⁹ Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.¹⁰ Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

The Lord was here on earth in direct communication with Moses on what he should do to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt to fulfill the promise He had made to His friend Abraham.

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THE LORD WILL BE ON EARTH

There is a prophesied returned of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth which has been kept sealed until now and there are many other passages of Scripture which confirm this fact. Contemplate on this; why will the Lord come as a thief in the night to many when He has said:

Matthew 24:29-31 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lord has said He will return to the earth after the great tribulation as stated in the passage of Scripture above. If that is when He will return, then, why will He still come as a thief in the night to those who believe in His name? If we are the children of light we are expected to know when the Lord will return on earth because it is our duty to seek the truth. It is the knowledge of the truth that will save us from the coming punishment. We just saw what happen to those in Judea and Jerusalem who did not know the time of their visitation.

The reason why the Lord will come as a thief in the night to many professing believer is because there is a prophesied return of the Lord which many are not aware of. The Lord has said He will return to Zion with mercy and His house will be built.

Zechariah 1:14-17 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁴ So the angel who spoke with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I am zealous for Jerusalem And for Zion with great zeal. ¹⁵ I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; For I was a little angry, And they helped—but with evil intent.”

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¹⁶ *‘Therefore thus says the LORD: “I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it,” says the LORD of hosts, “And a surveyor’s line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.”’*

¹⁷ *“Again proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; The LORD will again comfort Zion, And will again choose Jerusalem.”’ ”*

We know Zion is on earth and there is no temple of God in Jerusalem. The Lord will return to Jerusalem and His house will be built according to this prophecy. We know the man of sin will defile the temple of God when he sits in the house of God in Jerusalem passing himself to be God. This will happen before the return of the Lord according to what the Lord said in the passage of Scripture we saw earlier from the gospel of Matthew chapter twenty four. The Lord will return on earth as He did before during the days of Moses. Consider this passage of Scripture:

Micah 1:2-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

² *Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple. ³ For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down And tread on the high places of the earth. ⁴ The mountains will melt under Him, And the valleys will split Like wax before the fire, Like waters poured down a steep place. ⁵ All this is for the transgression of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?*

This passage of Scripture is crystal clear for us to see that the Lord will leave His place in heaven and tread the high places of the earth to put an end to the sins of Jacob, the house of Israel. The prophet Zephaniah was inspired to write:

Zephaniah 1:1-7 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹ *The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.*

² *“I will utterly consume everything From the face of the land,” Says the LORD; ³ “I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, The fish of the sea, And*

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the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land,” Says the LORD. ⁴“I will stretch out My hand against Judah, And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, The names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests— ⁵Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; Those who worship and swear oaths by the LORD, But who also swear by Milcom; ⁶Those who have turned back from following the LORD, And have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.”

⁷Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; For the day of the LORD is at hand, For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.

We have been given some of the duties the Lord will perform upon His return to the earth. Verse seven gives us a clear indication that the Lord will be here on earth. The prophet Amos was given this prophecy for us:

Amos 1:1-2 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

²And he said: “The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers.”

This prophecy will be fulfilled in our generation, in a matter of months. The Lord will roar from Zion: Zion is spiritual Jerusalem. In other words, Jerusalem becomes Zion when the Lord is present within its gates. The voice of the Lord will be heard in Jerusalem. We have now examined two passages of scripture which points to the fact that the Lord will be here on earth before the great tribulation. There are two important tasks the Lord will perform upon His return on earth. We should realise that the Lord has chosen to remain invisible to us just as He was during the days of Moses.

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TASK ONE

The Lord has determined to prepare a place for His people. The Lord made a promise to Abraham that He will give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants. We know the Lord is the seed of Abraham according to what God had promised. Today, the church the Lord Jesus Christ built is still scattered throughout all the nations of the earth. To be given residence in the land of Israel today for anyone who is not able to prove their Jewish roots is extremely difficult except in some cases you are very rich individual.

When the Lord returns, His first task will be the preparation of a place for His people and to punish the present day inhabitants of the land Israel who have not kept is laws and commandments and the neighbouring nations for their wickedness against the people of Israel. Consider this passage of Scripture:

Psalm 83:1-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹*Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, And do not be still, O God! ²For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; And those who hate You have lifted up their head. ³They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones. ⁴They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more." ⁵For they have consulted together with one consent; They form a confederacy against You: ⁶The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites; ⁷Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; ⁸Assyria also has joined with them; They have helped the children of Lot. Selah*

These nations all share borders with the land of Israel. We know the animosity that these nations abhor against Israel continually throughout the ages since the Lord planted His people in the land of Israel. The prophet Amos was inspired to write:

Amos 1:3-15 New King James Version (NKJV)

³*Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron. ⁴But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad. ⁵I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven, And*

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the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir," Says the LORD.

⁶Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they took captive the whole captivity To deliver them up to Edom. ⁷But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, Which shall devour its palaces. ⁸I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn My hand against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish," Says the Lord God.

⁹Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. ¹⁰But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, Which shall devour its palaces."

¹¹Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, And cast off all pity; His anger tore perpetually, And he kept his wrath forever. ¹²But I will send a fire upon Teman, Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

¹³Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory. ¹⁴But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, And it shall devour its palaces, Amid shouting in the day of battle, And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind. ¹⁵Their king shall go into captivity, He and his princes together," Says the LORD.

Amos 2:1-3 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime. ²But I will send a fire upon Moab, And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; Moab shall die with tumult, With shouting and trumpet sound. ³And I will cut off the judge from its midst, And slay all its princes with him," Says the LORD.

These are the same nations we saw from the passage of Scripture from the book of Psalms; Psalm eighty three. This prophecy against the nations that surround the land of Israel is documented in the majority of the books of the prophets. As mentioned earlier, the

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inhabitants of the Judea, the present day Israel are going to be punished as well. Here is the reason why:

Amos 2:4-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁴ Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have despised the law of the LORD, And have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed. ⁵ But I will send a fire upon Judah, And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

Now we can all see why the Lord is angry with the Jews who inhabit the land of Israel. They profess to keep the laws and commandments of God but in heart they cannot be any further away from the truth.

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SECOND TASK

After preparing a place for His people, the Body of Christ, the Lord will turn His attention on returning the captivity of His people to the land of Canaan as He had promised to His friend Abraham. As mentioned earlier, the Lord will be here on earth orchestrating events to fulfill His word as He did before during the days of Moses. There are over fifteen passages of Scripture addressing this event directly and few others, indirectly. This is what the Lord has said He will happen during that period of time:

Jeremiah 23:1-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹*“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says the LORD.* ²*Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: “You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,” says the LORD.* ³*“But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.* ⁴*I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the LORD.*

⁵*“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.* ⁶*In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called:*

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⁷*“Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’⁸ but, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.”*

The Lord will gather the remnant of His people from all the countries where He the Lord has driven them and bring them back to the land of Israel where they will dwell safely. He will then punish the shepherds who were supposed to feed His people but exploited them.

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There is another account of this event in the book of Ezekiel that sheds more light on what the Lord has proposed to do:

Ezekiel 34:11-16 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹¹ 'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

We have to understand that primarily, this prophecy is to fulfill the promise the Lord made to Abraham. Secondly, by removing His people from the harm's way as they were protected in Goshen in Egypt, the Lord has proposed to bring judgment on all those of his people who choose not to obey His command. We have to understand that, this event is the cut-off point that will set the prophesied events of the end of age in motion, beginning with the first four Seals, the housemen of the book of Revelation.

Jeremiah 33:25-26 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁵ "Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.'"

Can anyone break the Lord's covenant of day and night? Since day and night will always happen in their season, so will the Lord fulfill His promise to bring back the captivity of His people. There is an interesting passage of Scripture in the book of Matthew chapter twenty four:

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Matthew 24:15-22 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

We should understand that the great tribulation is a worldwide event not isolated to the land of Judea. The Lord has promised to protect His people from the great tribulation that is why in the above passage of Scripture, the Lord is advising the remnant who He brought out of the world to the land of Judea, present day Israel, to flee to the mountains. If you are not in Judea, ready to flee to the mountains at this stage, and are still alive after the first six Seals of the book of Revelation you will be in serious trouble.

The apostle Paul was inspired to write about this event, but many scholars have misinterpreted his words to mean something completely different. The great apostasy is God moving His people to a place of safety by the Lord from the world into the Promised Land, Israel, and secondly from the land of Judea to the mountains where they will be protected from the great tribulation.

Revelation 12:3-6 New King James Version (NKJV)

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

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God is faithful and He will do His pleasure. We have been given the word of truth but it is up to us to seek the Lord diligently for Him to open our understanding of what He has said while He can be found. There is a coming period of time, during the days of doom when people will earnestly seek the Lord but they will not be able to find Him. Take heed that no man deceive you.