

I. The Apple of His Eye

- A. Redemptive Narrative Centerpiece - The bible is not general information about God and with some random themes of heroic faith, sinful darkness, and healthy lifestyle tips. Rather, it is an historical narrative that tracks the progression of God's promises to restore His original intentions of creation through the means of a Savior. The primary vehicle through which God has chosen to use to bring the promises to pass would be a people group that He uniquely elected, and through which the Savior would come and belong to. Therefore, this people group is the centerpiece of the narrative of redemption from beginning to end.
- B. Eschatological Centerpiece - True to form of the rest of scripture, Israel is the centerpiece of the narrative of restoration as the story culminates to its prophesied final curtain. You will find that almost all the eschatological chapters in the bible are centered around the Jewish people, their land, their capital city, Jerusalem, and their Savior. (Deut. 32:10; Zec. 2:8)

II. Prophetic Signposts of the End of the Age

- A. **Restoration of the Nation** - One of the most striking fulfillments in biblical prophecy in our time is the return of the Jews to their homeland to re-establish the state of Israel. The Jews were scattered to the nations in AD 70. Now, 2,000 years later, they are back home. In one day, Israel became a nation, on May 14, 1948. (Is. 66:8; Ezk. 38:8;)
 - 1. Jerusalem - In 1967, Israel gained control of Jerusalem as a result of the Six-Day War (June 1967), about 20 years after they became a nation. (Zech. 12:6)

Mark Twain visited Israel in 1867 and described it as a, “desolate country, devoid of vegetation and human population...a desolate country...given over wholly to weeds...we never saw a human being on the route.... hardly a tree or shrub anywhere.”

- 2. Alliah - The Lord described a time when many Jewish people would return to the land. Over 1 million Russian Jews have moved to Israel since the 1990's. In 1850, the Jewish population of Israel was about 15,000; in early 1900, about 60,000; in 1920, around 75,000; and in 1948, about 600,000. Currently, over 7 million Jewish people live in Israel. (Ezk. 36:24-37)

3. Sabbath Law - The re-establishment of the Sabbath day of rest in social and civil law is a sign of the times. In 1951, the Sabbath (Saturday) was declared by law to be a day of rest. (When Israel was under the Ottoman Empire, Friday was the day of rest, and while under the British Mandate, it was Sunday.) (Matt. 24:15-20)
4. Temple - The rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (with animal sacrifices according to the law of Moses) is at the heart of the prophetic promises and signs regarding Israel in the end times. The temple has not existed in Jerusalem since the Romans destroyed it in AD 70.
 - a. One obstacle to the rebuilding of the temple is that the Mosque of Omar and the Dome of the Rock stand on the Temple Mount (the very site where Solomon's temple stood on Mount Moriah), the third holiest site in Islam. Today, there is a strong new movement in Israel, led by Orthodox Jews, to rebuild the temple.
 - b. The Abomination of Desolation (Antichrist's worldwide worship system) will take place in the context of a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and re-established Sabbath laws. The two main components of "the abomination" are the image and mark of the Beast. (Rev. 13:15-18)

B. World Wide Increase of Antisemitism - The prophets foretold that the Jews would be persecuted by all the nations and, thus, at the center of world controversy. The initial fulfillment of this prophecy occurred in the first century by fellow Jews, and later by the Gentile Crusaders, and the Spanish Inquisition. The holocaust was also a clear partial fulfillment of the world wide Satanic rage that will seek to eradicate God's unique people group from the planet. (Zech. 12:3, 9; 14:1-3; cf. Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Lk. 21:20-24; Jn. 16:2)

- a. I believe there is a Satanic strategy to seek to exploit Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 23:39 as a "loophole" in God's end-time plan by seeking to keep the leaders of Israel from receiving Jesus as their king. Satan knows that Jesus cannot violate His own prophetic word. Therefore, Jesus cannot return to earth to rule from Jerusalem until Israel's governmental leaders beckon Him to be their king.

b. Satan's end-time strategy is to control Jerusalem and the Jewish people. John uses a prophetic picture of Israel as a woman being attacked by Satan as a dragon; God intervenes to protect her from the Antichrist's rage (Rev. 12:13-17; Zech. 13:8-9).

1. Deceiving Israel into taking the mark of the Beast (making an alliance with the Antichrist)
2. Killing the remnant of the Jewish race so there are none to invite Him to rule Jerusalem.
3. Trying to make Israel so offended at Jesus that they will not receive Him as their king.
4. Satan wants to destroy the Jewish people so that a believing remnant cannot invite Jesus to rule Israel as her Messiah.

C. **World Wide Increase of Church Support** - God promises that He is going to raise up a mature and glorious Gentile church who will stand with Israel and not love their own lives even unto death. The Church must take a stand to boldly pray, declare, and sing the message of God's purposes for Israel so that all the nations hear it clearly (Isa. 40:1-2; 62:6-7, 11; Jer. 31:7-10; Mt. 25:31-46; Rom. 11:11; Rev. 12:13-17).

1. Gentile believers will provoke Israel to jealousy to know Jesus. In other words, Israel will desire to have what Gentile believers possess spiritually. This will happen as Gentile believers show love for Israel, including risking their lives to provide refuge for Jewish people in flight, performing miracles reminding them of Elijah, and being fearless in the face of death. (Rom. 10:19; 11:11)
2. We are watching the amazing fulfillment of the Lord's prophetic promise to establish night-and-day prayer for Jerusalem just prior to the return of Jesus, who will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa. 62:6-7)