

# WILL ISRAEL GO EXTINCT?

## Part 1

By Steve Schmutzer

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In late 2012, *The New York Post* reported that Kissinger – *the* Henry Kissinger - the gravelly-voiced veteran of world affairs had stated, “In ten years, there will be no more Israel.” While it’s no secret that Kissinger struggles with his own Jewish identity, he allegedly felt the passion of Israel’s enemies would prove to be the Jewish state’s demise.

That bit of news invited other media to jump in and stir the “anti-Israel” pot. It was another opportunity for them to flex some of their own thinly-veiled bias. The liberal press is always eager to plunge a blade of prejudice into Israel’s back.

This recalls the 2012 Democratic National Convention where God was shown the exit door and Israel got the cold shoulder. A motion was made to omit God and any reference to Jerusalem as the capital of Israel from the democratic platform. Things got awkward for the donkeys when the motion was loudly supported. Embarrassed on live TV, the DNC leaders simply ignored protocol and the nation watched as God and Israel got booed.

Be it the DNC membership, a respected diplomat, or the average person on the street, the general consensus seems to be, “Israel’s days are numbered.” The odds against the tiny nation are perceived as too great, and sentiments against the Jews continue to mount from multiple directions.

Within the pews, the reality is – tragically – not much different. Too few people there agree that God still has a plan for His chosen people. Research shows that 14 of the top 25 church denominations believe no Scriptural promises remain for the Jews. Contrary to the appeals of Scripture, much of the church has “conformed to this world” in stunning fashion.

For churches and Christians who choose to cultivate wrong views of Israel, an awkward quandary arises. Over 83% of God’s Word concerns Israel in some fashion, so that’s a lot of divinely-inspired Scripture to mishandle or set aside.

Would you let a brain surgeon who has dismissed more than 83% of their training operate on you? Of course not. They’d be dangerously unqualified to do so! And so it is with many church leaders who downsize what God’s Word is saying about His chosen people. Many of them are *also* poorly-equipped to lead their congregations as they constantly assert the Bible means something other than what it says.

This deliberate irresponsibility promotes doctrinal illiteracy. Approximately 100 million American church members today have very little to no understanding of Bible prophecy (Bill Koenig). Since the shaky foundations of ignorance and prejudice have always assisted the rise of heresies, entire denominations today errantly believe *they* are a continuation of Biblical Israel. This is a core position of Covenant Theology.

Whether in the church or out of it, these misguided ideas and passions, when developed down their natural course, often conclude that present-day Israel has no rights. For many people – and that includes a lot of Christians - Israel is simply a problem they wish would go away.

A Bible-based reality check is urgently in order here. Is Israel destined to be wiped off the map in our lifetime? Do seasoned leaders and party principals know something the rest of us don't?

The more important question is, "Does God have anything to say about the matter?" If He does, we should pay close attention. God's words "*....will never pass away.*" (Matt. 24:35). He's always had the final say and that's not going to change.

With the comprehensive counsel of the Bible in view, I believe all the dynamics of present-day Israel fit squarely within God's plan. That means nothing is out of control here and nothing is unexpected. Folks are certainly entitled to have their opinions, but if those opinions are inconsistent with the message of God's Word, they do not represent the truth.

And the truth concerning Israel's welfare begins with the fact that Israel is there in the first place. We cannot postulate on the dangers which threaten Israel's existence without appreciating the Jews' survival in the face of 2,000 years of dispersion and persecution. This situation is more improbable than each Native American tribe returning to and taking over the original territories they once held before Columbus arrived.

Many attempts to exterminate the Jews stain the pages of history, but the Jews have overcome each pogrom. They have endured in every aspect of their culture and have become a nation once more. No other ethnic group in human history can claim this sort of tenacity and this kind of revival. From Haman's murderous plan in the book of Esther to Antiochus Epiphanes' rages, from the medieval Crusades to the Russian slaughters in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and from Hitler's holocaust to Islam's fanaticism, the Jews – since antiquity - have overcome the worst odds to become a modern miracle.

While history presents a compelling case for God's protection of His chosen people, the Scriptures are very clear. This is why *responsible* believers diligently seek to understand and apply the truth of God's Word. The Bible, when it's properly taught and received, always corrects the media's deception, exposes the political posturing, and shames the vacuous spiritualization that infects all issues concerning Israel these days.

As I interpret the Bible literally, it's plain that the Jews have been supernaturally regathered in Israel. The Scriptures outline two occasions in which the Jews are regathered from their worldwide diaspora - just two. This is important, because if there were more than two such events, then who is to say it could not be three, four, or more? How would we really understand Israel today if the Bible didn't make this point clear?

In Ezekiel 20:33-38, God looks back to the Egyptian exodus and He uses that historical event as an image for a prophetic provision. This passage clarifies that God had "entered into judgment" against His people, even as He guided them into the Promised Land. As a result, not everyone made it in.

This passage affirms that God will do all this again. Ezekiel prophesied that God will collect the Jews from all parts of the world for a gathering of judgment. It means this newer event will be defined by great trouble for the Jews. Within their condition of spiritual poverty, God will sovereignly regather the Jews to the land of Israel after His judgment has been poured out on them, and even as His wrath upon them continues past that point (Ezekiel 22:17-22).

Let's take a look at the history of recent Israel to see if this lines up. It's clear that the Jews returned to their ancient homeland after the trauma of the Nazi holocaust and because of it. Today, many Jews continue to return to Israel from all parts of the globe. Therefore, we are able to look back on this terrible period of history and comprehend it as God's judgment according to the terms of Ezekiel 20:33-38. It could be nothing less.

It's why Israel's rebirth as a nation remains the single greatest prophetic event within the last few generations. The tragic time of the Nazi holocaust was an event that was within God's divine control. He used it to prepare the stage for Israel to be regathered and to become a true nation once more. That happened on May 14, 1948 in precise fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecies.

Today, Israel is a secular nation, "regathered in unbelief" in total compliance with the Scriptures. While God's ambition still remains to bring about His Millennial Kingdom through this diminutive nation, this will only happen after the continued expression of His judgments – his "wrath" - upon the Jewish people. We've seen the first stage of that process, but in Ezekiel 22:17-22, God's Word tells us there is more to come. He has gathered them "in judgment" and "for wrath."

Next time we'll look at the second worldwide regathering of Israel, but this second one will be in belief instead. We'll review the Scriptures which spell out only two regatherings, and we'll examine the obvious implications of this fact. They say much about Israel's situation as things stand today – and as they will be in the times to come!