

END TIME ORDER OF EVENTS

Revelation School

June 2008

As an introduction to this study, I am going to quickly go through the timing, or order of events, in the Book of Revelation, I will go through chapter by chapter, giving you a brief resume of what it is all about and where it fits. So here goes:

Revelation 1:1-3

God the Father gave Jesus this prophecy to show us what is to take place shortly.

Revelation 1:9-10

John was on the Isle of Patmos in 95-96 AD. The rest of Revelation 1 is a description of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The last sermon Jesus preached on this earth had an audience of one.

Revelation 1:17-19

In verse 17 we see John falling, an appropriate reaction. In verse 19 John is told to write the message down and Jesus Himself divides the message up into three sections –

- What John had seen.
- What is now
- What will take place later on and most of the book of Revelation comes into this third category - that is from chapter 4 – to the end of Revelation.

Here is some background information you will find helpful for understanding the book of Revelation.

1. The tribulation is a period of **Holy War**. Holy War is not what the Islamic nations say it is – they say if you do not like another nation they declare war and say it is a ‘holy war’, which means they are not afraid to die in it.

That is not the biblical idea of Holy War. Holy War is when God starts fighting against a nation and it is when **God Himself** declares war on part of the earth. It has happened many times in history, but there is still more to come. An easy example would be in

Genesis 7

this gives us the flood – which was universal - which means that this judgement came on **all** mankind. God tells the people of the earth that they have 120 years to repent. God does not just judge, He *always* gives a period in which people can repent first. That shows us God’s love, and after the period given for them to repent – the flood came. Noah was preaching faithfully all the time he was building the ark. ‘Judgement coming, change your minds.’ But they didn’t, and God declared Holy War. He used the flood and you always find He uses the elements as His weapons. Hailstones, earthquakes, wind, famine etc. So there is Holy War. You can find

other examples of Holy War in the books of Joshua and Judges, where God does use the Israeli army, but He also uses the natural elements against the Amorites. But again, God gave the Amorites 400 years to repent, but they did not – you will find that in

Genesis 15.

Where God is about to give Abraham the land and He tells him that He cannot do it yet, because the ‘iniquity of the Amorites’ has not reached its height.

So in the Tribulation period, Holy War is declared on the earth, which has not repented, and again God uses the elements to judge.

2. The tribulation is seen from the position of heaven. John is taken to heavenly places and looks down on the earth. In the ancient world, the king, or whoever was in charge, would have a battle plan - he would set up his headquarters on a hill overlooking the battleground so he could see what was going on, and he issued his battle orders from there, at various stages of the battle. You see this with Moses when he ascended the mount and held up his arms as commanded by the Lord – when he kept his hands up they were winning, when his hands dropped, the battle began to go to their adversaries. The orders given by the king were not given a time limit, he would wait for the first order to be completed before he gave another order to bring in the next phase of the battle plan. The book of Revelation is seen just like that.

God is seen in heaven in charge and He is reading out His battle campaign.

Revelation 5:1-5

Deals with the Seal judgements. One Seal is on the outside of the Scroll – which is the title deed to the earth – the other seals are on the inside, so there is one seal outside, and six inside, and the inside ones hold various sheets of the Scroll together. When you break a seal on the outside, you can open up the Scroll until you reach the next seal and you go on like that until you have opened all the seven seals. When all the seals are broken, you have God’s battle plan fully laid out, and so this Scroll deals with **His** battle plan for the tribulation period. The first Scroll covers the beginning of the Tribulation period, the last one covers the end of the Tribulation period, and Jesus opens up the Scroll.

Revelation 6:1-2

Verses 1 and 2 are the first Seal. A horse always means warfare, but a white horse means victory – Jesus comes back on a white horse! Here at the beginning of the tribulation you have a battle and it is a victorious battle. That is the start of the campaign of the leader of the tribulation period. This is the ‘man of sin’ as the bible calls him or the Antichrist himself. In a short space of time, this man is leader of the whole world. Incidentally, the fact that he carries a bow but no arrows indicates that it is a **political** victory that he wins, not a military one.

Revelation 6:3,4

The second Seal. A red horse always means warfare but a different kind of warfare from the white horse. This warfare has a lot of bloodshed, but does not actually achieve anything much. So the

tribulation period starts with peace but it does not last for long and a battle starts up and peace is no longer found on the earth.

Revelation 6:5-6

The third Seal. Black horse – famine. This money is a day’s wage and here you have a picture of the shortage of food and famine on the earth. Luxury goods are not touched.

Revelation 6:7-8

The fourth Seal. A pale horse. In the Greek it is actually a pale green horse and a quarter of the earth is destroyed by warfare, famine and disease. You have animals suddenly killing people as well and we have an horrendous situation developing here upon the earth.

Revelation 6:9-11

And the fifth Seal. Now God begins answering the prayers of all the persecuted saints who get saved during the tribulation period, and God moves in on the earth’s history and trouble starts in a big way. You will notice that this is the order that Jesus said it would be in Matthew 24.

Revelation 6:12-14

The sixth Seal is broken and nature starts opposing mankind on the earth. Now we know what this is, the biggest explosion the earth ever had was in 1883 when Krakatoa blew up. The explosion was massive and the results of it were this – for weeks all of Indonesia was in darkness all the time, oil lamps had to be alight all the time so people could see. At night the sky was red, blood red and the moon was the same as well – this is what happens here – meteors hit the earth in vast numbers.

It is estimated that the power of the explosion in Krakatoa was about 13,000 times the yield of the bomb that devastated Hiroshima, Japan. (Source: Wikipedia the online encyclopedia.) Verse 14 talks about hurricanes and tornadoes breaking out. Men seek to die, notice, not to be saved. The 7th Seal is yet to be broken, but that seal is not broken until

Revelation 8:1

The things of the 7th Seal are so amazing that there is total silence in heaven for thirty minutes.

So what about chapter 7, why is there a gap between the opening of the 6th seal and the 7th seal?

Revelation 7

This is the chapter that unlocks the book of Revelation for us. Writers both ancient and modern, when they are writing something, go along with the story and then all of a sudden they will need to refer back to something that has happened in the past. You see it in films frequently when you get wavy lines, a fade out or a flash back to a particular scene and then you go back to the present story. God does the same thing in the book of Revelation. He uses seals, trumpets and golden bowls or vials to show us the chronological order of events, and anything between is **infill detail** which we need.

Revelation 6:17

A question is asked and Revelation 7 is God answering that question. The 7th seal takes us back to the original story in chapter 8 and it is as easy as that. You can see this sort of thing in other places in Revelation.

Revelation 8:2

So the 7th Seal has seven trumpets and these trumpets are the seven stages within the 7th Seal.

Revelation 8 and 9

Deal with the seven trumpets – this is at the end of the tribulation.

Revelation 8:8-13

Revelation 9:1-21

You have the 6 trumpets completed. Where is the 7th trumpet?

Revelation 11:15

The chapter and verses between Revelation 10:1 and 11:14 are the infill detail which we spoke about earlier.

Revelation 11:15-19

The 7th trumpet is sounded. When that is sounded God reveals His Kingdom on earth. Within the 7 trumpets there are seven vials or golden bowls.

Revelation 15:1-7

Revelation 16

All the bowls are poured out on the earth.

Revelation 12,13 and 14

Are infill detail.

Revelation 12

Deals with Satan's attempt to wipe out the nation of Israel and how God deals with Satan.

Revelation 13:

Talks about the political system that is on the earth during the tribulation.

Revelation 14:

Deals with Jesus' victory over that situation and from there on we are back n the main account and the system of seals, trumpets and golden bowls keep us on course as far as chronology is concerned.

Revelation 19:

Deals with the Second Advent of Jesus Christ which occurs at the end of the seven golden bowls.

Revelation 17 and 18

Are infill detail.

Revelation 17

Deals with Mystery Babylon – the religious system and how God deals with that.

Revelation 18

Deals with Mystery Babylon the political system and how God deals with that.

You should now be able to read Revelation for yourself and understand it. So in essence what you have is this:-

Revelation 6,8,9

Revelation 11:15-19

Revelation 15,16 and 19

Are chronological.

Revelation 7,10,11:1-14

Are detail.

Revelation 12,13,14,17 and 18

Are detail.

Revelation 20,21, and 22

Are future and they occur after the tribulation.

Enjoy!

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Just as Genesis is the book of beginnings, Revelation is the book of consummation. In it, the divine programme of redemption is brought to fruition, and the holy name of God is vindicated before all creation.

Revelation is a much misunderstood book.

Many Christians I speak to are frightened of it and rarely if ever, read it. This is because they major on the antichrist and the mark of the beast, which together with teaching that has led them to believe they will experience this time of judgement, effectively keeps them out of the book which in its opening remarks tells us we will be blessed if we read!

Satan has effectively got our eyes off of the main character, causing a partial eclipse of the Lord Jesus Christ, about Whom the book is written. This book is the Revelation - the revealing - of the Lord Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show His servants.

This is a revelation of His Supreme Majesty, the fully revealed magnificence of the Lord Jesus Christ: Who as God declares Holy War against the unbelieving nations, and the nation of Israel, as He refines Israel to prepare her for her Messiah.

It is a time of God's wrath and justice being revealed to an unbelieving world, and His avenging the blood of the saints who have been martyred for the cause of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:1,2 *'After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgements, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her!'*

In the Tribulation period, Satan's function will be the same as it was in the garden of Eden, to test the heart of mankind, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 *'The coming of the lawless one (antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'*

He is granted power for three and a half years only - Revelation 13:15 *'He was **granted** power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.'*

When his job is done, he will be cast into the lake of fire, which was the judgement passed upon him in the garden of Eden, together with the beast and the false prophet.

When we study at this apocalyptic book – which means a book which warns about the coming destruction and devastation – we must read it in the context of God's holiness and judgements which

come upon the unrighteous and in the context of His total omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. He alone holds optimum power. The enemy can do nothing without permission.

We are looking at what is known in the Old Testament as 'The Day of the Lord' which is the day of darkness and not light. (Amos 5:17).

The scenario unfolds to John on the Isle of Patmos, where he is shown what has been, what is now and what is to come. From Revelation 6 onwards, we have the unfolding of the judgements on Israel and the nations, culminating in the rise of the antichrist and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, all of which take place during a period of 7 years, which are split into two time periods of three and a half years each. The second three and a half years sees the rise of the one world government, headed by the antichrist, a one world monetary system and one world religion. This time is known as the Great Tribulation and the study of it is called eschatology, which is a study of end time events.

The predominant source of wrath, mentioned without apology, is the Lord Himself.

It is God Who is going to bring righteous wrath and judgement upon the unbelieving world and upon the nation of Israel. From chapter 6 to chapter 16, we see the outpouring of the wrath of the Lamb as only He is found worthy to open the seals. (Revelation 6:16) He is the source of the seal and trumpet and vial judgements.

Revelation 14:7 states '*Fear God and give Him glory for the hour of His judgement has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the sea and the springs of water*'. This is one terrible period of judgement that will come upon the earth.

Jesus says in Matthew 25: that the time has been shortened for the sake of the elect - the elect being his chosen people Israel who will be saved out of this terrible time because God has decreed its length in advance – 7 years. Known as the time of the Great Tribulation, or the time of Jacob's trouble, '*but he will be saved out of it*'. Jeremiah 30:7.

Satan has managed to put fear in the church because of the references to the antichrist, the mark of the beast etc. In fact none of that will affect us. We will not be here, and as we study the background to this book it will become very clear why we will be removed before the time of 'Jacob's trouble' and the time of God's judgement upon mankind, God does not judge the righteous with the wicked - ever.

It has been said, it is impossible to know the truth and not be responsible – we are responsible therefore, to warn, exhort and encourage believers and unbelievers alike, to look up and understand the signs of the times.

Be blessed as you walk with me through this most amazing of books. Tomorrow's news today.

The Book of Revelation

The truth about Israel

School Day 1

9th June 2008

God's prophetic timetable:

This is an intensive Bible Study course, where we will trace the roots of God's faithfulness and promises to Israel and those promised that are yet to be fulfilled to the Jewish Nation. We will study where the church fits into God's eternal plan, and how we can see the unfolding of prophecy in our lifetime. We will also examine what that means to us as 21st century Christians and come to some conclusions about what we believe about the Great Tribulation, the Millennium and the Second Coming of Christ.

We are going to take the bible literally to believe God and that He is able to preserve His word to us.

Unbelievers see the nations come and go, up one minute, down the next, top dog for ten years, then reversal – like a chaotic tennis match. The majority of Christians and non-Christians don't see it all in the hands of the most glorious planner. To them it looks like lucky streak or whim. They go in for sublimation TV double loud and get involved in social action, anything so long as they don't have to think what is going to happen as far as the world is concerned.

A lot of non-Christians would like to think that death comes as a relief, except that they don't know and are afraid of death. The real tragedy comes when you have Christians in the same fearful state and they don't know that the One who loves them with all His heart, is in charge of this earthly arena, and they get nervous; they see the increased social disorder and they wonder if it's going to affect them and they say 'Lord, are You really in control?' and they find they have the same tensions and the same disturbances as non Christians. They suffer with fear and doubt about the future; this course is designed to help those people along. People who are nervous of the future are ignorant of God's prophetic timetable for this planet. By the end of this course you will not be ignorant; you will know exactly the way that we are going to go. We will take the literal, plain interpretation of scripture, including the prophetic passages! We will let them mean what they say, as we do the rest of the Bible.

Firstly I want to look at the sweep of history from the beginning right up to the present time and then on into the future. The first big division is Genesis chapter 1 to Genesis chapter 11. That broadly covers 2,000 years of mankind's history.

The rest of the Old Testament covers the next 2,000 years. Of these first 11 chapters, 7 of them deal with the events that occur within about a year or two. Chapters 1 – 2 deal with the 6 days of creation, chapter 3 the fall of man, chapters 4-6 procreation and God's declaration of judgement on man's wickedness, chapter 7 and we have the flood which lasted one solar year and the others deal with the rest. In these 11 chapters, called the seedbed of the bible, we have as much information as we need.

God's prophetic timetable is a picture of God's grace and judgement in the face of mankind's disobedience. To understand where we are going we need to keep three things in tension

- ✓ Human responsibility (free will)

- ✓ God's immutability (He never changes)
- ✓ The angelic conflict.

Without any one of these three you could be described as sitting on a two legged stool! In Luke 10:18 Jesus said '*I saw Satan fall like lightning*' this shows two things, Jesus the pre-existent One and the existence of Satan and his first fall. So from the creation story we can see that Satan was already fallen as he took the form of a serpent.

So, in the garden, God places Adam and Eve and gives them the most precious gift – free will. The right to choose. But Eve chooses to listen to the serpent and her husband listens to her and the rest is, as they say, history. Within a very short time, man is so corrupt that God has to bring judgement, saving only a remnant, Noah and his family.

In Genesis 12 God says, I'm going to choose one nation to be My own, and they're going to be My beloved people – my missionaries to the rest of the world and the world is going to learn about Who I am through them and My dealings with them. That nation we know as the nation of -

ISRAEL

When was the last time Israel was not in the news?

For decades a nation no bigger than Wales has dominated the headlines of the world. Whether we recognise it or not, Israel, the nation, the State of Israel is the centre of the world so far as God is concerned.

When you want to look at where we are chronologically, look at what is happening in Israel and take your compass bearing from this. Jerusalem is where Jesus is coming back – the Mount of Olives is where His foot will rest – so we need to be accurate in our assessment and understanding of what the scriptures say about this tiniest of nations, who, scripture says, are the apple of God's eye.

Many people say God has adopted the church now as His chosen people, and has finished with Israel, but is that really what the word of God says? The subject of Israel has to do with the character of God. Whether He is a faithful covenant keeping God, whether His word is true or not.

In this first session we will be examining these differing views on the church and Israel. So we will look at the truth about Israel and its purposes as ordained by Almighty God, using the scriptures as our authority. We will go on to see why the history of Israel, and where she fits in God's eternal plan, is so important when we study the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The first thing we absolutely have to understand is that the bible is a Jewish book. It was written by Jews, the whole thing, the only exception could be the gospel of Luke, but no-one is quite sure whether he was a gentile believer or not, so we are fairly safe in saying that the whole 66 books are Jewish in origin. Setting that stone in place will help us so much when we come to look at the place of the church in end time events, and in the book of Revelation in particular.

In God's sovereign choice of a nation to be born through the line of Abram, He was making a decree about the whole future of mankind, because from Judah, a tribe of Israel, would the Messiah, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, come. Yeshua ha Messiah. Jesus, the Saviour.

Jesus was a Jew, is a Jew, and will remain a Jew for eternity - by God's sovereign election and choice. This is why it is so important that we look at the scriptures from a Jewish, not western, viewpoint, or we can '*wrest the scriptures to our own destruction*' as it says in 2 Peter 3:16. Truthfully we can get into all kinds of trouble trying to make things fit if we don't look at the scriptures in the context in which they were written. I am not suggesting that we become Jewish but that we use every means we can to understand what the Spirit of God is saying to us. A text out of context is a pretext.

Some of what I will be teaching will be to show you the false teachings that are current in the church, the reasons why they are wrong, and I will be laying the truth of the word of God down alongside, so that you can make up your own mind which is truth and which is error.

Israel was called and chosen to be a light among the nations pointing to the One true God, in the same way as we, the church of Christ, are called and chosen to be a light showing forth the way of salvation for mankind through Jesus alone.

'Israel is My first born son...' Exodus 4:22

Historical Israel:

In Genesis 12:1-3, we see the call of Abram '*Now the Lord said to Abram get thee out of thy father's country...*' this is the split in the human race, God is sovereignly calling one man to Himself for His purpose. From this man, He declares, He will make a great nation. In Genesis 15:4, we see God making a promise to Abram of a son from whom a nation will come and God prophesies over him that his descendants will spend 400 years in Egypt and afterwards will come out with great wealth.

In Genesis 17:5 we see Abram described as the '*father of many nations*', and his name is changed to Abraham. This is part of the covenant that God made with Abraham. Always remember that God is a covenant making and a covenant keeping, God. There are many covenants in the Old Testament, always involving the shedding of blood. They are both unconditional and conditional. The covenant God makes with Abram here is an unconditional covenant. That means God is going to do it with no help from Abram! He does not have to do anything to qualify for the promise God is making. This is God's set and determinate counsel coming forth.

In Genesis 21, after a false start with the birth of Ishmael – where Abraham and Sarah did take the law into their own hands – we have the birth of Isaac, the son of promise. Incidentally, the whole Palestinian problem is the result of Abram listening to Sarai and going into her maid, Hagar. Thought provoking stuff!

Genesis 32 and we have the birth of the **nation** of Israel, as Jacob - the son of Isaac and Rebecca Genesis 25:26 - has a name change, like his grandfather. He becomes **Israel** after he wrestles with God and prevails, Genesis 32:28. You can see from Revelation 3:12 the same is promised to overcomers – a new name.

In the book of Exodus, we see Moses raised up as a leader of the now nation of Israel, who is to lead them out of the prophesied 400 year captivity, into the land promised to Abraham.

Leviticus shows us how to approach a holy God by walk, worship and service and Numbers follows Exodus in story terms, where Exodus left off.

Numbers is the book of the wilderness wanderings occasioned by Israel's unbelief and failure to enter the promised land.

Deuteronomy is Moses' parting counsels to Israel, repeating much of what he had already taught them and warned them of.

The book of Joshua is concerned with the conquest of the promised land and Israel's failure to obey God in destroying the nations before them. The book concludes with much land yet to be taken and allocation of the land God had promised to Abraham and his seed, to the tribes.

As I said earlier, your view about Israel is determined by how you interpret scripture: not only that, your view of God Himself is determined by your interpretation of scripture. So if you believe that God has changed His mind about His promises to Israel, and now is concerned, only with the church you have some questions to answer, not the least of which is how do you know where you stand right now, if God has broken His promise to Israel, may He not do the same with you?

Let's just examine the two widely held views about the nation of Israel to enable us to see where the errors occur and why they occur and lay the word of God down alongside.

There are generally two views held about this nation:

1. The first view says it is true that God did have a special relationship with Israel, but that special relationship no longer exists. They say it is true that God made certain promises to Israel and they are fulfilled, therefore God has no more obligation to them. They also say that the promises that pertained to Israel now pertain to the church. They might also say that because Israel blew it so badly, God got fed up with them, turned His back on them and is now concentrating on the church instead, and either way, the church is now what they call 'spiritual Israel'. For this group of people, the church is everything. These people say that the fact that Israel are back in the land has no significance at all. The fact that they took over Jerusalem in 1967 does not mean anything.

A none too close scrutiny of the scriptures would call into question this standpoint. It does affect the way the book of Revelation is interpreted, and the interpretation of end time events generally, as we will see later on, also it raises more questions than it answers. These people would say they were pro-Jesus, pro-the church, pro-Kingdom, but not pro-Israel.

2. The second view which has always been the minority view, though in the early church it was the majority view, says that God has made **unconditional covenants** with Israel and promises which have not yet been fulfilled, so while we accept that the church is glorious and wonderful, the bride of Christ, and has significance in the purposes of God, that does **not** mean God is finished with Israel. National, literal Israel still has a future – this again, is key in the interpretation of the book of Revelation. People who take this view, and I am one of them, would say we are pro-Jesus, pro-church, pro the Kingdom and **pro-Israel**. And incidentally I am also pro the rapture of the church and pro the literal actual millennial reign and rule of Jesus Christ but we will go into that later.

So those are the two main points of view in the church, about Israel. It is always good to ask when you are joining a church or denomination, where they stand regarding Israel, you can tell a lot about how

they interpret the scriptures from their answer, because not only does this involve Israel, but if you think a little deeply, it involves the integrity of God Himself. If they maintain God has finished with literal Israel the question we have to ask then is does He keep His promises or not?

Does Israel have a future?

The question is **does** Israel have a future as far as God is concerned? By the time we come to the end of today, you will be able to make up your own mind about what you believe about what the *scriptures* say regarding the nation and future of Israel. As far as the present is concerned, they are in a period of judgement, the fifth cycle of judgement, which means that they are dispersed among the nations. We will look more fully at the five cycles of discipline tomorrow morning in order to understand the book of Daniel and why that is so important in unravelling end time events.

The next question we have to ask is -

Does God ever change?

The immutability of God, His changelessness – when we suggest that God might either have changed His mind, or broken covenant, we are attacking His character, what we are saying is that He is no longer immutable, He is now subject to changing His mind, He's become whimsical, love you today, but tomorrow, well... Can you see how important our interpretation of scripture is? By saying that God has finished with Israel, has changed His mind about His covenant promises to them, and is concentrating solely on the church, we are calling Him - a liar. Beloved, this is not a light thing. So let's start looking at some scriptures – I am not going to them to prove something, I am going to them to establish what God has actually said. So here we go -

Jeremiah 31:35-37 'Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea and its waves roar (The Lord of Hosts is His name): if those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the Lord: 'If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord.'

What God is saying here is that if the sun does not get up one morning then Israel is cut off as far as He is concerned. God is saying, if the heavens above can be measured then Israel is cut off as a nation as far as He is concerned. What we need to know here in the 21st century is has man been able to measure heaven and the foundations of the earth yet?

Just recently some information came into my hands from the internet regarding the black holes. Having read these, though not, I confess, having understood them, God became even more vast to me than ever - just hear some of this, this is not from a Christian, this is scientific information...read from notes on black holes.

So, in Jeremiah 31:35-37 God is saying if these things ever cease, then Israel will cease to be a nation so far as I am concerned. The term forever or ever, means that there will always be a group of people who will form the nation of Israel. So how is that working out?

Can you think of any nation that has stayed a nation when it has been dispersed among the nations? A Jew is a Jew wherever he goes in the world. Now if I as an English person went and lived in America or somewhere else, I would very soon lose my nationality, I would be swallowed up and become a naturalised American or Dane, or whatever if I went to Denmark. Not so the Jewish nation, they still exist wherever they are. Why? Because *'God is not a man that He should lie, nor son of man that He should change His mind.'* Numbers 23:19, *'has He said and will He not do?'*

God made a promise to King David that one of his descendants would always be on the throne forever. But God only counts the times when Israel were in fellowship, so there were times when there wasn't a descendent of David on the throne, but whenever they were back in fellowship there was always a descendent of David ready to be on the throne. The genealogy of Jesus proves that He is a direct descendant of David and when He comes back as King Jesus, He will sit on that throne and the promise of God to David will be fulfilled - for ever.

Before 1948 there was no nation of Israel in the land but as soon as God wanted Israel back in the land, back came a group of people to form the nation in the land.

The people who hold the view, that God has somehow finished with Israel, do not realise something about the character of God. For a God that can promise things to Israel and then dump them is not the type of God to put your trust in, and the subject of Israel calls the character of God into question – how can we make such a statement?

So these verses in Jeremiah either makes the truth of what God has said stronger, or it makes the lie bigger. Are the heavens measured – they are not! We have just seen how vast they are. No instrument has ever been made or ever will be made that can measure the limits of God's creation.

Has the earth been measured – it has not. In fact the skin of the earth has never been scratched because it is impossible because of the tremendous heat. God has made sure that the nation of Israel will always be around because in these verses in Jeremiah, God has stated the impossible for man. If you can do this, He is saying, you can prove I am not Who I say I am.

We can say with absolute confidence with Paul *'Has God cast off His people? Certainly not!'* Romans 11:1. We can see things today that show us clearly that God has not finished with Israel.

However, the survival of Israel is one thing, the fact that many nations are against Israel is another. Why is it that people are against the Jews and have been for many generations? Jews have been hounded and persecuted like no other nation on earth, even by professing Christians.

In the natural it is impossible to explain why the hatred of the Jews is so worldwide and has gone on for over 2,000 years. It is only when you see the spiritual side of this that you can explain it.

It is Satan's work. The devil wants to destroy the Jews, if he can do this, he will be able to prove God a liar. God has made promises to the Jews and if Satan can destroy the Jews, God cannot keep His promises to them. If God had finished with Israel, anti Jewish feeling would have ended 2,000 years ago. There would be no point in it. Why should Satan go after the Jews if God has finished with them? Doesn't make sense, but if God hasn't finished with them – then they still have a future and a hope. The anti Jewish feeling shows very clearly God has not finished with Israel and Israel as far as God is

concerned, still have a future, in fact, in the times which are to come, they will play a very prominent part.

Many great empires have come and gone, including our own, and never been heard of again. The Assyrian empire was vast, but where is it today? Babylonian empire likewise – disappeared forever. But little Israel still goes on and on. If you talk to people who study ancient history they will tell you that the survival of Israel is little short of a miracle.

Satan has always been after obliterating this race, at one time the line of kings from which Jesus was to come came within one young boy of being extinguished – but God. You will be aware that Satan's first attempt, after God's curse, was to incite Cain to rise up against Abel who was a man of God, then we see him again destroying all the boy children at the time of Moses, and here again in 2 Chronicles 22:10-12 he attempts, through wicked Queen Athaliah, to extinguish the royal line through which Jesus was to come. He failed. The child Joash was crowned at the age of 6. Bringing it up to date, Herod tried to kill the baby Jesus by having all the boys under 2 slaughtered – we celebrate Christmas, but never remember the slaughter of the innocents.

Many Christians today do not understand what the survival of the Jews really means, it is about Satan's continuing attempts to discredit God and postpone his own destiny - the lake of fire. He has been judged, sentence has been passed, but it has not yet been carried out, and in the meantime, he will use every weapon he can to discredit God by trying to kill off His people and the promises God has made.

If Satan can break **one** promise of God, he knows that he will have effectively broken every promise of God. Therefore, Satan wants desperately to destroy every single Jew, because then God's word to Abraham will have been broken. And if he can manage to break that word of God, he would get off scot free because God's promise to destroy him would also effectively be broken. This is the basic reason why the Jews have always been at the centre of persecution and hatred. It is a satanically inspired strategy.

Genesis 12: 1 – 3 *'Now the Lord had said to Abram; 'Get out of your country, from your kindred, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.'² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.'³ I 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'. Cast iron promises. We can see a repetition of this in -*

Numbers 23:19,20 here we have Balaam, what you might call a failed prophet! He could prophesy all right, but he was a man who could be bribed, so he wasn't a good man according to scripture, but he knew a thing or two about God. Here he has been asked by Balak, a Moabite king, to curse Israel and this is what happens. The Spirit of the Lord is on him and he speaks - *'God is not a man, that He should lie, nor son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken and will He not make it good? Behold I have received a command to bless; He has blessed and I cannot reverse it'.*

Then in Numbers 24: 5,8 - *'How lovely are your tents O Jacob! Your dwellings, O Israel! God brings him out of Egypt; he has strength like a wild ox; he shall consume the nations, his enemies, he shall break their bones and pierce them with his arrows. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who*

will rouse him? Not what Balak wanted to hear at this point! So why does Balaam make such a statement? Because God is not a man that He might lie. You cannot break what God has said will come to pass. This is the conclusion we must come to. God has made unconditional promises to Israel and they will come to pass, God must keep them, otherwise He has a flaw in His character.

It is quite amazing what people will say to explain away the promises God has made to Israel. Roger Price talks of a book someone wrote explaining away the promises in Genesis by saying they only related to Abraham himself and died out when Abraham died!

So the group who believe that the church is 'spiritual Israel' say that God has made promises to literal Israel, but now He has no longer any intention of keeping them, but has transferred these promises to a group who call themselves 'spiritual Israel' and they will use all the 'promises' as relating to them and all the references to sin, failure and judgement as relating to literal Israel. Selective reading.

If God has just dumped Israel, beware Christian because He may very well dump you as well!

But God is not like that, He is a God who if He makes a covenant, will keep it.

There is still fullness to come for Israel. Nowhere in scripture is the church called spiritual Israel. But if they are well informed, people may quote this verse to you to substantiate what they say – Galatians 6:16 *'And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.'* Paul is saying, even those Jews who believe in Jesus will experience blessing. Paul is saying, **these** are the Israel of God who I am talking to, **Jewish believers in the Messiah**. Paul is saying here he is not against the Jews, they are called by him, 'the Israel of God'. But by taking this verse and using it to say that the whole church is called spiritual Israel, is taking a text out of context, which is a pretext. It is pushing it too far and, by the way, Paul would never have got away with saying the church is now spiritual Israel. It is only now, 2,000 odd years later, that people hear this rubbish and do not challenge it, but believe it instead. There is a lot of that going on these days. People who say that God has finished with Israel have a real problem and they get into a mess trying to explain scripture.

Whenever Israel is mentioned in regard to sin, failure or judgement or being put down, they always take it as literal Israel, anything else to do with blessing, they take as being theirs, as spiritual Israel.

I will just give you a couple of examples of this, there is one in Isaiah 19 that they quote: verses 23-25 *'in that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt, and Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land'*.

So they take this **literally** and say that these nations are given in order of preference and that Israel will be third. It does not mean that, it just means that there are three nations mentioned here. So because Israel is put on par, that is literal, because they don't appear to be anything special. Now whenever Israel or Jerusalem or Mount Zion is spoken of in terms of **supremacy**, blessing or the top of God's wonderful plan, that is to be taken to refer to spiritual Israel, the church. Beloved we cannot approach the scriptures like that, dividing as we think fit into blessing and cursing.

One more example is Isaiah 62:1-4 this whole teaching is given as being about the church yet these verses are speaking quite clearly about **literal** Israel. I am not saying that if God gives you those verses

you cannot take them for yourself, what I am saying is that arbitrarily looking at scripture the way those who call themselves spiritual Israel do, is completely wrong.

The final example will lead us into the book of Romans and it is Isaiah 2:1-3 this is used by the spiritual Israel teachers to say that this is not Israel, but spiritual Israel and they say that the church is going to be the tops and all the nations are going to want what the church have got and will come to the church to ask how things should be done. These people are also dangerously close to what is called dominion teaching, which is that the church will win everyone over to become Christians and then Jesus can come back. In other words, we will have done it all – aren't we just the clever ones! Of course, this is completely untrue, and totally opposed to scripture.

Once you have made up your own minds what the scripture says, just ask a few questions of the church you want to join. They don't have to agree with you, and it is all right to be with them, just don't be influenced by their wrong beliefs, that's all. We must do everything in our power to live in peace with one another and arguments about doctrine almost always end in division, so don't be divisive, just know what you know, believe what you believe and live in the good of it.

So once you understand this passage you then understand something about the book of Romans. Those who say that God has just dumped Israel and changed horses, as it were, haven't thought it through because, as I said before, if this is the case, He may very well dump them if they don't measure up! But God is not like that, He is a God who keeps covenant in spite of our intransigence, praise His wonderful Name. Once you understand this, you will understand something about the whole book of Romans. There have been many commentaries on this book and usually the problems start just after chapter 8 because Paul has been trotting along fine for eight chapters, then suddenly, he turns his attention to the Jews.

In chapter eight Paul says God has made all sorts of things available to us as Christians and praise God all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus. So just quickly, let's have a look at exactly what God does promise us in Romans 8 -

- We are sons
- We are adopted
- We are joint heirs
- We are foreknown
- We are predestined
- We are called
- We are chosen
- We are glorified
- All things work to the good
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God

- If God be for us, who can be against us?

These are wonderful promises to us who are the church in this day.

How do you think these statements would have affected the early church? Remember, it was only 10 or 20 years before that the Jews had rejected their Messiah, now they would have sat there and said this, and remember their Bible was the Old Testament, they would have said 'these are fine, glowing words, but they are exactly the same words used about Israel and look at the state they are in now. How can we believe what you are saying in Romans 8 when Israel is in the state it is - this is a problem.' This is where the commentators get into trouble and some say that Paul follows Romans 8, with 9,10 and 11 which deal with Israel, because he had to deal with the Jews, so he put his comments there. Some even suggest that there should be brackets round chapters 9,10,11, and if you are a Christian, go straight to Romans 12! Do not pass go, go straight to gaol! Bit like biblical monopoly!

The fact is that if people say things like this, they have not understood. We should actually all be able to have an answer to why the book of Romans is written as it is.

God has promised us these wonderful things, what has happened to Israel then? Paul gives us the answer in chapters 9,10, and 11. Paul does not answer the question by saying the church is now spiritual Israel – that would have taken three sentences – then he could have gone straight to chapter 12, he doesn't because there is a big problem with the question of what has happened to Israel.

For the remainder of this study, we are going to see the glorious answer Paul gives to this question. This is absolutely necessary for us in order that we can understand God's purposes for His people Israel, and understand where they fit into the book of Revelation. You see, if you take the Jews out, you will have to fit everything that happens into the dispensation of the church and that will lead you to thinking that you are going to go through the Great Tribulation. There is no other conclusion you can come to.

Romans 9:1-5 'I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.'

So the first thing Paul says in Romans 9 and incidentally he repeats it in Romans 10, is that he loves Israel. He made that statement because he has been accused of being against the Jews, so he states how much he loves Israel and in verses 3 and 4 he is talking about literal Israel. So he has stated both his love and God's love for Israel. He stated that God still has a plan and a purpose for the Jew, then he goes on to explain in more detail.

Verses 6-8 'but it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called". That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.'

Paul makes an interesting statement in verse 6, not all who are descended from Israel, are Israel. We have the same problem today, not all who call themselves Christians, are Christians.

In verse 8 we see it is the **children of promise** who are regarded as Abraham's seed and remember Paul is talking about Israel at this point. Of course we too are the children of promise, having believed on Messiah Jesus, but here Paul is talking about literal Israel. Now within the group of people called Israel, are two groups. All Israel, all Jews, have literally come from Abraham and many Jews even today believe because they are **related** to Abraham by descent, they are going to be all right.

Both Jesus and John the Baptist met this point of view in their days on the earth in the land of Israel.

Do you remember people went up to John and because they were descended from Abraham, thought that was enough, and John said '*God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones*' go away until you show the fruit of repentance.' Matthew 3:9. The point John was making was, yes, you are natural Israel, children of the flesh, but you are not real Israel, you do not believe on the Messiah. Jesus said the same thing in John 8:33 '*They answered Him, "we are Abraham's descendents, **and have never been in bondage to anyone.** How can you say 'You will be made free'.*

The Roman soldiers were in the streets and they had been in captivity in Egypt for 400 years and they say they have never been in bondage to anyone – selective memory! Jesus was very loving and didn't point out the soldiers, or mention their captivity in Egypt. That shows the grace and mercy of God. I would have said 'what are you talking about, what are these Roman soldiers then? And what about the captivity?' Jesus does no such thing, just goes on loving them and goes on with what He was saying to them.

What was Jesus looking for then, when He made this statement here in these verses in John? Jesus knew they had come from Abraham, but He was looking to see if they had the faith of Abraham. True Israel as defined by Paul is that first of all they have the **genes** of Abraham, that is, they have come physically from him. The second point is that they have the **faith** of Abraham. So within the group of people called Israel there is a subgroup which are true Israel and this group have both the genes and the faith of Abraham – that is the point that Jesus is making here. If you don't have both elements living and working in you, you aren't true Israel.

Romans 9:6-7 '*but it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but "In Isaac your seed shall be called"*.

Isaac was the seed of Promise or the seed of Faith. The true descendants of Abraham are descended physically from him and spiritually from him – that is they have the faith of Abraham.