

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

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Violence in the Middle East

Once again violence has engulfed the Middle East, this time between Israel and Hamas. On October 7th, over 1,000 Hamas militants invaded Israel and killed over 1,300 Israelis. Hamas' avowed mission is to destroy Israel.

What do the Scriptures say about such an effort? Will Hamas succeed?

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "Behold, I [God] will gather them [Jewish people] out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. ... I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; ... I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.—Jer. 32:37,40,41 *New American Standard Bible*

Israel was driven away from the promised land (modern-day Palestine) because of their disobedience to God and rejection of the Messiah, Jesus. Jesus prophesied this: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!" (Matt. 23:37-38 *NASB*) Jesus added in Luke 21:24 *NASB*: "Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Israel's punishment was to be temporary as the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 11:25-27 *NASB*: "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery ... that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the

fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.'" While Israel lost their relationship with God under the Law Covenant due to disobedience, they were not cast off forever. God would re-gather them from where they had been scattered and make with them a new, everlasting covenant.

"Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the LORD. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the LORD, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the LORD, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'"—Jer. 31:31-34 *NASB*

The apostle Paul quoted this prophecy in Hebrews chapter 8 adding that Jesus is the one who makes this covenant possible. "We have such a high priest, (*Continued on page 3*)

Fixing the Death and Birth Date of Christ

Our first parents disobeyed the Lord's command and put the human race into a dying condition. (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:17-19) However, God promised a seed (heir) that would destroy Satan. (Genesis 3:15) This meant man's return to favor with God, and no more death. Death would be swallowed up in victory.—Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:54

Eve hoped that her son Cain would be the promised seed. Thus, she named him Cain which means acquired. Little did Adam and Eve know that it would be thousands of years before the promised seed would come to save mankind. Several Millennia later, the prophet Daniel prayed for an understanding of the vision God had given him. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel to explain the vision so Daniel could record it.—Daniel 9:23

God's due time for the seed's arrival is shown in this prophecy of the Seventy Weeks found in Daniel chapter 9. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall* be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."—Daniel 9:24-25

Here, the time length for fulfilment of the vision (prophecy) regarding Messiah's coming was 70 weeks. The rebuilding of the walls at Jerusalem establishes the prophecy's starting point. Bible chronology shows us this rebuilding of the walls and the city was accomplished in 454 B.C. Next, the prophecy tells us the overall time period covered is 70 weeks or 490 days. Numbers 14:34 reveals the concept that in time prophecies, each day represents a calendar year. "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years." With a starting point is 454 B.C., the Prophecy (490 years) would end in 36 AD.

Now, the focus of this prophecy is the coming of the Messiah, culminating in the death of our Lord Jesus on the cross. God made it possible for our Lord to become the satisfaction of justice for Adam's sin by preparing a perfect human body for him. (Hebrews 10:5) This allowed Jesus to give his earthly life as a ransom for Adam releasing him and his descendants from the condemnation of death. "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: ... And he shall confirm the covenant with many [in Israel] for one week." (Daniel 9:26-27) Daniel 9:25 tells us that the vision was for seven and 62 weeks or 69 weeks. Thus, in the 483rd year of the prophecy, at age 30, Jesus was baptized at the Jordan river becoming Israel's Messiah. For the next 3½ years he preached the good news of the Gospel—the promised ransom, restitution and resurrection of all mankind. His death—Messiah being cutoff—took place "in the midst" of week 69, or year 486 of the prophecy—Friday, April 3rd, 33 AD.

Confirming this, Caesar's decree for the census was B.C. 2. Thus, Jesus was born around September 29 of that year. He was baptized and began his ministry 30 years later—29 AD. Jesus was killed after 3½ years later, in the midst of the prophecy's last weekx—33 AD. Thus, the Scriptures provide the true dates for Jesus' birth and death. ■

Violence in the Middle East (continued)

who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, . . . But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first [Law] covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them [Jewish people], He says, “BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH.” (Hebrews 8:1,6-8 *NASB*) Because of their imperfection, the Jewish people could not keep the first covenant, established at Mt. Sinai. They needed a better high priest and a better sacrifice—a ransom for Adam—to be cleansed from sin so they can come back into harmony with God. Jesus provided that better sacrifice with his death on the cross and thus, became that better high priest. As that high priest, Jesus is the guarantor and mediator of a better covenant—the New Covenant—under which Israel and all mankind will be cleansed from sin and re-gathered to God.

Since 1878, God has been re-gathering the Jewish people back to their promised land in preparation for the establishment of this New covenant. When this covenant is established, Paul writes, “What will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15 *NASB*) The New Covenant will result in the resurrection of all mankind from the grave, both Jew and Gentile.

Now we see the Jewish people being re-gathered to their promised homeland. While the heathen, particularly Hamas and others rage against it, it is a sign that God’s plan for man’s salvation is progressing toward the promised result of blessing all the families of the earth. (Psa. 2:1-9; Gen. 22:16-18) God’s plan to re-gather Israel to their homeland and bring them back into harmony with himself, will not be thwarted by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran or any earthly nation. Neither will it be thwarted by Satan and the fallen angels.—Eph. 6:11-12

By re-gathering Israel and establishing a New Covenant with them, “I [God] will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, . . . Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, . . . when I prove Myself holy among you [Jewish people] in their sight. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.”—Ezek. 36:23-28 *NASB*

God promised in this re-gathering of Israel that they will never be uprooted again. “I will bring My exiled people of Israel back from distant lands, and they will rebuild their ruined *cities* and live in them again. . . . I will firmly plant them there in their own land. They will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them,’ says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:14-15 *New Living Translation*) “They will possess their land forever, for I will plant them there with My own hands in order to bring Myself glory.” (Isaiah 60:21 *NLT*) “They will live in the land I gave My servant Jacob, the land where their ancestors lived. They and their children and their grandchildren after them will live there forever, generation after generation.”—Ezekiel 37:25 *NLT*

To learn more, see our offer for the free booklet *Israel in History and Prophecy* on the back page of this newsletter. ■

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The Orlando Bible Students is a non-denominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings.

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Israel in History and Prophecy

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