

281 On the move

The Lord God is on the move. Last year, 2017, saw the 50th anniversary of the conquest of east Jerusalem, including the crucial Temple Mount, by the Israeli Defence Forces, and also the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration issued by the British Government approving the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.

Next week, on May 15th 2018, is the 70th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, and students of “Bible numerology” will know that 70 is a very significant number scripturally (this can be explored in your Concordance). Being the product of 7 x 10, 70 “signifies perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual power and significance” (“Number in Scripture”, p 270, by E W Bullinger), and is also specially connected with the city of Jerusalem.

Coinciding with this 70th anniversary is the decision of President Trump to go ahead with opening the new United States embassy in Jerusalem, the first such embassy to be located in the city by any major power. Meanwhile Israel continues to face enemies on all sides: Hamas in Gaza, Fatah in the West Bank, Hizbollah in Lebanon, Iranian forces in Syria, as well as many critical voices in the United Nations. A second recent and controversial decision by President Trump, to withdraw the United States from the nuclear deal with Iran, has added to the general mood of tension in the region. (We have mentioned before that this President's surname MAY be significant, or may be not! - we shall find out in due course (eg., I Corinthians 15.22 / I Thessalonians 4.16, KJV)).

Clearly the situation in the Middle East is fraught, complicated, dangerous and long-standing, with rights and wrongs on all sides. Nobody is claiming that Israel is whiter than white – at times no doubt she is far from it - but the degree of hostility she has always faced from her Arab neighbours suggests that there is far more going on in all this than meets the eye. As Bible-accepting Christians, we do well to keep watching and alert.

We need to understand the background and undercurrents. Through thick and thin, the Jews remain God's covenant people, and to argue, as some do, that this is no longer the case makes God, to be frank, a Covenant-Breaker (eg., Genesis 12.1-3, 7 / 13.14-17 / 17.1-8, 15-22). Nowhere in God's Word do we find any hint of an ultimate, final abandonment of the Jews by God (even though of course they, like the rest of us, completely deserve that, eg Romans 3.23). Instead there are hundreds of promises of divine grace, forgiveness and restoration of His people, making it very, very hard to argue that the re-birth of the State of Israel in 1948 has no spiritual significance (eg., Luke 21.24 / Romans 9-11). The fact is that, how ever sinful the Jews may be, God is faithful and just, and will fulfil every detail of the promises He has made regarding the Jews and everyone else (eg., see “covenant” and “promise” in your Concordance).

Next we bear in mind that behind the scenes the “Arab-Israeli conflict” is a totally spiritual matter, with its roots in Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, and the two sons duly born, Ishmael and Isaac (Genesis 15–17 – we note God's graciousness towards Hagar and Ishmael - / Galatians 4.22-31). Today this ancient struggle orchestrated by Satan is being played out with increasing intensity, to prevent by any means

possible the fulfilment of God's promises that are focussed in the "seed of the woman", the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5.5). Thanks be to God, any opposition to Him and His gracious promises and purposes will of course be a 100% failure (eg., John 19.30 / I Corinthians 15.57 / Philippians 2.9-11 / Revelation 20-22), but for the time being the conflict is fierce and prayer is vital.

We also do well to recognise the pivotal role in Scripture of Jerusalem herself, for which we find in our Concordances over 800 references! - which merit our attention. No wonder therefore that it is as needful as ever for us to pray for "the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122), for the simple reason that when Jerusalem herself is finally at peace in her new, yet-to-come state, all of God's promises will have fully come to pass (eg., Revelation 3.12 / Chapter 21).

We worship and we work; we watch and we witness; we prepare and we pray. Truly "the best is yet to be", with the Key to that best being, as always, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

"I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14.6).

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