

Kingdom Come

The Hebrew people have been a fractured group for a long time – arguably, all the way back to Jacob’s twelve sons. And, as a nation with one king and one capital, their experience was pretty brief. David consolidated his rule over the whole country when he accepted the offer from the 10 tribes aligned under Saul’s incompetent son to be king over them as well as his own tribe, Judah. At that time, he moved the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem and that’s where, in God’s view and to the Jewish people, it’s been ever since.

But about 70 years later, when David’s grandson took the throne, the people felt so oppressed that the ten northern tribes broke off to form their own nation taking the name of their forefather, Israel. Unfortunately, they never had a good king and very quickly reverted to worshipping golden calves just as their fathers had done after leaving Egypt. As a result, it was all downhill for them and eventually God brought severe judgment.

The southern nation, Judah, had a series of kings as well – some good and some bad – but eventually, their spiritual depravity and disobedience resulted in their own destruction as well.

So the Hebrew people, united under one king based in the holy city, Jerusalem was momentous but historically momentary. Like man’s enjoyment of the paradise of God’s presence in the Garden of Eden, it was established by God, but man ruined it and was ‘evicted’. Nevertheless, the Lord will restore a united kingdom of Israel and it will happen in our days. Ezekiel foretold it. Let’s take a look.

“The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.” This is how Ezekiel chapter 37 begins. Ezekiel was a contemporary of Jeremiah, but he was among the people who had been taken captive by Babylon so as he is speaking, the Northern Kingdom of Israel has already been crushed by the Assyrians and scattered around the world while the Southern Kingdom, Judah, who has been recently conquered, is still in rebellion against God and against their Babylonian overlords. In this passage, the prophet is looking far into the future, declaring a vision of what is almost universally considered to be the rebirth of the nation of Israel in our days.

The prophecy continues, *“Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They*

indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’” (Eze 37:11) To which the Lord answers that He will raise them up, as a nation, from their graves and do something never before done.

“I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it,” says the LORD.’” (Eze 37:14)

So God said that not only would he resurrect the nation, but that He would place them in their homeland again. This, as you know was made official on May 14, 1948. But He doesn’t stop there.

The Lord instructed the prophet to take two wooden staffs (probably shepherd’s staffs) and write on one *‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions’* and on the other *‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.’* Then as he held them together, they miraculously became one staff. This represented their miraculous reunification.

Ezekiel recorded, *“Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into*

their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.” (Eze 37:21, 22) And to be clear, “king” here means king, not governor or prime minister.

Now a bit later in this same prophecy, God says that not only will they have one King, but also one Shepherd and it will be David who most students of Scripture agree prophetically pictures the Son of David, Jesus Christ.

And so, we can look forward to a time, quite soon, when Christ as the King of kings will rule his people and their will be no more division among them. Why soon? Well, Christ was asked about His return by His disciples. They inquired, *“Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”* (Mat 24:3)

He answered with a description of events leading up to and including what is called the Great Tribulation – a final period of horrendous difficulties. He said, *“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”* (Mat 24:21) Other scriptures call this the time of

“Jacob’s trouble” and it is described in detail in the book of Revelation.)

And then He gave a sign, a trigger so to speak – *“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.”* (Mat 24:32) Throughout Scripture, the fig tree is symbolic of the nation of Israel (both Northern and Southern kingdoms as a whole). The picture here is of the nation coming back to life after a period of dormancy. It is blossoming again.

“So you also, when you see all these things (the things He just described to His disciples), know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” (Mat 24:33, 34) You see, Jesus Himself told us that the generation that witnesses the events He described symbolized or triggered by the rebirth of the fig tree – Israel – will see ALL these things, including the Great Tribulation, take place.

Now, that begs the question – how long is a generation? As we know, the rebirth of the nation took place in May of 1948. One noted Christian author indicated in his best selling book way back in the 60’s I think that such a generation might be 40 years long and well, oops, 1988 came and passed. And since then,

Christian authors by and large have avoided the notion of a prophetic generation. No one wants to be seen as a wide-eyed loon, and I don’t blame them. But if there is a length that the Bible indicates as a prophetic generation, it would be truly loony not to consider it because there is indeed a prophetic year (360 days) and a prophetic week (7 years) that most Bible scholars agree to as they consider both scripture and prophetic fulfillment.

I’ll cut to the chase – I think we do have indication of a scripturally valid prophetic generation. It is seen in several scriptures but the most revealing is in Psalm 90. It starts off, *“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”* So right off the bat, the Psalmist, led by the Spirit of God, gives a hint concerning a coming insight. A little further on he writes, *“The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength (or force or **power**) they are eighty years, yet their boast (or pride) is only labor and sorrow (literally **trouble**, vanity, nothingness);...”* (Psa 90:10) Recall what I mentioned earlier about the Tribulation time being known as “Jacob’s trouble”. See Jer 30:7.

Now you might think the writer is simply making a general observation and that could be so if the writer

weren’t Moses who lived to be 120. And at the time he wrote this, the men of war among those he led (those above 20 years old according to the book of Numbers) all died off during the 38 – 40 years they wandered in the wilderness. So the last ‘hanger-on’ers’ among them were about 60 when they died. So perhaps, Moses is writing prophetically that 70 years is a prophetic generation unless there is a force or power in play. Then it is 80.

But back to Ezekiel. Not only did God use him to forecast the coming united kingdom under one King, He used him as a visual aid to declare a period of judgment upon the divided kingdoms. In chapter four of his book, the Lord instructs him:

“You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. Moreover take for yourself an iron plate, and set it as an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against it, and it shall be besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel.” (Eze 4:1-3)

Here we see that the first focus is upon Jerusalem. Then He follows with...

“Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. According to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.”

“And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.” (Eze 4:4-6)

So God said that Ezekiel, whom He earlier called the “son of man” – was to bear the iniquity of these divided kingdoms for 390 + 40 = 430 days representing 430 years.

Now the Jewish people were in Babylonian exile until the Persian king Cyrus allowed them to return, but when that happened, it was the remnant mostly of the people of Judah (not the other tribes) and they were never again to have a bona fide Jewish king and Jerusalem as their capital. This has been the case from 586 BC until today. So how does this 430 years figure?

Keep in mind that this prophecy is picturing through Ezekiel that it is the Lord (the Son of Man) who is bearing with the condition of the divided kingdoms. In it, each of the 11 tribes with an original allotment of land essentially got a judgment of 40 years (minus one mysterious decade). So it would appear that the 430 years is how long the Lord declared He would bear with the situation – that is, Jerusalem being without the one King over the whole of the united nation. Another way to say this is that the prophecy declares the time period that will conclude with a renewed “One Capital, One King”.

Historically, this troubling situation began when King Solomon died, because the rebellion by the northern tribes against his son, Rehoboam was almost immediate. This was 930 BC. And the last king of Judah who was also the last king of the divided kingdoms, Zedekiah, was dethroned and Jerusalem destroyed on the 9th of Av, 586 BC. So the period covered was 345 of our calendar years (inclusive of the partial years on each end).

But because this is a prophecy, we must consider not our 365.25 day calendar years but Biblical or ‘prophetic years’ which are 360 days long. When you do the math, this era works out to be exactly 350

prophetic years which then leaves 430 – 350 = 80 years. So where are those remaining 80 years?

Fast forward to May 1948. Once again, as Ezekiel prophesied in chapter 37, the Jewish nation was ‘brought to life’ back in their homeland and had rule over part of Jerusalem but since that time, they have not had a king let alone the King of kings reigning from the city. And though they are in one country, they have once again had two capitals - Jerusalem and Tel Aviv; and they are still utterly divided amongst themselves united only in their mutual defense.

So I suggest that since Jesus said there would be a last generation that would see all the things He foretold leading up to and including the Great Tribulation, and since Moses declared that a generation could be 80 years if a power or force was in play, and since the ‘fig tree’ of Israel budded so to speak in 1948, and since beginning with this new ‘budding’ the Jews have once again had two capitals, we could have an approximate forecast of the coming rule and reign of Christ from Jerusalem. One question remains – what ‘power’ is in play?

I suggest that this power may be the power or self-reliance or military prowess or national pride of the Jewish people themselves. When

that power is broken, Israel will look to their Savior. I think that may be so because of what Daniel, the prophet, spoke concerning the last days and the Jewish people. In chapter twelve of his book, he had a vision of a “man clothed in linen” (that is, a righteous man) inquiring about the length of the tribulation time upon the Jews and how it would all conclude. He recorded,

*“And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time (3 and 1/2 years); and **when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.**” (Dan 12:7) There’s the ‘power’ in play.*

So 1948 plus 80 years? You can do the math. Now, don’t cancel your life insurance or quit your job – I could be totally wrong here. But this study can and should help motivate us all as believers to look ever more sincerely for the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The King is coming! See Isa 32:1; Isa 33:17, 22; Isa 44:6. Of course, I don’t know when exactly. No one does.

But, along with you, I can see the signs of the times and surely it won’t be long!

*I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your **King.**” (Isa 43:15)*

May His Kingdom come!