

10. Israel

Scripture foretold the past two thousand years of Israeli history. Ezekiel wrote about Israel's exile from its homeland, which occurred in 70 AD with the Roman destruction of Israel. He also foretold the suffering of Jews while in exile at the hands of enemies, to include Adolph Hitler. Ezekiel quoted God as saying, *and the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them.* (Ezekiel 39:22-24)

Jews returned from exile and Israel was reestablished May 14, 1948. God foretold of a time when he would *no longer hide my face from them* (the Israeli people). God will reveal himself to the Israeli people, and Israel will accept Jesus as its redeemer. Concerning the establishment and purpose of modern Israel (referred to as "them" and "they" below), Ezekiel quoted God as saying, *"When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God,*

for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind, I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.”
(Ezekiel 39:27-29)

Zechariah wrote about the moment Israel will accept a crucified Messiah, the one pierced on the cross. *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first-born son.* (Zechariah 12:10)

Initial Peace

Israel’s protection during the end-times comes from a seven-year agreement with Antichrist, referred to as “He” in the following verse. *He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’* (Daniel 9:27) This verse refers to an agreement that initiates the seven-year end-time period. It is possible that Europe will accept Israel as part of the European Union and/or European Economic Area—world leaders have already considered this possibility.

Peace will not last, as Antichrist turns against Israel in the middle of the seven years. The three and a half years of protection Israel receives at the start of the end-times corresponds with the time Israel remains in unbelief concerning Jesus. Scripture cites this 42-month delay five times.

ISRAEL'S TIME OF UNBELIEF

	3 ½ years – 1260 days	3 ½ years – time, times and half a time*	3 ½ years – In the middle of the 'seven'
Daniel 9:27			X
Daniel 12:6-9		X	
Revelation 11:3	X		
Revelation 12:6	X		
Revelation 12:13-14		X	

* TIME, TIMES AND HALF A TIME = [1 + 2 + ½] YEARS = 3 ½ YEARS

The question asked in Daniel, *“How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”* The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, *“It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.”* (Daniel 12:6-7) Nothing could be fulfilled concerning Israel until the initial three and a half years are completed. At that time, Israel will accept Jesus as Messiah, and modern Israel becomes a spiritually re-born nation.

Two Witnesses

The initial three and a half years of the end-times, God provides Israel two witnesses. These are the first authentic prophets sent to Israel since the first century. *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.* (Revelation 11:3-6)

The two witnesses will preach from Jerusalem during the first 42 months. These witnesses will have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain, just as Elijah did when confronting King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1). These witnesses will have power to turn the waters into blood, just as Moses did before Pharaoh (Exodus 7:20).

After 42 months, God withdraws protection for the two witnesses, and both are executed. *Now when they had finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.* (Revelation 11:7-8) The place where these witnesses are murdered is the same city where their Lord was crucified. The Jerusalem on earth is corrupt, as *Sodom* was corrupt, and

worldly, like *Egypt*. The future heaven, the New Jerusalem, provides a sharp contrast to the corrupt Jerusalem on earth (Revelation 21).

The funeral celebration is appalling. *For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.* (Revelation 11:9-10) Through television coverage, *people from every people, tribe, language and nation will look upon the two corpses.* The contempt will be so great that no one buries them. People celebrate by sending each other gifts. Just as the birth of the Christian faith, people celebrate by exchanging gifts. People will celebrate this apparent end to the Christian faith with the same tradition.

However, the story transitions into a resurrection and rapture, it ends in victory. *But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.* (Revelation 11:11-12)

Then Israel accepts Jesus as Messiah. *At that very hour there was a severe earthquake, and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.* (Revelation 11:13) Israel must possess faith to give God glory; without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)

A Third Temple

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem will be a critical end-time setting. Because Muslims control the Temple Mount today, the idea that an Israeli Temple could be built at this site is considered unlikely. Yet there is growing evidence Israel will be able to rebuild on the Temple Mount. For example, archeological findings indicate the Islamic shrine on the Temple Mount might be on a location other than the site of the first two Israeli temples.

In Revelation, God surveys the Temple Mount, an action that demonstrates he is taking control. John, the writer of Revelation, *was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.* (Revelation 11:1-2)

A Temple could be built on the location of the two ancient temples, with the Islamic Dome of the Rock remaining intact in the outer court. At the middle point of the end-times, after 42 months, Israel will prohibit Muslim access to the Temple Mount.

Broken Promises

God does not permit Antichrist to attack Israel for the first half of the final seven years. Israel is the woman in the following story. *The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.* (Revelation 12:6) Later more details are given; the

dragon and serpent is Satan, and the male child is Jesus. *When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. Now leap forward to the end-times. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to a place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.* (Revelation 12:13-14)

Antichrist will establish an agreement with many nations, to include Israel, for a seven-year period. In the middle of those seven years, he will break the agreement and stop the Jewish practice of sacrifice and offering. *He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'* In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple, he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. (Daniel 9:27) The blood sacrifice of lambs for the atonement of sins will return as a cornerstone of the Jewish faith at the Third Temple. Antichrist will enter the Temple and claim to be Israel's Messiah. He will stop the *sacrificing* of lambs and require people to worship him.

Paul wrote about Antichrist, *he will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.* (2 Thessalonians 2:4) Antichrist will declare that he is the Messiah that Israel has sought after since the fall of Adam and Eve (Daniel 11:36). Israel will respond to Antichrist with an emphatic "no!" As a result, Israel will be persecuted. *On that day, when all the nations of*

the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. (Zechariah 12:3)

The violent harvest of Israel is depicted; enemy soldiers act as war criminals. *I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. (Zechariah 14:2)*

This over-running of Jerusalem brings our Messiah back to earth to fight for Israel. *Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. (Zechariah 14:3-4)*