

What Does this Mean for your Future?

You might be wondering how this all affects you? Well, the Bible says that at around the time of the Jews return to Israel God's Kingdom will also be established. Jesus says that when the fig tree (Israel) shoots forth or buds (i.e. Israel once more blossoms), then "*know that the kingdom of God is near*" (Luke 21:24-32, NIV). If this is true, then the Kingdom of God must be very close!

Yes reader, the return of the Jews to Israel is proof that Christ's return to this earth, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God is drawing nearer. We must each consider our own position. The same mercy that God shows to the Jews is offered to us today. The door to the Kingdom of God is still open.

Please, do not leave it too late. Get out your Bible and start reading it today. Whether you decide to read alone or with others, give yourself no rest until you have made God's promises your own.



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TIMELY TOPICS

Number 2

Dear Reader,

Some weeks ago you may have received a copy of 'Timely Topics, Number 1' which showed us that Jesus Christ will return to the earth and establish his righteous government over this world.

In this issue we will consider one of the smallest nations on earth, yet one that is constantly in the news and also in God's plan for the future of this world. This nation is Israel, a nation that is living proof of the existence of God.

1948 - A Momentous Year

David Ben Gurion stood resolute beneath the bright new flag which shined blue and white under the spotlights. To a roar of approval, he declared the formation of the State of Israel, and signed the new constitution.



Outside, thousands of poorly armed Jews danced and cheered in the streets of Tel Aviv. Then they prepared to fight for their lives against Arab nations who had vowed to destroy the infant country at its birth. It was May 14th, 1948. It was the rebirth of the nation of Israel.

To many Bible readers, the events of that day were nothing short of miraculous. For nearly 2,000 years, the Jewish people had been without a government, without a capital, without even land. They had been forced from their fatherland, first by the Assyrians and Babylonians, the then by the iron might of Rome. They had wandered among the nations and been persecuted, tortured, despised, and cursed, and now almost 2,000 years later they had returned to their land.

The Jews: God's Living Proof

Sixty years have passed since that momentous beginning, and Israel has blossomed. The population has exploded. Everywhere there are new houses, roads, and factories. Israel has become a major exporter of many sort-after products such as cut flowers, high-tech lasers, and medical equipment. Israel is alive. It is living proof that God is in control.

Israel: A Land Promised

Many have debated the Jews right to live in the State of Israel. Fifty years on, the families of the Arabs displaced from their villages in the War of Independence still believe that the land belongs to them. While we may sympathise with people who were forcefully removed from their homes and land in a time of war, we have to acknowledge that the land of Israel first belongs to God: *"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it..."* (Psalm 24:1). And what is special about the land of Israel is that God promised it to a man called Abraham and his descendents, the Jews, almost 4,000 years ago:

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said...'The whole land of Canaan [Israel], where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.'" (Genesis 17:1,8, NIV).

The Jews Punished

The land of Israel was given to the Jews. One of the conditions that God put on the Jews remaining in the land was their continued obedience to Him. Sadly, instead of worshiping and following God, they began to worship the gods of the surrounding nations. In addition, violence, sexual immorality, and oppression of the poor abounded in Israel. God warned them many times that He would have to punish them by forcing them from the land unless they repented and returned to Him. Eventually, God delivered His promised punishment by driving them from Israel. In AD70 the Roman armies invaded the land destroying Jerusalem and killing or taking many Jews into captivity. Jewish control of Israel had ended.

The Regathering Predicted

However, God is merciful and He hadn't forsaken the Jews (Romans ch.11). God promised that although they were scattered among the nations, He would re-gather His people and they would return to Israel. Over 2,000 years ago God said:

"...I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel..." (Ezekiel 37:21-22, NIV).

The Jews return to the land and the reestablishment of the nation was nothing short of a miracle. When we read Bible prophecies like the one above, which predicts this return, it is impossible to ignore this proof that God exists. Seeing these things gives us confidence that God is real and is an unseen agent who is actively working in the world to bring about His ultimate purpose.