



an unfinished drama

# SURVIVORS

the remarkable story of the Jewish people and  
what it means for the world's future

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## QUOTATIONS

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“...out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out  
of Mount Zion a band of survivors”

ISAIAH 37.32

## **August 587 BC**

**The city of Jerusalem was in flames. After a seige of two and a half years, the armies of Babylon had broken through the walls.**

The sacred temple built by Solomon was stripped of its treasures and destroyed, the Jewish king Zedekiah and many of his people deported to Babylon.

For 70 years the land of Israel lay empty.

The Persians replaced Babylon as the great power in the Middle East and a few Jews were allowed to return to their homeland. A new Jewish commonwealth was established – but this time it was a small subject state, ruled first by the Persians, then Greeks, then Romans.

The feet of Jesus of Nazareth crossed the hills of Galilee and Judea.

And history repeated itself

## **August 70 AD**

After four years of Jewish revolt, the Roman armies under Titus beseiged Jerusalem. On August 29 the Second Temple was destroyed by fire, the magnificent structure built by Herod the Great razed to the ground and the site ploughed up. Nearly 1 million Jews perished in one of the most horrifying sieges known to history.

Some 50 years later the very name Jerusalem was erased from the map of the Roman Empire, and all Jews forbidden to set foot in their ancient homeland.

So begins the remarkable story of the Jews in dispersion, a people without a land, a religion without a centre of worship. For nineteen centuries they wandered, denied the most basic human rights, forced to live in ghettos in the cities of Europe, subject to periodic attacks and plunder – the catalogue of crimes against the Jews is a terrible indictment of the so-called Christian civilization of the West.

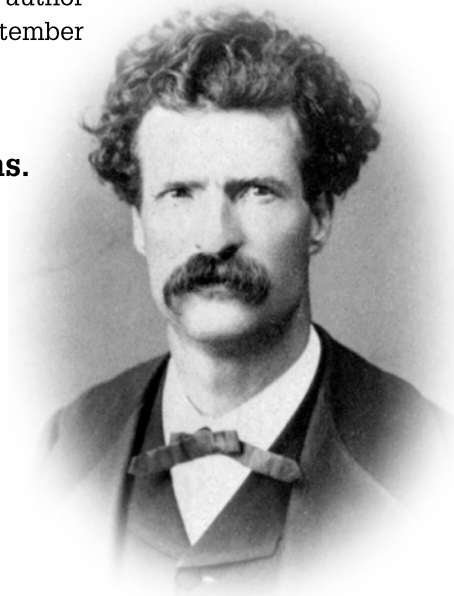
And yet the Jew survived, distinguished by his physical features, his dress, his customs, and above all, his religion. The Jew remained distinct from his neighbours, a unique people, hated, despised or envied for their sometimes astonishing intellectual and artistic achievements. No racial minority in the world's history has experienced such persecution over such a time and survived.

What is the secret of Jewish survival?

That question was asked by the American author Mark Twain. In Harper's Magazine for September 1899 he wrote:

**“All things are mortal but the Jew.  
All other forces pass, but he remains.  
What is the secret of his  
immortality?”**

American writer Mark Twain, author of 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Huckleberry Finn'







what is the secret of his immortality?

2500 years earlier, one of the Jewish prophets had made a remarkable prediction. Jeremiah said that his people would be oppressed and scattered, but that ultimately the Jew would outlive all his persecutors:

**“Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you.”<sup>[1]</sup>**

Where today are the ancient enemies and oppressors of Israel – the Philistines, the Edomites, the Hittites?

Where now are the great Empires that one by one decimated the holy land, and oppressed and scattered its people?

All have vanished, their existence marked only by the crumbling monuments of their once great civilizations:–

## NINEVEH

capital of the Assyrian Empire that destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel

## BABYLON

capital of the Babylonian Empire that destroyed the southern kingdom of Judah

## PELLA

birthplace of Alexander the Great and capital of the Macedonian Greek Empire

## PERSEPOLIS

capital of the Persian Empire that allowed the Jewish exiles to return and rebuild Jerusalem



A nighttime photograph of Jerusalem. In the foreground, the Dome of the Rock is illuminated with blue and gold lights, its large golden dome prominent. Behind it, the city of Jerusalem is visible, with various buildings and streets lit up. The background shows a dense urban landscape with many lights and some taller buildings. The overall scene is vibrant and captures the essence of the city at night.

# JERUSALEM

vibrant with life 3000 years after King David  
first made it his capital

The Jews have not only survived, they have revived.

This too was predicted long in advance by the great prophets of Israel. Prophet after prophet foresaw the time described as “the last days” when the wandering Jew would return to his ancient homeland, when the Kingdom of Israel would be revived and recapture its former splendour.

This was the hope which sustained the Jewish people throughout centuries of dispersion as year after year, at the Seder – the Passover supper – they repeated the time-honoured greeting:

### **“next year in Jerusalem”**

Gentile students of Bible prophecy looked for the same conclusion to Jewish history.

Dr. John Thomas, an English Bible student, wrote in ‘Elpis Israel’ (1850):

“The colonization of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus. They will emigrate as agriculturalists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth”.

James Grant wrote in ‘The End of Things’ (1866):

“the personal coming of Christ, to establish his reign on earth will not take place until the Jews are restored to their own land”.



a Jewish family keep the Passover



# “Son of Man, can these bones live?”

These men based their faith on unmistakable predictions in the Old Testament writings.

Around 550 BC the prophet Ezekiel had seen in a vision a valley full of human bones (Ezekiel ch 37).

These dry bones, he was told by God, represented the people of Israel in a state of despair and hopelessness. But as he watched, he heard a great rattling noise, and the bones moved together and became covered with flesh. Then at the command of God, they came to life, and stood upright, a great army.

The meaning of this graphic picture was explicit:

**“O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.”<sup>[2]</sup>**

**“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.”<sup>[3]</sup>**

So in 1864 another Bible student, John Cummings, asked the obvious question:

“One closing act in this great dramatic history of an extraordinary people is yet wanting to complete the whole. Their restoration is predicted and demanded. Who will stretch out his hand to move the scene and call forth the actors?”



30 years later, one of the principal actors in this divine drama made his appearance.

Theodor Herzl, a young Hungarian Jew, was in Paris, covering the notorious Dreyfus trial of 1895 on behalf of a Viennese newspaper. Horrified at the anti-Jewish feeling displayed by the French public, Herzl immediately wrote a pamphlet entitled 'Judenstaat' – 'the Jewish state – an attempt at a modern solution to the Jewish problem'. Only two years later Herzl had organized the first Zionist Conference at Basle in Switzerland which declared as its primary aim, the promotion of the colonization of Palestine. Political Zionism had been born.

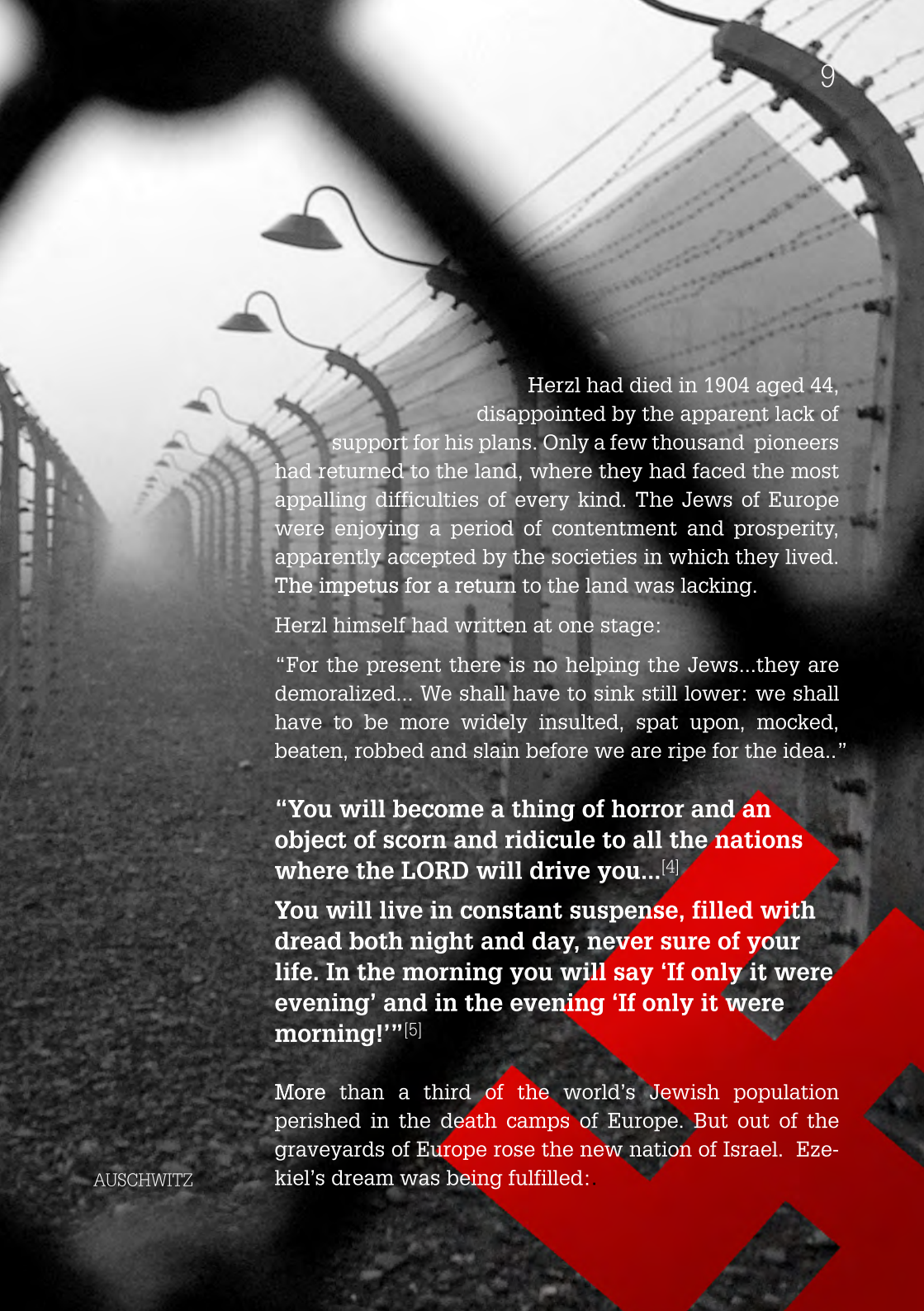
In his private diary at the time, Herzl wrote: 'at Basle I founded the Jewish state. If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years time perhaps, and certainly in 50 years, everyone will perceive it.'

51 years later:

May 14 1948 David Ben Gurion, first Prime Minister of the State of Israel, makes the Declaration of Independence. Above him, a portrait of Theodor Herzl.

Within the space of 50 years, the words of the prophets, the hopes of the Jewish people, and the confident expectations of Bible students, had been realized. But those 50 years had seen one of the most extraordinary and horrifying episodes of Jewish history.





Herzl had died in 1904 aged 44, disappointed by the apparent lack of support for his plans. Only a few thousand pioneers had returned to the land, where they had faced the most appalling difficulties of every kind. The Jews of Europe were enjoying a period of contentment and prosperity, apparently accepted by the societies in which they lived. The impetus for a return to the land was lacking.

Herzl himself had written at one stage:

“For the present there is no helping the Jews...they are demoralized... We shall have to sink still lower: we shall have to be more widely insulted, spat upon, mocked, beaten, robbed and slain before we are ripe for the idea..”

**“You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you...”<sup>[4]</sup>**

**You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say ‘If only it were evening’ and in the evening ‘If only it were morning!’”<sup>[5]</sup>**

More than a third of the world’s Jewish population perished in the death camps of Europe. But out of the graveyards of Europe rose the new nation of Israel. Eze-kiel’s dream was being fulfilled:



The ship 'EXODUS' with 4,515 Jewish refugees from the Holocaust in Haifa harbour, July 1947. The passengers were refused entry to Palestine by the British authorities and were returned to Detention Camps in occupied Germany. Almost all eventually reached Israel. Britain recognised the new state of Israel in January 1949.



**“‘breathe into these slain, that they may live’. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered into them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army”.**<sup>[6]</sup>

Nazi persecution provided the impetus that Zionism had lacked – the movement back to the land became irresistible. Britain, in an impossible position trying to reconcile the conflicting demands of Jew and Arab, surrendered her Mandate over Palestine to the United Nations.

On 29th of November 1947 the United Nations voted in favour of a resolution to partition Palestine between Jew and Arab, leaving Jerusalem under international control. A few months later, as the last British soldier embarked for home, the State of Israel was declared.

Israel had been reborn as all her prophets said she would.

After a lapse of two and a half thousand years, a self-governing Jewish state once more occupied the land of Palestine.

But it looked as if  
the infant state  
might be  
stillborn.





Six Arab nations declared their implacable hatred and their immediate determination to push the Jews into the Mediterranean. Five well-equipped regular Arab armies attacked a people with no artillery, no tanks, planes or warships –

*but Israel survived.*

In 1973 Arab armies attacked again, on the most sacred day of the Jewish calendar – Yom Kippur – and Israel was very nearly overwhelmed in the first few hours of fighting. Some of the greatest tank battles of all time were fought in the Sinai Desert –

*and Israel survived.*

In 1967, in the lightning campaign of the Six Day War, Israel captured the old city of Jerusalem. For the first time in 2000 years, the ancient capital of King David was under Jewish control. Jews were again able to worship at their most sacred site, 'Kotel Ha'maaravi', the Wailing Wall. This massive structure is part of the western side of the temple platform on which Herod the Great had started to build his temple shortly before the time of Jesus.

As building work continued, Jesus had made this remarkable prediction:

**“ the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles – until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”<sup>[7]</sup>**

Israeli Merkavah Mark II Tank in the desert





The Kotel or Western Wall of the Temple Mount, the most sacred site accessible to Jews. The first seven courses or so above ground level are believed to date from the time of Herod







Pomegranates -  
one of the celebrated 'Seven Fruits'  
of the Holy Land

30 years after Jesus died, Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed.

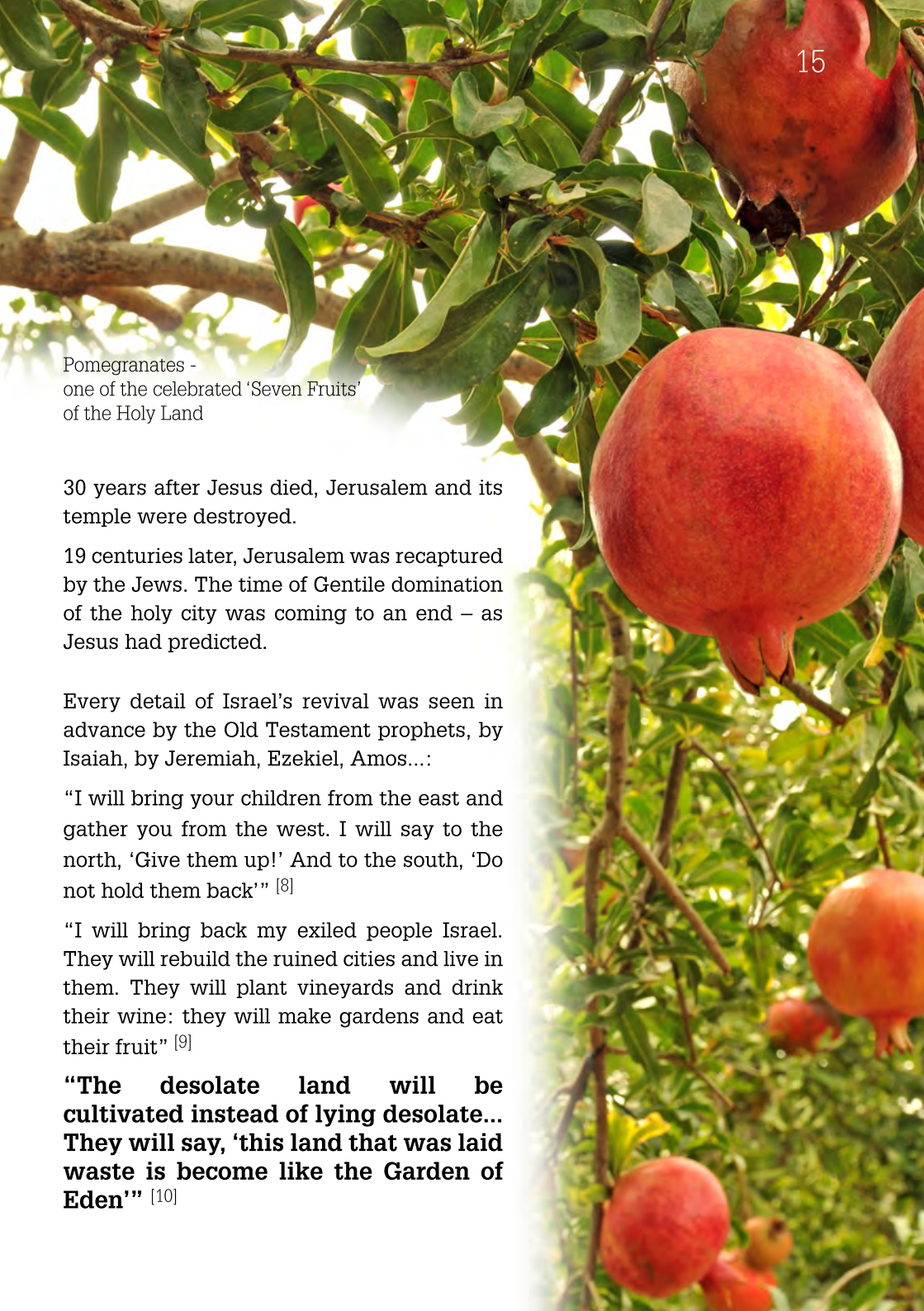
19 centuries later, Jerusalem was recaptured by the Jews. The time of Gentile domination of the holy city was coming to an end – as Jesus had predicted.

Every detail of Israel's revival was seen in advance by the Old Testament prophets, by Isaiah, by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos...:

"I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back'" [8]

"I will bring back my exiled people Israel. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine: they will make gardens and eat their fruit" [9]

**"The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate... They will say, 'this land that was laid waste is become like the Garden of Eden'" [10]**





## but something is missing

The history of modern Israel has been a vicious cycle of violence, terrorism, intifada and retribution. Brief incursions into Lebanon (1982 and 2006) and Gaza (2008 and again in 2014) brought Israel international condemnation. The hopes of the Palestinians for an independent state of their own are constantly frustrated – the Jewish settlements and the status of Jerusalem remain huge obstacles to a peace settlement. For a state born out of conflict, the battle for Israel continues.

Israel today is not the Israel pictured by the prophets.

The prophets looked forward to a great spiritual rebirth, when the whole nation would return to the worship of God and a new sanctuary would be built in Jerusalem.

That spiritual revival has not yet happened. The Jews have returned to their land – but not to their God. Israel today is a secular, western-style state that lives with the realities of materialism, unbelief and violence, protected by a standing army, a secret service and an undisclosed number of nuclear warheads. The absolute peace and security and the glories foreseen by the prophets are a very long way from reality.

So what is the future for Israel  
and her neighbours?





The key to the future  
is to be found in the long distant past.

4000 years ago, God made a promise to Abraham,  
the father of the Jewish people:

**“through your offspring all nations on earth will be  
blessed”<sup>[11]</sup>**

*That promise has not yet been fulfilled.*

The prophet Ezekiel looked forward to a time when the people  
of Israel would have their own king once again.<sup>[12]</sup>

*That has not yet happened.*

The angel that announced the birth of the child Jesus to Mary,  
promised that he would “sit on the throne of his father David,  
and reign over the house of Jacob for ever”<sup>[13]</sup>

*That promise has not yet been realised.*

Jesus Christ promised his followers:

**“I will come again”<sup>[14]</sup>**

*He has not yet kept his promise.*

Put together all the as yet unfulfilled prophecies and promises  
of Old and New Testaments, and there emerges a coherent  
and wonderful picture of the future.

Jesus Christ, the New Testament tells us, is the descendant  
promised to Abraham, through whom all nations will be bless-  
ed. He will return to reign not only as king of Israel but of the  
world, to establish a universal government and an era of  
peace and righteousness without precedent in the world's  
history.



The miracle of Israel is the witness to the truth of the prophets, the guarantee that their entire vision of the future will be vindicated. And the revival of Israel is the greatest sign that that future is not remote, but very, very near.

**“Look at the fig tree,” said Jesus, “as soon as its twigs gets tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.**

**So, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near”.**<sup>[15]</sup>

When he spoke, the fig tree was a recognized symbol of the Jewish nation...

Today, the fig tree nation has burst into leaf, just as Jesus said it would – the stage is set for his return.

Look at the fig tree



## what is the future for Israel?

The immediate outlook for Israel is black indeed – the Bible predicts a “time of Jacob’s trouble” before their complete redemption.<sup>[16]</sup>

It predicts a massive invasion of the land by Israel’s enemies, like a devastating hoard of locusts.<sup>[17]</sup>

When all hope is lost, and annihilation seems inevitable, then Jesus will set foot again on the land of Israel – and the Jews will at last recognize and acknowledge him as their long promised King, their Messiah.

**“They shall look on...the one they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child”.<sup>[18]</sup>**

That future time of trouble will be worldwide.

**“There will be great distress” says Jesus “unequalled from the beginning of the world... nations will be in anguish and perplexity. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world”.<sup>[19]</sup>**





From that time of trouble, there is only one escape route, through Jesus Christ.

**“Come to me”**<sup>[20]</sup> is Jesus’ invitation to all who would escape the futility of human life and the disaster which threatens all human civilization. To become a Christian in the real sense of the word is to adopt as our hope the ‘hope of Israel’ <sup>[21]</sup> –

to wait for the appearing of Jesus from heaven, knowing that the words of the prophets will be realized, and a time of absolute peace and goodness will replace the trouble and uncertainties of the present.

**“You are my witnesses”** God said to his people so long ago.<sup>[22]</sup>

The astounding survival and revival of the Jewish nation is the evidence that a divine hand is at work in world affairs, directing them towards a great and long predicted conclusion. Each of us has the opportunity to link ourselves with the future that God has promised, to accept Jesus as our redeemer and our King.

Tomorrow may be **THE END.**



“See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn...  
all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel...

No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin nor destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

**...the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.”**

ISAIAH 60





## BIBLE REFERENCES

The following passages of the Bible are referred to in the text:

- |         |                       |
|---------|-----------------------|
| Page 4  | [1] Jeremiah 30.11    |
| Page 7  | [2] Ezekiel 37.12     |
|         | [3] Ezekiel 37.21     |
| Page 9  | [4] Deuteronomy 28.57 |
|         | [5] Deuteronomy 28.66 |
| Page 11 | [6] Ezekiel 37.9      |
| Page 12 | [7] Luke 21. 6,24     |
| Page 15 | [8] Isaiah 43.5-6     |
|         | [9] Amos 9.14         |
|         | [10] Ezekiel 36.34,35 |
| Page 17 | [11] Genesis 22.18    |
|         | [12] Ezekiel 37.22    |
|         | [13] Luke 1.32,33     |
|         | [14] John 14.3        |
| Page 18 | [15] Luke 21.29       |
| Page 19 | [16] Jeremiah 30.7    |
|         | [17] Joel 2           |
|         | [18] Zechariah 12.10  |
|         | [19] Matthew 12.10    |
| Page 20 | [20] Matthew 11.28    |
|         | [21] Acts 28.20       |
|         | [22] Isaiah 43.10,12  |

Your word is truth

## For further reading

The following references explore some of the themes of 'Survivors' in more detail

*The gospel ('good news') is based on promises God originally made to the Jewish people, which can be shared by Christians*

"Understand this, that those who believe are children of Abraham. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." *Galatians 3.7*

"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." *Ephesians 3.6*

*This good news was given to Abraham and included all nations*

"The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced in advance the gospel to Abraham: 'all nations will be blessed through you'." *Galatians 3.8*

*Jesus is the special descendant promised to Abraham*

"The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed' meaning one person, who is Christ." *Galatians 3.16*

*Another ancestor of Jesus, King David, was promised a special descendant whose kingdom would last for ever*

"I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father and he will be my son...Your throne and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me." *II Samuel 7.12-16*

"He will endure as long as the sun...All kings will bow down to him, and all nations will serve him...All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed..." *Psalms 72 [Psalms 89.25-37]*

*The promises God made to Abraham and to David still await their complete fulfilment in the future*

"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised: they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance...These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what was promised. God had planned something better for us, so that **only** together with us would they be made perfect." *Hebrews 11.13, 39-40*

*The survival of the Jewish people in spite of centuries of persecution is the evidence that God's promises have been and will be kept*

"This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and the stars by night... 'Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,' declares the Lord, 'will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.'" *Jeremiah 31.35,36*

"Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew." *Romans 11.1*



*The regathering of the Jews and the restoration of their land is the first step towards the complete fulfilment of God's promises*

"See I will bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the ends of the earth...He who scattered Israel will gather them, and will watch over his flock like a shepherd. I will turn their mourning into gladness, I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow."

*Jeremiah 31.8, 10.13*

"They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities."

*Isaiah 61.4*

"He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel. He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."

*Isaiah 11.12,13*

"I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people. The sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards, and eat their fruit."

*Isaiah 65.19-21*

*The Jews have yet to experience a great rebirth of faith and the recognition of their true Messiah*

"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... they will all know me from the least to the greatest."

*Jeremiah 31.33,34*

"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'"

*Romans 11.26*

*God's promises will be realised when Jesus reigns over the whole world from David's throne in Jerusalem. All nations will enjoy the blessings of this future kingdom.*

"Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide."

*Micah 4.2,3*

"...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever".

*Daniel 2.44*

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.'"

*Revelation 11.15*

## NEXT STEPS

We hope you have been impressed by the message of SURVIVORS and its witness to the truth and power of God's Word. If you would like to know more about the Bible and its message of hope, may we suggest you:

1. Read the Bible regularly and really get to know what it says. Today everyone has a view about the Bible, often negative, but few actually read it. The '**Bible Companion**' is a reading table that will allow you to read the whole Bible in a year by reading several small extracts each day. For your free copy please use the contacts below.
2. Subscribe to **Light Magazine**, a free quarterly publication exploring the Bible and its teaching. To view back issues, special issues and for more information, visit [www.lightmagazine.org](http://www.lightmagazine.org). Special issues include 'Light on Israel' which deals in more detail with the theme of SURVIVORS.
3. Visit [www.the1way.net](http://www.the1way.net) where you will find things to read, hear, watch and download, covering many aspects of the Bible:-
  - \* confirming its accuracy and reliability
  - \* helping you understand its content
  - \* explaining its relevance in today's world
  - \* changing the way you lead your life and view your future
  - \* inviting you to learn more about the 'good news' in the Bible

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"If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
may my right hand forget its skill.  
May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you..."

PSALM 137

Spanning 4000 years of human history, the story of the Jews is an epic of faith and failure, of glory and exile, of amazing gifts and devastating suffering. Their survival and revival in the State of Israel is both a modern miracle and a potentially lethal flashpoint in the cauldron of Middle East politics.

**SURVIVORS** tells that story – and looks ahead to the extraordinary ending that has long been predicted.



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