



**PREPARATION FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM
(LOOKING BACK AND GROWING FORWARD)
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY
LESSON 6**

**The Palestinian Covenant
Deuteronomy 27 –30**

In these chapters the blessings and curses are enumerated at length and in various minute details, so that on the first entrance of the Israelites into the land of promise, their whole destiny was laid before them, as it was to result from their obedience or the contrary. In a dramatic ratification ceremony the people were to be divided between Mt. Gerazim and Ebal in what came to be known as Samaria, and the blessings and curses were read antiphonally. The Levites in the valley between read the twelve curses (27:11-26). These chapters make up the Palestinian Covenant whereby Israel is promised enjoyment of the land.

I. ISRAEL'S TITLE DEED TO THE LAND

A. Based on the Abrahamic Covenant

God's promise of personal, national, and universal blessings to Abraham and his seed is the basis for all of the other covenants of Scripture. His covenant was unconditional and limited to the descendants of Isaac and Jacob.

B. Based on the Palestinian Covenant

That part of the Abrahamic covenant that promised a specific land to Abram's descendants is called "The Palestinian Covenant." It was reaffirmed to Isaac and to Jacob (Gen. 26:2-4; 28:13-15). (*Scripture verses are not written out in order to save space. References are given, not as "proof texts," but to be looked up in your Bible as an integral part of the lesson. If many are given, at least two should be looked up.*)

1. The physical nature of the promise

One of the important provisions of the Abrahamic covenant was the promise of possession of the land. From Abraham's point of view, this was undoubtedly one of the main features of God's covenant with him. In the original promise he was told to go to a land that God would show him (Gen. 12:1). This was given more content in Genesis 13:14-15, where God promised to give to Abraham all the land he could see. This promise of the land is later enlarged and given specific boundaries (Gen. 15:18-21), and the land is promised as an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:7-8).

2. The unconditional nature of the promise

The basis of the covenant is the unconditional covenant with Abraham. The promises were given unconditionally as far as their ultimate fulfillment is concerned. We therefore hold that Israel has a bona fide ground for possession of the land, particularly in the future reign of Christ on earth (The Millennium). The promise as given emphasized that (1) it was gracious in its principle; (2) the land was an inheritance of the seed; (3) its title was given forever; (4) the land was to be possessed forever; (5) the promise included specific boundaries (Gen. 13:15; 17:7,8; 15:18-21).

C. Based on Israel Being the Promised Seed

Several questions must be answered to determine if modern Israel qualifies as the rightful heir of the promises.

1. Has ancient Israel already fulfilled the promise of possession of the land?

I Kings 4:21,24, Joshua 21:43,45 and Nehemiah 9:7-8 are given as evidence that the promise was fulfilled in Joshua's and Solomon's day. But if it were fulfilled, then why do the Scriptures that were written later still appeal to the hope of a literal possession of the land? (Isa. 11:11-12; 27:12-13; Jer. 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 31:8; Ezek. 11:17-21; 39:28). Any reasonable fulfillment of these prophecies demands a future possession of the land.

The original promises of the land involved (1) possession of the land, (2) permanent possession, (3) and occupying the land. Even in Solomon's day at the height of his kingdom, the land was not all possessed. At best it was placed under tribute as the very passages cited indicate (e.g., I Kings 4:21). At least it is obvious that possession was not permanent. The priests in the Nehemiah reference do not claim complete fulfillment. They merely state that God had done His part. The past occupancy of the land was a partial fulfillment but not a complete fulfillment of the promise.

Two New Testament passages are used to teach that the promises are fulfilled spiritually in the believing Israelite or Hebrew Christian of today. In Romans 9-11, Paul distinguishes between merely physical Israel and "true" or "spiritual" Israel. But here the contrast is not between those who inherit Abraham's promises and those who do not, but rather a contrast between those who inherit only the national promises and those who inherit the spiritual promises also. The line of national promises is narrowed to Isaac and his seed (Rom. 9:7), and the line of spiritual promises is narrowed to those who believe.

In Galatians 6:15-16, Paul speaks of "the Israel of God." Some believe that he is referring to Christians, both Jew and Gentile, and argue that the church therefore receives the blessings promised to Old Testament Israel. But Paul is simply saying that Jewish believers, "the Israel of God," are distinguished from Gentile believers, although in this age they are on the same level.

2. Was obedience the condition for possessing the land?

a. Israel's condition for enjoyment

God commanded circumcision as the seal and sign, not as the condition of the covenant. Obedience is clearly the condition for any given generation to possess and enjoy the blessings of the land, but the ultimate fulfillment of the promise is unconditional. Deuteronomy chapters 28 and 29 refer to the enjoyment of the privileges and blessings of the land. But God's grace and mercy are seen in His guaranteeing them that He would not take His favor from them. When they repented, He would restore them. When He dispersed them, He would regather them.

b. Our condition for enjoyment of the Abrahamic blessings today

Both principles apply also for the believer today. Possession of Heaven for all eternity is conditioned only on trusting Jesus Christ as Savior. It requires no keeping of rules, regulations, ritual or religion (John 5:24; Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 6:23; Titus 3:5; Gal 3; Gal 2:16; Rom. 4:4-5). Enjoyment of our life in Christ in this present world, depends on our trusting Him for daily needs and walking in obedience by, and in the realm of, His Holy Spirit (Phil. 4:6-8; Rom 6:12-14; I Cor. 10:1-24; Gal. 5:16-26).

There is one difference however. Instead of the legal principle, "If I obey, God will bless me," the Christian lives by the principle, "God has already blessed me, therefore I will obey." The motive and power is not trying to earn God's favor and blessing. It is the power of His Spirit leading us to live for Jesus out of gratitude for sins forgiven (Col. 3:1-11; Eph. 4:20-24; Gal. 2:20; Luke 7:47).

One other analogy with physical Israel may be made: even when we sin, God never turns His back on us (Rom. 8:31-39), and when we confess our sins, He forgives us and cleanses us (I John 1:9).

c. The results of the condition unfulfilled

Even before Israel entered the land, and before any chance to disobey, God predicted their sin, dispersion, and restoration. Scripture prophesied that Israel would be removed from the land three times:

1) The Egyptian sojourning

The prediction is given in Genesis 15:13 and the restoration to the land is given in 15:14-16.

2) The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities

This was predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:62-65, 30:1-3, and is a major theme of the prophets (Jer. 25:11) as was the restoration (Jer 29:10-14; Dan. 9:2).

3) The Roman expulsion

The final dispersion was after Titus destroyed the temple in 70 A.D. Several years later the Jews continued to revolt and were expelled from the land.

3. Did Israel forfeit her right to the land?

Although Israel was punished for her disobedience, God never abandoned her. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob strayed from the will of God, but in each instance the covenant was repeated. Even apostasy did not destroy the covenant. In spite of it, Jeremiah promises that the nation will continue forever (Jer. 31:31-36). The covenant is declared to be immutable in the New Testament, even confirmed by an oath by God Himself (Heb. 6:13-18). Even after rejecting her Messiah, Israel is not cast off. Although temporarily judicially blinded, God will yet redeem Israel. A future generation of Jews representing the nation will be saved (Rom. 11:26).

4. Is the church the new Israel?

One of the most confusing ideas in church history has been the theory that the church inherits the promises of the Old Testament in a spiritual sense and is the "new Israel" today. This has caused great confusion about worship, salvation, politics, and church government as well as prophecy. The New Testament is clear that the church began at Pentecost in Acts chapter two, is entered by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is a New Testament "mystery" (something hidden in the past and not obtainable by human searching, but now revealed to the believer), is not under the Mosaic law, is distinct from Israel, includes both believing Jew and Gentile, has a different relationship to the Holy Spirit, and is a distinct people of God (Col. 1:18,24; I Cor. 12:13; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4,5; Eph 3; Gal. 3:23-29; John 7:37-38; I Cor.10:32)

5. Is the modern Israel a fulfillment of the promise?

a. Israel will return in unbelief.

The prophets predicted two regatherings of Israel from the last dispersion, one in unbelief and one in faith. The present state of Israel fits into prophecy in relation to the return to the land in unbelief. Ezekiel 20:33-38 clearly deals with this return. Ezekiel compares this return to the Exodus when God brought them to the land but had to chastise them for forty years in the wilderness. Afterward, a new nation emerged to go into the land. A similar thing was to occur in the future. God would bring them with "wrath poured out" (vs. 33,34). That may be a reference to the Nazi holocaust, out of which the state of Israel was born. Another passage that deals with the return in unbelief is Ezekiel 22:17-22, relating it especially to Jerusalem. Isaiah 11:11-12 has an interesting reference to a "second" international regathering. When was the first? It cannot mean the captivity, for that was not international as spoken of in the text. The first international regathering is going on right now.

b. Israel will return before the tribulation period.

That this return in unbelief is before the tribulation period is clear from passages like Zephaniah 2:1-2, and from the fact that the tribulation begins (not with the rapture of the church) with the signing of a seven-year pact by the man of sin with Israel. That presupposes a Jewish state with leadership before the tribulation can begin. Such a state has been in existence since 1948.

c. Israel will build the third temple.

Jerusalem had to fall into the hands of the Israelites because of the prophecies of a third (tribulation) temple. Four passages presuppose a third temple and that presupposes control of the temple compound and the old city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 11:1-2).

d. At the end of the tribulation, Israel will return to the land in faith.

(1) The regeneration of Israel (Jer. 24:7; Ezek. 11:19-20).

(2) The regathering of Israel from all nations (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11:11-12:6).

(3) Full possession of the land, including the extended boundaries, increased productivity, security, and abundance of water (Isa. 27:12; Jer. 31:1-6, 11-14; Ezek. 34:25-31).

II. THE ARABS AND THE LAND

A. Who Are the Arabs In Palestine?

Biblical history of the land starts with the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Moabites, Philistines and Jebusites and others in the chosen land east of the Mediterranean Sea. It was taken by the Jews in the thirteenth century B.C. After a stormy, seven-century relationship, God gave temporary control of the land to the Babylonians, who lost it to the Persians, who lost it to the Greeks, who lost it back to the Jews, who lost it to the Romans, who lost the eastern part to the Moslems in 648 A.D.

The history of the land from the time of Jesus is a frightening story of revolt, war, and conquest. Following the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., the Jews continued to revolt against Rome until they were exiled from the land. The Romans named the area "Palestine" after the Philistines and as an insult to the Jews and renamed Jerusalem "Capitolina." After Emperor Hadrian's death in the third century, the Jews returned to Jerusalem and acquired Roman citizenship.

When the empire split, the Jews came under Byzantine rule, and Palestine became a battleground between the Byzantines and Persia. The Jewish population dwindled for the first time through death and migrations.

The Jews and Christians who remained in Palestine welcomed the Persian victors in 614, but they barely had time to become acquainted when, in 638, they had a new set of masters, the Mohammedans. The subsequent five hundred-year Moslem rule was broken by the Crusaders when they captured the Holy Land in 1100.

For almost two hundred years the Crusaders held on until they were ousted by an incredible species of men known as "Mamelukes"--the Arab name given to the Turkish slaves in Egypt. The Mamelukes rebelled against their Egyptian masters in 1250, seized power in Egypt, defeated the Crusaders, made Palestine an Egyptian province, stopped the Mongol invasion of Genghis Khan, and held the frontiers of Egypt intact for 267 years. They were fine horsemen, but incapable of political organization. Yet they built magnificent universities and mosques, and made Cairo the show-place of the world. They also reduced the populations of Egypt and Palestine by one third.

Their end came in 1517 when the Ottoman Turks annexed Egypt and Palestine to their ascending empire. For the next three hundred years Palestine was ravaged by wars between Turks and Europeans, including Napoleon, and by 1860 the "land of milk and honey" was a barren desert.

By 1900, all that remained were about 50,000 Jews, 50,000 European and Arab "Christians," about 50,000 nomadic Bedouins, and a conglomerate of 200,000 Mongols, Mamelukes, Syrians, Lebanese, and Turks, bound loosely by adherence to different sects of Mohammedanism. Most spoke not Arabic but an Aramaic. They were called "Arabs" only for want of a better name. They were united in misery, living in filth, and oppressed by *effendi* and absentee landlords.

Toward the end of the 19th century, God raised up a secular organization called the "Zionists" (a political group whose purpose was the establishment of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine). God wove world

events and the desires of the Zionists together in a divinely prearranged schedule. Five Palestinian immigration waves came at the right times and in the right succession. In the first wave of 1880-1900 the tillers of the soil came to break the ground. In the second wave the scientific farmers and laborers arrived to build the country's agriculture. Then came the third wave of young people, the entrepreneurs, the speculators, to build cities, found industries, organize an army and establish educational institutions. In the fourth wave the intellectuals, the professionals, the bureaucrats, settled to draw blueprints for democracy and statehood. In another wave, after World War II, came Jews from every walk of life to fill the gaps in all ranks.

During World War I the now famed Balfour Declaration was born. It was an expression of gratitude from the British government to the Jewish people for the part they played in the Great War. When England's brilliant chemist, Chaim Weizmann, asked for a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, he received a favorable reply through Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary. The British government let it be known (November 2, 1917) that "His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." The Jews were jubilant.

However, claiming the divine rights of victors, England and France divided up the Ottoman Empire, taking for themselves former Arab lands held by the Turks. Palestine was not annexed outright, for Britain could not openly repudiate the Balfour Declaration, which President Woodrow Wilson and the United States Congress recognized as a valid document. The League of Nations, however, handed over Palestine to Britain as a mandate, which she promptly proceeded to rule like a colony. For a little over two decades, Palestine was split into two irreconcilable Arab and Jewish entities.

The British rigidly controlled Jewish immigration resulting in the ugly anti-British war until the United Nations granted Israel statehood in 1948. Immediately the Arabs attacked Israel, and through that war displaced much of the Arab population of Palestine.

The Arabs today claim that they are the descendants of Abraham that were to inherit the blessings. This claim is made on the basis of the Islam holy book, the Quran, which tells the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. But which son? Abraham eventually had eight sons (Gen. 25:2, 9). In the story told in Genesis chapter twenty-two, the Bible states it was Isaac (Gen 22:2), but the Quran intimates it was Ishmael. On that basis, the Arabs feel that they are to be the recipients of the blessing of Abraham given in Genesis 22:15-18. They deeply resent Israel's claim to be the chosen people.

The Arabs claim the right to be the sole rulers of Palestine by virtue of Mohammed's conquest of that country in the seventh century and by virtue of having a majority of the population at the end of World War I. The Jews claimed the right to Palestine by virtue of their conquest of that country in the thirteenth century B.C., by virtue of having been a majority in that country longer than the Arabs, and by virtue of the United Nations declaration.

The Palestinians who fled during the war of 1948 were not taken in by any Arab nation and eventually were given part of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the government of Israel. In attempting to become a new "State" they have drawn up a charter that has been the object of division in the peace talks of 1998. The charter is in essence this:

Article 1: Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an Integral part of the Arab nation.

Article 2: Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.

Article 3: The Palestinian people possess the legal right to their homeland and have the right to determine their destiny after achieving the liberation of their country.

Article 4: The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential and inherent character. It is transmitted from parents to children. The Zionist occupation and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people...do not make them lose their Palestinian identity...

Article 5: The Palestinians are those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there. Anyone born after that date of a Palestinian father -- whether inside Palestine or outside it -- is also a Palestinian.

Article 6: The Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion [1917-ed.] will be considered Palestinians.

Article 7: ...It is a national duty to bring up individual Palestinians in an Arab revolutionary manner... He [all Palestinians] must be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice his wealth and his life in order to win back his homeland and bring about its liberation.

Article 8: The phase in their history, through which the Palestinian people are now living, is that of national ("watani") struggle for the liberation of Palestine.... On this basis the Palestinian masses, regardless of whether they are residing in the national homeland or in diaspora ("mayfjir") constitute--both their organization and the individuals--one national front working for the retrieval of Palestine and its liberation through armed struggle.

Article 9: Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase. The Palestinian Arab people assert their absolute determination and firm resolution to continue their armed struggle and to work for the liberation of their country and their return to it...

Article 10: Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war. This requires its escalation, comprehensiveness and mobilization of all the Palestinian popular and educational efforts and their organization and involvement in the armed Palestinian revolution....

Article 13: Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary objectives, the attainment of either of which facilitates the attainment of the other...

Article 14: The destiny of the Arab nation, and indeed Arab existence itself, depends upon the destiny of the Palestinian cause...The people of Palestine play the role of the vanguard in the realization of this sacred national ("qawmi") goal.

Article 15: The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national ("qawmi") duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine.... Accordingly the Arab nation must mobilize all its military, human, and moral and spiritual capabilities to participate actively with the Palestinian people in the liberation of Palestine. It must, particularly in the phase of the armed Palestinian revolution, offer and furnish the Palestinian people with all possible help, and material and human support, and make available to them the means and opportunities that will enable them to continue to carry out their leading role in the armed revolution....

Article 17: The liberation of Palestine, from a human point of view, will restore to the Palestinian individual his dignity, pride and freedom....

Article 18: The liberation of Palestine, from an international point of view, is a defensive action necessitated by the demands of self-defense. Accordingly, the Palestinian people, desirous as they are of the friendship of all people, look to freedom-loving, justice-loving and peace-loving states for support in order to restore their legitimate rights in Palestine....

Article 19: The position of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the State of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time...

Article 20: The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate for Palestine and everything that has been based upon them, are deemed null and void. Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history and the true conception of what constitutes statehood. Judaism, being a religion, is not an independent nationality. Nor do Jews constitute a single nation with an identity of its own; they are citizens of the states to which they belong.

Article 21: The Arab Palestinian people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine and reject all proposals aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian problem, or its internationalization.

Article 22: Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatic in its nature, aggressive, expansionist and colonial in its aims, and fascist in its methods. Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement, and a geographical base for world imperialism placed strategically in the midst of the Arab homeland to combat the hopes of the Arab nation for liberation, unity and progress.

Israel is a constant source of threat vis-a-vis peace in the Middle East and the whole world. Since the liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence and will contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian people look for the support of all the progressive and peaceful forces....

Article 23: The demands of security and peace, as well as the demands of right and justice, require all states to consider Zionism an illegitimate movement, to outlaw its existence, and to ban its operations....

Article 24: The Palestinian people believe in the principles of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity, and in the right of all peoples to exercise them.

Article 25: For the realization of the goals this Charter and its principles, the Palestinian Liberation Organization will perform its role in the liberation of Palestine in accordance with the Constitution of this Organization.

Article 26: The Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of the Palestinian revolutionary forces, is responsible for the Palestinian Arab people's movement in its struggle to retrieve its homeland, liberate and return to it....

Article 28: The Palestinian Arab people assert the genuineness and independence of their national revolution and reject all forms of intervention, trusteeship and subordination.

Article 29: The Palestinian people possess the fundamental and genuine legal right to liberate and retrieve their homeland. The Palestinian people determine their attitude towards all states and forces on the basis of the stands they adopt vis-a-vis the Palestinian case....

Article 30: Fighters and carriers of arms in the war of liberation are the nucleus of the popular army which will be the protective force for the gains of the Palestinian Arab people.

Article 31: The Organization shall have a flag, an oath of allegiance and an anthem. All this shall be decided upon in accordant with a special regulation.

Article 32: Regulations, which shall be known as the Constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organization, shall be annexed to this Charter. It shall lay down the manner in which the Organization and its organs and institutions, shall be constituted. . .

Article 33: This Charter shall not be amended save by (vote of) a majority of two-thirds of the total membership of the National Congress of the Palestine Liberation.

– From truepeace.org (Basic Political Document of Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement Leila S. Kadi (ed.), Palestine Research Centre, Beirut, December 1969.)

B. Why Do They Want Such A Tiny Land?

Answers to this question range from their desire for another Mediterranean seaport to their coveting of the incredible wealth in the Dead Sea. After all is said, the economic, geographic, and political reasons still do not answer the question, "Why the intense hatred of Israel?"

1. The uniqueness of anti-Semitism

At this point it is necessary to note the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Jewishness, or any other national or racial prejudice. Four qualities distinguish the two:

- a. Anti-Semitism, a term coined in 1879 is irrational, illogical, and stems from unconscious forces. First comes the violence, then the rationalization. In anti-Jewishness there is some perceived motive for retaliation.
- b. Anti-Semitism is against the Jewish "race" and has nothing to do with individual Jews. Anti-Jewishness is directed against the individual in the same way that prejudice and violence is directed against individuals of other nationalities.
- c. Anti-Semitism seeks out Jews and Jews only for its targets; does not care about others who have caused the same conditions that it claims to be the troubling circumstance. Anti-Jewishness is simply part of a general violence.
- d. Anti-Semitism does not seek a solution, redemption, or alternative to Jewishness, nor does it try to proselyte. Anti-Jewish violence often wants to convert the Jew to his religion. The hatred of the Arab nations for Israel is more than anti-Jewishness. It is as irrational as that of Nazi Germany (not surprisingly, the Arab leaders in Palestine made an alliance with Nazi Germany). What is behind it?

2. The Satanic nature of anti-Semitism

The time-long adversary of God and His cause is Satan, and he despises Israel for four reasons:

- a. They are God's chosen people. Satan hates anything that God loves. Being the apple of God's eye, and having been chosen for a purpose (not a privilege), Israel became the special object of Satan's hatred.
- b. They are God's special display. They were the revealers of His nature, the recipients of His grace, the place of His dwelling, the bearers of His Word, the seed of the covenant patriarchs, the example to the world, and the genetic door for His incarnation.
- c. They are the bearers of the "seed." The enmity between Satan's seed and the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15) culminated in the "seed" of a Jewish maiden. If he could have destroyed Israel, he thought he could have frustrated the incarnation, and the salvation of mankind.

d. They are the key to the second coming. The major reason for his continued hatred of Israel, is his knowledge that there is something that only the nation of Israel can do that would destroy him. When Jesus comes back to earth again about seven plus years after the rapture and at the end of the great tribulation, Satan will be bound for one thousand years (Rev. 20:2). At the end of that millennium, he will revolt against the Christ in one last battle. Defeated by fire from heaven, he will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:7-10). Satan knows all of this, and his purpose is to frustrate, or at least deter, the second advent. He knows that Jesus will not come back until the nation of Israel does something. If Satan can kill the nation of Jews, he will stop the second advent. Before Jesus comes back to earth the nation of Israel--the generation of Jews living at that time--will have to do two things:

(1) Israel must confess her national sin.

This is not the killing of Jesus. The Gentiles (and you and I) did that. The one national sin of Israel is the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. When Jesus came the first time, He was rejected as the Messiah by the Jewish people who were led to that rejection by the national leadership of Israel. That constituted the unpardonable sin for that generation, and Jesus predicted the last dispersion of the Jews from the land of the covenant (Matt. 12:22-45--note in vs. 41-45 how many times "this generation" appears. Please read John 1:12; 11:45-53; Luke 19:41-44; Matt. 23:13, 29-39). Just as the Jewish leaders once led the nation to reject the messiahship of Jesus, the Jewish leaders alive at the close of the tribulation will lead the people in recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. For two days, they will confess their national sin as the nation is regenerated and saved (Lev. 26:40-42; Jer. 3:11-18; Hos. 5:15).

(2) Israel must plead for the Messiah to return.

(a) Zechariah 12:10 - note the textual note in the NIV. It should read "They will look to me...," not "on" me. The NIV study Bible comments "the emphasis seems to be looking "to" the Messiah in faith."

(b) Matthew 23:37-39 - Jesus said they would not see Him again until they said, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." That was a specific Messianic greeting (see Ps. 118:22-26) which the crowds at the triumphal entry had used and which the leadership of Israel tried to stop. It will mean their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

(c) Hosea 5:15-6:3 - note that God says, "I will go back to my place [Jesus did this by going back to Heaven at the ascension] until they admit their guilt." Then they will call on Him and He will "appear" (v. 3).

So Israel must confess her national sin of rejecting the Messiah and plead for Him to return. Then Satan will be doomed. Destroying Israel is therefore the number one item on Satan's agenda, and is the dark force behind anti-Semitism.

CONCLUSION

As the darkness spreads across the globe, and nations move into the divinely prefigured order, Satan will increase his attacks on the Jews. But God has bet His very character and the destiny of the universe on their survival.

In the meantime, the enjoyment of the greatest of the Abrahamic blessings depends on each individual in this age. Both Jew and Gentile must come to God through faith in His Son, Jesus the Messiah. Have you received Him?

We who know Him personally have the privilege of enjoying our spiritual possessions by loving obedience to Him. Are you missing His blessing because of disobedience? The old hymn is still true,

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."