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We Should
Always Remind
Ourselves . . .
Gary's Letter
to Readers

Angels & Cherubs:
Their Ancient History
and Prophetic Future
by Gary Stearman

Ask Gary
Stearman
Answers to
Reader
Questions

JERUSALEM IN THE COMING DAYS

by Randall Price

The City of God
by Dr. Larry Ollison

Spiritual
Warfare
in the
End Times
by Todd Hampson



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JERUSALEM IN THE COMING DAYS

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." — Isaiah 2:2



— by Dr. Randall Price —

Learn more about Randall's ministry and archaeological work by visiting: www.worldofthebible.com

The current focus is on the Coronavirus pandemic. Many rightly recognize that such a plague and the global control that comes with its management fits the pattern of events predicted for the beginning of the Tribulation (Rev. 6:8). Nevertheless, as unparalleled as the present situation may be, many other necessary signs of the end in Revelation 6:1-17 have not yet appeared and cannot until after the Rapture of the Church. However, Jerusalem, the place where the end time events will find fulfillment is already present and should for prophecy watchers be a more significant focus. When President Trump recognized the historic role of the city as Jerusalem's capital and moved the U.S. Embassy

there, attacks increased on his presidency, including the Coronavirus pandemic. To my mind, the evil one saw this act as devastating to his plan to weaken international support for Israel and the Jewish people and has since been working to diminish the United States as a western defense for Jerusalem.

The Central Importance of Jerusalem

But why Jerusalem? By global standards it is a meager city within a minor nation whose own future is in doubt. By biblical standards, no other place in the world in all of history has had the praise given to Jerusalem. The psalmist declared: "Glorious

things are spoken of you, O city of God" (Ps. 87:3). And that divine definition of Jerusalem as the "city of God" is what separates it from all others and makes its coming days the most glorious on earth. When we consider Jerusalem's place in prophecy, one of the most obvious facts of the prophetic record is that no matter where we start or end, Jerusalem is there. Take Jerusalem out of the Bible, and it will immediately become apparent that something major is missing. Under one name or another, Jerusalem appears in about two-thirds of the books of the Old Testament and almost one-half of the books of the New Testament. It is mentioned in 660 verses in the Old Testament and 142 in the New Testament and of these, 465 in the Old Testament and 24 in the New are prophetic predictions about the city subsequent to the time of their utterances. Jerusalem is particularly at the heart of redemptive history. In fact, we could say that God's redemptive plan could not have been revealed apart from this place. Jerusalem was indispensable to the preparation of Christ's first coming (Lk. 13:33) and it will also be crucial to His second coming as He returns to the Mount of Olives on the east of the city to conclude the campaigns of Armageddon and to begin His millennial reign (Zech. 14:4, 9), making Jerusalem the spiritual capital of the world.

The Prophetic Importance of Jerusalem

In the Bible, Jerusalem occupies a strategic position with respect to two major prophetic periods: "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) and "the seventy weeks of Daniel" (Daniel 9:24-27). In the case of "the times of the Gentiles" the city prophetically marks the beginning and ending of this period, which stretches from the Babylonian destruction (586 B.C.) to Christ's second advent. As for Daniel's "seventy weeks" prophecy, Jerusalem marks both the beginning and ending of this period as well as occupying the time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week (the time of the Church Age, and after the Rapture, the interim before the Tribulation).

Jerusalem's Preparation for the Future

Those who study the messianic prophecies in Scripture and the conditions leading to their fulfillment are aware that the world was prepared in various ways for the first coming of Christ. The New Testament affirms this saying "When the *fulness of time came*, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law" (Gal. 4:4). The term "fulness of time" (Gk. *plerōma*) indicates that the coming of Christ was fixed in the purpose of God and therefore the proper time for Messiah's incarnation that had been prepared in advance. A number of historical factors worked

together in a unique way to make this the right time to send the Savior. It was a time of a moral and spiritual vacuum in the Roman Empire under which the Jewish nation suffered occupation and persecution, creating a messianic expectation within Israel. It also was the time when a pseudo-peace (the Roman *Pax Romana*), a universal language (Greek) and a system of global transportation (Roman roads), made possible gospel outreach to the world.

In like manner, God is at work behind the scenes today, utilizing various political, economic, and religious factors to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ. Just as Galatians 4:4 declared the God-ordained timing of Christ's first coming, so 1 Timothy 6:14 uses similar language to announce a divine preparation for the second coming: "the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at *the proper time*" (Gk. *kairois idiois*).

It is interesting that the world of the end time that will see the second coming of Christ will have conditions that parallel those of the first century for the first coming of Christ. This future time will again see a unique focus on the city of Jerusalem. Looking at these conditions in more detail we find:

① **A moral and spiritual vacuum** of competing religions that offer little value. Today, Eastern religions have swept into Western society, and New Age thinking, and the mind sciences have infiltrated mainline Christian denominations. Higher criticism has attacked the credibility of the Bible and postmodernism has led to a rejection of objective truth. Add to this the fear of being politically incorrect or of persecution by the government or other religions (such as Islam) and we have the present condition of growing apostasy in the West and in the Church worldwide. These factors have especially affected Jerusalem where secularism alongside a religious Judaism adds to both confusion and conflict within the city. Since the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem, Islam has increased its exclusive demands for the Temple Mount and its presence in the eastern part of the city through the combined economic contributions of the Turks, Iranians and the Saudis.

② **The Jewish people face unparalleled spiritual and political persecution.** Today, anti-Semitism is increasing worldwide and its main target is the Land of Israel, the only refuge for the Jewish people on earth. In particular, the nations that border Israel have called for its destruction and have been actively seeking alliances (such as that of Russia, Turkey and Iran) in order to one day invade the country and put an end to the modern state. These actions presage the event of the coming invasion of Israel, with a focus on Jerusalem, predicted by the Prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 38-39).

3 ***A new universal “language”*** of the internet has united the world via satellite digital technologies making possible global communication – and control as Artificial Intelligence now governs most households in the U.S. through smart devices. One can see the Western Wall plaza at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem 24 hours a day via Visual Jerusalem’s Kotel Kam, a video camera, positioned directly opposite the wall in the Jewish Quarter. When the Antichrist assumes control and requires his mark to function in his society (Revelation 13:17), such technology will make it possible for everyone bearing the mark to be surveilled as well as allowing the world to witness live the execution and resuscitation of the two witnesses in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:7-12).

4 ***Global transportation*** has made possible the many waves of Jewish immigration to Israel, including a large population of Ethiopian Jewry as well as many other alleged “lost tribes” from various parts of the world. This will continue into the Tribulation as Jews flee persecution in the nations to take refuge in Israel. It will make possible the worldwide witness of the 144,000 Jewish believers to their fellow Jews and to Gentiles (Rev. 7:1-8), but also the assembling of the armies of the world at Megiddo (Rev. 16:14-16) for the final battle against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:2-3; 14:2-3). Therefore, the means *now exist* to fulfill the prophetic Jewish return and military scenario of the last days.

5 ***A global pseudo-peace*** is the goal of national leaders, being “pseudo” because the agenda is “peace” after their exclusive ideology has gained dominion. The Tribulation begins with real peace being removed with the advent of the Antichrist (Rev. 6:4) and his pseudo-peace as a result of his conquests spreading his deception worldwide (Rev. 12:9; 13:8,14). Jerusalem, known as the city of peace (Heb. *shalom*), will become the focus of pseudo-peace as the Antichrist establishes the city as his military (Dan. 8:9) and religious (Rev. 11:2, 8; 13:15) headquarters.

6 ***Jewish people have a fervent messianic expectation.*** While only 21% of the total Jewish population is religious, those who are, especially in Jerusalem, have expressed a new urgency for the Messiah to come and restore their Land and people and the world according to the biblical prophecies. These messianic revivals within Orthodox (and ultraorthodox) Judaism have been provoked in response to crises such as modern anti-Semitism, the Gulf War, threats to Israel and the general lack of spirituality in the world. This messianism is today promoted through poster, banners, books, music and websites that announce, “King Messiah

is coming, prepare for the coming of King Messiah!” Yet, because the messiah they await is not Yeshua (Jesus), this misplaced longing will pave the way for the deception propagated by the false prophet of the Antichrist who will counterfeit the works of the true Messiah and seek to deceive the Jewish people and the world through great signs and miracles (Rev. 13:12-15; cf. Matt. 24:23-26). As military efforts to annihilate the Jewish people begin at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-22; Rev. 12) and increase to its end (Zechariah 14:1-2), Jews will realize that their faith in a false messiah has failed them and through the witness of the 144,000 and the Two Witnesses a Jewish Remnant will identify Jesus as their Messiah, repent and call for Him to come (Zech. 12:10-13; Matt. 24:30; Rom. 11:26-27; Rev. 1:7).

Jerusalem’s Prophetic Program at Work

Is the Jewish return to Israel and Jerusalem today simply to be dismissed as a historical accident or as a socio-political consequence of the Holocaust with no scriptural significance? Replacement theologians think so. They attempt to find the promises of Israel and Jerusalem’s restoration under the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-33) fulfilled in the Church as the new Israel and spiritual Jerusalem. They claim that Satan is bound, the kingdom is now, and the Church is triumphant in the world. However, how can one believe that the period of the darkest exile of the Jewish people, which began in A.D. 70 and continues until today, fulfills their promise of a glorious messianic era!? Rather, for two millennia, biblical students who adopted a consistent historical, literal, grammatical interpretation of the Scriptures expected a physical return to take place with the Jewish people in their own Land. While the final end time regathering and spiritual restoration of the Nation (Isa. 11:10-12; Matt. 24:30-31) has not yet taken place, the prophets depicted this modern return taking place when an unbelieving Jewish remnant was resident in Jerusalem and observing Jewish laws (Zech. 12:10-14:4; Matt. 24:15-20,29-31).

However, God has not forgotten His people nor His Holy City, Jerusalem. He constituted the Jewish people to be a “kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19:6) to bring sanctity to a fallen world. How can this purpose be realized if the Jewish nation does not possess the Holy City and the Temple Mount where this kingdom of priests is to function? Indeed, the very road to restored Zion is called “the Highway of Holiness” (Isa. 35:8) and Mount Zion, “My holy mountain” (Joel 3:17). To this end Jewish prayers in both home and synagogue have daily entreated God

for the restoration of Jerusalem. The *Musaf*, a service that follows the Sabbath day liturgy, petitions the Almighty for renewed worship in a restored Zion. The 13 benedictions of the *Amidah*, recited daily, include a request to “rebuild the Temple speedily in our day,” and a Sabbath benediction prays, “Have pity on Zion, which is the home of our life....”

A proper perspective of current events indicates that we are living in exciting times and our “salvation [glorification at the Rapture] is nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11). Jerusalem is the stage for the final drama and what happens there is the signal event in our day of the nearness of that Blessed Hope (Tit. 2:13). Those who expect a literal fulfillment of the promises to be performed in Jerusalem realize that the conditions now exist for these prophecies to be fulfilled in the future. As we look at the prophetic literature as it relates to the world coming against Jerusalem, we today can see how that can really happen. It is no longer farfetched, it is no longer “Well, one day all these things will come to pass.” We can see exactly how it could be in our land and in our time.

Beyond today, is the promise of tomorrow, and a place with the name “Jerusalem” is the predicted destination for all of God’s people, both in the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal State. What is specifically promised is that the earthly Jerusalem will be the capital of the world during the time of Christ’s reign on earth (Isa. 2:2-4/Mic. 4:1-5; Zech. 14:3, 9-11, 16-21) and the heavenly New Jerusalem will be the abode of resurrected believers from the beginning of history through the Tribulation and thereafter will be resident on a new earth forever (Rev. 21:1-22:5). Today the Temple Mount is the most volatile acreage on earth, but in the coming Kingdom the Temple will be rebuilt (Ezek. 37:26-28; 40-48), Christ will be enthroned there (1 Chr. 17:14), the redeemed nations will stream to it for worship alongside regenerate Israel (Isa. 2:2-3) and the Word of the LORD will go forth from Jerusalem to cover the world with the knowledge of God (Isa. 2:3; 11:9-12; Hab. 2:14). Today, Jerusalem remains trodden down by the Gentiles as the times of the Gentiles are still in effect (Lk. 21:24). This is most evident as the Old City of Jerusalem (the Jerusalem of the Bible) and especially its Temple Mount, where despite the legal reality of Israeli sovereignty, the Arab (Gentile) authorities exercise practical control. But in the coming age Christ will be King over all the earth reigning from Jerusalem (Psa. 2:6-8) and the Gentile nations who throughout history despised and held dominion over the Jewish people (Isa. 60:14-16) will come to Jerusalem to honor them by acknowledging their

blessing (Zech. 9:9-10), giving them tribute (Isa. 60:3-9) and assisting in their kingdom tasks, such as rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple (Isa. 60:10-14). In light of Jerusalem’s coming days of gloom and glory, those who are watchmen have specific tasks that they are to perform with respect to Jerusalem today.

Watchmen are to Perceive Jerusalem’s Situation

The Bible commands that believer’s perceive and act upon an understanding of Jerusalem’s prophetic future: “arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come... . For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory” (Ps. 102:13,16). Despite the fact that the background of our Bible is the Land of Israel, we usually will hear more about what is happening in Israel on the news than in church. The reason for this, I suspect, is that pastors in general are more focused on the Israel of the past than that of the present or future. By contrast, the world outside the church has an intense interest in Israel today and its plans for tomorrow. Books such as mine were written to provide this much needed prophetic information. To understand God’s control over this city is to gain assurance of His control over our lives as believers: “Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds His people from this time forth and forever” (Ps. 125:1-2). God’s control over Jerusalem will one day be “on earth as it is in heaven,” for He is coming to reign the world from this city. If pastors throughout this land were to read this book and just apply the call for action in its last chapter might we see the Church reclaim its passion for prophecy and renew its support for Israel?

Watchmen are to Provoke Jerusalem’s Senses

Not only are we to perceive Jerusalem’s situation, we are also to provoke Jerusalem’s senses. In Romans 11:13-14 Paul wrote, “I am speaking to you who are Gentiles ... I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might *move to jealousy* my fellow countrymen and save some of them.” Based on this passage, Gentile Christians have an obligation to show their faith in such a way as to cause Jewish unbelievers to want what they have. We can get involved by educating ourselves about Israel and the Jewish people—what they believe (and their perspective of Christians) and why; getting to



Jerusalem's familiar Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock—be assured that God's prophetic program will transform everything to align with His holy purposes in the Latter Days.

know Jewish people on friendly terms (without a conversion agenda); seeking to show our gratitude for their having given us our Bible, our heritage, and our Messiah; and simply living out our own faith in a biblically appropriate and appealing manner.

Watchmen are to Pray for Jerusalem's Security

There's an Old Testament account that clearly demonstrates to us the great power of prayer. This prayer was lifted up to God by King Hezekiah when the defeat of Jerusalem was imminent, and deliverance seemed impossible. The prayer itself is recorded in 2 Kings 19:15-19 and is a model prayer for intercession. Observe that when Hezekiah finished praying God said, *"Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard you"* (2 Kgs 19:20). Jerusalem didn't have a prayer against the Assyrians, but King Hezekiah knew that prayer was their only hope. The result was one of the greatest and most miraculous deliverances in all of history. David, Jerusalem's most celebrated king, charged his people, *"Pray for*

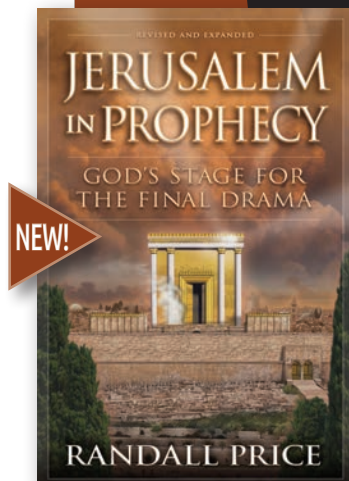
the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you. May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces" (Ps. 122:6-7). David's says this prayer is specifically for those within the walls and palaces of Jerusalem (vs. 7), that is, Jerusalem's leadership of that day, today and tomorrow who make decisions about the city's future.

The coming days of Jerusalem are coming soon! And until that day, our responsibility is clear: *"You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come ... For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in His glory"* (Psalm 102:13,16). The LORD is coming in glory, but even now He is at work rebuilding Zion. The return of the Jewish People to the Land, the rebirth of the Jewish State, the reunification of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, plans to rebuild the Temple, and the threats of the nations to invade the city all remind us that God's prophetic program is marching on. As we join in the hope of this future fulfillment, we are able to join in the declaration "Jerusalem is ours!" It is ours in prophecy, it is ours in prayer. As those who want to be ready for God's reign, let us be faithful to favor it—our hope on earth and our home in heaven. **PW**

BOOK

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