

THE



HARVESTER

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

November 1986

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[Editor's Note: The writings which appear in this article was first published as two parts in SEEDS OF PROMISE, September 1980 & October 1980. The remaining part of this article, which has yet to appear in print, will be presented in next month's issue.]

MIDDLE EAST SIGNPOSTS

It would be most unlikely that even in remote areas, one alert to the world around him would not be aware of the Middle East conflict. But the significance of this conflict is not nearly so well known. The Jewish-Arab differences date to almost 4,000 years in the past, and the present situation is only the most recent of numerous clashes between these two peoples.

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These present differences result from events linked to predictions of Paul in Romans 11:11-25 and Jesus in Luke 21:20-24.

In Romans 11 Paul paints in words the pictures of a good olive tree. He explains that a branch is broken off of this olive tree and in its stead a branch from a wild olive tree is grafted-in. The first branch is identified as the Jews and the wild olive branch represents the Gentiles. In verse 11 Paul explains of the Jews that *"through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles."* This refers to the Jews rejecting Jesus as the Messiah and God extending His grace to the Gentiles. As a consequence, history records that the Christian church has been predominately Gentile in all but its early years. It appears that Paul was able to see in the distant future a possible end of the Gentile-controlled western dominance, however, for in verse 25 he wrote, *"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."* Note that a "fullness" was to be experienced by the Gentiles.

Jesus spoke in Luke 21 of the destruction of Jerusalem, an event which occurred at 70 A.D. He issued advice concerning the impending destruction of that beloved city and predicted in verse 24, *"They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations."* From that time in 70 A.D. until this present age, the Jews have been wanderers among the nations of the world. They have had no land to call their own and have been a scattered people. In the latter part of verse 24, Jesus foretold the climax of this situation when He said, *"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

Related to the fulfillment of these prophecies of Paul and Jesus are the events taking place today in the Middle East. When the present nation of Israel was established by the United Nations in 1948, the Jews for the first time since 70 A.D. were identified with a land of their own. Then nineteen years later, in 1967, Jerusalem for the first time since 70 A.D. came under the control of the Jewish people.

The present Middle East situation may be likened in some respects to the Israelites' bondage in Egypt over 3,500 years ago. Abraham had been told by God in Genesis 15:13-16, "*Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*" Abraham was thus informed that the land of promise was not yet subject to inheritance. The Amorites were to become an abominable people and their land given to the children of Israel. But this should occur 400 years later, for God said, "*The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*" God does not destroy righteous people, but when people cease to be righteous, when they turn away from God, then they become subject to His just wrath. This happened to the Amorites and seems to vividly portray what is happening among us who compose the Western culture.

GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE; THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN; AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

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Following Jerusalem's destruction by the Roman armies in 70 A.D. and the subsequent Gentile domination of almost 19 centuries, the Jews became a scattered people without a common homeland. Among the Gentile controlled Western nations in the meantime, forward strides were being made in discovery and in exploration. In all history no people have enjoyed the luxury, the convenience, and the prosperity which has been ours in recent years. The fields of science, medicine, industry, and agriculture have experienced accomplishments almost beyond the expectation of a century or so ago. Social benefits and public services in our nation today provide encouraging opportunity. We have lived with freedom and enjoyed abundance.

But rather than express our thankfulness by living godly lives, it appears that we have chosen instead to turn our attention to immorality. We have allowed our values to become cheap and have drastically lowered our standards. This is evident at every turn. Our speech has become corrupt. It is filled with filthy words, which are a product of filthy minds. Reading material and television, as well as other means of communication, are often suggestive and designed to appeal to those of base standards. We observe the increasing breakdown of the home, which through the ages has been the basis of a balanced society. When the family falls apart, the nation composed of such families cannot expect to stand. There is

disrespect and rebellion among the young. Corruption in government has become an expected thing, rather than the unusual. Our nation has not been the victor in either of our last two wars, both fought against weaker Eastern nations.

It appears that we have now reached our fulness and have begun to sour. Both Paul and Jesus spoke of the fulness of the times of the Gentiles. A diligent student of the Bible and one who is observant of world conditions can surely see the corrupt tendency present in our nation and in the nations of our Western world. God did not destroy the Amorites and allow the children of Israel to possess their land until their iniquity had become full. It is high time for us to wonder how long will God wait, how much time do we yet have before our iniquities become so full, that we forfeit God's favor and become subject to His just wrath. It is high time that we shake ourselves awake, that we repent of our evil ways, and return to the God from whom all blessings flow. Or will we, as the Amorites did, continue in our iniquities until our blessings are removed?

The founding of the present nation of Israel in 1948 and the domination of Jerusalem by the Jews in 1967 appear as signposts serving God by the way of pointing out to Western man that he has reached his peak and how dangerously far he has gone down the road of time. How good it would be if our people could recognize these signs, become aware of our plight, and change our course.

Our comments will be continued and expanded, if the Lord will, in the next issue.

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FROM THE SCRIPTURES

BETTER IS...

Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. (Prov. 15:16)

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. (Prov. 15:17)

Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right. (Prov. 16:8)

Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. (Prov. 16:19)

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife. (Prov. 17:1)

Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. (Prov. 19:1)

Better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen. (Prov. 25:7)

Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. (Prov. 28:6)

Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit. (Eccl. 4:6)

Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. (Eccl. 4:13)

Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. (Eccl. 5:5)

Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit. (Eccl. 6:9)

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. (Eccl. 7:8)

AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS

(A Series to Promote Church Attendance)

This month our text comes from Zechariah 14:16-19. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

It is true that we no longer live under the Old Law nor are we obligated to "keep the feast of tabernacles". But we are familiar with the fact that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4) and "all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). Perhaps we ought to heed the warning in Zechariah and consider how God will treat those who refuse to attend the church services today.

More than likely God will not smite us nor send a plague upon us immediately. However, we will face our deeds in the day of Judgment (2 Cor. 5:10). That is the time when our Lord will deal with us for purposely missing services we could have otherwise attended. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall

be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13:41-42) What better way to offend God than to avoid worshipping Him at His own house!

Are we like that "family of Egypt" who refuse to go to church from day to day to worship the "King, the Lord of hosts"? If God dealt harshly with the nations then, how much worse will it be for us in the Day of Judgment? "But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matt. 11:24) Please consider this matter seriously, that we may not do "as the manner of some is".

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Nov. 7-9	Godby Road Church Atlanta, GA	Bill Prince Jr. (Oxford, AL)
Nov. 16-23 (Su-Sa)	2101 N. 31st Street Phoenix, AZ	Jack Nance (Winston-Salem, NC)

Have you already planned your Gospel meetings for next year? If so, why not advertise it early through this paper for free? Just send in the appropriate information at least 1½ months in advance. This is due to the paper being printed at that scheduled time.

 * Real friends are those who, when you've made *
 * a fool of yourself, don't feel that you've *
 * done a permanent job. *
