

~ Jerusalem, a Cup of Reeling ~

We see religious leaders getting into politics in an unprecedented manner. This, we believe, is a mistake. Christ's Kingdom is not a mixture of world governments sprinkled with religious men. We know the nations of earth all must fall and be broken. God's faithful people are not involved with the kingdoms of this world. The promise to all the faithful is, "He who overcomes and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father." (Revelation 2: 26, 27) The faithful people of God have never needed to become involved with the world's politics, for they neither have the power or wisdom to deal with all world problems now. When the Kingdom of God is established, these together with their Lord, shall dash the nations to pieces as a potter's vessel and the earth shall be under the iron rule of Christ. They will follow the Kingdom of blessing.

With intense interest we have all watched the Middle East. Somehow, the idea is being circulated that Israel was born by driving out millions of people from their land much as the settlers did to the native Indians. Few realize the miracle associated with the rebirth of Israel – that Jerusalem and its environs were kept a sleeping community for all the centuries. In our Lord's time, the population of Jerusalem was estimated to be 25,000 to 30,000. *McClintock and Strong*, in a volume printed in 1890, gave the estimated population as being 12,000 to 30,000. The more probable figure according to tax estimates was 11,500 of which 4,500 were Mohammedans; 3,000 were Jews; and 3,500 were Christians. The population of Jerusalem and the Palestine area remained small and constant. In 1099 A.D., the Crusaders took the city and held it for about 88 years, and only then did the population increase because many churches were built in that time.

The Berlin Congress of Nations, in 1878, gave the Jews the right to buy land in Palestine. The population then was a mixture of Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans. The barren land could not

hold great populations, but we think that God purposely kept the region with a very small population to make it easy to bring His people back to their own land without displacing others. It is God's attention to every detail that makes us have confidence in His great plan of the ages. Peloubet estimated the Jewish population of Jerusalem in 1892 as 25,322, increasing Jewish population to 50%. It was only as returned Jews created jobs in Palestine that the nomad Arabs settled there in considerable numbers.

What about the Palestinians who are exiled and living in camps? First, let us note they were not driven out by the Jews. They left Israel when the Arab leaders asked them to, promising to drive the Jews into the sea in 1948. The thought was to clear the land of Arabs so that the Jews could be slaughtered easily. After the war, they were promised to be returned. The Israeli army was victorious and these poor people found themselves betrayed by the Arabs.

Could not the Arabs have, with oil "billions", easily afforded PLO people homes and lands? In fact, the Jews left sizeable land holdings in Arab lands, especially in Yemen; but the Arabs would not give these poor souls so much as a foot of this land. They did not want to help these dispossessed Palestinians. They kept them in camps to show the world how cruel Israel was. They were pawns in Arab diplomacy. If the Arabs assimilated them, they would have no claim whatever to the land of Palestine. Whatever the cost in human despair, the Arabs kept them in camps and fed them on hatred.

Will the nations try to take Jerusalem away from its rightful possessor, Israel? "Lo, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the peoples round about..." (Zechariah 12: 2, 3) Jerusalem is the Lord's, the city of the great King; and Israel is the proper custodian.

Is Israel going to have more land, possibly annexing Lebanon? What do you think of Zechariah 10: 10? "I will bring them home from the land of Egypt...and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon, till there is no room for them." Here, Lebanon is portrayed as being filled with returned Jews. ♦

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