

Is the Bible a message from a God I can't see?

— Accurate long-term predictions (part 3)

The Jews

At the start of part 2, we looked at what we know about the Jews:

- Disliked by many
- Found in most countries
- Persecuted in the Holocaust
- At the centre of Middle East tensions
- Seem to be different from other people
- Often in the news
- Often found in positions of influence



Jews at the Western Wall in Jerusalem

We now continue our review of how this was predicted in the Bible.

1. Hatred and persecution of the Jews

There are many clear predictions that their constant rebellion against God would also result in terrible persecution for the Jews:

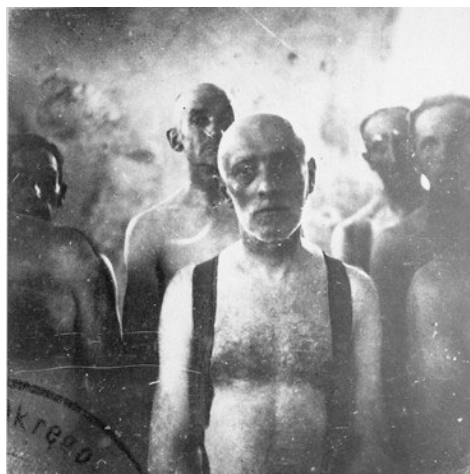
But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments... I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you... And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

Leviticus 26 v 14, 17 and 25

Martin Gilbert in the preface to the *Atlas of Jewish History* says:

... I was surprised, depressed, and to some extent overwhelmed by the perpetual and irrational violence which pursued the Jews in every century and to almost every corner of the globe. If therefore, persecution, expulsion, torture, humiliation and mass murder haunt these pages, it is because they also haunt the Jewish story.

The picture below shows Jews being taken to Oswiecim Concentration Camp in Poland in 1943. This persecution by Adolf Hitler in the Second World War was typical of the persecution that the Jews have endured down the ages.



This picture shows a group of Jewish men waiting to be killed in a gas van at the Chelmno death camp.

And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

Deuteronomy 28 v 65 to 67

The story of the Holocaust that these words predict is, without exception, the most terrible and horrific story in human history.

Anti-Semitism still continues today. The *Jewish Virtual Library* website has a section called “Anti-Semitic Trends Throughout the World”, which reports incidents round the world each year. It contains a recent report, “Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism”, presented to the United States Congress. The “Overview” on page 3 of the report has the following comments:

Over the last decade, U.S. embassies and consulates have reported an upsurge in anti-Semitism.

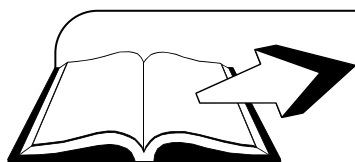
In June 2007, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe issued Resolution 1563, which notes ‘...anti-Semitism is today on the rise in Europe. It appears in a variety of forms and is becoming relatively commonplace’.

In the United Kingdom, an All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism launched an investigation into anti-Semitism. The Inquiry produced a September 2006 report, which states, ‘It is clear that violence, desecration of property, and intimidation directed towards Jews is on the rise.’

The Bible also predicts:

And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the Lord will drive you. *Deuteronomy 28 v 37*

The word “Jew” came into popular use in North America in the 1840s. “To Jew” means “to use questionable business practices”.



**Accurate Clear
Predictions**

- The Jews were to be hated and persecuted wherever they settled
- They were to become a proverb

2. The Jew – Arab conflict

We are all aware of the tension that exists between the Jews and the Arabs. It dominates world politics.

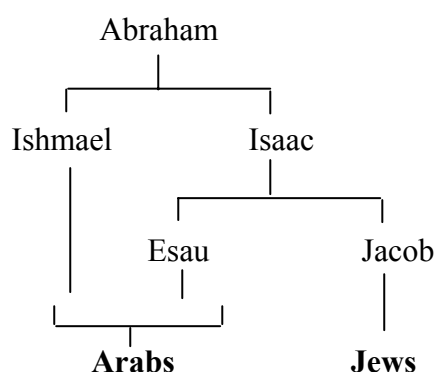
The problem centres on the Middle East, where much of the world's oil is to be found. This means that all the world takes sides in this situation.

The terrorist problem has its roots in this conflict.

Both Jews and Arabs claim a right to the same land. The Jews currently occupy the land in the form of the nation of Israel. The Arabs want a Palestinian state on the same land.

The tension between Arabs and Jews

Both Jews and Arabs correctly claim the man Abraham as their ancient ancestor. Both claim that they should have the land promised to Abraham. The Bible shows us how these tensions started 4,000 years ago.



As the family tree on the left shows, Abraham had two sons called Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac also had two sons, Esau and Jacob.

Some of the Arab nations are descended from Ishmael and Esau.

The Jews are descended from Jacob.

So we can see the possible tensions when two groups of people believe they have a right to the same piece of land. Thousands of years ago, the Bible predicted that this tension would develop into hatred and cause the international problems that we see today.

As we look at these predictions, we must be careful to keep our own political views out of these considerations. The Bible criticises the actions of both Arabs and Jews. We are looking at the fulfilments of the predictions, not the rights and wrongs of the people or the politics involved.



© iStockphoto.com / Ben Thomas

An angry political protester raising a fist in the air in a New York march. A “Justice for Palestine” sign can be seen in the background.

Before Ishmael was born, his mother was told:

You shall name him Ishmael ... his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.

Genesis 16 v 11 and 12

4,000 years ago, problems were predicted among Abraham's children. There are many verses in the Bible which talk of the hatred that the descendants of Ishmael and Esau would have for the Jews, who are Jacob's descendants.



The prophet Ezekiel makes a prediction against "Mount Seir", which is the area where some of Esau's descendants settled:

... set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, '... you shall be desolate. Then you shall know that I am the LORD. Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword ...'

Ezekiel 35 v 2, 4 and 5

The Bible predicted the tension between Arabs and Jews

This is another prediction of the hatred of the Arabs for the Jews.

One of the most amazing comments about this hostility is in Psalm 83. The writer of the Psalm is pleading for help because the Jews are surrounded by enemies:

*They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,
And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.
They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation,
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.'*

Psalm 83 v 3 and 4

The Psalm goes on to list these enemies, which include most of the nations which surround Israel. It would be difficult to give a more accurate prediction of the current situation – the nation of Israel surrounded by enemies that would like to see Israel removed from the map. Have look at the "Further Information" section at the end of this session (page 56) for more details of this remarkable statement.

The destruction of Israel is central to the aims of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement. In recent elections for the new Palestinian parliament, it claimed 76 of the 132 seats, giving it a majority in the Palestinian Authority.

The Covenant (or Charter) of Hamas was published in 1988. The preface to the charter quotes Imam Hassan al-Banna, who said:

Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.

Article 13 of the Charter says:

There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours.

On April 1, 2006, Hamas Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar said:

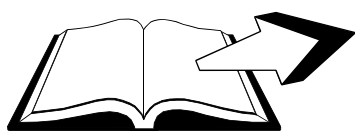
I dream of hanging a huge map of the world on the wall at my Gaza home which does not show Israel on it.

The president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, expressed the same sentiments in October 2005 at a conference in Tehran on the subject, “The World without Zionism”. Quoting one of Iran’s past leaders, he said:

Israel must be wiped off the map.

While Iran is not, strictly speaking, an Arab country, it does have a significant Arab population and has strong ties with Arab countries.

It is clear that the Palestinian Authority as well as Iran wants the nation of Israel destroyed – part of the ongoing fulfilment of predictions made thousands of years ago.



**Accurate Clear
Predictions**

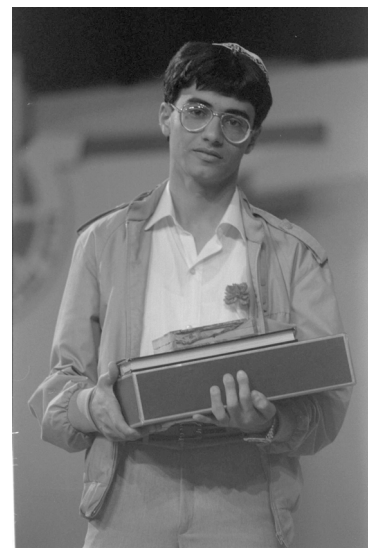
- There would be tensions between Arabs and Jews
- The nations surrounding Israel would want Israel destroyed

3. Survival of the Jews away from their homeland

Despite hundreds of years without a homeland, suffering dreadful persecution, the Jews are still a distinct nation.

Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.
Leviticus 26 v 44

This is a clear promise that, despite their persecutions, the Jews would not be destroyed.



A Jewish student



A Jewish family
celebrates the feast of Passover

'For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you.'
Jeremiah 30 v 11

'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant,' says the LORD, 'for I am with you; for I will make a complete end of all the nations to which I have driven you, but I will not make a complete end of you.'
Jeremiah 46 v 28

The Jews are here promised that the nation will outlive all its persecutors.

Their history shows how the promise has been kept. It was world-famous writer Mark Twain who observed, "The Jew has stood at the graveside of all his persecutors".

Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant'.
Jeremiah 33 v 25 and 26

This passage compares the certainty of day following night with the certainty of the Jewish race continuing.



A group of Jewish school children

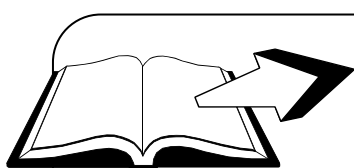
The prophet Hosea adds another prediction about the Jews:

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince.
Hosea 3 v 4

For many centuries until 1948 the Jews had no central authority of any kind.

The God of the Bible makes the bold statement that we shall know He exists if the Jews continue to exist:

For I am the LORD, I do not change;
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.
Malachi 3 v 6



**Accurate Clear
Predictions**

- Despite their persecution and lack of a homeland, the Jews would survive as an identifiable people
- They would outlive their persecutors
- They would survive a long time with no central authority

4. Return of the Jews to their old homeland

In 1948, the nation of Israel was re-formed. This was the first time the Jews had a national homeland since AD 135.



The ship “Exodus” loaded with Jews in 1947 - one of the many boats that brought Jews back to their old homeland

Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land.’

Ezekiel 37 v 21

Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet ...

I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.’

Ezekiel 11 v 16 and 17



The climax of the return of the Jews to Palestine was the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948

Martin Gilbert’s *Atlas of Jewish History* shows that between 1652 and 1946 at least twenty other places round the world were considered beside Israel as possible Jewish homelands. But the Bible’s predictions were correct despite men having other ideas!

And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.

Ezekiel 34 v 13



The Knesset – The government building of the modern nation of Israel



The modern city of Jerusalem

And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 21 v 24

From AD 70 to 1967, Jerusalem was ruled by non-Jews (Gentiles).

But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. Ezekiel 36 v 8 to 10



The picture above shows a farm in the Huleh valley in 1984. This contrasts sharply with the pictures at the top of page 76 which show the Huleh swamp in 1940.



The left-hand picture shows an aerial view of the beachfront hotels at Tel-Aviv. This shows that the cities have indeed been “inhabited”, as Ezekiel predicted.

5. Jerusalem would become an international problem

Two verses in the prophecy of Zechariah clearly talk about this:

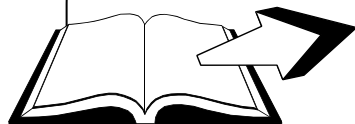
And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.
Zechariah 12 v 3

For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. Zechariah 14 v 2



Jerusalem – centre of Middle East tension

These two verses very clearly predict that Jerusalem would become the focus of world problems. We can see that situation developing now.



Accurate Clear Predictions

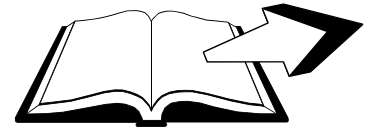
- The Jews would be regathered from the nations where they had been scattered
- They would return to their ancient homeland
- The desolate land would become fruitful
- Cities would be built
- Jerusalem would once again be ruled by Jews
- Jerusalem would become an international problem

How do we foretell the future?

We can see how remarkable these prophecies are when we look at *our* attempts to foretell the future. Weather forecasters, market researchers and sales forecasters all do their job by comparing the present situation with similar situations in the past. They do their best, but sometimes their forecasts are wrong. So if we as humans try to foretell the future, we must rely on similar circumstances in the past. Even then we can still only guess at what will happen in the future. But, as we have seen, the Bible makes totally accurate long-term predictions.

In Old Testament times, if we had attempted to predict the future of a people like the Jews, we would have looked at other nations around at the time. We could have based our predictions on nations like the Babylonians and Romans, who rose to the peak of their power and then declined and disappeared. We could have used the Egyptians or Chinese as our basis and forecast that they would rise to their peak, and, after some decline, continue for thousands of years. When the Bible predictions were made, there was no reason, based on past experience, to expect the Jewish nation to have the history it did. It was to rise to its peak, decline and disappear from its homeland for over 1,800 years, and then reappear again in its ancient homeland. Past experience of other peoples would have told us that *this never happens*.

Summary of accurate predictions (parts 1, 2 and 3)



**Accurate Clear
Predictions**

City /nation	Desolation/ doom predicted	Other predictions	Prediction correct?
		Four consecutive superpowers, each overthrowing the previous one	✓
		The fourth, the Roman superpower was not to be superseded by another	✓
		It would fragment and become the many weak and strong nations of Europe	✓
Thebes	Yes		✓
		Attack by a large force, population greatly reduced	✓
Memphis	Yes		✓
		City and all objects of worship to be destroyed	✓
Egypt	No		✓
		Superpower status to decline – would continue to exist being dominated by other powers	✓
The Jews	For limited time		✓
		The Jews were to be attacked by a powerful nation:	
		• much further away than previous attackers	✓
		• whose language was totally different from Hebrew	✓
		• who was swift as an eagle	✓
		• who would be merciless	✓
		Cities would be besieged and stormed	✓
		The Jews would eat their own children in the sieges	✓
		The cities in the land would be destroyed	✓
		All places of worship would be destroyed	✓
		Jews to be scattered round the world	✓
		They would be hated and persecuted	✓
		They would become a proverb	✓
		Despite a long time out of their homeland they would survive as an identifiable nation	✓
		They would outlive their persecutors	✓

City / nation	Desolation/ doom predicted	Other predictions	Prediction correct?
The Jews (continued)		They would survive a long time with no central authority Their land would be desolate while they were out of it They would eventually return to their homeland The land would then flourish again Surrounding nations would want the nation of Israel destroyed	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Jerusalem	For specific time	Would be out of Jewish hands for set time, then it would return to Jewish rule	✓
Edomites	Yes		✓
		Desolation caused by disappearance of passing traders	✓

Historians agree that the Old Testament was in existence by 200 BC. As nearly all of these predictions were fulfilled after that time, they could not have been made after the events.

It is clear that each prophecy was fulfilled a long time after the death of the particular prophet, so he could have had no influence in making the prediction come true. It is equally clear that those involved in fulfilling the predictions had no idea that they were doing so.

Questions to consider

1. How did Daniel know that there would be *three* superpowers following on from the Babylonian one – why not two or four? How did he know the fourth superpower would become divided?
2. What made the Bible prophets predict accurately such a unique history for the Jews?
3. What made the same prophets predict a totally different history for the surrounding nations? They were all subject to similar problems, so we would expect similar outcomes
4. How did the same prophets choose which cities and nations would be destroyed and which would remain?

The challenges to *you*

You are now invited to answer the challenges posed by this astonishing catalogue of accurate, correct predictions.

The *first* challenge is:

Are there any other similar accurate, clear predictions from any other source?

Remember, to be comparable, they must be:

- Clear and direct
- 100% accurate
- Written by people who had no influence to make them come true
- Fulfilled by people who were not aware they were doing so

The *second* challenge is:

The other “What’s so special about the Bible?” sections show other ways in which the Bible is unique:

- A consistent message, relevant to everyone, written by people from vastly different cultures and times
- A law thousands of years ahead of its time
- Support from archaeology

Finally, the *third* challenge is:

- *Find out what this accurate and reliable source of information has to say about your future*
- *If it is 100% correct about various superpowers, powerful nations and flourishing cities, you can trust its statements about your own life*

Our aim is to help *you* see the Bible message for *yourself* – not just accept what we or anyone else might say about it.

Further Information

More details of Psalm 83

Verses 6 to 8 of Psalm 83 list the people who are wanting the nation of Israel destroyed.

They are :

Edom	Ammon
Ishmaelites	Amalek
Moab	Philistia
Hagrites	Tyre
Gebal	Assyria

The areas where most of these nations lived are known and are shown opposite superimposed on a map of Israel's current borders. *The Times Atlas of the Bible* confirms all except the Ishmaelites and Hagrites.

It is clear that the Psalm is indicating Israel surrounded by hostile nations. This is exactly the situation we see today.

