

87. THE GATHERING OF ISRAEL

1. Because of disobedience, what experience came to Israel ?

"I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." Jer. 34: 17. See Jer. 25: 8-11.

2. What prophecy spoke of their return from captivity?

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. . . . And you shall seek Me, and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, says the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, says the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." Jer. 29: 11-14. See also Jer. 23: 3.

NOTE - The first dispersion of the Jews occurred 606-588 BC., under Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. In 457 BC. under Artaxerxes, the Persian king, large numbers of Jews returned to Palestine, their homeland.

3. How had Moses spoken of another and greater dispersion?

"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth. . . . And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trusted. . . . And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." Deut. 28: 49-64.

NOTE - This calamity and dispersion occurred in AD. 70, under Titus, the Roman general. Says the Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II, article "Jerusalem," page 932: "Jerusalem seems to have been raised to this greatness as if to enhance the misery of its overthrow. So soon as the Jews had set the seal to their formal rejection of Christ, by putting Him to death, and invoking the responsibility of His blood upon the heads of themselves and of their children (Matt. 27: 25), the city's doom went forth. Titus, a young, brave, and competent Roman general, with an army of sixty thousand trained, victorious warriors, appeared before the city in April. AD. 70, and the most disastrous siege of all history began." See pages 11, 12.

4. Under what striking symbol was all this foretold?

"Thus says the Lord, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle. . . . Then shall thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shall say unto them, Thus says the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." Jer. 19: 1-11.

NOTE - 'No city on the globe has suffered more from war and sieges than Jerusalem. . . . Storming legions, battering-rams, and catapults have razed it again and again. And yet, the general outline of the city has always been preserved. Zion and Mount Moriah remain in full view from Olivet, and there, on those hills, stretching away toward the west, city after city has come and gone in the passing ages.'" - Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II, article "Jerusalem," pages 928, 929.

5. How long was Jerusalem to be trodden down of the Gentiles?

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21: 24.

NOTE - Jerusalem stands for the people, the truth, and the true worship of God. It is first mentioned in the Bible as Salem (Gen. 14:18); is spoken of figuratively as a mother bringing forth the children of God (Gal. 4:26,27); and is a type of the holy city, New Jerusalem, which is to be the metropolis of the new earth.

6. What will terminate the "times" allotted to the Gentiles?

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24: 14.

7. Why was the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles?

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Acts 15: 14.

8. What false idea of this gathering were some to hold?

"And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem!" Micah 4: 2.

9. For what will the heathen be assembled in Palestine?

"Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat. . . . Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision [margin, concision, or threshing; i.e., war] : for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Joel 3: 12-14.

10. Under whose influence are the nations to be assembled?

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. 16: 13,14.

NOTE - Infatuated by the doctrine of the world's conversion and a temporal millennium of peace, prosperity, and good will among men, the deluded nations will aim to make Jerusalem the centre of a glorious kingdom, at which place they will doubtless expect Christ will come and take up His reign as their king. This was the favorite idea of the crusaders in the Dark Ages. But the crusaders were mistaken in their conception, and sorely disappointed. So also will the modern crusaders be mistaken and disappointed; for one object of Christ's second coming will be to "smite the nations" and to destroy these armies assembled. Rev. 19: 15.

11. Unto whom are God's people to be gathered?

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. 49:10.

12. How did Christ speak of the gathering of the Gentiles?

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd!" John 10:16.

13. What great gathering yet awaits God's people?

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people. . . . And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Isa. 11:11,12. "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:31.