**Harry S Truman, Israel, and the End of the World**

**May 13, 2018**

**Crossroads Community Church**

**Ezekiel 38:1 – 39:8**

Announce Ezekiel 38 - 39

Last and this week we observe at least *three* important dates :

* Mother’s Day
* May 8 (last Tuesday) 🡪 birthday of Harry S Truman
  + 33rd President
  + 1884 (134 yrs ago)
* tomorrow -- the 70th anniversary of Israel becoming a nation (May 14, 1948)

Today :

* a talk (Ezek 38-39)
* understand what God may be doing in our world :
  + If you want to understand the timetable of world events, and of the Lord’s return, keep your eye on Israel.
  + Israel is the barometer for the unfolding of God’s plan for the world, and for the return of Jesus Christ.

Paul (1 Thess 5:1-9) :

**Ø**Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord *will come like a thief in the night*.

(“Day of the Lord” : “that period of time in which God will openly intervene in the affairs of men … for judgment and for blessing”

* the end of this world
* the coming of the reign of Jesus Christ
* Ezekiel :
  + “on that day”
  + “in the latter days”

While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But *you*, brothers and sisters, are *not* in darkness so that this day should surprise *you* like a thief.

(So many people say, “No one knows the day nor the hour.”

* True.
* Jesus did say that.
* But Paul also says, “You shouldn’t be surprised ... if you are a follower of Christ / student of the Bible.”
* And Jesus : “When you see these certain things happening, stand up and lift up your heads ; your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28)

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Many of the prophecies concerning the Lord’s return were unimaginable before 1948 bc the prophecies depended on Israel being in the land.

In this passage, references are made to :

* + the mtns of Israel which had been a continual waste (38:8) 🡨 irrigation ; wasteland is blooming
  + its people were brought out from the nations (1948), 🡨 38:8
  + living securely (today – Israel never been more secure) 🡨 38:8

On May 14, 1948, they announced the birth of their new nation.

And Harry T was the first world leader to recognize this new nation ... only 11 minutes after Is declared its indpndnce.

So, prophecies such as this one are now extremely plausible.

It is possible that the stage is set …

* … for this particular invasion
* … which Ezekiel described as being part of the “latter days”
* … which should cause us to
  + lift up our eyes
  + get ready for the coming of the Lord

Ezekiel 38-39

* describe an invasion of Israel
  + from the north (38:6,15 ; 39:2)
  + an alliance of nations
  + God says he will :
    - bring them in
    - then then destroy them in his blazing wrath
    - with earthquakes / torrential rain / fire & brimstone from the sky

* an invasion / battle that has never yet happened in history (a prophecy yet to be fulfilled)
* will happen “in the last days” (38:16)

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Who ?

* Gog
  + the leader of the land of Magog (38:2)
  + the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (38:2)
    - tribes of the ancient world who lived in what is modern-day Russia.
    - “Rosh” – the basis for the modern name Russia
    - Acc. to some, Meshech and Tubal are at the origin of the names of two impt Russian cities :
      * Meshech 🡪 Moscow
      * Tubal 🡪 Tobolsk
        + one of the oldest Russian cities east of Ural Mtns
        + population today = 100,000
  + army comes from uttermost parts of the north (38:6 ; 39:2)
  + straight line north from Jerusalem 🡪 Moscow
* Persia (38:5) 🡪 present-day Iran *Russia / Iran 🡪 both in Syria today*
* Ethiopia (38:5) Ancient Ethiopia 🡪 modern-day Sudan
* Put (38:5) 🡪 modern-day Somalia
* Gomer (38:6) 🡪
  + a reference to Germany ?
  + referenced that way in ancient Jewish commentaries of the Bible
  + anti-Jewish sentiment is on the rise again in Germany
* Beth-Togarmah (38:6) 🡪 present-day Armenia or Turkey *Turkey*
* 38:6 🡪 “many peoples with you” *Russia / Iran / Sudan / Somalia / Turkey / Syria ? / Germany ?*

an alliance involving Russia, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Turkey, and possibly Germany

* coming from the north
  + Moscow
  + directly north of Israel : Syria
* ***today entirely plausible***

Note : Not a single Arab nation mentioned in the invading army.

* closer ties recently between Saudi Arabia & Israel
* to counter perceived growing threat from Iran

the objective :

* to destroy the people dwelling securely in the land
* to capture the spoils of the battle
  + silver / gold / cattle
  + material riches of the land

result, however : a dramatic turn of events

* confusion and division among the invading army 🡪 38:21 : Every man’s sword against his brother.
* tremendous earthquake / collapse of mountains
* hailstones, fire, brimstone upon Magog’s armies
* armies turned back
* seven years of dismantling all the military equipment involved (39:9-10)

a group of countries that protests the invasion (38:13)

* protesting 🡪 v. 14
* but not intervening
* Sheba & Dedan (38:13) 🡪 present-day Arabia
* “Tarshish with all its merchants and villages” (KJV : “the young lions of Tarshish”)
  + some Bible & history students believe Tarshish
    - a reference to England / Europe
    - https://www.heraldofhope.org.au/tarshish-britain-or-spain/
  + the young lions of Europe (merchants and villages) would be nations such as :
    - Canada
    - Australia *🡪 protest the invasion but don’t respond*
    - the US

Why the U.S. not mentioned in these prophecies, nor in end-times prophecies in Revelation ?

* Has some event occurred in the US that has disabled it ?
* Has US policy turned a cold shoulder to Israel ?

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So, we have in Ezekiel 38-39 :

* an event of worldwide significance to take place in Israel
* the stage for which we might reasonably say has already been set.
* occurring in “the last days”

We can imagine that

* *if* such an invasion of Israel were to occur (it will)
* … *if*, prior to that, the United States had been reduced as a leading world power,
* … *if*, in connection with this invasion, the other superpower – Russia / Iran – suffered a debilitating defeat,
* … *if* Israel emerged victorious, but badly wounded,
* … what are the chances that the whole *world* would be crying out for that wrld ldr we know must come on scene ?
  + “Antichrist” :
* not, initially, the personification of evil
* someone who can pass himself off as *like* Jesus, a world *Savior*
* resolves the world’s conflicts, much of which is centered in Israel and Jerusalem

“Are we near to the end of the age, and Jesus’ return ?”

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Let’s take a look at our first point :

**I. The Unique Place of Israel in God’s Plan for the World.**

Have you ever wondered … (Israel My Glory, May/June 2018, p. 30)

* why anti-Semitism persists today ?
* why the Jewish people have endured despite all the persecutions against them ?
* why the modern State of Israel, despite its small size, is repeatedly the focus of the news ?

**Ø**Deut 7:6 God 🡪 Moses /Israelites

You are a people *holy* to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has *chosen you* out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

* not because the Jews were better than other ppl
* not because they are more numerous than other ppl

**Ø**Deut 7:7-8

The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors …

What was it the Lord swore to the ancestors of the ppl of Israel ?

**Ø**Gen 12:2 (Abraham ≈ 1800 yrs BC)

The Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

* the land (v. 1)
* numerous descendants (great nation – v. 2)
* a blessing (vv. 2-3)
  + “I will bless *you*.”
  + All nations will be blessed through *you* (and your descendants).

How has the *world* been blessed through Abraham’s descendants, the Jews ?

* God’s Law (ex : 10 comms)
* the Bible (all authors are Jews)
* the Savior (a Jew)
* the good news of the gospel 🡪 salvation of our souls

Israel is still a blessing today in many ways : (IMG, May/June 2018, p. 12)

* a leader in innovation
* Their irrigation technology is used around the world to turn deserts into gardens.
* Their computer technology is used daily around the world by ppl who have no idea it was invented in Israel (including the facial-recognition feature of the iPhone X).

A unique nation !

A ppl God has used to bless !

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God’s future for Israel is also unique.

Despite all it has been through, Israel’s worst days are still ahead.

* **Ø**Jeremiah (30:7)
  + the day of Jacob’s trouble
  + a day like no other
  + “Tribulation” (“Day of the Lord” / judgment)
    - persecution of Jews (and Christians)
    - take the sign of the beast (his number) in order to buy and sell
* Zechariah 13:8

**Ø**In the whole land,” declares the Lord, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.

This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. *They* will call on my name

and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’ ”

Part of the purpose of that Tribulation:

* to break the stubborn will of the Jewish nation (Daniel 12:5-7),
* that those who were intended to be a light for God in the world … will finally themselves believe.

**I. The Unique Place of Israel in God’s Plan for the World.**

**II. The Unique History of Israel’s Homeland in the World.**

How did the Jews end up back in the land of Israel, and why all the fuss about it ?

God gave the nation of Israel, thousands of years ago (Abraham – Gen 12) the legal right to the land of Israel.

* repeated to :
  + Isaac
  + Jacob
  + Moses
  + David (reigned from Jerusalem)
  + the kings & prophets
* For over 3000 years there has always been a Jewish presence in the land of Israel, even during times of dispersion.
* It is the Jews who have the *strongest* historical, religious, and legal connection to the land of Israel / city of Jer.

Jerusalem has never been the capital of any country except Israel.

* Jerusalem mentioned almost 700x in the Jewish Bible.
* never mentioned in the Koran
* For thousands of years, the Jews pray for Jerusalem (Ps 122), and pray facing Jerusalem.
* Muslims pray facing Mecca and have no prayers for Jerusalem.

Prior to Israel declaring its independence in 1948 :

* + Britain (1917-1948)
  + Turks (Ottoman Empire – 1517-1917)

The Balfour Declaration (British document -1917 WWI), and other treaties signed by the League of Nations, and the U.S. Senate, designated the land that is now Israel – including Jerusalem – as a “trust” for the reconstitution of the Jewish homeland.

* 1922, Britain lopped of 78% of the area legally designated for a Jewish homeland in order to create Transjordan.
* 1948, a UN recommendation would partition remaining 22% of land into Jewish and Arab states, rejectd by Arabs.
* Instead, … invasion by six Arab nations
  + repelled
  + 1967 repelled invasion again and captured all of Jerusalem

**II. A Unique History in the Land**

**III. The Current State of Affairs in Israel and in the World.**

Why does anti-Semitism still exist today ?

* The Jews are not perfect people.
  + nation of Israel not a perfect nation
  + mostly a secular nation
    - only 2% call themselves Christian
    - 50/50, Catholic / Eastern Orthodox
  + few believers in Jesus the Messiah
  + Israelis don’t like Christian evangelism, although they do like the Christian tourist industry.

Lifeway Research Poll, 2017 – among Americans with evangelical beliefs :

“I support the existence, prosperity, and security of the State of Israel no matter what Israel does.” 24%

“I support the existence, prosperity, and security of … but don’t feel the need to support everything Israel does.” 42%

“I do not support the existence, security, and prosperity of the State of Israel.” 1%

“I have no strong views about the State of Israel.” 32%

Ultimately, anti-Semitism :

* an attempt by Satan to eradicate the people about whom *God* has said, “I am their God.”
  + “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.”
    - **38:23**
    - **39:7**
  + If he can eliminate the ppl, no reason to believe in their God … who happens also to be our God.
* a foolish attempt by Satan to prevent the return of Jesus Christ
  + just as he tried to eliminate Christ as a baby (killing of babies in Bethlehem)
  + just as he tried to disqualify Christ through temptation
  + just as he tried to eliminate Christ through execution on the cross
  + Jerusalem is the place the Bible says the Lord Jesus will reign when his kingdom comes.
    - Jerusalem must be wrested out the control of the Jews, or Christians.
    - Perhaps that will prevent the righteous and glorious reign of Jesus Christ.

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Yet, about Israel and Jerusalem God has said :

Isaiah 49:15-16

**Ø** “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?

Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;

your walls are ever before me.”

Jeremiah 31:31-34

**Ø** “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel

and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,”

* the new covenant we speak of at Communion 🡨 sealed with blood of Christ
* we (Christians) share in the *spiritual* blessings of the new covenant

Jeremiah 33:20-21

**Ø** “This is what the Lord says: ‘If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, then my covenant with David my servant … can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne.”

What are the implications of all of this ? 🡪 a prophecy of a dramatic invasion from the north to take place “in the last days.”

* We’re steadily and surely moving toward the great concluding point of the history of the Earth.
* The age of God’s grace is soon coming to a close.
* Christ is coming soon !
* And a judgment day with it, in which the hearts of all ppl will be judged to determine whether they will spend eternity in the Kingdom of Christ or be eternally separated from the Father-God who made them and loved them.
* Be alert !
* Pray :
  + for the salvation of people around us
  + for the salvation of neighbors / family members / ppl we see in the news and on tv / teachers / workers
* Be ready and willing ambassadors of the gospel. (“How will ppl know the good news unless we tell them ?”)

Paul : But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness that this day should surprise you like a thief.

Jesus : When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, bc your redmptn is drawing near."

(Lk 21:28)

Peter : Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

* living pure / kind / loving lives so that the gospel will be *believed* by people
* living godly lives because we are about to set foot in, and live forever in, a holy place in the presence of our holy, loving Lord

looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for ***new*** heavens and a ***new*** earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the *patience* of our Lord as salvation …” (2 Peter 3:11-15)