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## The Mystery of Israel

Why is the Bible predominantly about one nation? Why did God found a physical nation? The answers teach invaluable lessons that explain much about our world today!

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The Bible is the most popular book in the whole world—yet it is a book about one nation : Israel . That statement may surprise you, but when you look at the facts, it is undeniably true. Yet Israel is a total mystery to the religions in this world.

Herbert W. Armstrong made this subject plain in his most important book, [Mysterie der eeuwen](#). The fifth chapter of that book is “Mystery of Israel.”

At the beginning of that chapter, Mr. Armstrong said we must understand that Israel “has great significance in God’s purpose for all peoples! One cannot understand the real purpose and incredible potential of man without this vital knowledge.” If you are to reach your incredible human potential, you must understand the truth about Israel!

There are many seemingly paradoxical facts surrounding Israel. Have you ever wondered why God raised up that nation? The Bible plainly states that God is not a respecter of persons (Romans 2:11)—but is He a respecter of NATIONS? Did He show favoritism to Israel? Here is another mystery: Are you aware that God didn’t even offer salvation to the physical nation of ancient Israel? It was given material blessings. But the gift of His Holy Spirit was not made available to them, except for the prophets.

Here is yet another: The northern kingdom of Israel *was not Jewish*. That may shock you. The Bible’s first mention of the word *Jews* is in 2 Kings 16:6—and it appears in the context of them being AT WAR WITH ISRAEL! How do you explain that?

All these questions are answered in Chapter 5 of [Mysterie der eeuwen](#), a book you need to be well acquainted with.

## Father of the Faithful

Seven generations after the Flood, God began using a man named Abram. Following his conversion, his name was changed to Abraham. He eventually became known as the father of the faithful—the patriarch of anyone who has faith in God, whether Israelite or Gentile (Romans 4:11, 16). But to get Abraham to that point, God had to test him.

In Genesis 12, God commanded him, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (verses 1-2). What a wonderful promise! God started Israel with one man, just as He started all of humanity with one man.

This was a *material* promise of *national prosperity*. God had a plan for Israel. Isaiah 43:21 says, “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.” God intended Israel to show the world how to obey Him, and what a multitude of blessings He provides to those who do that!

Throughout the Bible, God works on the principle of duality. There was a first man, Adam—a material, carnal man—and a “second Adam,” Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45-47; Romans 5:14). There is also duality surrounding the nation of Israel. The physical congregation of Israel in the Old Testament was a *type* of the New Testament Church of God.

Likewise, the promises God made to Abraham are dual: One is purely material and national; the other is spiritual and individual. Here is the second of those promises: “[A]nd in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). This is God’s promise of grace: salvation to all humanity!

In Genesis 17:4, God told Abraham that he was to be a father of *many* nations—physically. But God also told Abraham, “in THY SEED shall ALL the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). That one “seed” is not talking about one great nation. It is talking about Jesus Christ and salvation coming through Him (Galatians 3:8, 16). Christ, the second Adam, died for our sins and prepares us to receive the Holy Spirit, by which He lives in us! We are saved by His life (Romans 5:9-10).

## Spiritual Israel

The Apostle Paul was apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). He said Gentiles who are spiritually converted become a part of *spiritual Israel*, the Church: “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou [Gentiles], being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them [Israel], and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree” (verse 17).

Here is an inspiring truth most people do not understand: Spiritually, ALL MANKIND is to become Israel! Paul wrote elsewhere, “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ...” (Romans 2:28-29). We all become spiritual Jews when we are converted to God’s way of life.

If you turn your back on God, however, as 95 percent of God’s people have done in this end time, then God says you are part of “the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews ... but do lie” (Revelation 3:9).

To the children of ancient Israel, God said, “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation ...” (Exodus 19:5-6). They were to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They were to teach the world about God. But they didn’t have God’s Holy Spirit, so this was all on a carnal level; they could only obey the letter of God’s law. Still, that is a wonderful way to live if you don’t have God’s Holy Spirit! That law was DESIGNED to bring prosperity and peace.

The Israelites told God that they would obey all that He said (verse 8). History shows, however, that they failed to follow through. God later said, “Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 3:20).

Still, Israel was God’s chosen nation. He gave them His law, His government and His religion—though all on a physical level; they were not a spiritual nation. He was with them, and they could appeal to Him.

What was the purpose of that? It is one of the most amazing truths in the Bible, but very few people understand it!

## What Mankind Lacks

The history of Israel proves a crucial spiritual point. It illustrates the limits of human beings when we lack God’s spiritual power working in us!

Mr. Armstrong wrote, “To Israel, God gave His statutes and judgments, as well as His spiritual law. But these perfect laws did not, without God’s Holy Spirit, solve the nation’s problems! God *could* say: ‘I am God. Take my word for it.’ But God gave PROOF, through Israel, that without the Holy Spirit, man is helpless! They even had God to appeal to” ([Mysterie der eeuwen](#)).

Ancient Israel had tremendous advantages as a nation. They experienced tremendous miracles from God. For example, the Red Sea parted, they walked across on dry land, and the walls of the sea collapsed on the Egyptian army chasing them. What an amazing miracle to experience! This should have bolstered their faith, convincing them that God could pull them through anything! Instead, they shortly began grumbling and claiming that God had brought them into the wilderness to kill them!

Then God delivered the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. This was a PERFECT spiritual and moral law! When God gave it, the mountain was afire, lightning flashed, and thunder shook the earth, illustrating God’s great power and authority. God then followed that by giving them a perfect set of statutes and judgments. But rather than being awed and inspired at their great Lawgiver, and grateful for these incomparable gifts, the Israelites grew scared!

God worked countless miracles for this nation: He collapsed the walls of a great enemy city; He halted the movement of the sun in the time of Joshua; He defeated enemy armies with swarms of hornets. The Israelites had God directing them. They were His nation. He made a marriage covenant with them, known as the Old Covenant (e.g. Jeremiah 3:14). They had an intimate relationship with God! Nevertheless, Israel still proved faithless, stubborn and rebellious!

Why such a ghastly failure? In [Mysterie der eeuwen](#), Mr. Armstrong explained, “God now decided to give them knowledge of

His law—His kind of government—*His way of life!* He was going to prove to the world that without His Holy Spirit their minds were incapable of receiving and utilizing such knowledge of the TRUE WAYS OF LIFE. He was going to demonstrate to them that the mind of MAN, with its one [human] spirit, and without the addition of God's Holy Spirit, could not have spiritual discernment—could not solve human problems, could not cure the evils that were besetting humanity. The nation Israel would be His guinea pig to demonstrate that fact."

This explains why man is continually plagued by insoluble problems! Israel's failure proves that, no matter how many other advantages people may have, *without God's Spirit* mankind is helpless to devise solutions to troubles that are fundamentally spiritual! Human beings *insist* that they can reason their way to the right answers. But our problems are of a spiritual nature and must be solved spiritually! That is an astounding truth we ought to understand when we look at the 6,000 years of human history.

Herbert W. Armstrong personally met with hundreds of heads of state and prominent world leaders. He wrote, "[M]any kings, emperors, presidents and prime ministers I have conferred privately with now realize the problems are *beyond* human ability to solve" (ibid).

What a crucial truth! Humankind has bungled through 6,000 years of operating apart from God, and we have reached the point where we face the very real prospect of human annihilation! That is a problem beyond our ability to solve!

God, however, reveals the solution.

## The Solution

Among the commands God gave ancient Israel was this: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God ..." (Deuteronomy 10:20-21). Remember Isaiah 43:21: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." The Israelites should have been praising God to the whole world! But they never did. That job still needs to be done.

The Apostle Peter wrote about the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant in 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." This echoes the account in Exodus 19. Peter is talking about a kingdom of priests who praise God and teach the Word of God to the world, helping people to live the way of blessings. This is what God's true Church, spiritual Israel, must do today.

Notice: This *spiritual* nation is not just "a kingdom of priests"—it is "a ROYAL priesthood"! Those of the New Covenant have God's Holy Spirit in them! Jesus Christ is living in them. That is what makes it a holy nation.

God had a goal with ancient Israel on a physical, letter-of-the-law level, but the people failed. But spiritual Israel, God's Church today—if we are doing our job prior to Christ's return—is showing forth the praises of God! Our lives should be *filled* with praise for God because of the wonderful blessings He continually gives us! And what He gives us today is only a tiny foretaste of the riches to come: God's saints today will receive salvation in the Family of God as the Bride of Jesus Christ! (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-9). But to receive that transcendent reward, we must heed God's message and obey Him now.

Hebrews 8:6 describes the New Covenant as "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" than the Old Covenant. With the New Covenant, you can receive forgiveness of your sins. You can call on God the Father, your Father, and pray to Him, and He will take you into His Family forever! You can receive eternal life! You will become a God being. That's what your Bible teaches throughout. These truly are wondrous promises! How inspiring and moving!

This passage continues by explaining where Israel failed: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For *finding fault with them*, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (verses 7-8). What was the problem with the Old Covenant? Was it the law? No—that was perfect (Psalm 19:7). It wasn't with anything on God's part. The problem with the Old Covenant was THE PEOPLE! They didn't have the Holy Spirit. And as a result, they couldn't obey God, and couldn't solve their problems, which were spiritual in nature.

God was showing all the world that THE FAULT IS WITH US! We MUST learn that we need another spirit! Then what will God do? "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them [not on physical tables of stone, but] IN THEIR HEARTS: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10).

This is the solution to this world's problems!

The nations of Israel today, America, Britain and the Jewish nation in the Middle East, have received abundant blessings from God (read [De Verenigde Staten en Groot-Brittannië in de profetieën](#) for a biblical explanation). Yet they have not learned how desperately they need God and His Spirit. God is going to punish them if they don't repent of their sins. But He also has an incredible future prepared for them.

Mr. Armstrong's book [Mysterie der eeuwen](#) makes God's plan for the nations of Israel—and all mankind—plain. There is

abundant hope in that plan. I urge you to study this book to understand the Bible's most amazing truths—truths that will change your life!

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