**Israel, During the Old Testament Theocracy and At Christ’s First Coming**

Excerpts from Arlen Chitwood's Esther

**During the Old Testament Theocracy**

Following Adam’s fall, God waited 2,000 years before he brought forth the man — Abraham — through whose lineage the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Then, 500 additional years passed before God was ready to begin fulfilling his promises to Abraham concerning a seed and a land, through a nation emanating from his loins (**Genesis 12:1-3**; **13:14-17**; **15:13-21**; **Exodus 6:3-8**; **12:40**-**41**).

Twenty-five hundred years beyond the creation of Adam, during the days of Moses, the nation emanating from the loins of Abraham found itself exactly where the same nation (because of disobedience) finds itself today. The Israelites found themselves in a Gentile land (in “Egypt,” a type of *the world* in Scripture), ruled over and persecuted by a Gentile power.

God called the nation out of Egypt under Moses, to dwell in the land that had been covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were to dwell in this land as “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*.” And, in this position, they were to be placed “*above all people*,” with the Gentile nations of the earth being *blessed through Israel* **(**cf. **Genesis 12:1-3**; **Exodus 19:5**-**6**; **Deuteronomy 6:23**; **7:6**; **28:13**).

However, unbelief and disobedience marked the history of the Israelites — from the days of Moses to that time centuries later when God allowed Gentile powers to come into the land, uproot his people, and carry them away captive into Gentile land.

A theocracy existed in the land of Israel for about eight centuries, which reached its heights during David’s reign, extending into part of Solomon’s reign. But this theocracy, because of Israel’s disobedience, never rose to the heights that God had intended. It never became a theocracy in which the nations of the earth could be ruled by and blessed through Israel.

During the latter part of Solomon’s reign, things began to go even further awry. And about fifty years after his reign, Elijah appeared, followed by Elisha, calling attention to sin, disobedience.

But matters remained unchanged. And, to remain true to His Word, God was left with only one recourse. The Israelites were to find themselves occupying a position diametrically opposed to the position that God had called them to occupy.

The Israelites would be removed from their land and scattered among the Gentile nations; they would find themselves under subjection to these nations and mistreated by these nations in every conceivable way, exactly as God had promised (*cf*. **Leviticus 26:21**-**22**, **27**-**28**, **33-39**; **Deuteronomy 28:25**, **30**, **37**, **65-67**).

In 722 B.C. the Assyrians were allowed to come into the land and take the northern ten tribes into captivity. And slightly over one hundred years later, about 605 B.C., the Babylonians were allowed to come into the land and take the southern two tribes into captivity. These were captivities from which only remnants of Jews have ever been allowed to return, more particularly at two different times — one that began seventy years following the Babylonian captivity, and the other that began in 1948, during modern times.

The nation itself has never been allowed to return from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Rather, because of disobedience, the nation has remained scattered among and persecuted by Gentile nations. And that which happened in Europe during particularly the years 1939-1945 — 6,000,000 Jews slain as a result of Gentile persecution — is simply *an extreme outworking of that which God promised would happen to His people if they did not obey His voice*. In short, the Holocaust was *the direct result* of two things:

(1) *Jewish disobedience*, *and*

(2) *God keeping His Word*.

But the Holocaust also had to do with something else relative *to God keeping His Word*. Though the Gentile nations may seek to carry out genocidal activities surrounding Israel, *this nation cannot be destroyed*.

As the bush burned during Moses’ day, *apart from being comsumed* (**Exodus 3:2**-**3**), the nation of Israel will continue to be persecuted by the Gentiles, *apart from being destroyed*. For, as God was *in the midst of the burning bush* during Moses day (**Exodus 3:4**), or as a fourth person was seen *in the fiery furnace* during Daniel’s day (with the three Israelites [**Daniel 3:19-25]**), God has always resided *in the midst of His people*, *Israel* (even today, in their disobedience). Thus, *to destroy Israel*, *God Himself would have to be destroyed*.

*Two things* relative to Israel in the preceding respect are contingent entirely upon God fulfilling that which He has promised in His Word. *One* has to do with the position in which the nation of Israel finds itself today (scattered among and persecuted by Gentile nations), and *the other* has to do with the fact that Israel will continue as a people until God’s purpose for calling this nation into existence has been realized.

**At Christ’s First Coming**

Christ’s first coming occurred about six centuries following that time when the complete nation (northern ten tribes and southern two tribes) had been removed from their land, carried away by Gentile powers, and scattered among the Gentile nations. And His first coming occurred at a time slightly over five centuries following the return of remnants under Zerubbabel and Ezra.

These remnants formed the original nucleus for that segment of the nation that was in the land, under Roman dominion and persecution, at Christ’s first coming. Most of the Jews at this time were still scattered throughout Gentile lands (**Acts 2:8-11**), and even the ones in the land of Israel found themselves under subjection to a Gentile power.

Christ’s first coming occurred during “*the times of the Gentiles*,” which began about 605 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar was allowed to come into the land and begin carrying the remaining southern two tribes into captivity; and this time will continue until the heavens are opened, Christ returns, overthrows Gentile world power, and places Israel in the position to which the nation was called in the beginning.

Jerusalem was being trodden down of the Gentiles when Christ came the first time, and it will be trodden down of the Gentiles for the three and one-half years immediately preceding Christ’s return (**Luke 21:20-24**; **John 19:10-15**; **Revelation 11:2**). Then, “*the times of the Gentiles*” will end, for Israel, in that day, *will be brought to the place of repentance*.

In this respect, note the message of John, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy at Christ’s first coming. It was a simple message: “*Repent*, *for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand*” (*cf.* **Matthew 3:2**; **4:17**; **10:7**; **Luke 10:9**). There was a call for *national repentance*, and this was to be followed by *national baptism* (showing exactly the same thing that the Red Sea passage during Moses day depicted relative to the entire nation in the type [ref. [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Search for the Bride, Ch. 6](http://bibleone.net/SB_06.htm)).

And this call for repentance, followed by baptism, was voiced by Peter on the day of Pentecost, after the promised Spirit had been sent: “*Repent* *and be baptized every one of you* [the entire nation of Israel] . . . .” (**Acts 2:38a**).

This was the beginning of the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel (which lasted until about 62 A.D.). During the original offer (during Christ’s earthly ministry), the message was *to the Jew only* (**Matthew 10:5**, **6**; **15:24**). But, during the re-offer, the message was *to the Jew first*, *not to the Jew only*.And, during this time, it was *also to the Gentile* (**Romans 1:16**; **2:9**, **10**, **16**).

However, Israel refused to repent during both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom. During the offer, the Jewish people climaxed their unbelief and disobedience through rejecting the message and the Messenger, pledging their allegiance to a pagan Gentile king, and then crucifying the true King (**John 18:19-23**; **19:14**-**15**). This was then followed by continued rejection during the re-offer of the kingdom (**Acts 2:37-41**; **3:19-4:3**, **10-21**; **5:17-33**; **7:51-8:4**; **9:20-29**).

This left God with only one recourse — to continue fulfilling in the lives of the Jewish people that which He had stated in His Word relative to the consequences of disobedience (e.g., allowing a Gentile power to destroy Jerusalem in 70 A.D., followed by a scattering of the remnant in the land, followed by continued Gentile persecution). Though the nation was set aside for a dispensation, *there must be a continuation of the outworking of the principles that God has laid down in His Word surrounding Israel* (for Jew or Gentile, as seen in **Genesis 12:3**).

Man is living today during a time when Israel remains in *an unbelieving and disobedient state*. And God’s Word, relative to Israel in this state, *must be fulfilled*. That’s what most of the book of **Esther** is about. The matter is introduced in chapter **one**, and the remaining chapters present the full and ultimate end of the matter — *the unparalleled sufferings that the nation is about to undergo*, *followed by the glory to then be revealed*.

[Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Esther, Ch. 2, Israel, During the Old Testament Theocracy and At Christ’s First Coming](http://bibleone.net/Esther_02.htm)