

Last State Worse than the First That Which Awaits the Nation of Israel, Before...

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of the man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation (Matt. 12:43-45).

These are Christ's closing recorded words to Israel's religious leaders *after* they had committed the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (12:24-32), *before* He "went...out of the house," "sat by the seaside," and began to speak "in parables" (13:1-3).

The house of Israel, during time covered by events seen in these parables (the present dispensation and subsequent Tribulation), was to be left "empty, swept, and garnished ['put in order']" (v. 44; cf. Matt. 23:38). The house was *to stand vacant* ("empty"), and it was to be "swept" and "put in order" relative to its vacated state. *Nothing was to remain.*

And, once the house of Israel found itself in this condition (which would include *the people, the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land*), the nation was left with only the same previously existing recourse: *Repentance.*

But, should repentance not be forthcoming — with the Jewish people persisting in their disobedience, ignoring the reason for their condition, seeking to bring about a change in the existing situation themselves — *matters would only become worse.*

God had revealed through Moses, at the beginning, that Israel would not be allowed to continue indefinitely in disobedience. The nation would ultimately be brought to the place of *repentance*. And, to bring this to pass, if necessary, Israel's punishment would be intensified *seven times* (Lev. 26:18-31). Israel, through this means, would be brought to a place where the nation would have no recourse other than to turn to the God of their fathers (*cf.* Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7ff; Jonah 2:2-10).

Then, fifteen hundred years later, Christ called attention to this same fundamental truth immediately before He left the house, went down by the seaside, and began to speak in parables (Matt. 12:43-45; 13:1ff).

Matthew 12:43-45 reveals an "unclean spirit" dwelling in the house prior to the house being left "empty, swept, and garnished." Then, following this — because of Israel's refusal to repent, and because of Israel's efforts to bring about a change in the existing situation through naturalistic means — "seven other spirits," *more wicked than the first*, would take up residence in the house, with the latter state of the nation being *far worse* than the former state (v. 45).

("Seven" is a complete number, showing *the completeness of that which is in view*. "Seven times," or "seven other spirits," may refer to *completeness* rather than to a *literal seven-fold intensity*.)

However, either way, matters would be quite similar. With *completeness* in view, *intensity* would be involved; and this intensity could, at times, possibly be even greater than seven-fold.)

Israel was *sick* (resulting from sin, disobedience [Isa. 1:4-6]); and "the house," *the house of Israel*, was about to be left *desolate*. *And the nation's condition would continue after this fashion until a certain decreed time.*

This condition would continue until matters had become so bad that Israel would be forced to cry out to the God of their Fathers for help (Ex. 2:23-25). And, correspondingly, the nation would, in that day, through Divine power, be brought into such dire straits that the Jewish people would willingly, gladly, and eagerly say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37-39; *cf.* Isa. 53:1ff).

Israel's condition was/is of *Divine origin*, and the nation's cure must also be of *Divine origin* (Hosea 5:13-6:2). A *Divine purpose* lies behind the nation's present Divinely decreed condition — a purpose having to do with bringing a nation to the end of itself, leaving the nation with no place to turn other than to the God of their fathers.

(A similar *Divine work* can be seen in Zech. 1:14, 15, where the Lord set about to chasten His son, Israel, because of disobedience; but, in this case, the Gentile nations stepped in and "helped forward the affliction." That is, God, in His infinite wisdom, set about to chasten His son in order to bring about *correction*. And the Gentiles, seeing Israel being chastened, stepped in and sought to intensify the nation's sufferings.

And God will not countenance such action. God said that He was "a little displeased" with Israel, resulting in the chastening; but, when the Gentiles stepped in and "helped forward the affliction," God said that He was "very sore displeased" with the Gentiles.

In this respect, the Gentile nations should take note of that which has been happening and continues to happen to Israel today. It is, again, *the same chastening hand of God, for the same purpose*. And God will no more countenance interference in His plans and purposes for Israel today than He would in Old Testament days. Should any Gentile nation attempt such [as some already have], God will, again, be "very sore displeased"; and the principle set forth in Gen. 12:3 will still apply: "I will...curse him that curseth thee.")

A Modern-Day Situation

An interesting situation pertaining to God chastening His son, Israel, *because of continued disobedience*, has developed during modern times. And this is something which affects not only Israel but the surrounding Gentile nations as well.

Israel has sought to return to her land, while, at the same time, remaining in disobedience. And, attempting to return after this fashion is not only *attempting to return before the time* but also *attempting to reverse that which God has decreed concerning Israel's sickness and desolation*. It is attempting, *through humanistic means*, to bring about a change in an "empty, swept, and garnished" house, *the house of Israel*. And an attempt of this nature can only result in *seven other spirits, more wicked than the first, entering into the house*.

The principle has been unchangeably established and set — given by God through Moses, and reiterated by Christ — and it CAN-NOT be broken.

With an existing Jewish nation in the Middle East, in the eyes of man, Israel has seemingly succeeded in that which the nation attempted (*return to the land, and change that which God had previously decreed*).

But, in the eyes of God, though an Israeli nation presently exists in the Middle East, matters are viewed from *a quite different perspective*. According to Scripture, all of the best efforts put forth by Israel — seeking to bring about a change in an “empty, swept, and garnished” house — can only have one end. *Conditions for the nation can only become worse.*

One need only look at a decaying Middle East situation, in the light of Scripture, to see what is *really happening*. Intensifying trouble exists throughout the Middle East. The whole area is like a powder keg, with a lit fuse, waiting to explode. And the nations (Israel and the Gentile nations, including the United States) are desperately, though vainly, seeking to defuse the situation.

But neither Israel nor the Gentile nations have any understanding at all of that which is happening. They have no understanding of *the nature* of the problem, *why* it exists, or *how* to deal with it. And, even if they did understand all the ramifications of the existing problem, they couldn’t even begin to deal with it. *God alone is the only One Who can possibly deal with it.*

The whole of the existing problem is a matter between God and Israel — “I will take away, and none shall rescue him” (Hosea 5:13, 14).

And the whole of the revealed solution is also a matter between God and Israel — “...till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face...” (Hosea 5:15-6:2).

An eluding Middle East peace is the most intractable problem facing man in the world today. And Israel, along with the Gentile nations — understanding somewhat the gravity of the situation if it is allowed to continue (though still not understanding “why” this is the case) — are *desperately* seeking a solution.

But a solution will not be forthcoming until a *full-end* to the decreed “seven times” or “seven other spirits,” in relation to Israel’s chastisement, has come to pass. And the nations, awaiting the *full-end* to a problem and situation which they can’t even begin to understand or deal with, don’t have a clue concerning which way to turn.

Various plans are being studied and considered, and concessions are being made which were unheard of only a short time back. But all of man’s best efforts *will fail*. This is simply something which man *has no control over and cannot deal with*.

And where is it all headed? From a Scriptural standpoint, there is only one possible answer. It is all headed toward a *climactic, desolate end*—an end *seven times worse* than it would have been had the Jewish people not persisted in their disobedience and sought, themselves, to bring about a change in a “desolate, swept, and garnished” house.

(And those in Christendom today who teach, *completely contrary to Scripture*, that the remnant in the land is there in fulfillment of God’s numerous promises to one day restore His people and their land, have introduced and promoted error having grave ramifications.

In essence, by teaching and promoting error of this nature, *such individuals are giving credence to Israel’s attempts to change that which God has decreed, which will result in an inevitable Divine punishment about to befall the nation*, seen in Matt. 12:43-45.)

A Man Seemingly Possessing the Answer

In the immediate future, a man is going to appear in the Middle East with the seeming solution to the insoluble problem. And he will undoubtedly be received with open arms by the world at large, for he will appear to have the answer to this intractable problem.

But, though his solution for Middle East peace will appear to work for awhile, the end result will be exactly as stated by Christ in Matt. 12:43-45. Instead of one wicked spirit in the house, in the end, *seven spirits more wicked than the first* will be found therein.

Israel will seek to be cured of her sickness through an association with this man — the man of sin, the Antichrist. But he will be *unable* to effect a cure. *The Lord* wrought Israel’s sickness, and *only the Lord* can effect the nation’s cure (Hosea 5:13, 14).

The matter of a Jewish nation, a remnant in the land today, is as *Jonah out of the Lord's will, asleep in the hold of the ship, out of the sea*. This remnant in the land today, *out of the Lord's will*, is no longer scattered among the nations. They are *in their own land, no longer in the sea, though asleep to the true nature of their condition and calling* (the "sea," used as a metaphor for *the nations* and showing *the place of death*).

In Jonah's case, *the sea raged* as long as this condition persisted — Jonah asleep on board the ship, out of the sea. But once Jonah had been cast into the sea, the sea became *calm* (Jonah 1:3-15). And Jonah had to remain *in the sea, in the place of death* (typifying, *as well, being scattered among the nations*), for two days, until the third day. *Only then* could Jonah be removed from the sea and be placed back in the land (Jonah 1:17-2:10).

Israel's place out of the Lord's will can only be in exactly the same place which Jonah occupied out of the Lord's will — in the sea, *i.e., in the place of death and scattered among the nations*. This is the place where God dealt with Jonah in *the type*, and this is the place where God has decreed that He will deal with Israel in *the antitype*.

And Israel, as Jonah, has to remain in this place and condition (*in the sea — in the place of death, scattered among the nations*) *until the third day*. Any attempt by either Israel or others to bring about a change in *the timing of Israel's return or the nation's present condition and situation* is not only *doomed to failure* but is also *destined to make matters worse than they previously existed*.

An attempt has been made *to remove Israel from the sea, through humanistic means, before the time, on the second day*. An attempt has been made, through Zionist endeavors, *to reenter an "empty, swept, and garnished" house*. And this, in itself, will reveal *the only possible future for the present existing nation of Israel in the Middle East*.

What is going to happen according to Jonah? *The sea is going to rage; the Gentile nations are going to be in turmoil*. And this continuing account from the Book of Jonah *will address the whole of the situation relative to Israel and the Gentile nations, both present and future*.

(Refer to the author's two pamphlets titled, "The Turbulent Middle East," for a type-antitype treatment of the Book of Jonah.)