THE UNIQUENESS OF ISRAEL

CFI Conference

February 5, 1993, Friday Evening

This practice of making a proclamation is spreading rather widely amongst the people of God, and I believe it is a very important part of our equipment and our practice for the time in which we're living. I didn't have any plan to say this, but probably the hardest place for the purposes of God to progress—both the purposes of God for Israel and the purposes of God for the gospel—is the Middle East, which is where I've made my living for many years. And the main spiritual reason is that for more than thirteen centuries the Moslems have proclaimed their false statements five times every day throughout the entire area. If you consider the total number of proclamations made from all the mosques stretching from the west of North Africa as far as Iran and even into the south of what is the Soviet Union, uncountable billions of proclamations have been made declaring (I don't like to say it, so I won't say it) — but declaring a false god and a false prophet. And that is one of the main reasons why the atmosphere is so totally alien and hostile to the purposes of God and the truths of the Bible. I think it is high time that we as Christians learned what the Muslims have been practicing for more than thirteen centuries—the power of proclamation. So we're going to make a proclamation that is relevant to the present conference which is from Psalm 33 verses 8 through 12.

> Let all the earth fear the LORD;
> Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
> For He spoke, and it was done;
> He commanded, and it stood fast.
> The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
> He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.
> The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
> The plans of His heart to all generations.
> Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
> The people whom He has chosen as His own inheritance.

The name of that people is . . . Israel—that's right.

It's my purpose to bring some teaching this evening which I trust will be a kind of foundation for the rest of the teaching that is to follow in this conference. I want to teach about prophecy, fulfilled and unfulfilled. I want to bring out from Scripture some of the main reasons why Israel is a totally unique people. There is no other people on earth or in history that can in any way be compared with Israel according to the revelation of the Bible which I accept.

I want to begin with a word that David prayed to the Lord recorded in 1 Chronicles chapter 17 verse 21, where David's speaking to the Lord in prayer and he says these words:

> Who is like your people Israel, the one nation in the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people.

So, David very clearly states there is one nation and only one nation that answers to that description, and it is His people Israel. And I think we will not be able to receive the full benefit or impact of this conference and the messages that are brought unless we recognize the uniqueness of Israel.

My friend, Lance Lambert, has actually published a book called *The Uniqueness of Israel,* but I trust he'll forgive me for taking the title. People today basically object to recognizing that anybody is different from anybody else. We live in a culture which is extremely egalitarian. Everybody is equal to everybody else, and there's no difference, and men are the same as women, and women are the same as men, and it doesn't matter who you are, you're just in the same category. That is not the way God views the earth. God loves everybody, but He doesn't deal with everybody the same way, and God has special peoples. In the Old Covenant it was Israel; in the New Covenant it's the church of Jesus Christ. I want to say emphatically they are two distinct peoples. I should have had here a copy of my new book, *Prophetic Destinies: Who Is Israel? Who Is the Church?* because one of the great errors that has invaded the church is the theory that the church is the new Israel, that the church has somehow taken over the identity and the destiny of Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth, and if you want to obtain the book and you haven't, you'll find in it a list of seventy-nine passages in the New Testament where the word *Israel* or *Israelite* is used. And I think I have demonstrated clearly to anyone who believes the Bible that it is never

used as a synonym for the church.

But we are talking tonight not about the church, but about Israel, and I want to emphasize that Israel is a unique people. That's one reason why they're the subject of so much persecution, because basically humanity doesn't like people who are different. Some of you have probably experienced that at school in your childhood. You were just a little bit different in some way and people picked on you. That's something in human nature, but it's exaggerated in the attitude of humanity towards Israel.

Now, I need to say I'm not Jewish, in case anybody should mistakenly identify me that way. I am a Gentile whose destiny, by the providence of God, became involved with Israel. It wasn't my choice. It was God's doing. I can't go into that in detail, but within a few months of my finding Jesus (or Jesus finding me) I became very directly involved in the Middle East and in the events that happened in Israel. I first visited Jerusalem in 1942 so I have a longstanding connection with Jerusalem, with Israel, and with God's people the Jews. And I would observe this for those of you who are friends of Israel—I think it's true that if you become identified in any way with the Jewish people you will probably have to experience some of the opposition and the rejection that they've experienced over the centuries. It is not always easy to be a friend of Israel. So if you intend to be one, you'll probably have to face that issue.

Now let's look at some of the ways in which Israel is unique. We'll turn to Exodus 19, the passage which describes what God spoke to the Jewish people after they had been brought out of their slavery in Egypt. He brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai and He began to speak to them about His destiny for them. And He told Moses to tell them this in Exodus 19 verses 5 and 6:

> "'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

So God stated His purpose for Israel in those phrases. First of all, they were to be a special treasure to Him above all people. Secondly, they were to be a kingdom of priests, and thirdly, they were to be a holy nation. Now that was God's purpose; and the unbelief and disobedience of Israel, to a large extent,

prevented the outworking of God's purpose. But my personal conviction is this: that Satan can delay the outworking of God's purposes but he can never ultimately prevent it. So, before time ends, that destiny of Israel stated there by Moses will be fulfilled. They will be a special people, a special treasure to the Lord. They will be a kingdom of priests and they will be a holy nation.

Now those promises are given also to the church of Jesus Christ in 1 Peter chapter 2. But the fact that they're given to the church does not change the fact that they were initially, and I believe eternally, given to Israel. Let me say this. God is not so poor that He has to rob Israel to bless the church. God has got enough for both parties.

Now let's turn to the New Testament and look at some of what it has to say about the uniqueness of Israel. In Romans chapter 3 verses 1 and 2, Paul raises the questions: "What is the real benefit that the Jewish people enjoy?" He says in chapter 3 verses 1 and 2:

> What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit or circumcision? [That is, the outward mark of being a Jew? The answer is:] Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles [or the words] of God.

So that's one extremely important distinctive feature of Israel: that to them were committed the oracles, the divinely inspired Word of God. That, in itself, is a staggering fact of history. The Bible contains, as we have it today, sixty-six books of varying length and all of them but two were authored by Jews. If there had been no Jewish people there would be no Bible. And Luke, who was not Jewish, was in some sense probably in the category of a proselyte. So let's bear in mind the fact that we who are not Jewish, who have received eternal and limitless blessings through the revelation of Scripture, we owe it all to one people—to the Jews. And bear in mind that it cost them a great deal to bring this Scripture. Many of them laid down their lives for it. It was not easy.

I think also those of us who are in, what I would call, for want of a better word, "the Protestant tradition"—though I don't like that word—I think we need to bear in mind that what we have in the Scripture also cost thousands of believers their lives to gain for us. The Bible is free, but it is not cheap. Nothing that God offers is cheap.

Then Paul goes on in Romans chapter 9—well, let's turn to Romans 1 for a moment. He speaks of his own indebtedness for the revelation of Scripture. Not all Jewish people realized their responsibility. In fact, it was probably a small minority, but Paul speaks for that minority when he says in Romans 1:

> I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

Paul had a sense of indebtedness because he had received the revelation of the Word of God. He was indebted to all peoples—Jews and non-Jews, educated and non-educated, no matter what race or culture or color—he saw himself as a debtor. The Jewish people were not possessive of the Scriptures; they were stewards of the Scriptures. They were responsible to God for how they exercised their stewardship. Paul is an outstanding example of someone who realized his stewardship and was faithful in the discharge of it.

And again there's a parallel for us. In countries such as the United States or Britain particularly, or also Scandinavia who have a long history of the Bible being available to us, we also are debtors. We're debtors to all the other nations that have not had that privilege. I hope we realize that. And there's no conflict between being a debtor to the Jews and a debtor to the nations, because God has a certain order in which He's dealing with the nations, and in Romans 11:25 and 26 it says:

> The full number of the Gentiles must come in…and then all Israel will be saved.

So bear in mind every time you reach out with the Word of God to the unreached—and that's our slogan in Derek Prince Ministries is to *Reach the Unreached and Teach the Untaught*—every time we do that we are hastening the redemption of Israel, because all the Gentiles appointed to salvation must come in before the final, complete salvation of Israel takes place. So there's no sense of being exclusive. We are debtors to all.

And then in Romans 9 Paul lists eight specific facts about the Jewish people which make them unique. Romans 9 from verse 3 onwards. Paul says:

> I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to

the flesh, who are Israelites [he's talking about Israelites, the people of Israel, and then he says,] to whom belong [actually eight distinctive features…

We'll go through them. If you want to follow in your Bible it's in verses 4 and 5 of Romans 9:

…to whom pertain [or belong] the adoption [God adopted Israel as His people], the glory,

That word means the presence of God manifested to human senses. It's called in Hebrew the *shekinah*—the manifest, visible presence of God. It was manifested in the cloud that was a smoke by day and a fire by night, and then in various other ways. And, generally speaking, when the full glory of God was manifested no one could stand up. Everybody ended up on their faces. I would love to see that happen again, and I believe sometime or other it's going to happen. Don't be too dignified. I always smile when I hear Christians sing that song, that beautiful hymn, *Let angels prostrate fall,* because most of the people that sing that song would never dream of falling prostrate themselves. It's good enough for angels but not for us sober, dignified, respectable church members! Anyhow that's the second thing.

This word fascinates me because the Greek word is *doxsa*, from which we get the English word *doxology*, etc. And before I became a preacher I was a student of Greek philosophy, and *doxsa*—I shouldn't be telling you this but anyhow I've got into it now—*doxsa* is a key word in Plato's philosophy, because there were two things—knowledge and *doxsa*—which means *opinion which you receive through the senses.* Now when that word is translated in the New Testament it's always translated *glory*. But there's a connection because *the glory* is that much of God's presence that impacts human senses. So when we talk about *the glory*, we're not talking about something undefined or imperceptible. It's the presence of God manifested to human senses in His people. That's the second thing.

The third thing was the covenant and God made a number of covenants in the Old Testament beginning with Abraham, but all of them were made with Israelites. He made no covenant with Gentiles from Abraham onwards. He had made a covenant with Noah, but that was previous.

Then the giving of the law, which of course took place at Sinai. That has not been given to any other nation but to Israel. I think it's very important—this is controversial—but I don't believe God ever

expected Gentiles to observe the Law of Moses. And I smile or else I sigh when I see Christians trying to observe the Law of Moses. I'm getting far outside my outline, but that's probably a good thing. See, in Romans 8 Paul says:

> God has redeemed us through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross from the law, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not work according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

So it's not the law that's to be fulfilled in us, thank God, because nobody ever succeeded in keeping it yet, but it's the righteous requirement of the law. And my personal conclusion, which you can check for yourself, is the righteous requirement of the law can be summed in one word, which is *love.* All the law is fulfilled in this word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And Paul wrote in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 5:

> The goal of our instruction is love.

See, this to me is very important, because it seems to me so much instruction in the Christian church isn't even aimed at the goal, which is love. If we don't produce loving people, Paul says, it's a waste of words. How many words have been wasted in the course of history by preaching and teaching that doesn't produce love, and anything else is a deviation from the purpose of God. And, let me say this, if we really were experiencing and demonstrating the love amongst ourselves and to others, the Jewish people would come running to us.

I was talking to a Jewish believer here, right here in this church, he was sitting in that pew two or three Sundays ago, and I said to him, "How did you become a believer?" And he was still very Jewish. I had no problem about recognizing his identity. He said, "I found myself amongst a group of farmers in Ohio." And he said, "I was so envious of what they had I asked God for it." That's exactly what Paul says, that we should make the Jews jealous. We've done very little to do that over the centuries.

Then he said—this is so characteristic—he said, "I prayed, 'God, if Jesus is the Messiah, show me.'" And then he confessed it's a sin that he used the name *Jesus*. I don't know whether all of you can think

your way into that, but that is basically the characteristic Jewish attitude toward Jesus.

All right, we're going on. The next thing after the giving of the law is the service of God. The word means *the priestly service of God.* They were to be a kingdom of priests.

And then the promises. Basically, every promise that I can think of in the Old Testament from Abraham onwards was given to Israel. It's to them the promises belong. And then it says:

> …of whom are the fathers. From them came the patriarchs.

All the patriarchs were Jewish—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and so on. That's a list of seven things which I'll go through again quickly: the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, the promises, and the fathers. And then the eighth thing, and for me eight has a special number because it's seven plus one, the beginning of a new week, is "of whom according to the flesh Messiah came." So there are eight things that distinguish Israel from all other nations, and all of them are extremely significant for us as believers.

And then Jesus just summed it up in four or five short words in John chapter 4 and verse 22 speaking to the Samaritan woman at the Well of Jacob—and I don't know whether you've ever noticed—as far as I can discern, the first person to whom Jesus ever declared *I am the Messiah* was a Samaritan woman. Not only was she a Samaritan, she was a woman. I mean, she was as far away from qualifying for privileges as she could be, and very, very rarely if at all did Jesus ever explicitly say to the Jews, "I am the Messiah," because they should have known. But the Samaritan woman was not expected to know, so He told her. And then He said:

> "You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we Jews know what we worship, for salvation is from the Jews."

Those four or five short words are some of the most important words in the Bible. "Salvation is from the Jews." No Jews, no salvation. No patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible and no Savior. How much salvation is there when you took away all that? So this is not some wildly excited statement. This is

a sober fact of history—salvation is from the Jews. Whether you like it or not . . . I hope you all like it, but even if you don't like it, it's still true. A lot of people don't like it, but it doesn't make it any the less true.

I suggest that we just say those words together with real emphasis. I'll say them once, then you follow with me. "Salvation is from the Jews." All right. "Salvation is from the Jews." Now turn to somebody close to you, look them full in the face and say, "Salvation is from the Jews." That's right. All right. Now we've established that scriptural fact. And if we establish nothing else tonight, that would be supremely important.

Now one other unique fact about Israel which I want to deal with in a certain amount of detail is they're the only nation whose history was predicted in advance by prophecy before it ever happened. That's not true of any other nation, and I'm going to go quickly through sixteen prophecies in the Bible concerning Israel. I'm going to point out to you those which have been fulfilled and those which have not. Now I have Scriptures for all of these. I'm not going to turn to them because of the limitations of time.

First of all—and the first three of these prophecies were all given to Abraham in Genesis chapter 15. The Lord predicted the enslavement of Israel in Egypt—number one. Number two—He also predicted their deliverance from Egypt with wealth—also to Abraham. Thirdly, also to Abraham—He predicted that they would gain possession of the land of Canaan. So those are three specific predictions all made in advance of the event. Number one, Israel would be enslaved in Egypt; Number two, they would be delivered with wealth; and number three, they would take possession of the land of Canaan. Now all those have been historically fulfilled. There is no question about that. They're all simple facts of history.

And then, Moses predicted before they ever entered the Promised Land, that after entering they would turn to idolatry. This was predicted in Deuteronomy 32 verses 15 through 21, and there are countless examples of the fulfillment of it in the subsequent history of Israel.

Number five—God predicted that there would be established a center of worship in Jerusalem. This was predicted in Deuteronomy 12 verses 5 and 6, and in many other places and in Psalm 132 it was fulfilled.

Number six—the prophets of Israel predicted that the northern kingdom, Israel, would be taken into exile by the empire of Assyria. This is found in many passages of the prophet Amos. I won't give you the specific references. That was exactly fulfilled.

Number seven—the fact that the southern kingdom of Judah would be taken into exile in Babylon was also fulfilled in many passages of Jeremiah and was predicted and was exactly fulfilled.

Number eight—the destruction of the first temple, the total destruction of Solomon's temple was predicted in 2 Chronicles 7 verses 19 through 22, when the Lord appeared for the second time to Solomon. He said:

If you're obedient, I'll bless you. If you're disobedient, I'll destroy everything you've built.

And it happened exactly as He said. It wasn't metaphorical. It was literal. And I think it's important to understand as we look at all these prophecies—every one of them was literally fulfilled. There is no pattern in the Bible for the metaphorical fulfillment of simple statements. That's one of the great errors the church has fallen into.

Number nine—the return of a small remnant from Babylon to Jerusalem was predicted, in Isaiah chapter 6 and chapter 48 to mention only two.

Number ten—the destruction of the second temple was predicted in detail by Jesus Himself, and was fulfilled in less than one generation from the time He made the prediction. You can find it predicted in Matthew 24 verse 2, Luke 19 verses 43 and 44. And again—let's pay attention to this—it was literally fulfilled. Jesus said, "There would not be left one stone upon another," and that's exactly what happened. It was not metaphorical. To me, that's frightening when I think of many of the yet unfulfilled prophecies of the Bible.

Number eleven—it was predicted that the Jewish people would be scattered among all nations. Leviticus chapter 26 verses 33 and 34, Ezekiel chapter 12, chapter 20 and so on—many places—that was literally fulfilled. The Jewish people in my lifetime have returned to Israel from at least one hundred different nations. That in itself is very remarkable.

My first wife (whom some of you knew) was Danish and she used to say to me, "You scatter the Danes amongst all nations and come back two hundred years later you would not find a single Dane anywhere on earth. They would all have been assimilated." Yet the Jews have been scattered for nineteen centuries, and endless different pressures have been brought to bear upon them to give up their identity, and yet they've remained and come back.

Number twelve—it was predicted, also in Leviticus 26, that during their dispersion they would be persecuted and oppressed, and history provides endless examples of that.

Number thirteen—it was predicted that in God's time they would be regathered again from all the nations where they had been scattered and brought back to the land of Israel—predicted in Isaiah chapter 11 verse 11 and 12, Zechariah chapter 10 verses 9 and 10, and many, many other passages. That has been fulfilled and is being fulfilled.

So we have thirteen predictions of Scripture concerning Israel, all made in advance, and all exactly fulfilled in history.

Now I want to suggest to you three major prophetic predictions that have not yet been fulfilled. Number fourteen—that all nations would be gathered in war against Jerusalem. Zechariah chapter 12 verses 2 and 3, and chapter 14 verses 1 and 2.

Number fifteen—that there would be a supernatural revelation of the Messiah to Israel collectively by the Spirit of God predicted very dramatically in Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 and following.

And number sixteen—that the Messiah would come in person and descend on the Mount of Olives. And that is found in Zechariah 14 verses 3 and 5 and other places, as well as in the New Testament.

So now this is not exact. You could change a few things, but I think it's a fairly reasonable presentation of some of the main prophecies or predictions of the Bible concerning Israel; and out of sixteen, thirteen have been, or are being, exactly fulfilled. That leaves three as yet unfulfilled. Now if your mathematics are the same as mine, that means just over eighty percent of the prophecies have been fulfilled. Less than twenty percent are left to be fulfilled.

Now I was—one of my fields of study was logic, and I realize that the fact that eighty percent of the

prophecies have been fulfilled is not in itself a logical proof that the remaining twenty will be fulfilled. But I think it's a good reason for believing it. What I want to emphasize is: we are not misguided fanatics, we are not dreamers from another world, we are people with both feet on the ground and our heads in right order if we take seriously the yet unfulfilled predictions of Scripture. And let me say what the three were again, because they're very important and very exciting: that all nations would be gathered against Jerusalem in battle; that there would be a supernatural revelation of Jesus, the pierced One, as the Messiah; and that the Messiah would come in glory on the clouds of heaven, with tremendous glory. Luke 9:23, Jesus says:

He will come in His own glory, the Father's glory and the glory of the holy angels.

That's a triple glory. And if you bear in mind what I said to you about the word *glory*, it means a staggering, unbelievable impact upon human senses, and it's there, it's waiting.

Now I just want to go a little further tonight. Tomorrow night, the Lord helping me, I want to deal with what the future holds. I'll try to move on from fulfilled to unfulfilled prophecy. But tonight and the latter part of this message I just want to deal with the particular prophecies about the regathering of the Jewish people in their own land toward the close of this present age. And let me say, there are many exciting predictions concerning the close of the age, and most of them are fearful—wars, pestilences, famines, earthquakes, tremendous disasters. But if you go back over nineteen centuries of history, you can find some things that could be interpreted as happening in that category. But the one thing that is absolutely unique about the present century is the regathering of the Jewish people in their own land. There is no parallel in the past nineteen centuries. This is the one distinctive prophetic indication of the time in which we are living. And if you realize that there is a devil, I think you'll understand some of his tremendous opposition to this revelation, because it's a key to understanding so much else that's happening in the world today.

Now, let's go to Jeremiah 30 for a moment and look at a very clear prediction of the regathering of the Jewish people. It's in Jeremiah 30, we could read the first seven verses—Jeremiah 30: 1 through 7:

> The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, "Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.'"

That's an interesting thought, isn't it? Don't fail to keep a record of what I've spoken. Now this is not parallel, but Ruth and I over the last four or five years, three years, we've started writing down some of the things that we believe the Lord spoke. Now I say we believe, you're free to challenge that. And only the past two weeks while we were on holiday on the west coast of Florida, we read through those things and it was impressive. First of all, there was a remarkable consistency all through and if there were two things the Lord emphasized, number one was "Listen to what I'm saying," and number two, "Wait on Me." I think He must have said those things at least twelve different contexts during that period. And there were a number of predictions, some of which have already been fulfilled. But if we had not kept a record, we would have lost a great deal of the impact of that.

Now be very careful, because when I first came to know the Lord in 1942, '41, God gave me the gift of interpretation. Now I didn't even know it was a gift, and I never spoke in tongues without getting the interpretation. And let me tell you, one of the things that I said again and again—or rather the Lord said—every time I spoke in tongues it came, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob." And having a very carnal mind and no real scriptural background I thought, "So what?" But after a while it dawned on me He really is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and I discovered in the Bible that's how He wants to be known to all nations forever. That's an astonishing fact, isn't it? The Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, wants to be recognized as the God of three men, all of whom were somewhat weak, had their errors and their weaknesses—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Well, then I began to get interpretations that related to my life. So I started to write them down. And after about two years or so—and some of them are remarkable. One of them was a predictive prophecy of a certain period of time that was to elapse and when the time was fulfilled I was on the Suez Canal and it was the Jewish Passover, and I had no idea of the Jewish calendar at that time. But it couldn't have been more appropriate. But I said to myself, "Listen, I think I'm getting a second Bible, and one Bible is

enough." So I destroyed them all. I'm a little sorry in a way that I did, but I think it was right. But I don't feel any reservation now about making a record of some of the things that we feel God speaks to us.

And let me say one thing that we have learned and I want to share with you because I think it's important, if you want to hear from God you have to wait on God. You can't give God ten minutes and say, "Now speak." You can't give Him one day and say, "Now speak." You have to wait until He speaks. And that's perhaps one of the greatest deficiencies in the body of Christ today—hardly anybody has time to wait on God. And I want to say time spent waiting on God is not time wasted. It saves you from wasting a lot of time doing things that God never directed you to do. Amen?

All right. Now we're going back to Jeremiah chapter 30 verse 3:

> "For behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will bring back from captivity [or from exile] My people Israel and Judah. [That's the two kingdoms—the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom.] And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."

No matter what politicians or others say, God says, "They shall possess it." Now I think anybody with a moderate familiarity with Scripture will recognize there is only one land that answers the description, "The land that I gave to the fathers of the Jewish people." The land that was originally called Canaan and later was called the land of Israel, and in the New Testament its only title is the land of Israel. It is never called Palestine, which was a Latin/Roman name imposed on the land in order to obliterate its Jewish heritage. And as for Ruth and me, we will not use the word Palestine. I won't go into that.

Now we come to the message.

> Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. "For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.'"

Now, a well-known Charismatic figure in another nation—and I won't be more specific—made a statement some years ago. He said, "The return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel could not be from God, because if it had been from God there would be peace." But you see, he didn't know his Bible, because the Lord says they will return and there will not be peace. I'm going to say that again.

We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear or terror, and not of peace.

And then the description becomes more and more intense.

> Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with a child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale?

This is not going to be a little minor skirmish. It's going to something so terrifying that men will behave like women in travail. Do you believe that? It's going to happen whether you believe it or not. I sometimes think that Christians who are urging Jews to return to the land are a little naïve, because if they are going to urge them they should also warn them of what lies ahead. I mean I don't say, "Don't return"—I'm in favor of it. But don't expect an easy time. But I think probably those that don't return will have an even harder time in due course. Now verse 7:

> Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall he saved out of it.

I believe "the time of Jacob's trouble"—and I'll deal with this hopefully tomorrow—is the beginning of what is called the Great Tribulation, because Paul said, "God's order of tribulation is to the Jew first and also to the Greek." So we who are Gentiles need to bear in mind that whatever comes upon the Jewish people, sooner or later it's going to boomerang and come on us.

All right. But the important statement there is, *But he shall be saved out of it*—not from it, but out of it. Sometimes we ask God to save us from things and He doesn't do it, but He does save us out of it.

Now, at the end of that chapter, and it's all one chapter, the Lord says concerning all that's predicted, *In the latter days you will consider it,* or you'll understand it. So the full understanding of Jeremiah 30 is reserved for the latter days, which I believe is an indication that its fulfillment will not be manifested until the latter days, the close of the age.

Now one other prophet I'd like to turn to briefly is Hosea chapter 1 and verse 10. God has said that He will reject Israel and say, "You are not My people." But then it says in Hosea 1 verse 10,

> Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there it shall be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."

What was the place where God said to them, "You are not My people," in their own land? And specifically Hosea says the same place God will say to them, "You are My people." So to restore them to His favor, He has to bring them back to the land. Also another important fact about Jewish people, which is not exclusive to them, is that God does not deal with them merely as individuals. He made them a nation by His covenant and He deals with them collectively. Now He can deal with individual Jews, and He is, supernaturally and sovereignly. But that's only the prelude to dealing with the nation as a whole. And there's only one place God can do that. He has to get them together again. He can't deal with them as a nation if some of them are in South America and some in South Africa and some in Canada and some in China. He has to gather them together. And there's only one place that's logical or scriptural, that is their own land. So the purpose of God regathering Israel is that He may be able to deal with them there, not just as individuals, but as a nation.

I think we have a lot to learn from that in the church, because I think one of the great errors of the church, particularly in America but in other countries too, is that we are far too individualistic in our concept of God's dealing. There's me and my salvation, my Savior and my faith and my gifts and my church. Is it really my church? The last time I was a pastor, which was more than thirty years ago, I was talking about "my church" and I felt God arrested me sometime and said, "Would you mind telling Me whose church it is?" And I thought it over and I said, "Lord, I hope it's Yours; but I'm not too sure." I think this is a tremendous lesson that's going to be brought home to all of us. We've got to learn to act corporately as a community, and things are going to happen where we won't survive unless we do that.

You know I read a statistic—the average number of persons in an American household today statistically is 1.7 persons. In other words, not even two people can live together any longer. Why? Because it says in 1 Timothy 3, "Men will be lovers of their own selves," which is the root of all human problems. "I can't get on with you, so I'm going to live on my own. Don't get in my way; I won't get in

your way. Leave me to myself and I'll make it." You'll make a disaster; that's what you'll make.

All right, now, I just want to come, in closing this study, to just one specific series of predictions about the regathering of Israel found in Ezekiel chapter 36. You could find in the Bible at least fifty predictions—probably many more. But I want to choose just this one because it is so carefully ordered, step by step and phase by phase from dispersion to final regathering. I'm going to look in Ezekiel chapter 36 and I'm going to read a number of verses, but I'll pause to comment. Ezekiel 36 verse 16:

> Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds: to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity."

Notice, it was their own land, even when they defiled it. And then God says, "I judged them." In verse 18 and 19:

> Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds.

The dispersion of the Jewish people was a judgment of God. Many Jews today don't want to acknowledge that fact, but the Bible clearly states that.

> Now when they came to the nations [that's *goyim*, the non-Jewish peoples] wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, "These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land."

In a sense, God said, "The scattered Jews were an embarrassment to Me, because everywhere they went they misrepresented Me. They didn't fulfill their function as My people." Then God says, and this is very important, in verse 21:

> But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.

Now God's reason for intervening on behalf of Israel is not that they deserve it. He makes that

abundantly clear. It's to retrieve the glory of His name. Verse 22:

> Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God: 'I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.'"

You cannot understand the regathering of Israel if you try to explain it by the fact that the Jews have deserved it. They haven't; and God goes out of His way to emphasize that they haven't. The reason He's doing it really is twofold. First of all, because He's decided to do it. You see, we leave very little room for the sovereignty of God in our contemporary Christian thinking. But the reason God does things is because He's decided to do them. And what a relief it is when you realize that! You see, I'm thinking something—I didn't plan to say that, but God spoke to me—forgive me that phrase. I had the impression God said that He was renewing my youth. I didn't ask Him to do it, I didn't have any reason why I should claim it, but He decided to do it and there are many evidences that He's doing it. That's good, that's exciting.

Another time Ruth and I were in London in September this year and in a very exciting church which has five thousand members, but their meeting place only seats nineteen hundred, so they have five services every Sunday. The exciting thing about this church is that fifty percent of the church are Africans in the middle of London. So for me being there was like being back in Africa. I mean, I just had a wonderful time. But while we were on the platform, and God gave us really glorious meetings—while we were on the platform Ruth said to me, "I think I have a word." So I said, "Go and ask the pastor who's on the platform and if he says okay, it's okay." So he said, "Okay."

So Ruth stood up there and I mean she spoke with such authority. It was not my wife speaking and the words were these, "I have decided to visit London." Why is God going to visit London? Does London deserve it? No, but because He's decided to do it.

Brothers and sisters, you'll get rid of a lot of your problems if you'd line up with what God has decided to do. Stop trying to earn it! So this is the whole background of the restoration of Israel—God made the decision. One thing we will never understand is all the judgments of God. So don't waste time

trying.

Paul says in Romans 11:33:

> …His ways are unsearchable and His judgments past finding out.

Don't waste too much time trying to analyze the judgments of God. Trust Him. He's just, but He's also merciful.

All right, verse 22—I think I read that—verse 23, God says:

> "I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the LORD God, "when I am hallowed [or sanctified] in you before their eyes."

God has chosen to reveal Himself to all the nations by what He does in Israel. So again, the nations do not need to feel neglected. God does this. He doesn't deal with an immense crowd of people. He picks out an individual and deals with him. Somebody said, "If God had left it to a committee to get Israel out of Egypt, they'd still be there today." But God chose one man—Moses. God very seldom picks a committee. There is a place for committees. I'd better stop there. A friend of mine, years ago, said, "The trouble with committees is they have neither body to be kicked nor soul to be damned."

All right, we're going on, verse 24. Now we're coming to the stage-by-stage outworking of this process which is happening before our eyes. And I can say my own eyes have seen much of it firsthand. Verse 24:

> For I will take you from among the nations…

And bear in mind, this is always *goyim*—which is the word that's used by Jewish people to describe nations that are not Jewish.

> For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

Whose land? It's always been their land. It was their land when they defiled it, it was their land when they were driven out of it, and it's their land when they're brought back to it. It's never belonged to anybody else. Why is it their land? Because God gave it to them, and God has an absolute right to do what He will with any part of the earth because He owns the whole thing.

All right, verse 25:

> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be cleansed; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Now another major error of Christian theology has been, if the Jews are to return to their own land, they must repent and acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and then God will bring them back. God says, "No. That's not the way I'm going to do it. I'm going to get you into the land in your filthiness and in your idolatry—which, believe me, is the condition of Israel today—and then I'm going to start cleaning you up. Amen. He says, "I'm going to sprinkle clean water on you." That can be interpreted various way, but for me I think the clean water is the Word of God. And as the Jewish people are confronted by the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, it's going to do something. Sometimes it's slow and inch by inch—and sometimes it's sovereign and very dramatic.

I have a number of Israeli friends, Jewish, who met the Messiah. No two of them met the Messiah in the same way. Every one of them God dealt with as an individual, and most of them He dealt with supernaturally. I think of one brother who is known to many of us here—I won't name him. He got hold . . . somebody gave him a New Testament. He had no intention of reading it and he began to read Matthew. Any Jew that reads Matthew says to himself after a while, "Jesus really was a Jew. There's no doubt about that." You cannot read the gospel of Mathew, being Jewish, without recognizing that Jesus was a Jew—which, of course, is the lie that has been propagated by the orthodox: He is not a Jew. And he came to faith when he read the words that were put over the head of Jesus on the cross, *This Is Jesus, The King Of The Jews.* And he believed. He was totally transformed by believing that one statement.

So you can never predict how God will reach a Jew. You can't predict how He'll reach a Gentile; but

particularly the Jewish people. If I could say this: I think God, in a way, is a little bit jealous about the Jews. He abrogates to Himself the privilege of dealing with them in His own way direct.

I'll share something with you. I've probably gone on too long, but… About three or four years ago I was in our home in Jerusalem, and about two o'clock in the morning I was wide awake and I had this sense of excitement. I thought to myself, "Why am I excited?" And then the thought came to me, "Because all heaven is excited. You're sharing in the excitement of heaven." So then I said to myself, "Why is heaven excited?" And the answer was, "Because Jesus is excited, and when Jesus is excited, all heaven is excited." So then I said, "Why is Jesus excited?" And the answer I believe God gave me is, "Because He knows He's about to be reconciled with His own brothers after two thousand years of separation." So if you're witnessing to Jews, let the Holy Spirit take over, and don't give up because you meet an apparently blank exterior, because something very deep may be happening inside. I smile because I believe that the Holy Spirit is the first person of the Godhead that you contact when you become a believer. But most of us didn't recognize the Holy Spirit. Is that true?

I mean, before I met Jesus, the Holy Spirit was dealing with me in a very powerful way. I was reading the Bible as an unbeliever and reading it in the Army, and because I was seen reading the Bible, the chaplain came to me and said, "I want you to read the lesson in church on Sunday." It turned out it was Whitsunday, Pentecost Sunday, so the lesson was Acts chapter 2. Now I rather fancied myself as a reader of English, so I thought, "I'm really going to let them know how this should be read." So I practiced it in advance and chose the breathing spaces and all that. Well when I got up it was a pathetic failure, because I couldn't read more than three words without gasping. My whole chest was heaving. And I thought, "This is ridiculous, it's embarrassing," and I had no idea what it was. But that was May and in July Jesus revealed Himself to me. He had already been dealing with me by the Holy Spirit. And you see a lot is going on with the Jewish people that they don't understand.

Let me tell you another story because it will encourage you. Some years ago, in fact in 1980, Ruth and I attended the first real multiracial, multi-denominational conference in Johannesburg, in South Africa. A very outstanding experience, and I was the closing speaker, and they said to me, "Now it's the

end of the conference. Everybody's tired, forty-five minutes and no more." So I put Ruth in the front seat. I said, "When I've finished with forty-five minutes you put your hand up and I'll stop in the middle of a sentence."

I got going and I began to talk about God's dealings with Israel, which was not planned at all. And at the end they said to me, "You know you spoke an hour and a half." I said to Ruth, "Why didn't you put your hand up?" She said, "I did, but you didn't see me." But, that message got around South Africa to the Jewish communities and so they began inviting Ruth and me to come and speak to them. And one of the groups that we spoke to was B'nai B'rith in Johannesburg. You know what the B'nai B'rith are? It's a Jewish sort of anti-defamation league, and these were totally secular people. The man who was leading it was a sabra from Israel, born in the Old City, but very secular. So he gave what they call my "curriculum vitae," my academic background, which is what's the most important for them—and turned me loose. And I tried to explain to them out of the prophets why I believed in the destiny of Israel. I didn't specifically preach about Jesus.

In the middle of it two men lit cigarettes, and I thought, "How good to be in a place that people are not so religious that they don't know you don't smoke when the preacher is speaking." I thought, "Thank God I've broken out of the ghetto." So at the end the leader stood up and said, "Now, when Dr. Prince was speaking," he said, "something was here. Something, it was kind of warm and comforting. It made you feel happy." And he spent several minutes describing. He didn't know he was talking about the Holy Spirit, you see. And he never got any further at that time. I don't know what's happened to him since. But what I'm trying to say to is, Trust the Holy Spirit. Release the Holy Spirit. He knows what to do. It's really comical to watch the Holy Spirit deal with Jewish people because He comes up, as it were, on their blind side, and they don't know what's happening to them.

Anyhow, we've got to go on. I'm nearly finished. Verse 26:

> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Now if I'd said that, I would be called anti-Semitic, but it's Ezekiel who said it. He said, "The Jewish people have had a heart of stone." That's one of the amazing facts of history. What's the fact about a heart of stone? It is incapable of responding to the Holy Spirit. What's the truth about a heart of flesh? It becomes capable of responding to the Holy Spirit. It isn't necessarily converted, but it can respond. Now I believe that really began to happen in 1967, the year of the Six-Day War. There was a remarkable change in the attitude of the Jewish people toward Jesus, so that now today in many circles you can talk freely about Jesus to Jews—not necessarily to all.

We have secular Jewish friends who come and visit us and it's really comical. They sit around and we think, "Why don't they go? We've given them coffee. What more can we do?" And it dawns on us they're waiting to hear about Jesus. What they really want to hear is how God answers prayer. If you can talk to Jewish people about specific answers to prayer, they'll listen, because they like things that work.

Oh, I think I must tell you about—I really need to finish, but I'll tell you about our engineer. When we were building our house we had a Jewish engineer—a very distinguished man. He'd been the engineer for the Jerusalem Theater, and why he was willing to come and help us with our petty little building, I don't know—but he was. He'd been exposed several times to Christians. So one day when the house was almost complete and we'd moved in, he came along and he said, "I'm in a real hurry. I can only give you ten minutes. I just want to see how things are going." And then he said, "Oh, I've got such a pain in my back." And Ruth said, "Well, my husband has a treatment for that," and he began to get interested.

I didn't get excited. "What is it?" "Well," I said, "I get people seated in a chair and I measure their legs and if their legs are unequal then I hold them—the short leg grows out and that usually means God has touched the person's back." "Will you do that for me?" "Sure," I said. "Sit down." I was very casual about the whole thing. I held his legs and, sure enough, one was shorter and grew out, and God touched him. I mean, he was a different person. And he said he could only stay ten minutes—he stayed half an hour.

He came back about a week or so later and he said, "My back's fine, but I've got something in my shoulder. Do you have anything for that?" So Ruth said, "Yes, my husband has something for that." And I

said, “Yes. If you will stand up straight and put your arms out wide and bring them together in front of your nose, if they’re unequal I’ll see and your short arm will grow out, and then you’ll know the Lord has touched you.”

Well, it worked. He brought his arms together and the short arm just grew out like that. I mean… I said, “The Lord has touched you.” He was in a short-sleeved shirt because it was summer and all the hairs on his arm stood up. He said, “What’s that?” I said, “That’s the power of God.” And then he said, “You could have a line outside this house if you started to…” But we don’t have a line outside the house, and I don’t do it unless I specifically feel God wants it done. But he later said to our friend, Lance Lambert, who also had used him as an engineer, “I believe that Jesus is the Messiah.” Now he’s not born again. He has an intellectual belief, but his heart hasn’t been changed. But that’s a little example of how the Holy Spirit is so original and creative in dealing with people. Of course, it’s not only Jewish people, but there’s a special excitement, I think, to see Him do that after nineteen centuries of a heart of stone.

Then he goes on, the next verse, verse 27:

> I will put My Spirit [capital M and capital S] within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

What is “My Spirit”? That’s the Holy Spirit. So first God says, “I’ll give you a heart of flesh that can respond to the Holy Spirit, then if you respond I’ll put the Holy Spirit in you, and then you will keep My commandments and walk in My statutes.” You see, no one can obey God without the Holy Spirit—neither Jew nor Gentile. You can try to keep the law, you can try to keep the commandments, you can try to be good, but only the Holy Spirit will enable you to do that.

At the age of 15 I was—what do you call it?—confirmed in the Anglican Church. The Bishop of Oxford came and laid his hand on my head and I was confirmed. Before I was confirmed I was a sinner, and after I was confirmed I was a confirmed sinner. I mean, the reason I did it was because it was expected. I’m sure the dear bishop did it because it was expected of him. Then I said to myself, “Now I really ought to be a lot better.” And it was very clear to me I needed to be a lot better. So I said,

"Confirmation has come. I'm going to be good." Well the problem was, the harder I tried to be good, the quicker I got bad." So after a few months I said, "You know, this thing doesn't work." So I gave up.

Ten years later God put the Holy Spirit within and immediately it was a delight to do the will of God. So whether you're Jew or Gentile only the Holy Spirit can make it a joy and a possibility to obey God.

Now we come to the key verse, verse 28:

> After this then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Now, bear in mind that is the goal. Everything else that's happening are just stages on the way to the fulfillment of the goal. But the goal is *You shall be My people and I will be your God.* Don't get impatient. Don't get upset. A writer in the *New York Times* said—I didn't say it—he said: Rabin's recent behavior has dispelled at least one myth—the Jews are cleverer than others. I mean, we could be provoked by what we see Jewish politicians do. In fact, if you knew all the stories, you'd be more than provoked. Don't let that affect you. God knows what He's doing. His ultimate goal is, "You will be My people; I will be your God." And everything else that happens along the way will be incomplete until then. So that's where we're working for, that's what we're praying for.

Now let me just make one further statement then I close. If you take verses 23 through 30 of that chapter in Hebrew, God says eighteen times *I will.* Never once in all those verses is there any suggestion that it depends on anything but what God wills to do. So don't look for an explanation in the Jewish people because it isn't there. It's God's sovereign will and purpose, and the way to be happy in life is to line up with the will of God. You know Bob Mumford's example of the cat—that somebody was stroking it with the fur the wrong way? Bob said, "Turn round, silly, and you'll be stroked the right way." So, if you're struggling, maybe you're looking the wrong way. Maybe you're not lined up with the purposes of God.

I believe the purpose of God is the restoration of Israel and I believe as I align myself with that purpose, sincerely and humbly, God's blessing is on my life and ministry and I am successful—not by

world's standards, but by the standards of God. So as we continue with this conference let's make up our minds, a decision of our wills, we're not going to try to straighten God out or to correct Him, or improve on His plan, we're just going to get aligned with what He has decided to do. Can you embrace that? And whether you are Jewish or non-Jewish, God will bless you. Amen.