

## THE PEACEFUL NATION

MY FRIENDS, we are currently considering that portion of the Book of Ezekiel which appears to throw prophetic light upon מדינת ישראל, the present little State of Israel, which, as you know, re-emerged into history on May 14, 1948, with the authority of the United Nations.

The Ezekiel prophecies are encouraging for they disclose a prophesied prosperity in at least three spheres — prosperity in sovereignty, prosperity in soil, prosperity in soul.

The certainty of the appearance of these three Divine bestowals fully justifies a clear positive note in announcing them; the sequence of their appearance is less obvious, and therefore justifies consideration of each feature without necessarily inferring chronological succession.

Like three fragrant flowers in a garden of Divine planting we can examine each bloom repeatedly and separately without necessarily knowing which flower blossomed first.

In my ninth message in this series we paused to inhale the delectable perfume of the first prophecy — the coming of the Shepherd Prince assuring goodness in government מלכות ישראל, the kingdom of Israel. The beauty of this bloom of promise invites our return to it later on, by the way.

In my last message entitled “THE KISS OF THE SOIL,” we sensed the rich fragrance of the second flower of Divine promise — the goodness of the ground, the soil, in providing a material prosperity supernaturally inaugurated and maintained for the restored people of Israel.

You will remember that we agreed that the present transformation of the land of Israel, wonderful though it undoubtedly is, is nevertheless only a reflection of the prophesied fullness.

Reserving the attractive redolence of the third bloom for spiritual inhalation in future messages, let us leave our garden and — incidentally — our metaphor, and turn our attention to the dramatic panorama of prophecy portrayed by הנביא יחזקאל, the prophet Ezekiel, in his thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters.

My friends, I desire to paint for your gaze a tranquil picture. A peaceful portrayal of a particular people in a particular place.

However, in painting this picture let us avoid the unreliable and changeful colours of mere human speculation. Human opinion can be very vivid and sensational initially, but, the changes of time can, and frequently do, leave it somewhat faded and undoubtedly very flat.

Permit me, then, to employ exclusively only those pigments provided upon the palette supplied by the Divinely-inspired Ezekiel himself. In short, I will not add to Ezekiel's words.

Come. Behold the canvas! The people of Israel restored back to the land of Israel:

“The land of Israel ‘brought back from the sword’

The people of Israel 'gathered out of many peoples'

The land of Israel that was once 'waste' and 'desolate'

The people of Israel dwelling 'in the midst' thereof

Israel 'safely' and 'at rest' in 'unwalled villages,' without 'walls,' 'bars,' or 'gates'

Israel having gotten 'silver' and 'gold,' 'cattle' and 'goods.'

Those are the actual colours the prophecies of Ezekiel authorize me to use in painting my word-picture for you; thus it is a picture conjured to our minds by the very words of Scripture itself.

It is the picture of a peaceful nation dwelling in reasonable tranquillity, security and prosperity.

A picture of a people restored to a land restored; a land restored both with regard to ownership and output.

It is a pleasant picture and may I remind you that for nearly two thousand years it has been a fanciful picture.

If I were broadcasting this message only one hundred years ago incredulous listeners would have laughed at Ezekiel's picture — for it is really his, you know, not mine — of a people restored to a land restored.

But we know today that such laughter would have been the laughter of a loon! For, surely, the picture painted by Ezekiel is a picture that finds its most eloquent animated initial commentary and counterpart in current history!

The unsheathed sword of the fourth of August, 1914, ultimately united the long-parted and sorrowing lovers - ארץ ישראל ועם ישראל - the land of Israel and the people of Israel, both seared and scarred with the agonies of two thousand years of separation; these — the people and the land — now clasped each other in ardent reunion.

The land, once "**waste**" and "**desolate**," warmly responded to the renewed embrace of her long-absent lover "**gathered out of many peoples**" back once again to her bosom.

The Divine expulsion of the people of Israel from the land of Israel which began under Titus in the year 70 of the Common Era and was completed under Hadrian about 134 C.E. scattered the residue of the twelve tribes of Israel, now known as the Jewish people, into many, many nations.

For 1,000 years most of the scattered people remained in the Near East and countries round North Africa; a lesser number managed to penetrate as far as England, Spain, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, and in those areas around the Balkan and Slav countries.

It was not until the eleventh century that the Jewish population increased numerically in Europe and more particularly in Spain.

Unwarranted and Satanic hate and persecution made the scattering even more widespread. Torquemada's Inquisition in Spain in 1492 and wholesale massacres in Russia in 1881 are but vile echoes in reverse of the infamy of Adolph Hitler in more recent history which began in those black days of 1939.

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution recommending an independent Jewish State in Palestine. This stung Arab groups to force, and so both within and without the land of Israel the sword was prominent and hostilities did not abate until the armies of Israel had amazed the world by securing decisive victories everywhere upon the battlefields.

On May 11, 1949 the State of Israel was admitted as a member of the United Nations. Thus the land of Israel was "**brought back from the sword.**" Surely, my friends, the prophetic light which blazed out from the utterances of Ezekiel some 2,500 years ago struck the flashing sword blades of those amazing years of 1914 to 1948 with scintillating brilliancy and with refraction sufficient to illumine the most sceptical.

"**Back from the sword**" and "**gathered out of many peoples,**" land and people were reunited in an embrace the warmth of which even statistics cannot destroy.

In the short period from May, 1948, until the end of 1950, in which year I myself was in Israel, no less than 260 new settlements had been established and over 60,000 new immigrants were absorbed in occupations solely agricultural. The value of productive farming in constant prices multiplied itself twelve times in twenty-two years!

In modern Israel today, agriculture and industries account for over 50% of the occupational structure of the people. Within that same short period to which I have referred, industrial enterprises jumped from 536 in 1925 to 3,355 in 1950.

Indeed the scenes of the present day restoration could well result in the prophetic picture painted by Ezekiel if we were to blend his pigments with the statistics and features of Israel as it has emerged in our own days.

Not all the features are fully present yet, we must admit, but it is a picture worth watching.

Israel, regarding himself secure in "**unwalled villages,**" "**safely**" and "**at rest**" and in reasonable prosperity with "**silver,**" "**gold,**" "**cattle**" and "**goods.**"

Such is the picture of a PEACEFUL NATION. And it is a very pleasant picture, too.

But is it a fool's paradise? What awaits the people and the land already "**so weary with disasters**"?

Fortunately, the light from Ezekiel which flashed upon the sword blades of our own generation will also reveal to us, in my succeeding messages, the answer to this question too.

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**(1900-1964)**

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This article is an extract from the very popular radio series, "Treasures From Tenach", which are also transcribed. Both audio (click MP3 tab, then "011peacefulnation.mp3", and transcriptions are available for free download at [www.thevineyard.org.au](http://www.thevineyard.org.au)