

# The Time Of Jacob's Trouble

## Jeremiah Chapter 30

*'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.  
Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labour with child? So why do I see every  
man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labour, and all faces turned pale?  
Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble,  
but he shall be saved out of it.* *Jeremiah 30: 4-7*

**An End to Captivity** is prophesied by Jeremiah in the previous chapter

- Jeremiah's letter to the captives told them to build houses, plant gardens, marry and prosper and grow in numbers
- Jeremiah then prophesies that their captivity will end after 70 years

*For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.*  
*Jeremiah 29: 10*

- Jeremiah had prophesied earlier of this servitude (*Jeremiah 25: 11-12*)
- It is this prophesy of Jeremiah that Daniel reads, believes and prays about in Daniel 9 when he receives the prophetic word about the Lord's purposes and plans for the Jewish people (known as Daniel's 70 Weeks – *Daniel 9: 24-27*)

**A Return to the Land** is prophesied in chapter 30, verse 3

- The Lord tells Jeremiah that the days are coming when He will bring the Jewish people back to their land – note... He will do it

*' "For behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah," says the Lord. "And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."* *Jeremiah 30: 3*

- The scriptures speak of two exiles and two returns (*Isaiah 11: 11-12*)
  - The first exile and return being after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities
  - The second being after the scattering of the Jewish people by the Romans in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries – the return only beginning in any significance in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Ezekiel, in chapters 36 and 37, prophecies of Israel's physical restoration to the land... followed by their spiritual restoration.
  - All through these chapters it is clear this is a work done by the Lord (with involvement of the gentiles at His initiative)
- In Hebraic understanding prophecy is 'pattern' – not 'prediction and fulfilment' as in Hellenistic thinking – hence this prophecy has several fulfilments:
  - It was partially fulfilled when Judah returned from Babylon – but this was not the return of Israel who were taken captive by the Assyrians and spread across their empire over 100 years before Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians
  - It began to be fulfilled with the return of Jewish people to their land – starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and continuing (in limited fashion) under the British Mandate in the 1920's and 1930's and then increasing after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948

- Clearly, in the book of *Revelation 12: 3-6*, the Jewish people will be back in the land in the Tribulation and there will be a new temple built which the ‘Antichrist’ will desecrate and the Jewish people who hear the word of the Lord, will flee Jerusalem (as declared by Yeshua in *Matthew 24: 15-22*)

**A Day of Great Trouble** is prophesied in chapter 30, verses 4-11

- The prophecy concerns Israel & Judah – all the Jewish people (verse 4)
  - This suggests it is in modern times (certainly after the 19th century)
- The description is terrifying – verses 5-6
  - Trembling voices – of fear
  - Men are like they are in labour – timorous men not warrior men; every man with his hands on his loins, in the utmost anguish and agony, as women in travail of childbirth
  - Faces pale – like death
  - This picture would seem to relate well with the time of the Holocaust and the Jewish men in the concentration camps
- No day like it – verse 7
  - It is ‘great’ in its intensity
  - It is named as ‘*the time of Jacob’s trouble*’

**A Restoration of Relationship** with their God is prophesied in chapter 30, verses 8-9

- Jacob (i.e. all 12 tribes) will be saved out of it – by the Lord – who will break their bonds of slavery – verse 8
- Jacob (i.e. the Jewish people) will once again “serve the LORD their God, and David their king” – verse 9
  - The Lord their God is in Hebrew *yehôvâh 'êlôhîym* – that is Yahweh who chose them for himself
  - David their king is generally understood to mean the Yeshua, the Lord Jesus, the seed of David
    - Yeshua is the great King often promised as Israel's hope (*Jeremiah 23: 5-6; Isaiah 9: 7; Ezekiel 37: 24-25; Luke 1: 32; Revelation 17: 14, 19: 16*)
    - No king of David's seed has held the sceptre since the captivity
    - However, some take it to mean the literal David, raised from the dead.
- No timing of this ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’ is specified
  - Some suggest it is speaking about the holocaust in World War II
    - Certainly the UN was motivated by the holocaust to affirm the San Remo Conference resolutions – this led to the establishment of the Jewish state
    - But Israel cannot be said to be serving the Lord their God in the days thereafter
  - However, the context suggests it is in the Tribulation – because it speaks of the Jewish people being saved out of it, and afterwards serving the Lord – verses 7-9
  - This is further confirmed by verses 10-11
    - The Lord will save them from afar
    - They will return to their land – and will have rest and peace, and none shall make them afraid (unlike these days)

Zechariah 13 verses 7-9

*"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion," says the Lord of hosts.*

*"Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.' "*

- There is much controversy over the timing of this prophecy
  - Some scholars say that two thirds will be killed in the ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’ – that is in the tribulation
  - On that understanding they argue against the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, certainly until the Lord’s rule is established
  - However that understanding does not sit well with the prophecies of Jeremiah 30: 8-12, nor with *Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37*
  
- The Zechariah prophesy itself sets the time scale - “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered” verse 7
  - There can be little doubt that this is referring to the death of Yeshua and the dispersion of the Jewish people thereafter
    - Note that *Jeremiah 30 : 7* – the time of Jacob’s trouble – is set right in the middle of middle of a picture of the dispersed Jewish people suffering persecution and yet with a time of return and restoration at hand
  - This would seem to imply that the time of Jacob’s trouble has been, and to some extent still is, that time of Diaspora – and we know that this has been a period of relentless persecution of the Jewish people
  - Zechariah’s prophesy of two-thirds which will be cut of and die – in the context – should be understood as relating to the period since the death and resurrection of Yeshua to the present day.
    - The word translated as ‘land’ in Zechariah 13: 8 is in Hebrew *'erets*, which can also be translated as ‘earth’
  
- It seems that both Jeremiah’s prophesy of the ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’, and Zechariah’s prophesy of ‘two-thirds which will be cut of and die’ are better understood as relating to the whole period between Yeshua’s death and His coming again
  - Nevertheless it is clear that in the last 3½ years of the tribulation (the period spoke of by Yeshua as a time of ‘great tribulation’) will be a time of great persecution for the Jewish people
  - *Revelation 12: 13-16* speak of a time (in the middle of the 7 year tribulation) when Satan and his angels are ‘cast to the earth’ and seek to persecute ‘the woman’ (Israel) – so it clearly will be a time of great persecution
  - Since the Coming World Leader (the Antichrist), and his accomplice the False Apostle, lead all the world astray – it seems likely that many Jewish people will be deceived by him and may not heed Yeshua’s warning to flee Judea and go to the wilderness “when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (*Matthew 24: 15*)
  - The scriptures do suggest that many Jewish people will be killed in the final battles at the end of the tribulation – but there is no restatement of a number, let alone ‘two thirds’

## Amir Tsarfati – Message 20th March 2003

“My conclusion is very simple: The progressive liberal deceptive and diabolical demon has completely taken over a large portion of the Israeli society to the degree of what the Bible calls: STRONG DELUSION!”

For years I’ve struggled with the portion from Zechariah 13:8-9 where it says that two thirds of Israel will be cut off and die and the last third the Lord will bring through the fire and refine them.

That’s the one third that will survive the looming Tribulation known also as Jacob’s trouble. That’s the one third that will be there to welcome the Messiah’s return as Zechariah 12:10 describes. They’ll mourn cry and repent!

Based on what I see today, if the antichrist will rise to power tomorrow I believe two thirds of Israel will be easily deceived to the point of eventually receiving the mark of the beast.

Interestingly enough, even some major Rabbis can see the coming tribulation.

Now, if the tribulation is so close, can you imagine how much even closer our rapture is!

Yes, the fig tree is blooming! Israel is back in the land! However, it is the physical restoration only. The spiritual one will be painful and tragic.

Pray for Israel!

### Persecution of the Jewish People since Yeshua’s Death

Right from the very beginning of the dispersal of the Jewish people there has been great persecution:

- In AD 70 when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, over 1 million Jews were killed and many others made slaves.
- In AD135 the Bar Kochba rebellion resulted in the death of ½ million Jews and others taken into slavery.
- Throughout the remainder of the Roman Empire and into the time of the early years of the Papacy there were many pogroms and persecutions of the Jewish people, including forced conversions (or death).
- During the times of the crusades (late 11th century to 13th century) there many pogroms against the Jews in which hundreds of thousands died and there were many mass exiles.
- As the Black Death raged in Europe in the middle of the 13th century, the Jews were often blamed and thousands murdered on the pretext of their guilt for the plague.
- It was in 1434 in Augsburg that Jewish men had to sew yellow buttons to their clothes to identify them as Jewish.
- The rise of the Ottoman Empire in the middle ages saw more pogroms against the Jews by Moslems and Arabs, as well as more Crusades by Christian Europe fighting against the Moslems but killing Jews as well.
- From the 14th century to the 19th century the Christian church has been responsible for the persecution of the Jewish people throughout Europe, resulting in the deaths of

millions of Jews – some suggest as many as 5 million in total, due to Christian persecution.

- In 1543 Martin Luther published his pamphlet ‘On Jews and their Lies’ which was deeply anti-Semitic and recommended that Jewish houses be razed to the ground and their books burned. Luther’s writings were, four centuries later, used by the Nazi’s to justify their ‘final solution’.
- The Soviet Union has seen many pogroms against the Jews and exiles and civil restrictions. Commentators suggest that at least a million Jews have been murdered during the Soviet period, particularly under Stalin.
- It is well established that under Hitler in the 1930’s and early 1940’s – in the Holocaust – 6 million Jewish people were killed.
- Since the 1940’s there has been a steady rise in antisemitism on a worldwide scale and many attacks against Israel itself – this has led to much loss of life.

Reckoning up all Jewish people who have been killed throughout the time since Yeshua’s death, and anticipating there will be some deaths in the coming days and in the tribulation – it is not difficult to see that the numbers who will remain at the end of the tribulation will be about half the number of Jewish people that have been killed throughout AD history. That is to say one-third will come through the fire and be refined – and will acknowledge the Lord (Yeshua) and the Lord God as their God... in true relationship.

## Insights from the Book of Revelation

### *Revelation 12: 13-17*

- The Dragon (Satan) is cast to the earth – at some point (probably at the start of) in the Great Tribulation (the last 3½ years of the 7 year Tribulation)
- Satan pursues the ‘Woman who gave birth to the male child’ – that is, he pursues the Jewish people
  - The context suggest that the Jewish people worldwide, not just those in Israel, are pursued
  - The ‘Woman’ flees ‘into the wilderness to her place’ – many scholars suggest this is a reference to Bozrah (which means sheepfold)  
– see *Micah 2: 12; Isaiah 63: 1*
  - The time period of this flight is the last 3½ years of the 7 year Tribulation
- The Serpent (Satan) spews out a flood to sweep away the woman
- The Earth helps the woman – possibly a reference to help from tribulation saints
- Satan, having failed to exterminate the Jewish people, turns his frustrated rage against every follower of the Lamb he can find—Jew or Gentile

There is no indication here specifically of ‘Jacob’s Trouble’ although it is clearly a time of great satanic oppression of the Jewish people

### *Revelation 13*

- The Beast from the Sea – the Coming World Leader, often referred to as ‘The Antichrist’
  - He has a healed mortal wound – he is a false Christ
  - He makes war with the saints (both Jew and Gentile) and has power to overcome them
  - He has authority (rule) over every tribe and tongue and nation

- All who dwell on the earth will worship him – the implication is that the Jewish people, as well as the Gentiles, are deceived
- The Beast from the Earth – the False Apostle
  - He causes people to worship the Beast from the Sea (the false Christ) – the Beast from the Earth is a false Holy Spirit
  - He has power to kill all who dwell on the earth who do not worship the ‘Beast’
  - All those deceived will receive the ‘mark of the beast’ which will preclude them from being redeemed (see *Revelation 20: 4*)

There is clear indication here that those who are deceived by ‘The Antichrist’ will suffer in the Great Tribulation.

Those who refuse the ‘mark of the beast’, the False Apostle will have killed...but they will have eternal life.

Those who take the ‘mark of the beast’ will be killed in the final battles when the Lord returns to rule and reign.

Since all ‘earth dwellers’ are deceived, it is likely that this includes many Jewish people.

## Notes by JAG

- The ‘Time of Jacob’s Trouble’
  - *In Matthew 24: 15-22* Jesus is also referring to the prophecy in Daniel 12 when He speaks of an unprecedented time of trouble
  - *Zechariah 13: 8* speaks of two thirds being cut off (killed) – however
    - The context is the scattering of Israel after the Shepherd (Jesus) has been struck (killed)
    - ‘In all the land’ (v.8) can be understood as ‘in all the earth’, not necessarily ‘in the land of Israel’ – hence the two thirds can be those in the Diaspora - a number not dissimilar to the two holocausts – one in Roman times and that in the 1930’s & 40’s...in both about 6 million Jewish people died
    - Many scholars, however, understand this to refer to the Tribulation
  - *Jeremiah 30: 7* speaks of ‘Jacob’s trouble’ – and again many scholars understand this as referring to the Tribulation...however
    - The context is the Lord’s purpose to regather the Jewish people to their land
    - *Jeremiah 30: 5-7* seems to fit with the holocaust – ‘faces turned pale’
    - *Jeremiah 30: 8-11* speaks of regathering after suffering – as since 1946
    - Part is yet to be fulfilled – Israel is not yet resting in quiet, there has not been an end to the nations of the Diaspora...nor are they ‘serving the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up’
  - *Hosea 5: 15* The Lord’s return to save Israel will not occur until they acknowledge their offence (the rejection of Messiah) and seek him earnestly
    - Jesus makes clear a prerequisite to His second coming – The Jews must call on Him as their Messiah (*Matthew 23: 37-39*)