

# God's Purpose And Plan For Israel—Part 1

## Outline:

1. Israel and God's Plan of Salvation
2. Why should we try and understand what's next for Israel? What does it matter?
3. Three prophecies that have already been fulfilled by Israel in recent history
4. What is the current situation for Israel?
5. The next event on the timeline of God's prophetic plan concerning Israel—The Gog Magog war of Ezekiel 38-39
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## 1. Israel and God's Plan of Salvation

God started to reveal His plan of salvation right after Adam sinned and brought death into the world. Talking to Satan, God said *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."* (Genesis 3:15) Satan's seed is the antichrist who will rise up in direct rebellion against God, as described in the book of Revelation. The Seed of the woman is none other than the Saviour or Messiah. Satan would indeed hurt Jesus (crucifixion), but Jesus would rise again. However, at the cross, Jesus will completely defeat Satan and his place will eventually be in the Lake of Fire forever.

About 2,100 years go by before more information is given about this coming Messiah. God calls Abraham and promises him that the foretold Saviour would be one of His descendants. God unconditionally promises Abraham that He will make of him a great nation and from that nation would come the Messiah or Saviour.

Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV

*Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

The Messianic promise here is that, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." God again reaffirms this promise to Abraham later on after Isaac is born. *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."* (Genesis 22:18).

The same promises given to Abraham are then given to Isaac, *"Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. <sup>4</sup> And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"* (Genesis 26:3-4 NKJV).

God then gives the same promise to Jacob. *"And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Genesis 28:13-14 NKJV).

Notice the repetition of the three main elements of God's promise that are reiterated—the land, the descendants or nation, and that “in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Paul in Galatians confirms the identity of the Seed as being the Saviour or Messiah in Galatians 3:16, *“Now the promises (covenants, agreements) were decreed and made to Abraham and his Seed (his Offspring, his Heir). He [God] does not say, And to seeds (descendants, heirs), as if referring to many persons, but, And to your Seed (your Descendant, your Heir), obviously referring to one individual, Who is [none other than] Christ (the Messiah). [Gen. 13:15; 17:8.]”*

After Abraham, the lineage of the Saviour or Messiah is then narrowed to the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), then King David (2 Samuel 7:9), and then Zerubbabel (Haggai 2:23). In the gospels of Mathew and Luke we see the genealogies of Joseph and Mary respectively.

So why did God choose to use a particular nation to bring the Saviour into the world? To answer this question, consider what God says about Israel. *“They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children [or nation]. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. <sup>5</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And He is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.”* (Romans 9:4-5 NLT)

Because of prophecy, God telling us in advance who the Messiah would be; there could be no doubt as to the timing, identity, purpose, and actions of the Messiah. There are over 320 prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ. Also, the law tells us of the holiness of God, and without it we would not know just how desperately we need the Saviour to save us from our sin. Truly, the singular purpose of the nation of Israel's existence is that they are a central part of God's plan of salvation.

## **2. Why should we try and understand what's next for Israel? What does it matter?**

God in His word has told us in advance what is going to happen, and this especially applies to the nation of Israel. Isaiah 46:9-10 says, “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.’” (NKJV)

Israel is one of the most central pieces in God's plan of salvation for the whole world—the plan that centres on the First and Second comings of Christ. The fact is that we will all be affected by what happens to Israel, just like the whole world was affected in the past with what God did through Israel.

It is impossible to understand the times and the seasons if you don't understand God's plan for the nation of Israel. Bible prophecy focuses on Israel. Other nations are only mentioned in their relation to Israel, the people, and the land. For example, WWII is not mentioned in the Bible, but the return of the Jews to the land of Israel as a result of what happened in WWII (the holocaust) is recorded or prophesied in Ezekiel 36-37 and Isaiah 1:11.

### **3. Three prophecies that have already been fulfilled by Israel in recent history**

#### **1. God said that He would bring back the exiled Israelites into the land of Israel a second time**

Isaiah 11:11-12 NKJV

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a *second* time to bring back the remnant of his people... He will gather the scattered people of Judah from the ends of the earth.

The first time was when God brought the people of Israel back to into the land of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. The second regathering is still happening today after the Israelites were again scattered and exiled in AD 70 by the Romans.

This second regathering of God's people, Israel, started happening with the Zionist movement in 1870; God caused the Jews to desire to return to their own land, the land of Israel. It was a slow start, and until 20 to 30 years ago, the majority of Jews still lived outside of Israel. However, we live in prophetic times now, where for the first time in 2,000 years, the majority (more than 50%) of the Jewish people live in the Land of Israel. Why is this important? Because the land of Israel is God's land, and the Jews are God's people.

#### **2. Isaiah 66:7-9 says that Israel would become a nation again in a day**

This was fulfilled on May 14, 1948, when, after the horrors of the holocaust during WW2, the United Nations voted that Israel would be declared a nation—for the first time in almost 2,000 years.

Isaiah 66:7-9 NLT

"Before the birth pains even begin, Jerusalem gives birth to a son. <sup>8</sup>Who has ever seen anything as strange as this? Who ever heard of such a thing? Has a nation ever been born in a single day? Has a country ever come forth in a mere moment? But by the time Jerusalem's birth pains begin, her children will be born.

<sup>9</sup>Would I ever bring this nation to the point of birth and then not deliver it?" asks the Lord. "No! I would never keep this nation from being born," says your God.

The birth of the nation of Israel out of the ashes of the holocaust is also a fulfilment of the dry bones prophecy in Ezekiel 37—a dead nation come back to life after there seemed to be no hope for them.

Ezekiel 37:11-13 NLT

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, 'We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone. Our nation is finished.'

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, prophesy to them and say, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the Lord.

### 3. Psalm 83 speaks of when the nations directly surrounding Israel (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) would come against Israel, but Israel would win

This prophecy has already come to pass: 1948-49 (Israel's war of independence), 1967 (Six-Day War), and 1973 (Yom Kippur War). However, the antisemitic spirit or attitude that the psalm predicts regarding the desire of those nations surrounding Israel only gets stronger. They, and other nations wish to cut off Israel from being a nation, to be remembered no more. And this desire is only getting stronger as time goes on—just consider the popular mantra going around the world these days, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free [of Jews]”.

Psalm 83:1-7, 13-16 NLT

O God, do not be silent! Do not be deaf. Do not be quiet, O God. <sup>2</sup> Don't you hear the uproar of your enemies? Don't you see that your arrogant enemies are rising up? <sup>3</sup> They devise crafty schemes against your people; they conspire against your precious ones. <sup>4</sup> **“Come,” they say, “let us wipe out Israel as a nation. We will destroy the very memory of its existence.”** <sup>5</sup> Yes, this was their unanimous decision. They signed a treaty as allies against you—these Edomites and Ishmaelites; Moabites and Hagrites; <sup>7</sup> Gebalites, Ammonites, and Amalekites; and people from Philistia and Tyre. [These were what the nations surrounding Israel were called at the time]

... <sup>13</sup> O my God, scatter them like tumbleweed, like chaff before the wind! <sup>14</sup> As a fire burns a forest and as a flame sets mountains ablaze, <sup>15</sup> chase them with your fierce storm; terrify them with your tempest. <sup>16</sup> Utterly disgrace them until they submit to your name, O Lord.

Consider that the Jordanians and the Egyptians already have peace agreements with Israel, and the Lebanese don't wish to fight Israel any more (only the Iranian controlled terrorist group Hezbollah does). Truly the nations around Israel have been subdued, disgraced, and forced to submit and recognise Israel's right to exist. Psalm 83 has been fulfilled.

### 4. What is the current situation for Israel?

Currently, the nation of Israel is fighting against multiple terrorist groups that are funded by Iran. Also, as mentioned previously, antisemitism is very much on the rise with many openly speaking about their perceived need to utterly destroy the Jews, simply because they are Jews. This is all a precursor to the next main event.

### 5. The next event on the timeline of God's prophetic plan concerning Israel—The Gog Magog war of Ezekiel 38-39

This next main war against Israel involves Russia, Iran, Turkey, and other north African nations including Libya and Sudan. They will launch a massive surprise attack on Israel—but God destroys this massive multinational army with no help at all from the Israeli armed forces or any other army. This war is not the Battle of Armageddon that happens at the end of the 7 year tribulation (see Revelation 19), and it's not the final war at the end of the Millennium, but it will be an amazing victory that will demonstrate God's power and sovereignty over the nations. This victory will have nothing to do with Israel's military prowess, but rather the miraculous and divine intervention of the God of Israel. It will be like the display of power that God used to bring glory to His name during the time of the Exodus. This is the start of God bringing His people, the physical nation of Israel, back to Himself, for the nation to accept Jesus as their Messiah.

Ezekiel 38:14-23 NLT (*This whole chapter is a message to Gog, the leader of Russia*)  
“Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: When my people are living in peace in their land, then you will rouse yourself. <sup>15</sup> You will come from your homeland in the distant north with your vast cavalry and your mighty army, <sup>16</sup> and you will attack my people Israel, covering their land like a cloud. At that time in the distant future, I will bring you against my land as everyone watches, and my holiness will be displayed by what happens to you, Gog. Then all the nations will know that I am the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> “This is what the Sovereign Lord asks: Are you the one I was talking about long ago, when I announced through Israel’s prophets that in the future I would bring you against my people? <sup>18</sup> But this is what the Sovereign Lord says: When Gog invades the land of Israel, my fury will boil over! <sup>19</sup> In my jealousy and blazing anger, I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day. <sup>20</sup> All living things—the fish in the sea, the birds of the sky, the animals of the field, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people on earth—will quake in terror at my presence. Mountains will be thrown down; cliffs will crumble; walls will fall to the earth. <sup>21</sup> I will summon the sword against you on all the hills of Israel, says the Sovereign Lord. Your men will turn their swords against each other. <sup>22</sup> I will punish you and your armies with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulphur! <sup>23</sup> In this way, I will show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

### What needs to happen first?

Before this next main event concerning Israel described in Ezekiel 38-39 can happen, the Bible in Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37 gives us a list of things that must happen, or come to be, before the Gog Magog war described in detail in Ezekiel 38-39 can happen. Here is the checklist—let’s see how many of these circumstances are in place, and what still needs to happen:

1. The restoration of the land — the people can’t return until the land can sustain them

Israel was a barren wasteland. Nobody wanted to live there for hundreds of years. The place was deserted, abandoned, empty. Mark Twain, after visiting Israel in the 1800’s, said that he hardly saw a living soul in his entire journey, not even the cactuses grew, that’s how bad the desert wasteland was. So there was a need for the restoration of the land before the people could come back to their ancestral homeland.

Ezekiel 36:8-9 NKJV

But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and **yield your fruit to My people Israel**, for they are about to come. <sup>9</sup> For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.

Notice that God acknowledged that the land was dead, and so promises to speak to the land to become fertile and fruitful again, in preparation for the Jewish people. This has already happened and is continuing to happen—Israel is now an agricultural powerhouse.

2. The return of the Jewish people to their home land (they can't be attacked if they are not back in their home land)

After God revitalised the wasteland that the land of Israel had become, it was time for the Jews to return to their ancestral homeland. As we read in Isaiah 1:11, the return of the Jews to the ancestral homeland is predicted in many places. Here is the reference in Ezekiel in the context of the Gog Magog battle.

Ezekiel 36:24 NKJV

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

3. An angry alliance between Russia, Iran, and Turkey (Ezekiel 38:1-5)

This alliance between what used to be traditional enemies is a very modern phenomenon. Why are they suddenly friends? Because in middle eastern culture, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. The leaders of all three nations are more and more becoming increasingly hostile to Israel—their hatred of Israel has grown stronger than their distain and hatred for each other. Interestingly, all three nations already have troops in Syria, and other countries around Israel. They are also working together more and more, especially militarily.

4. All of them dwell safely

Israel will be caught off guard—there will be a false peace after war. We are getting close to this now, with Hamas almost completely destroyed, and Hezbollah will somehow cease to exist as a threat to Israel. Israel will think that they can relax, with all their near enemies destroyed. But the real enemies are the distant countries.

Ezekiel 36:7-11 NLT

“Get ready; be prepared! Keep all the armies around you mobilised, and take command of them. <sup>8</sup> A long time from now you will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel, **which will be enjoying peace after recovering from war and after its people have returned from many lands to the mountains of Israel.** <sup>9</sup> You and all your allies—a vast and awesome army—will roll down on them like a storm and cover the land like a cloud.

<sup>10</sup> “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: At that time evil thoughts will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme. <sup>11</sup> You will say, ‘Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwalled villages! I will march against her and destroy these people who **live in such confidence!**’

5. The motive for the attack will be financial gain—Israel must be a prosperous nation

Ezekiel 36:12 NLT

I will go to those formerly desolate cities that are now filled with people who have returned from exile in many nations. I will capture vast amounts of plunder, for the people are rich with livestock and other possessions now.

Consider that Israel has the strongest currency in the western hemisphere, a very strong and growing economy, are very prosperous when it come to medical, military, and agricultural innovation and technology, and to top it off, they have contracts to supply Europe with gas in the near future from their own vast gas reserves. Russia, Iran, and Turkey are all struggling financially, and their situations are only getting worse.

6. *There will be a strong friendship between Israel and the Arabian Peninsula as well as a weak America and Europe*

Ezekiel 38:13 NLT

But Sheba and Dedan [Arabian Peninsula] and the merchants of Tarshish [western Europe] will ask, 'Do you really think the armies you have gathered can rob them of silver and gold? Do you think you can drive away their livestock and seize their goods and carry off plunder?'

They will talk, they will be indignant, but they will do nothing. Even today, Israel is fast losing support from Europe, though the USA, for the time being, is still supporting Israel (but one day they will not be willing to stand with Israel). Also, there are now peace agreements with the moderate Arab countries (the Abraham Accords).

However, what the bible says happens next for Israel is not so wonderful.

### **6. Israel in the Tribulation (Jacob's trouble)**

The Bible tells of a time when there will be a time of great tribulation for the people of Israel, but that the nation would be saved out of it. Jesus described the last three and a half years of the 7 year Tribulation as "great tribulation" (see Matthew 24:21).

Jeremiah 30:7 NKJV

Alas! For that day [the 7 year Tribulation] is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he [Israel] shall be saved out of it.

Daniel 12:1 NKJV

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people [Israel] shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.

We know this time as the 7 year tribulation as described in Daniel 9:27, when the antichrist will confirm a peace agreement with Israel for 7 years. The antichrist will break the agreement at the half way point (an event called "the abomination of desolation"), and at this point will do everything he can to try to eradicate the Jews, but God will supernaturally provide for His people in Sela (Petra in modern day Jordan) (see Revelation 12:3-9, Isaiah 16:4-5).

Daniel 9:27 AMP

And he [the antichrist] shall enter into a strong and firm covenant with the many [Israel] for one week [seven years]. And in the midst of the week [after three and a half years] he shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease [for the remaining three and one-half years]; and upon the wing or pinnacle of abominations [shall come] one who makes desolate, until the full determined end is poured out on the desolator [antichrist].

Daniel 9:27 NLT

The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him."

Revelation 12:6, 13-14 NLT

And the woman [Israel] fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place to care for her for 1,260 days.

<sup>13</sup> When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child [Jesus]. <sup>14</sup> But she was given two wings like those of a great eagle so she could fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness. There she would be cared for and protected from the dragon for a time, times, and half a time [the last three and a half years of the 7 year tribulation].

*The antichrist cannot be revealed and the Tribulation can't start until the church is removed—the rapture must happen before the 7 year tribulation starts!*

2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 NLT

Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. <sup>2</sup> Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord [the seven year tribulation] has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. <sup>3</sup> Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day [the 7 year Tribulation] will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction [the antichrist]. <sup>4</sup> He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God. [the Abomination of Desolation]

<sup>5</sup> Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? <sup>6</sup> **And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.** <sup>7</sup> **For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way [the Holy Spirit working through the church].** <sup>8</sup> **Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed,** but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.

<sup>9</sup> This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. <sup>10</sup> He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

*The "Abomination of desolation"*

The event that marks the middle of the Tribulation when the antichrist breaks his agreement with Israel is called in the Bible, the "abomination of desolation". Daniel 9:27 tells us that it happens at the half way point of the 7 year tribulation—after 3 1/2 years or 1260 days or 42 months.

Daniel 9:27 NLT

The ruler [Antichrist] will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven [years], but after half this time [three and a half years], he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object [in the holy of holies section of the temple] that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him."

The reference in Daniel tells us there will be a "Tribulation Temple", the temple that will be built as a result of the 7 peace agreement that the Antichrist confirms between Israel and the rest of the world. As we just read in 2 Thessalonians 2:4b, the Antichrist "*will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.*"

Jesus warns the Jews living in Israel to flee when this happens, because as Danial 9:27 foretells, the antichrist will make war with Israel at this point.

Matthew 24:15-21 NKJV

“Therefore when you see the *‘abomination of desolation,’* spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Revelation 12 outlines the ongoing hatred and satan’s attempts to destroy God’s chosen people Israel, because they are God’s vehicle by which the Messiah will come into the world.

Revelation 12:3-17 NLT

Then I witnessed in heaven another significant event. I saw a large red dragon [satan] with seven heads and ten horns, with seven crowns on his heads. <sup>4</sup> His tail swept away one-third of the stars in the sky, and he threw them to the earth [when satan rebelled against God]. He stood in front of the woman [Israel] as she was about to give birth, ready to devour her baby as soon as it was born [when Herod tried to kill Jesus].

<sup>5</sup> She [Israel] gave birth to a Son [Jesus] who was to rule all nations with an iron rod. And her Child was snatched away from the dragon and was caught up to God and to His throne [the ascension, when Christ returned to Heaven]. <sup>6</sup> And the woman [Israel] fled into the wilderness [Petra in Jordan], where God had prepared a place to care for her for 1,260 days [for the last three and a half years of the 7 year tribulation].

<sup>7</sup> Then [at the halfway point of the 7 year Tribulation] there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. <sup>8</sup> And the dragon lost the battle, and he and his angels were forced out of heaven. <sup>9</sup> This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens,

“It has come at last—salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night. <sup>11</sup> And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! **But terror will come on the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you in great anger, knowing that he has little time [only three and a half years].”**

<sup>13</sup> When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman [Israel] who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup> But she was given two wings like those of a great eagle so she could fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness. There she would be cared for and protected from the dragon [satan] for a time, times, and half a time [three and half years].

<sup>15</sup> Then the dragon tried to drown the woman with a flood of water that flowed from his mouth [an army]. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped her by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that gushed out from the mouth of the dragon. <sup>17</sup> And the dragon was angry at the woman and declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God’s commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus [the gentile believers].

This will not be an easy time for Israel. The prophet Zechariah tells us that two thirds of the Jews will perish.

Zechariah 13:8-9 NKJV

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: <sup>9</sup> 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.’ ”

At the end of the Tribulation, right before Jesus comes back, the nations will gather to fight against Jerusalem. This is the battle of Armageddon as also described in Revelation 19:11-21.

Zechariah 14:1-5 NKJV

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. <sup>2</sup> For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. <sup>4</sup> And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. <sup>5</sup> Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.

*What is God’s purpose for allowing His chosen nation Israel to suffer so badly during the 7 year tribulation, and especially in the last three and a half years?*

Hosea 5:15 NKJV (also see Matthew 23:37-39)

I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”

At this time there will be the national salvation of the nation of Israel—a spiritual rebirth resulting from the forgiveness of sins—the New Covenant:

Zechariah 12:10, 13:1 NKJV

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

### Jeremiah 31:31-37 NLT

“The day is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. <sup>32</sup> This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the Lord.

<sup>33</sup> “But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the Lord. “I will put My instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> And they will not need to teach their neighbours, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know Me already,” says the Lord. “And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

<sup>35</sup> It is the Lord who provides the sun to light the day and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea into roaring waves. His name is the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, and this is what he says: <sup>36</sup> “I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to abolish the laws of nature!” <sup>37</sup> This is what the Lord says: “Just as the heavens cannot be measured and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored, so I will not consider casting them away for the evil they have done. I, the Lord, have spoken!

It is only at the second coming of Christ that what Paul said in Romans 11:25-27 will come to pass:

### Romans 11:25-27 NKJV

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; <sup>27</sup> For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”