Landmarks of Prophecy

Landmarks of Prophecy is an epic Bible study adventure presented by Pastor Doug Batchelor, president of Amazing Facts. You'll delve into the pages of the Bible to get clear, trustworthy, logical answers to your most pressing questions about life, faith, and the future—while getting life-changing insight into what lies next in human history and the practical tools you need to thrive in the here and now!
United Religions
Shimon Peres, former Israeli president, met last week with Pope Francis to propose a type of United Nations for world religions. Is this part of God’s plan for lasting world peace?

Read More
The Final War Over Worship

The last great conflict will occur when the earth’s final powers force every man and woman to worship the beast power or be killed. Today, huge developments in the religious world about the true day of worship—the Sabbath—show that we are standing on the precipice of this stunning biblical prophecy.

Once in every generation, there is a unique opportunity to be involved in something world-shaking. We believe that today is such a day. It is our hope that you will stand with Amazing Facts to boldly proclaim the truth about God’s seventh-day Sabbath right now!

Read More

Latest News

Three speaking engagements are scheduled—Sep. 5 thru 13!

Join Pastor Doug Batchelor for "Landmarks of Prophecy," an exciting new Bible study adventure beginning October 31!

Amazing Facts’ new video series will delight, inspire, and inform people from all walks of life!

A Christian Without a Church?

Daily Devotionals

Amazing Facts Daily Devotional
The Rhino's Horn

Bible Universe Daily Devotional
Discerner of Thoughts
Besides being a very large and strong animal, one of the most notable features about a rhinoceros is its horn (or horns). The name rhinoceros comes from two Greek words—rhino, meaning “nose,” and ceros, meaning “horn.” It is amazing that this mammal, which can weigh up to two tons and grow up to six feet tall, is a vegetarian. There are five different rhinos in the world. Two come from Africa (the black rhino and the white rhino) and three from southern Asia (the Indian ...

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. - Hebrews 4:12

Oh, how different are the standards by which God and men measure character. God sees many temptations resisted of which the world and even near friends never know--temptations in the home, in the heart.

Read More | Subscribe by Email
Media on the Brain by Scott Ritsema

We see it all around us. Hollywood, popular music, TV, video gaming, spectator sports, e-relationships, and pornography are saturating the lives of God's professed people. But what does the latest science say about the mind-altering effects of 21st century media?

Product Code: DV-MB
Now $49.95
Learn More

Extras

Scripture Picture
Matthew 11:30

Featured Website
Qimiaozenxiang
Our Chinese Language Website
As blood continues to be spilled in the Middle East, the recently retired Israeli president met with Pope Francis at the Vatican City to outline a new UN-like organization called “United Religions.” Because conflict often stems from religious differences, Peres believes the world needs an intergovernmental organization to promote international peace.

Peres, in his proposal, believes “the Argentina-born pontiff [is] the only world figure respected enough to bring an end to the wars raging in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.” [1] Though Francis did not commit to the plan, this is the third high-profile meeting between the elder statesman and the pope in the last four months.

“Peres praised Francis as the only world figure respected across national boundaries and different faiths. In an interview with the Catholic Magazine Famiglia Cristiana, Peres called on Francis to leverage his respect to create an interfaith organization to curb religious violence. ‘What we need is an organization of United Religions... as the best way to combat terrorists who kill in the name of faith,’ Peres said. ‘What we need is an unquestionable moral authority.’” [2]

Ironically, history shows that designating a human being as an ‘unquestionable moral authority’ has often led to more violence. In the past, these spiritual leaders have sought to violently enforce religious laws in the name of unity, leading to even more bloodshed and fewer civil rights, including an individual’s right to worship according to one’s own conscience.

Not surprisingly, somber warnings are given in the last book of the Bible about a coming effort that will seek to enforce world peace under the banner of a spiritual movement united with world political powers. Of course, it is one thing for diverse religions to come together to discuss the protection of religious liberty in our world, but quite another when the state and church combine their efforts to exercise so-called moral authority.

Muscle and force are not the trademarks of God’s character, nor how He desires to govern His people. It is Satan who relies on intolerance and threats to foment hate and intimidation, prompting contained violence and destruction. Lasting peace comes from true justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation. While we certainly should speak out against inhumane terrorist acts by any organization, the violent means described in Revelation 13 show us that a beast-power will someday use those very same tactics to enforce worship in the name of peace—and billions will submit to it. Will you?

“If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the...
saints” (Revelation 13:9, 10).

For more information on worship and religious liberty, click here.
For more information on the anti-Christ and end-time powers that will rise up in unity, click here.

Amazing Facts is a non-profit, donor-supported ministry. We greatly appreciate your prayers and financial support.

DONATE NOW

NOTE: If you have a Bible question please submit it here. We cannot guarantee answers to Bible questions posted in the comments.

Visit www.amazingfacts.org for free Bible study resources!
Hello, friend!

Believe it or not, the devil is not opposed to religion—as long as he gets the worship. This is why Satan offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world, if He would only fall down and worship him (Matthew 4:9).

Indeed, the Bible says those who worship the beast power in the last days will be a churchgoing people! Jesus warned, "The time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (John 16:2).

I believe we’re on the precipice of this stunning prophecy—and I hope and pray you and I will stand together united in Christ!

It's All About Worship

Have you considered that when Cain murdered Abel, it sprang out of a disagreement over how to worship God? Likewise, the last great conflict will occur when the earth’s final powers force the world to worship the beast power or be killed.

This has been one of the central issues all throughout Bible history.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon sought to unite his vast empire by forcing the worship of all his subjects. “You shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:5, 6).

But as you know, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to worship the giant idol and break one of God’s Ten Commandments (Daniel 3:12). Likewise, Daniel risked being tossed into the lion’s den after refusing to pray to anyone other than God when the king of Persia demanded worship (Daniel 6:7). And let’s not forget Mordecai’s faithfulness as seen in the book of Ester!

Each time, when all seemed lost, the Lord turned the tables and His faithful people were delivered!

History Repeated

The church of Jesus is about to face a similar test! There is soon going to be another great upheaval in the world over the right way—and day—to worship. The Bible foretold that the beast power "shall intend to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25). As you know, there is only one commandment that is both a time and a law … the Sabbath law!
Yes, the great final persecution of the last days will revolve around a false day of worship. It’s already beginning to happen. Not long ago, one of the most beloved and powerful religious leaders made a very direct, worldwide appeal for the keeping of Sunday.

“Pope Francis lamented the abandoning of the traditionally Christian practice of not working on Sundays, saying it has a negative impact on families and friendships. … He says that spending Sundays with family and friends is an ‘ethical choice’ for faithful and non-faithful alike.”

He later added, “Preserving the special character of Sunday as the Lord’s Day — even civilly where possible.”

Did you catch that? The pope said that keeping Sunday is a moral choice and that it should be preserved, even by law where possible!

This might seem like just a small religious matter to most of the world—but you and I know that these seemingly benign pronouncements could build momentum quickly. With the pope’s popularity on the rise, all it would take is some global crisis for the world to look to Rome for its spiritual guidance.

Sadly, I have only heard the slightest peep from America’s Protestant pulpits. But this doesn’t mean you and I should just sit back and watch it all unfold! God has called us to do something about it!

A Time of Tremendous Opportunity

Once in every generation, there is a unique opportunity to be involved in something truly world-shaking. I believe that for you and me, today is such a day. It is my hope that you will stand with me to boldly proclaim the truth about God’s real seventh-day Sabbath right now.

For some time now, Amazing Facts has been covering the pope’s shocking announcements and developments with video updates—all in an effort to set the record straight about Scripture and to share the three angels’ messages with the world.

Because of your support of Amazing Facts, well over a million people have been exposed to these truths through these YouTube news flashes.

And that’s the point—right now the world is paying attention. People’s long-dormant spiritual natures are being stirred, and they are listening and taking interest. That’s why your gift this month will help reach more precious, searching souls with the everlasting gospel, the Sabbath, and so much more Bible truth in a loving, thoughtful, and friendly way.

Sabbath Truth Magazine

Imagine a tool you could easily share with a friend, family, or co-worker about this very crisis of faith—a witnessing resource that’s sharp, tasteful, exciting, loving, and completely faithful to God’s Word and entirely dedicated to the subject of the true Sabbath.

With your support, Amazing Facts is going to produce this new sharing magazine to debut in next few months. It’s going to be a powerful tool for you and churches around the world to get people ready for the final crisis and fight the lies of the evil one!

Your faithfulness will mean more people will experience God’s Sabbath—and explain to them how the Sabbath subject will be a pivotal truth in the last days. Through this inspiring and convincing sharing resource ...

1. You will help lovingly but boldly proclaim the truth of God’s seventh-day Sabbath, offering desperate souls true rest in today’s unending rat race.
2. You will teach them about the diabolical conspiracy to change God’s commandments and substitute a counterfeit day.
3. You will help encourage readers to give their hearts to Christ, experience His rest, and join His kingdom in loving obedience.

The GOOD news is that this new sharing magazine will be a huge gateway to an entire multimedia focus on Sabbath, pointing people to SabbathTruth.com and a vast sermon archive, documentaries, books, short-form videos, free Bible studies, and more. It’s only the beginning of a special media emphasis on the Sabbath!

The GREAT news is that this magazine will be so easy and timely to share. You might say to a friend—“Have you heard what the pope recently said about keeping Sunday as a day as the Sabbath? Here’s a great magazine that explains why all that is happening.”

We know this will make a difference! Carol wrote recently, “I thank God for you. I was always convicted about the Sabbath, but every Christian kept telling me it was Sunday. … I’ve been reading your facts for two hours and it’s all backed by God’s holy Word! I will show all my friends!”

This is the kind of exponential impact we’ll make together! Your gift will put this magazine and many other resources into the hands of people who really need to hear about the Sabbath. Let’s reach them while we can!

**More Truth to Proclaim**

Someday, Amazing Facts could lose the freedom to proclaim the Sabbath. “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). That’s why we must act now, with your support. And remember, this Sabbath magazine will continue reaching souls long after we’re forced to close our doors!

The big issue in the last days revolves around worship—and the highest form of worship is to give of ourselves and of our means. So your gift today will eternally impact many hearts and lives for Christ.

So in light of all that’s been happening in the religious, political, and economic world—from unrest in the labor force to the pope’s emboldened spiritual leadership, it’s time to act in faith! Help us put this fantastic new witnessing resource into the hands of thousands with your gift today!

Yours in worshiping Christ,

Pastor Doug Batchelor President, Amazing Facts

**Special Alert!** Friends of Amazing Facts who deeply believe in the Sabbath truth have promised to match every penny we receive this month to help create this magazine and continue broadcasting the everlasting gospel—up to $125,000! This effectively doubles the impact of your giving today!

**Amazing Facts is a non-profit, donor-supported ministry.**

We greatly appreciate your prayers and financial support.
AN AMAZING FACT: Most people know that camels are very well adapted to sandy desert life. Their soft feet spread out so they won’t sink into the sand. To protect their eyes from sand, they have two thick rows of eyelashes. They can see through a thin third eyelid during a sand storm. Camels can close their nostrils against blowing sand and have extra hair inside their ears to keep sand out. Contrary to popular myth, camels don’t store more water than other animals, yet they can handle extreme dehydration much better, enabling them to go for days without needing a drink.

Camels have been known to safely lose body water equivalent to 40 percent of their weight, a loss that would be lethal to any other animal. To make up for previous fluid loss, camels can take in very large amounts of water at one session, drinking up to 27 gallons of water in 10 minutes. Because of the wide swings in desert temperatures between night and day, the camel’s system has the ability to endure very large fluctuations in body temperature (from 97.7 to 107.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Before the Civil War, efforts were made to use camels for crossing U.S. deserts, but the experiment failed. Their soft-padded feet were unsuitable for much of the rocky southwestern terrain. They frightened horses and they were detested by their handlers, who were accustomed to more docile mules. In contrast, at about the same time, camels were introduced to Australia, where they flourished. Wild camels are now scattered through the arid interior of Australia and are estimated to number over 500,000. Camels and kangaroos live side by side. For centuries camels have been called “ships of the desert” because they resemble boats floating across a sea of sand and can travel up to 100 miles in a day, carrying loads as heavy as 1,000 pounds.

Keep this picture in mind when you consider Jesus’ words: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25). Jesus also told a parable about a rich man who landed in Hades that has been greatly misunderstood. His point was that rich people who have no concern for others have their only reward in this life. Riches can easily distract us from the kingdom of God.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS
It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
- Mark 10:25
Please Note: The AF Daily Devotional is not archived so be sure to check back each day! These readings are taken from the A World of Wonders Daily Devotional. Click here to order your copy!

Visit www.amazingfacts.org for free Bible study resources!
Daily Devotional

bibleuniverse.com/study-tools/daily-devotional
1 Peter 1:13

Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.- 1 Peter 1:13

Peter says, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 PETER 1:13. Here is a lesson for us to learn; here is a work for us to do to control the mind, not letting it drift on forbidden themes, or spend its energies on trifling subjects.

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 PETER 4:7 We are not only required to pray, but to guard the words and actions, and even the thoughts,—to "watch unto prayer." If the mind is centered upon heavenly things, the conversation will run in the same channel. The heart will overflow at the contemplation of the Christian's hope, the exceeding great and precious promises left on record for our encouragement; and our rejoicing in view of the mercy and goodness of God need not be repressed; it is a joy that no man can take from us. During the waking hours, the mind will be constantly employed. If it dwells upon unimportant matters, the intellect is dwarfed and weakened. There may be some spasmodic flashes of thought, but the mind is not disciplined to steady, sober reflection. There are themes that demand serious consideration. They are those of the great plan of redemption, which is soon to be finished. Jesus is about to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, and what manner of characters must we have, to enable us to stand in that day?

Well would it be for us if we could always remember Calvary, where Jesus bore the terrible burden of the sins of the world. In his expiring agony hear him exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" MATT. 27:46 and remember that he endured the hiding of his Father's face, that it might not be forever hidden from fallen man. He endured shame, cruel scourging, insult, and mockery, that we might be reconciled to God and rescued from endless death. If our minds dwell upon these themes, our conversation will be in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, and even vain thoughts will seem out of place.

He who died for us loves us with a love that is infinite. He wants us to be happy; but he would not have us find our happiness in foolish jesting and joking, which disgrace the holy cause we profess to love.

By dwelling upon the themes of eternal interest, the mind is strengthened, and the character developed. Here is the foundation of that firm, unswerving principle which Joseph possessed. Here is the secret of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

Would you like to know Jesus more? Would you like to understand your Bible better?
Click here to sign up for our Free Online Bible School
Subscribe to Bible Universe Daily Devotionals by Email

Today's musical inspiration:
Spiritual Israel

AF amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/49/t/spiritual-israel.aspx
By Doug Batchelor & Steve Wohlberg

An Amazing Fact

The European cuckoo is known as a “brood parasite.” The females lay their eggs in the nests of smaller bird species—like the reed warbler. In turn, these unsuspecting mothers unwittingly incubate, feed, and raise the young impostors, typically at the expense of their very own offspring.

One of the most sorrowful tragedies of nature is watching a reed warbler working herself to death to satisfy the voracious hunger of a greedy cuckoo chick while her own young, already weak with starvation, are pushed out of the nest.

Another Brood Parasite

The devil has successfully planted a dangerous lie in modern Christian theology, and it has been unwittingly hatched, adopted and nurtured by most evangelical churches—and now this parasite is pushing out Bible truth with a bigger-than-life-deception. Sadly, this adopted falsehood is growing fat with attention while true interpretations of prophecy are starving with neglect.

Today around the globe, millions interested in Bible prophecy have their eyes fixed on Jerusalem. To be fair, it is really not all that difficult with the legitimate news value that comes from that never-ending quagmire of strife and bloodshed between Palestinians and Israelites. Christians are constantly speculating about the modern state of Israel, a rebuilt Jewish temple, and a Middle East Armageddon. These subjects are being discussed through magazines, books, radio, television, the Internet, the pulpit and at Bible prophecy conferences.

It is amazing how many Christians fully buy into this connection of end-time Bible prophecies concerning the nation of Israel. For example, best-selling author Dave Hunt echoes these views on the back cover of his popular book, A Cup of Trembling. He writes: “Fast-moving events in the Middle East point almost daily toward the grand finale—the time of greatest suffering for the Jewish people worldwide, which will climax in the terrifying battle of Armageddon and the glorious return of Messiah to rescue Israel and reign over the world from David’s reestablished throne in Jerusalem.”

A Foundation of Sand

This “Middle East” approach to prophecy became popular among mainline churches in the 1980s with a series of books from Hal Lindsey. In his bestsellers, including The Late Great Planet Earth and Countdown to Armageddon, Lindsey employed this very literal dispensational approach to prophecy,
making several very specific, and very errant, predictions. He wrote that a secret rapture of the church
would occur in 1981, which would be followed by the building of a new Jewish temple, the advent of the
Antichrist, the great tribulation, the invasion of Israel, the battle of Armageddon and the millennium—all by

Despite every single one of these predictions falling flat, his books continue to sell, making for most a
standard that all end-time prophecy is viewable only when filtered through “nation of Israel glasses.”
Worse, the seeds of error they contain have sprouted and become firmly rooted in many churches. Now
millions of Christians are vigilantly guarding a styrofoam monument with no prophetic veracity, and
building on the crumbling sand of popular evangelical trends. What are the primary pillars holding up this
diversionary doctrine? While there remain some differences of opinion among these evangelicals
regarding the role of modern Israel in the end-times, the majority agrees on the following five events as
core prophecies:

1. The rebirth of the state of Israel in 1948.

2. A soon-coming seven years of “Great Tribulation.”

3. The rebuilding of the Jewish temple on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount.

4. The Antichrist’s rise during the tribulation; He’ll enter the temple to proclaim Godhood.

5. A final war against Israel, which will result in Armageddon.

It’s Happened Before!

Here is the big question: Are all of these end-time prophecies in Scripture regarding Israel and the temple
speaking of the literal nation of Jews and a physical building, or is there a deeper spiritual application?

Do you remember when Jesus came the first time? His people misunderstood and misapplied the
prophecies regarding His kingdom. They eagerly waited and watched for Him to establish a literal, earthly
kingdom. Jesus constantly explained that His first coming was to establish a spiritual kingdom. He said,
“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold,
the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20, 21).

But because the persistent and popular teachings of the day focused on a muscular messiah who would
overthrow the Romans and seat himself on David’s throne, the disciples brushed aside or simply ignored
Jesus’ comments regarding His spiritual kingdom. They tried to make these spiritual prophecies literal,
and the crucifixion crushed their expectations of an Israel with dominion over all the Earth. Longing for
freedom from political oppression, they lamented, “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to

Even after His resurrection, the disciples still clung to these popular views that had ingrained themselves
in their minds, hoping still for an imminent, literal kingdom. “When they therefore were come together,
they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). They wanted so much to believe their own view that the devil was able to blind them to the plain truth.

Is it possible that today’s church at large is making the same mistake by misapplying prophecies regarding spiritual Israel and the temple—interpreting them in a literal sense without basis? If so, they could be preparing to embrace a diabolical deception—not to mention experience a devastating disappointment!

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 2:7). We hope this study of end-time prophecy will clear the muddled understanding of prophecy so prevalent in today’s Christian faith.

The Name “Israel”

It is impossible to clearly understand the subject of Israel apart from a careful study of the Old Testament. The first time the name “Israel” appears in Scripture is when it was spoken to Jacob after his long night of wrestling with a powerful opponent. The heavenly stranger finally said, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:28). Thus the name “Israel” was at first a name of heavenly origin applied to Jacob alone. It represented his spiritual victory over sin, through wrestling in prayer and claiming God’s grace.

Jacob had 12 sons who later moved into Egypt. The descendants of these sons eventually multiplied into the 12 tribes, which were later forced into slavery by the Egyptians until the time of Moses. Then God told Pharaoh through Moses, “Israel is my son, even my firstborn ... Let my son go” (Exodus 4:22, 23). Note here that the name “Israel” is expanded to include Jacob’s descendants. Therefore, the name “Israel” first applied to a victorious man, then to his people. You’ll soon see why this is a very important point!

Israel, God’s Son

About 800 B.C., the Lord spoke through the prophet Hosea, saying, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1). Yet by this time, the nation of Israel had failed to live up to the spiritual meaning of its name. You see this verse in Hosea explodes with tremendous importance, when we look at the New Testament.

Approximately 800 years after Hosea’s prophecy, we learn, “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king” (Matthew 2:1). Because Herod felt threatened by this new child king, he sent soldiers who “slew all the children that were in Bethlehem” (v.16). Joseph was warned of the impending crisis in advance when “The angel of the Lord appeareth to [him] in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word” (v. 13). So the family arose and “departed into Egypt” (v. 14).

Matthew writes that the child Jesus remained in Egypt “until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son” (v. 15). Notice that Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1—which originally referred to the nation of Israel coming out of
Egypt—and actually declares it more perfectly “fulfilled” in Jesus Christ! (Please don’t miss this important point that a prophecy in the Bible can have a dual application with both a literal and spiritual fulfillment.)

Here, Matthew has only touched the surface of a truly shocking principle developed throughout his gospel.

Matthew's Amazing Revelation

A careful study of Matthew reveals even further that Christ’s story actually repeats the history of ancient Israel, point by point—but He overcame where they had failed. Notice the following amazing parallels between the history of ancient Israel and Jesus Christ:

- In the Old Testament, a man named Joseph has dreams and goes into Egypt to preserve his family (Genesis 45:5). In the New Testament, another Joseph likewise had dreams and goes into Egypt to preserve his family (Matthew 2:13).

- When the young nation of Israel comes out of Egypt, God calls it “my son” (Exodus 4:22). When Jesus comes out of Egypt, God says “Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:15).

- When Israel leaves Egypt, her people go through the Red Sea. The apostle Paul says they were “baptized unto Moses ... in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:2). Jesus is also baptized “to fulfill all righteousness,” and immediately afterward God proclaims Him, “my beloved Son” (Matthew 3:15-17)

- After the Red Sea crossing, the Israelites spend 40 years in the wilderness—led by the pillar of fire, God’s Spirit. Immediately after baptism, Jesus is “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness” for 40 days (Matthew 4:1, 2).

- At the end of the 40 years, Moses writes Deuteronomy. At the end of Jesus’ 40 days, He resists Satan’s temptations by quoting three Scriptures—all from Deuteronomy!

- In Psalm 80:8, God calls Israel a “vine” that He brought “out of Egypt.” Jesus later declares, “I am the true vine” (John 15:1).

- In the Old Testament, the name “Israel” first applied to one man: Jacob—representing his spiritual victory over sin. Even so, in the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the Israel who came “out of Egypt.” He is the one victorious man who overcame all sin!

More Striking Evidence!
The list of parallels between Jesus and Israel goes on but consider just a few more points.

For example, after healing a group of people, Jesus modestly “charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaïas [Greek for Isaiah] the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets” (Matthew 12:16-19). Here the writer quotes Isaiah 42:1-3, a passage that originally applied to “Israel, ... my servant” (Isaiah 41:8). Yet Matthew again tells us it is “fulfilled” in Jesus Christ!

The apostle Paul also follows the principle in his letters of applying statements originally made about the nation of Israel to Jesus Christ. God called Israel “my firstborn” in Exodus 4:22. Yet Paul said it was Jesus Christ who is “the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15).

The clearest example is when God calls Israel “the seed of Abraham” (Isaiah 41:8). However, Paul later writes that Abraham’s seed does not refer to “many,” but to “one, ... which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). Thus we discover that repeatedly in the New Testament, statements that once applied to the nation of Israel are now applied to Jesus Christ. The Messiah is now “the seed.” Therefore, Jesus is the very essence of Israel! This is an explosive truth, and it cannot be ignored if we are to truly understand the role and identity of modern Israel.

A New Nation

Yet there is more. Remember that the name “Israel” not only referred to Jacob, but also to his descendants—who became Israel. The same principle is seen in the New Testament.

For example, the Lord told the ancient Israelites, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). In the New Testament, Peter applies these exact words to the church: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9).

Likewise, immediately after Paul’s statement in Galatians 3 about Jesus being “the seed,” he then tells his Gentile (a non-Jew) converts, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). Thus in the New Testament, the name Israel not only applies to Jesus Christ, but also to those who are born in Christ—His Church! In other words, all true Christians are now God’s spiritual Israel.

The church is called the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), which is one reason why James, when writing to the church, addresses it as the 12 tribes that are scattered abroad (James 1:1). From the very beginning, the church has understood Israel to mean a spiritual body of Christ.

Double Vision

Have you ever been hit so hard on the head that you start seeing double? Well, from what we have
studied together, the Christian world needs a loving “bonk” on the head with this New Testament truth, so that more people start “seeing double” about the subject of Israel! According to the New Testament, there are now two Israels. One group is composed of literal Israelites “according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3, 4). The other is “spiritual Israel,” composed of Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ.

Paul writes, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6). How’s that for proof! That is, not all are part of God’s spiritual Israel who are of the literal nation of Israel. Paul continues: “That is, They which are the children of the flesh [physical descendants of Abraham], these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (v. 8). The children of the flesh are only natural descendants of Abraham, but the children of the promise are counted as the true seed. Today, any person—Jew or Gentile—can become part of this spiritual nation of Israel through faith in Jesus Christ.

God Looks on the Heart

Just as there are two Israels, there are also two kinds of Jews. First, there are the Jews who are only natural, physical descendants of Abraham. Second, there are the Jews in Spirit who believe in Jesus Christ. Paul writes, “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest on the law, and makest thy boast of God ... For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision [Gentiles] keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? ... For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:17, 25, 26, 28, 29).

Did you catch that? The implications are staggering! Someone who is “called a Jew” because he is a physical descendant of Abraham, and yet who lives as a lawbreaker, “is not a Jew”—at least, not in God’s eyes. His “circumcision is made uncircumcision.” It is revoked. Thus to God, he is a Gentile. And a believing Gentile, who through faith keeps “the righteousness of the law,” his uncircumcision is counted for circumcision. Thus to God, he is a Jew.

John the Baptist paved the way for this principle when he warned the Jews not to trust their literal ancestry for salvation. “Bring forth therefore fruits meet [worthy] for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matthew 3:8, 9).

Later, Jesus echoed this same principle in a showdown with the religious leaders. “They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham … Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:39, 44).

Paul also writes, “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7). “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). Thus, according to Paul, a real Jew in the sight of God is anybody—Jew or Gentile—who has personal faith in Jesus Christ!

Eventually, this truth hit Peter between the eyes, and he told a room full of Gentile converts, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh
righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34, 35).

Eating with the Patriarchs

Remember also when Jesus marveled at the faith of a Gentile soldier. He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness” (Matthew 8:10-12).

Jesus’ declaration stunned the listening crowd. The idea of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sitting and eating with Gentiles was taboo, unless they had been converted to the Jewish faith! (Acts 10:28).

This is also an underlying theme in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The Jews feast on the Word, but they do not share it with the Gentiles starving for truth. Therefore, they are cast out of the kingdom. But Lazarus [the Gentiles], the one who lay outside the gate hungering for the crumbs of truth, abides in Abraham’s bosom (See Luke 16:19-31).

The Road to Building a New Temple

Let’s now follow a brief but directly related tangent.

If we want the fog to clear from around the subject of prophetic Israel, we must also consider the Jewish temple. Many who have focused their attention on a literal nation fulfillment are also expecting the ancient Jewish temple to be rebuilt.

Some of the contemporary so-called Christian “Zionists” who have written on this rebuilding include Thomas Ice, Randall Price, Grant Jeffery, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Dave Hunt, and John Hagee. Their combined published book sales exceed 70 million in more than 50 languages. This shows their views to be extremely influential, and therefore they cannot be simply dismissed. A significant proportion of evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal, and fundamentalist Christians worldwide endorse this view.

In the same way the devil has misdirected focus from spiritual Israel to the literal headlines concerning the Middle East today, he has also confused people on the subject of the temple. Oddly, most of the speculation and hopes for a rebuilt temple spring from one vague ethereal reference in the New Testament dealing with the antichrist power. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4, we read, “Let no man deceive you by anymeans: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (emphasis ours).

Since the Romans destroyed the last Jewish temple in AD 70, many naturally assume that in order for this antichrist being, a specific person in their view, to sit in the temple, it will have to be rebuilt. But let us follow the Biblical clues.
A Spiritual House

Just before King David died, he wanted to build a permanent temple in Jerusalem. Nathan the prophet told David that he would not be able to build this house for God, but that his son Solomon would do it.

First Chronicles 17:11, 12 recounts, “And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will establish his throne for ever.”

Later, David said the Lord told him “Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts” (1 Chronicles 28:6).

But this is one of the clearest examples in Scripture of prophecy having dual applications. Yes, history records do show that Solomon was the son of David and that he built a physical temple, but the New Testament says that Jesus was the true “Son of David,” who was to build a temple and kingdom that was to last forever. Jesus clearly taught that He had come to transfer the attention from a physical building of worship to something greater: His body, the church.

John 2:19-21, says, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.” Jesus’ prophecy concerning the pride of the Jewish nation and the destruction of the temple inspired the most intense rejection of His teaching. Here are some high points of this truth:

- “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38).

- “And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:1, 2).

- “We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands” (Mark 14:58).

- “And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Mark 15:38).

And even as Jesus hung on the cross, His mockers reminded Him of His teachings. “Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:40). But of course, Jesus was not speaking of rebuilding the physical temple. He meant to build a spiritual one.

The New Testament Perspective
After the veil in the temple ripped from top to bottom and the early disciples were excommunicated, we find an unusual indifference among the early believers, nearly all Jews, regarding the Jewish temple. Because they knew Jesus to be the true Lamb of God, and that the Jewish temple was designed to accommodate animal sacrifices, the New Testament writers saw the temple as irrelevant. They recognized the establishment of a new spiritual temple and priesthood. See some amazing Biblical evidence for this below, with our emphasis in bold:

- “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (1 Corinthians 3:17, 16).

- “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

- “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Sadly, even after God provides all this clear biblical evidence that His temple today is a spiritual one, the church, many Christians are waiting for the Jews to rebuild a physical temple on the site where the mosque of Omar (Dome of the Rock) now sits—also known as the Temple Mount. Yet there is no prophecy, promise, or commandment in the Bible that says the temple would be rebuilt again after the Romans destroyed it. Though it might very well be rebuilt, Jesus’ prophecy that not one stone would sit upon another seemed to be of an extremely final tone.

So what does the verse in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 mean? Simply this: This antichrist power would seat itself over the church of God claiming the worship that belongs only to Jesus Christ. Historically, Protestant scholars have consistently applied Paul’s words to the papal power, and to its influence within Christianity.*

But now, let’s return to the “nation” of Israel. ________________________________  *For more information about this prophecy, order Steve Wohlberg’s book, The Antichrist Chronicles: What Prophecy Teachers Aren’t Telling You!

All Israel Saved?

Since we’ve gone this far, we might as well go all the way! Only Jews will be saved. Furthermore, all Jews will be saved! Now after you pick yourself up from the floor, allow us to explain these bold statements.

We all know that people are saved under the new covenant, right? Now notice the wording of this new covenant: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of

PrintFriendly.com: Print web pages, create PDFs http://www.printfriendly.com/print?url=http://www.amazingfacts.org/me...
And in the book of Hebrews, Paul expands on this concept: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:8, 10-12).

The new covenant is made “with the house of Israel”! God never makes a salvation covenant with Gentiles. In fact, nowhere in Scripture do you find any saving covenant made with anyone but Israelites! So if you want to be saved, you must be born again as a spiritual Jew. This is not to say that all Christians must now be circumcised and sacrifice lambs, but we must have the spiritual equivalent of these things—Jesus, the Lamb of God (the final sacrifice), and circumcision of the heart.

God does not have one method of salvation for Jews and a different one for non-Jews. Everyone is saved the same way under the same program—by grace through faith. Paul uses the analogy of an olive tree to explain that all Gentiles who are saved are grafted into the stock of Israel. “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root [supports] thee” (Romans 11:17, 18).

The Christian religion is based on a Jewish manual called the Bible. (In this light, it is difficult to understand how any professed Christian could be anti-Semitic.) Christianity is not a new religion, but rather the completion of the Jewish faith. So with this in mind, we can now better understand what Paul meant when he said, “And so all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26). Some take this verse to mean that God will ultimately save all literal Jews. If this were true, it would contradict every principle of God’s dealings with humans throughout history and Scripture. God is not a racist. In Jesus’ eyes, “There is neither Jew nor Greek” (Galatians 3:28).

We are saved based on choices we make regarding God’s provision, not on national status or physical citizenship. But if, when Paul says that “all Israel will be saved,” he is speaking of spiritual Israel, and if we understand that we become a “true Jew” only by a choice, then it all makes sense.

**Israel’s Purpose**

The primary functions for the Jewish nation were to preserve Scriptures and introduce the Messiah to the world, which was accomplished at Pentecost. We read, “Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2). And in Acts 2:5, “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” These converted Jews then took the truth back to their respective countries.

Jesus was also very concerned that the early ministry of His apostles was to focus specifically on the literal house of Israel. “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5, 6).
But after Jesus’ death, the Jewish Sanhedrin (supreme court) officially rejected the message of the gospel through the Spirit-filled preaching of Stephen. They even executed him. From that point on (AD 34), God opened the doors to the Gentiles.

- “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).

- “For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47).

Prophetic Applications

How does all of this apply to prophecy? The greatest book about prophecy, the book of Revelation, talks about Mount Zion, Israel, Jerusalem, the temple, the Euphrates, Babylon and Armageddon. Thus it is clear that Revelation uses the terminology of the Middle East in its prophecies. But sincere Christians all over the earth are applying these prophecies to literal places in the Middle East and to the modern nation of Jews. Yet once we grasp the New Testament principles discussed in this study, we are able to finally see that there is something wrong with that picture. We should be seeing error messages all over the place!

Remember that when Jesus came the first time, the devil had bamboozled God’s people into making the spiritual prophecies about the Messiah carnal and physical. Satan is doing the same thing today with the subject of Israel. Yet the plain, biblical truth is that Revelation centers on Jesus Christ and God’s Israel in the Spirit, not the Israel of the flesh. And with this correct understanding of spiritual Israel, suddenly other prophecies in the New Testament take on a whole new meaning! It’s now easy to see that the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14 are not literal Jews and the new temple will not be earthly, but rather the Body of Jesus and the church (John 2:19, 20).

An Amazing Fact:

“Fools Gold," or iron pyrites, a mineral composed of iron sulfide, actually contains no gold at all. The mineral is brass yellow and has a metallic luster. The resemblance of pyrite to gold caused many prospectors to mistake it for gold, which is how it became known as fool's gold. Even though it is often found in the vicinity of gold, it is easily distinguished from the real thing by its brittleness.

Conclusion

This “counterfeit gold” dynamic is also found prevalent in the area of spiritual truth. The Bible teaches that even gold comes in varying degrees of purity: “And the gold of that land is good” (Genesis 2:12). Millions are toting around heavy bags bulging with spiritual “fool’s gold.” They are rejoicing, believing they have discovered something to make them rich. It sparkles on the outside, but when they get to the bank of heaven, they discover this currency is worthless.

Furthermore, the tragic fact is that the popular literal focus miserably fails to grasp the true power of God’s
promise. And this failure to recognize this principle will result in false Middle East interpretations and ultimate deception.

Don't forget that “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6). And remember, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). Share with others the truth that now “there is neither Jew nor Greek, ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:28, 29).

Let us not live in the flesh or accept popular, convoluted teachings that focus on an earthly state. Rather, let us live in the Spirit. Like Jacob of old, let us wrestle in prayer and cling to Jesus until by faith we hear Him say, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Genesis 32:28).

Shalom.

For more eye-opening information, order Steve Wohlberg’s book, **Exploding the Israel Deception**, or Doug Batchelor’s new booklet, **Who Will Sing the Song? - Understanding the 144,000**.