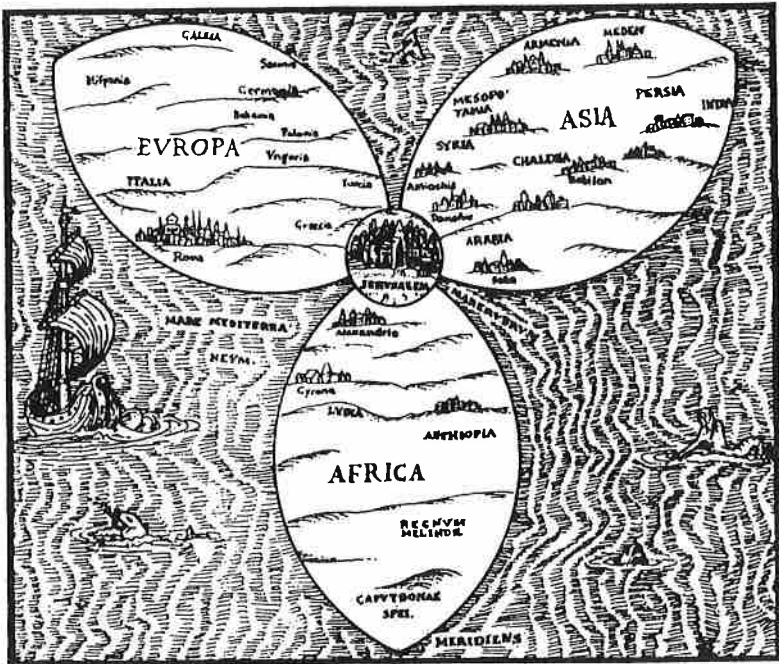


ISRAEL
A
GREAT NATION

by
Timothy Tow



Israel at the Centre of Three Continents



Ancient Map showing Jerusalem at the centre of the world, 1580.

"Thus saith the Lord God; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her" (Ezekiel 5:5).

"For out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa 2:3).

ISRAEL A GREAT NATION

Since the end of World War II, many young and vigorous nations have been born, one after the other, which were once colonies of the Great Powers. From the ASEAN Bloc have "emerged" the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Many nations have arisen in Africa with new names that old-timers have a hard time to follow. Among all these new nations there came into being on May 14, 1948 the State of Israel. The majority of Israel is made up of returnee Jews, after 2,000 years of exile.

In land area Israel is one of the tiniest. The only country in the world, to which she can boast of comparative bigness, perhaps, is Singapore. Population-wise Israel has over 5 million souls, not much bigger than Singapore either. Indeed, Israel is but a speck on the globe, a little dot on the world map. If you stand at a vantage point in the Holy Land on a fine day, say, on the hill of Samaria, you could see almost the four corners of the country. How does a tiny country like Israel become such a great nation as she is today?

Israel is in the news, front page world news, more often than any other of the new-born nations. Israel is in the news side by side with the super powers, most frequent with the United States. How has little Israel gained such global prominence?

In an issue of the Straits Times 1981, the story was told of former Israel Prime Minister Menachem Begin

meeting with former US President Ronald Reagan. This is what Begin said of a joke he cracked with the American President. Begin said President Reagan told him he had three phones on his desk. One was white to call British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. One was blue to call France's Francois Mitterrand. The third which was a red one was for God. But added Reagan, "I don't use it too much, as long distance is so expensive."

Mr Begin told his host he too had three phones. One was for Mrs Thatcher, one for Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and also one for God. "But," added Begin, "I use it all the time as, in Jerusalem, it is considered a local call."

Israel is a great nation because it is so closely linked to God. Israel is a great nation not by her own prowess. Not because the Jews are a smarter people, a superior race. Israel is a great nation because that is what God had graciously promised Abraham, that his descendants would so become (Genesis 12:2). The same promise that Israel would be a great nation he confirmed in Jacob (Genesis 46:3) and with the Israelites under Moses (Deuteronomy 26:5). Israel's greatness is solely from God.

Now, may we ask, "How does Israel become great?" Israel has become great by being God's receptacle, God's chosen vessel, to receive His Special Revelation.

Sin had polluted the whole world and blinded the eyes of the nations to the light of the truth. Instead of seeking the Creator God that had made them, they groped in the darkness of idolatry. This is particularly condemned by St. Paul in the first chapter of Romans. In the midst of such Egyptian darkness, God came first to Abraham, and after several generations to Moses. God took Israel out of the land of their slavery and gave them the Law. This Law which is summarised in the Ten Commandments God delivered to Moses on two tables of stone. By the light of

these two tables Israel was delivered from the pollutions of the world, from sins against God and the sins against her fellowmen. And it is through Israel that the moral Law, as given in the Ten Commandments, has become the pattern of all modern legal codes of the nations of the world. Thus declared Moses to Israel on the eve of their entry to the Promised Land to remind her of her holy obligations to greatness,

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. *Deuteronomy 4:5-10.*

We who live under the justice of a good Government in Singapore must remember the British who gave us our law. But, how did the British possess such good laws? Where did they get it? From the Bible and from the Law of Moses.

In contrast with little Israel, there is that gigantic country China, the land of our ancestors. For hundreds of years until the Manchu Dynasty she had sunken into the depths of poverty and misery, of backwardness in science and technology. And all this because our ancestors had departed from the Creator God, being devoid of His Law. Our ancestors were steeped in idolatry, not knowing the Living and True God. Hence flourished all the social evils that outgrew from their sin without restraint. As recent as the last two generations, the Chinese people did not enjoy such a divine right of man as the weekly Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath had been enjoyed in the West with the advent of Christianity from time immemorial. The keeping of Sunday as a Holy Day was particularly strong in the days of the Puritans in Great Britain. How both man and beast rested from their servile work in the Light of God's Law! This is but one blessing to mention that comes to the whole world from Israel, yea, even from the Law of Moses. How is it we have no need to go to office or factory when Sunday, our Christian Sabbath, comes around? We in Singapore today are enjoying the blessings of a Law which God first gave to Israel! This law that distinguished Israel from the Gentiles, that made Israel great!

Secondly, Israel is a great nation because not only has God's Law been given through her, but also God's Son. Jesus our Lord and Saviour was born a Jew, from the house of David, from the stock of Abraham. The greatness of Israel, as we have observed, is not in her mental powers, but rather in her spiritual heritage. Through her is the Promised Seed given whereby all the families of the earth are blessed (Genesis 12:3). We Christians must remember that we owe the Jews this great debt. Israel was not only, as St. Augustine had said, the Librarian to the Christian Church (she has given us by her prophets the Bible).

Through her has come to us the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, the only way to God. A young Jewess, the Virgin Mary, was the chosen vessel through whom Jesus Christ was born.

But alas! The Jews who were the very recipients of the Salvation of God rejected Christ and had Him crucified. Their Church leaders were not afraid of the guilt of their crime. They even challenged God to take the Blood of the Spotless Son of God upon themselves and their children (Matthew 27:25). Of the Jews that believed in Jesus and were gathered together as a Christian community there were not more than 120. Apart from those 3,000 and 5,000 (Acts 2:41; 4:4) who believed the Lord at Pentecost, the rest of the Jews rejected the Gospel. Therefore the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles. The Jews who rejected Christ were rejected of God. Hence their Diaspora or dispersion, their scattering, to the ends of the earth. Israel the great nation became a small nation, a stateless nation.

By the mysterious decrees of God Israel, like the olive branch, was cut off when they rejected the Saviour. The Gentiles who believed, like a wild olive branch, was grafted in her place. Today salvation is still given to the Gentiles, so this Gospel continues to be preached freely and without restraint to us who live in a free country like Singapore. But soon our time will be up when "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in," ie. when the predestined number of Gentiles to be saved will be counted. Then Israel, the outcast Olive branch, will be reinstated when "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26).

One reason why Israel must be reinstated is God's unchangeable promise to Abraham. The promise given him and his descendants is forever vested in them. Another reason why Israel must be restored to her former glory is that the promise God gave to David of a throne that must

remain forever must be fulfilled. And that throne to be set up again is by none other than Christ, the Messiah, David's Greater Son.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. *Isaiah 9:6,7*

In the light of these promises, no wonder we see Israel gathered back together to her land as a nation. Israel is become a great nation again, a super power among the larger but weaker Arab nations.

Satan does not like to see Israel restored to her previous greatness as in the days of David and Solomon. Satan has therefore instigated the Arabs to fight Israel. Five wars were fought: In 1948 the Arabs tried to prevent Israel from becoming a nation but they failed. In 1956 there broke out the Second War. Again the Arabs were defeated. In 1967 Egypt, Syria and Jordan were gravely wounded in the Six Day War. The fourth one, fought in 1973 known as the Yom Kippur War or War of the Day of Atonement, again saw Israel victorious. All these victories against her neighbours are foretold by Isaiah.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall

assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. *Isaiah 11:11-15.*

The fifth war was waged over Lebanon 1982-85. Israel's invasion of Lebanon is foretold by the prophet Zechariah.

Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled; a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled. Thus saith the Lord my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter; Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. *Zechariah 11:1-6.*

How is it that the Arabs, like a platoon of soldiers charging on a teenage boy walking alone in the lane were on the

contrary thrown back one after the other like in a *Kung Fu* drama? The secret of Israel's greatness as a nation is God.

And as God is behind the descendants of Abraham His "friend", so has He helped Israel in the epic Entebbe raid, saving over 100 hostages hijacked by Palestine Arabs. Moreover God has enabled His chosen race to carry out the destruction of the atomic plant in Iraq. Iraq retaliated in the recent Gulf War with Scud missiles, but to no avail. Israel continues to be helped by the United States the greatest power in the world in a new age of peace-making according to Daniel's prophecy. That Rabin had shaken hands with Arafat under Clinton's patronage surprised the whole world except students of prophecy. All this is in order that Israel might play her role in the coming of Jesus Christ. As Christ, like an airplane, needed Israel to land in the First Advent, and the aerodrome was the Virgin Mary, so must He need Israel, a restored nation, a second time to return to earth to judge the nations.

Israel is bound to be a great nation again, because God has set this seal upon her in Abraham: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Genesis 12:3). Thus those who have persecuted Abraham's descendants the Jews have lost out. Yea, they have been thoroughly extinguished. The sad ending of Hitler, Jew-baitor and arch anti-Semitic is notorious. Then there arose Nasser, who wanted to throw every Jew into the sea before the Six Day War. He soon died in the War's aftermath. How we thank God for Sadat, his successor, who so bravely stood alone to make peace with Israel. Sadat who fell a martyr for world peace died a glorious death.

With Israel's southern borders secure she can face the enemy with her back to the wall. But war will erupt again culminating in the Battle of Armageddon. In this final

Battle the Messiah must come to save Israel. According to the prophecy of Zechariah on the climax of that last Battle:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in

winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. *Zechariah 13:8 - 14:9.*

What is your attitude to Israel? If you have that anti-Jewish feeling like the rest of the world, change over to a lover of Israel. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee." Make peace with Israel! Such a heathen chieftain had the wise insight into the goodness of making friends with Israel: Thus Abimelech, Chieftain of the Philistines, came to Abraham: "God is with thee in all that thou doest..." And thus did Abimelech say to Isaac, "We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee: and we said, let there be now an oath betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the Lord" (Genesis 21:22; 26:28,29). This wise choice is what King Soloman had observed: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). Make peace with Israel because she is destined to be great. She will be the greatest when our Lord comes back to earth, to sit on His father David's throne in Jerusalem.

Jesus will rule this wartorn earth with peace for a thousand years.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. *Revelation 20:4.*

No more will there be a United Nations Headquarters in New York. The capital of the world will be shifted to Jerusalem, as seen by the Prophet Isaiah.

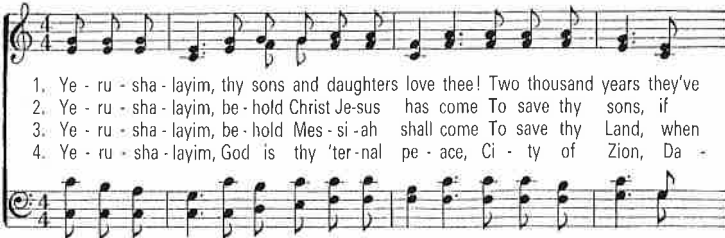
And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. *Isaiah 2:3,4.*

Israel, indeed, is destined to be a great nation when she turns to her Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, whom her people have blindly rejected all these centuries. Let Israel now say: Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

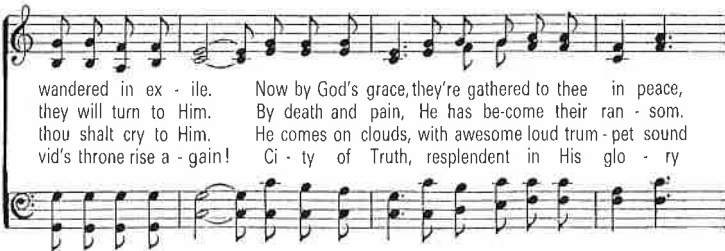
Yerushalayim, Messiah Is Come

T. Tow

Swedish folk melody
Arr. by R. J. Hughes



1. Ye - ru - sha - layim, thy sons and daughters love thee! Two thousand years they've
2. Ye - ru - sha - layim, be - hold Christ Je - sus has come To save thy sons, if
3. Ye - ru - sha - layim, be - hold Mes - si - ah shall come To save thy Land, when
4. Ye - ru - sha - layim, God is thy 'ter - nal pe - ace, Ci - ty of Zion, Da -

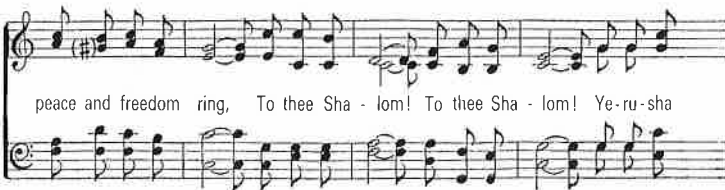


wandered in ex - ile. Now by God's grace, they're gathered to thee in peace,
they will turn to Him. By death and pain, He has be - come their ran - som,
thou shalt cry to Him. He comes on clouds, with awesome loud trum - pet sound
vid's throne rise a - gain! Ci - ty of Truth, resplendent in His glo - ry



Chorus

By thy embrace, their weeping turns to smile.
Ris - ing a - gain, He has forgiv'n their sin. Ye - ru - sha - layim, let
To judge the earth - peace a mil - len - ni - um.
Till sun shall rise and moon no more shall wane.



peace and freedom ring, To thee Sha - lom! To thee Sha - lom! Ye - ru - sha



layim, lift up thy voice and sing, Messiah is come, Messiah is come!

In the New Jerusalem

T. Tow

Bethel Hymns



- 1 We're a pilgrim band now headed for the glo-ry land a-bove. We are
2 In that land of glo-ry where the saints are gather'd round His Throne. No more
3 We are heading near-er near-er for the land that's now in sight. Will you



travelling thru the wil-der-ness be-low. We've a home that's far a-sighs nor tears nor sor-rows nor des-pair. But an e-ver-last-ing join us to the Ci-ty bright and fair? Is your name for-e-ver



way be-yond the blue sky and the stars.
song of vic-tory flows from e-very tongue. In the New Je-ru-sa-lem!
writ-ten in the Lamb's book of Life?



Chorus



Hal-le-lu-jahs fill the heavens For the saints have all come home



To Je - ru - sa - lem! To Je - ru - sa - lem!



Israel and Neighbouring Countries

