

But even if they're scattered to the ends of the earth as a result of disobedience, He is going to bring them back again to the land of Israel, Deuteronomy 28, Deuteronomy 30 tells you that.

We see also that the Holocaust itself was preparing the way for the rebirth of Israel. It showed the world that the Jews needed a homeland, and also, to the Jewish people, that they needed a homeland to live in. Jeremiah 31, as we've read, says that the nations of the world should take notice of this: "Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.'" Jeremiah 31 verse 10.

So, a word there which is directed to the nations, to the *goyim*, gentile nations. And the people who are in the '*isles afar off*'. As far as the prophets are concerned, the '*isles afar off*' are the places like this one. Places afar off they didn't know their names of, but places which should hear this word.

And who's going to hear the word of the Lord and believe it? It should be those who believe the Bible, in other words, the Bible-believing Christians should actually believe that this is the Word of the Lord and pay attention to it. That God has scattered Israel but He's also gathering them, carrying them back to his land, and that is the fulfillment of His word. And that they should pay attention.

So, the word here implies 'pay attention, give attention to this', because what's happening is important. It's important for two reasons: firstly, the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Israel is a sign of God's faithfulness to His covenant and to His word to the Jewish people. In Jeremiah 31.35 to 36 God says He's going 'to preserve the Jewish people as long as the sun and the moon and the stars are shining in the sky'.

If we look carefully, we find that in the Hebrew prophets there is a message given to the Jewish people (and the Gentile church) in the last days which points them to both the time of trouble and the Messiah who is able to save Jews and Gentiles out of this trouble. Know where to look and you will find it. One such passage is **Jeremiah 30-31**, one of many passages in both the Old and New Testament which speaks of a unique time of trouble and deliverance from it. It is specifically directed to the period known as the last days, which means the final period of this age. In the Hebrew prophets one of the phrases used to describe this time is '*acharit ha yamim*', the last days – see **Jeremiah 30.24**

In the previous chapter the prophet has been talking about the coming captivity of the Jewish people in Babylon, and their return to the land of Israel after a period of 70 years: **"After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place."** **Jeremiah 29.10** As far as the prophet was concerned these events would be fulfilled in the near future.

Daniel, one of the Jews taken into captivity in Babylon, records how he was praying for the restoration of Jerusalem, when he understood that the 70-year time frame of **Jeremiah 29** was fulfilled. In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— **"In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes."** **Daniel 9.1-3**

Daniel's prayer was effective and led to the decision of the Persian Emperor Cyrus to give the edict for the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple there (**Ezra 1.1-4**), after the Medes and the Persians overthrew the Babylonian Empire. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Cyrus was presented (possibly by Daniel himself) with the scroll of the prophet **Isaiah**, who had written years earlier saying that the one who would cause the restoration of Jerusalem was named Cyrus (**Isaiah 44.24-45.7**). *"This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the Divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfil what was so written; so, he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem."* Josephus Antiquities of the Jews - Book 11.

So accurate was biblical prophecy that unbelieving liberal theologians conclude that these words must have been written after the event, but Bible believers recognise that God knows the end from the beginning and is well able to communicate this to His prophets. If those prophecies were accurately fulfilled, so will be future prophecies of the last days.

In **Jeremiah 30-31** God changes the subject from the captivity in Babylon, telling Jeremiah to write 'these words' in a book, which has special relevance to '*acharit ha yamim*', the last days. Midway through this section the text says, 'be acharit ha yamim titbonenu bah' in the last days you will understand it. The context of these words goes beyond the soon coming captivity in Babylon and the Jews return from Babylon. It points to events which will happen in the last days, in other words the days before the Day of the Lord, which in New Testament terms in the Second Coming of Messiah Jesus.