

# THE DISPERSION OF ISRAEL AMONG THE NATIONS

**BIBLE TEXT**: Deuteronomy 28:29, 43, 48, 65-67; Isaiah 32:10,13, 14;

Hosea 3:4; Luke 21:20-24

LESSON 162 Junior and Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Deuteronomy 28:29**

<sup>29</sup> And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*.

### **Deuteronomy 28:43**

<sup>43</sup> The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

### **Deuteronomy 28:48**

<sup>48</sup> Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

### **Deuteronomy 28:65-67**

<sup>65</sup> And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

<sup>66</sup> And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

"Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled

"But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-24).

### **The Rejection of Israel's Messiah**

In the preceding lesson we took up the study of prophecy in connection with the present world-wide dispersion of the Jews. We saw there how the Lord, through the mouth of His Prophet Moses, told these people, approximately 1500 years before the beginning of this current dispersion, all that would befall them if they persevered in their disobedience. During the greater part of this 1500-year period they were in a state of rebellion against God. This rebellion reached its climax when they rejected and crucified their Messiah, God's only begotten Son, thus perpetrating the greatest travesty of justice in all history.

The Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, was determined to escape the responsibility of that which, under pressure, he was about to do. The jealousy, envy, and blind rage of the Jews knew no bounds. It bereft them of sane and sound reason. They cried out, in their ignorance, to Pilate, "His blood be on us" (**Matthew 27:25** <sup>25</sup> Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. **1 Corinthians 2:8** <sup>8</sup> Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory). They were not content to stop there, however, but went a step further and added, "and on our children," thus incriminating their children and children's children, yet unborn, in the greatest of all tragedies. What a terrible imprecation of wrath upon themselves and their offspring!

They were not able to lift the load of responsibility from the shoulders of Pilate, but were eager to assume all such responsibility to the fullest extent. And ever since that awful moment of rejection, flee as they have into every country on the face of the earth, the Avenger of Blood has been on their trail. No really effectual cities of refuge have been found for these unfortunate people; nor will be until they look upon Him whom they have pierced and in true repentance and faith find in Him the source of all their blessings, both spiritual and material (**Zechariah 12:10** <sup>10</sup> And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications:

night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

<sup>67</sup> In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

### Isaiah 32:10

<sup>10</sup> Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.

### Isaiah 32:13-14

<sup>13</sup> Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns *and* briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy *in* the joyous city:

<sup>14</sup> Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

### Hosea 3:4

<sup>4</sup> For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim:

### Luke 21:20-24

<sup>20</sup> And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

<sup>21</sup> Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the

and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.).

In less than 40 years from the time the Jews uttered these words assuming full responsibility for the death of Jesus, the Romans, under General Titus in 70 A. D., came and laid siege to the capital of the Jewish nation, Jerusalem. When the city finally fell, after a six-month siege, the Romans crucified the inhabitants in such numbers that there was found a deficiency of crosses for the condemned, and of places for the crosses. Josephus tells us that this siege was started at the time of the Passover. The people had come in vast numbers from all parts of the land to Jerusalem to observe this annual feast and were suddenly shut up within the walls of the city, as in a great prison, by the Roman army. It is very significant to note that no other foreign nation ever came thus to destroy the Jews at any of their solemn festivals, from the days of Moses until this time. The Lord had always protected them on such occasions, but now they were in a state of apostasy from God, and, of course, in a state of disobedience to Him. When this siege came to a close, 1,100,000 Jews had died by crucifixion, pestilence, and famine, and 97,000 were led away captive.

Thus began the world-wide dispersion of the Jewish people, which has extended over a period of some 1900 years down to the present time. Having exiled their own Messiah, the Jews themselves became exiles among all nations, where their history for the past centuries has been written in blood and tears. At the time Jesus spoke the words: "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24), it is estimated that there were approximately 12,000,000 Jews in the whole of Palestine; Galilee alone containing about 3,000,000. Another writer states that "the population to the square mile was larger in Palestine than in any other portion of the Roman Dominion." However, in the year 1160, only 200 Jews could be found residing in Jerusalem. In 1827 only about 500 could be found from Dan to Beersheba. By 1882 this number had increased to only 4,000. Thus we are made fully to realize that the words of Jesus have had a very literal fulfillment during the past nineteen centuries. For nearly all these 1900 years the Jews have remained outside their own country and the Gentiles have possessed their land. The Jews are at this moment scattered among all nations under Heaven, and we are reminded of the fact that this scattering took place long before the days of steamships and railroads. The speed of the scattering is absolutely out of proportion to the convenience of travel. All this meant extreme hardships on the part of those being scattered.

## Political and Religious Status During the Dispersion

**"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hosea 3:4).**

As we have learned in our studies, these "many days" have extended over a period of many centuries. The place of their abode has been "from the one end of the earth even unto the other." Thus they have been deprived of their national home and have been without a king and without a prince.

There is only one place that the Jews can offer their many sacrifices, and that is in the place of the Lord's choosing (**Deuteronomy 12:5-6** <sup>5</sup> But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: <sup>6</sup> And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: **Deuteronomy 12:13-14** <sup>13</sup> Take heed to thyself that

mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

<sup>22</sup> For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

<sup>23</sup> But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

<sup>24</sup> And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: <sup>14</sup> But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. **Deuteronomy 16:1-6** <sup>1</sup> Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. <sup>2</sup> Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. <sup>3</sup> Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. <sup>4</sup> And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. <sup>5</sup> Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: <sup>6</sup> But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt). The Lord designated the site of the Temple to be in Jerusalem; "in the threshingfloor of Oman the Jebusite" (I Chronicles 21:18; II Chronicles 3:1). They are prevented from offering their sacrifices today because the Mohammedan Mosque of Omar now stands on this site. At their Passover today they put away all leaven from their houses. They eat the Matzoth — unleavened wafers — and the roasted shank bone of a lamb. They attend the synagogues and carry out the ritual and direction of the Talmud. They have everything but what the Lord required first of all. He did not say, "When I see the leaven put away, or when I see you partake of the Matzoth or of the lamb, or see you in attendance at the synagogue, I will pass over you," but "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Their religion is a religion without Blood, since they reject their crucified Savior — and a Bloodless religion is a lifeless religion. For hundreds of years the Jews have lived in this manner, and today we see them beginning to step into the next phase of the prophetic utterance, which reads: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the **LORD** and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5).

#### Conditions Prevailing in the Land

"Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come."

"Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

"Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks" (Isaiah 32:10, 13, 14).

These words were spoken about 2600 years ago. We have only to examine the conditions that have prevailed in the land of Palestine during these centuries fully to realize the accuracy of this prediction by the Prophet Isaiah. Travelers over the bleak hills of Palestine have wondered how the Bible description of it, as found in **Numbers 13:21-27** <sup>21</sup> So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. <sup>22</sup> And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, *were*. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) <sup>23</sup> And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs. <sup>24</sup> The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the

children of Israel cut down from thence. <sup>25</sup> And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. <sup>26</sup> And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup> And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it. and other portions of Scripture, could ever have been true. We are told that shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, a plowshare was drawn over the Hill of Zion, as a witness that it ceased to be a city. The Prophet of God had very clearly foretold that Jerusalem would become a plowed field (**Jeremiah 26:18** <sup>18</sup> Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest).

The land that held out so much promise for Israel became a desolate waste — unproductive and barren — without the early and latter rains, although it once flowed "with milk and honey." Egypt was watered by drawing water from the Nile river with the aid of the human foot. Israel was watered by the rains from the heavens. If the Lord gave copiously the early and latter rains, prosperity was assured. If He withheld the rains, barrenness and impoverishment would result, and the people would "perish quickly from off the good land" which the Lord gave them (**Deuteronomy 11:10-17** <sup>10</sup> For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst *it* with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: <sup>11</sup> But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven: <sup>12</sup> A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. <sup>13</sup> And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>14</sup> That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. <sup>15</sup> And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. <sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; <sup>17</sup> And *then* the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you). The results of disobedience would be the withholding of the early and latter rains. How striking that the Israelites could read this great Book of the Law, read their own curses, their own history — past, present, and future — and still remain in unbelief.

For nearly 2,000 years the land has been devastated. No civilization has flourished for any length of time, and the land has lain idle for a thousand years. As the people were unable to pay the taxes levied by the Turkish government upon every tree, they were compelled to cut the trees down, and thus Palestine became practically a treeless country. So long as Palestine remained under Turkish and Arabian governments, hardly anything grew there, for the land was desolate. This is an outstanding proof that the land does not belong to the Arabs but to the Jews. God did not say to Abraham that in Ishmael "shall thy seed be called," but, rather, "In Isaac." The Jews, therefore, and not the Arabs, are the rightful owners of the land.

While God has been miraculously preserving the Jews for the land, He has been just as miraculously preserving the land for the Jews. By the withholding of rain, the land that once flowed with milk and honey was



reduced to comparative barrenness. This is prophesied in **Isaiah 32:9-17**  
<sup>9</sup> Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech. <sup>10</sup> Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. <sup>11</sup> Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird *sackcloth* upon *your* loins. <sup>12</sup> They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. <sup>13</sup> Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns *and* briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy *in* the joyous city: <sup>14</sup> Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; <sup>15</sup> Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. <sup>16</sup> Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. <sup>17</sup> And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. The condition outlined in this Scripture has existed in Palestine for centuries. The vintage failed; the land went out of cultivation; thorns over-spread the whole land; roads were practically nonexistent. The Turk did nothing to cope with the difficulties caused by the lack of rain. In this way God has preserved the land for the people.

During the centuries in which the Jews, scattered throughout the entire world, have been going through their long nightmare of suffering, their own land has been lying desolate with but the scantiest population, as indicated above. We are told that for century after century, unique conditions have made for the land of Israel a perpetual Sabbath. Through hundreds of years, this country has been held by the only nation that could ever have kept it in such perpetual desolation. It is believed by some that if a more progressive nation had possessed Palestine, its condition would have been somewhat different. The greatest of the professed Christian nations have eagerly desired it, and frequently sought to gain possession of it by force of arms, but all their efforts in times past have failed. But God's time arrived when it was to pass out forever from the grip of the Turks, whose grip had been ruthlessly maintained for more than twelve long centuries. At the close of World War I, Palestine passed out from Mohammedan power, thus ending that long, dark page of Israelitish history.

### **Survival During Dispersion and Persecution**

It was the withholding of the latter rain that has preserved the land for the Jews. We have noticed, on the other hand, how the Jews have been preserved in a most remarkable way for the land. Notwithstanding their nearly nineteen centuries of world-wide dispersion and their indescribable oppressions, and cruel deaths, there are today approximately 12,000,000 Jews remaining throughout the world, even after the most recent outbursts of persecutions, which occurred during World War II. Many millions of these people suffered the most cruel and inhuman to attempt, which resulted in the death of 6,000,000 of them.

Going back into their history we find that the Pharaohs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, B. C., endeavored to crush them by drowning, but they could not be drowned. Other attempts to crush them were made by the Assyrians in 775 B. C., by Nebuchadnezzar in 588 B. C., by Haman in 510 B. C., by Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 B. C., and by Titus of Rome in 70 A. D.

Now the Lord, through the mouth of His lawgiver, Moses, had informed the people that terrible suffering would be part of the price they would pay for disobedience.

**"Thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee."**

**"The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low."**

**"Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."**

**"And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:**

**"And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:**

**"In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" (Deuteronomy 28:29, 43, 48, 65-67).**

They have been only tolerated, at best, by many of the nations among whom they have settled. But they are, truly, an outstanding witness of the power of God. They are an irrefutable testimony of the divine inspiration of the Word of God. John Knox, the eminent churchman, was once asked by a king, "Can you give me, in a word, proof that the Bible is God's Word?" The great preacher answered, "Yes, the Jews."

### **Those That Bless and Those That Curse the Jew**

The Lord said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Genesis 12:3). What has happened to the nations, few in number, that have really befriended the Jews for any length of time? The United States is considered the greatest and wealthiest of all the nations. The Jews have found a haven here for 300 years. They have increased in number until today the largest Jewish population in any nation of the world is the 5,200,000 in the United States. They have prospered among us, and the country has prospered with them. We read in the Bible: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psalm 122:6). It is regrettable to note, however, that they have not lived here entirely free from all persecution and discrimination. Especially has this been more or less true in late years.

Britain became great under the leadership of Disraeli, a Jew. She prospered and became a world-wide power. This man was one of Britain's greatest statesmen of all time. However, during the latter period of the British mandate over Palestine, the once-favorable attitude of the British government toward the Jews was definitely reversed. A British White Paper, issued May 17, 1939, forbade Jewish immigration to Palestine after five years and limited immigration during this five-year period, to **12,000** annually. During World War II the British used force of arms to enforce this White Paper and to prevent the Jews from returning to their native land. Many ships, carrying Jewish refugees who were fleeing from Nazi torture and death, were stopped at sea by the British navy, and their precious cargo of men, women, and children were removed and herded into the miserable detention camps of Cyprus.

Coincidental with the reversal of British policy toward the Jews, there has been a steady decline of her nation and empire. At the present time she is no longer rated the top nation of the world. She, is in great financial distress. She is no longer mistress of the *seas*. Could it be that what the Almighty God spoke to Abraham nearly 3900 years ago, "I will .. . curse him that curseth thee," has anything to do with the decline of Britain? We find the Lord, through the mouth of His Prophet Zechariah, saying, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8)

Other nations that have so bitterly persecuted, tortured, and massacred the Jews have gone down: namely, the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, and in our time, the German. Pharaoh tried to

drown the' Israelites. He and his army were drowned in the Red Sea. Haman tried to hang them. He was hanged on the very gallows he had prepared for the execution of the leading Jew of his day, Mordecai. The avowed intention of Hitler, the German dictator, was to remove all Jews from the face of the earth. He came to a most ignominious end, and brought untold suffering, misery, and starvation to Germany's millions.

### **The Continued Existence of the Jews**

What is the meaning of the continued existence of the Jews? Why have they not been swallowed up by the people among whom they have dwelt? This has happened to other occidental races who have immigrated to new countries. By the time the third generation is reached, every trace of the original nationality has vanished, and they have become absorbed with the people among whom they dwell. But not so with the Jews, for they have remained separate and have been easily distinguished from the various races among whom they have lived. The Jews remain, but their enemies perish. We are reminded of the prophecy of Balaam: "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9). (**Jeremiah 30:10-11** <sup>10</sup> Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid. <sup>11</sup> For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.)

During the thirty or more centuries of their national existence, they have been continually stumbling on the verge of the abyss of annihilation, yet they have always regained their footing. Why? Only because of -divine preservation. They have certainly been miraculously preserved for some special purpose in connection with the future development of the human race. An infidel king once wrote to the governor of one of his provinces: "Let those Jews alone; no man ever touched them and prospered."

As we continue this study we shall observe the unfolding of God's Plan for these miracle people who are now found in every nation under Heaven. God's unerring Word of prophecy is coming to pass and will continue to come to pass until all has been fulfilled.