



SUGAR LAND BIBLE CHURCH
"BRINGING THE BIBLE TO LIFE FOR 38
YEARS
1982– 2020



THE CORNERSTONE

September 2020

Continuing our Study in the
Book of Hebrews

Begins September 8, 2020

Key Concept: Jesus Christ Is Better

Picking up in Hebrews 8:6-13

Tuesday Morning Class—9:00 am

Teacher: Betty Cooke

Tuesday Evening Class—7:00 pm

Teacher: Betty Cooke

Sign-up Sheets on the table in the foyer

Missions for the Month



Art & Robin Allen
Ministry Newsletter
At McChord AFB, WA
April 2020

Life and ministry here in WA continue to be blessed and bear fruit. Even with the current health crisis we have found ways to stay connected and deepen relationships. When the crisis began to capture the world's attention God seemed to impress on me that He was going to touch many lives in a very personal way.



Our Navigators ministry at McChord AFB is going well even though we haven't been to the base in a couple weeks. We are holding our Wednesday discipleship study using Zoom and have seen more attend consistently on video than in person. The fellowship has deepened, and many are sharing their "social distancing" and witnessing stories.

Meeting one to one with airmen has not skipped a beat either. Many have been off work and confined to their dorms or homes as they rotate on "skeleton crews" at work. So, they're available more now than before. Meeting on Zoom or messenger video has created great opportunities to continue personal discipleship.

Our neighborhood outreach effort has been blessed also. We started a monthly soup night where our neighbors are invited to bring their own bowls and spoons for free soup and conversation. We have had a house full each time and have connected with several neat people. We were able to meet and encourage those who are already believers. We look forward to when



**Andy Woods—Pastor**

Signs of the Times for 2020 (Part 7)

In our first installment, we observed that the Bible places much emphasis on the signs related to Christ's return (Matt. 24:33; Luke 21:28; Heb. 10:25, etc.). Observing these signs helps us ascertain that general time of human history in which we find ourselves. We noted that if the signs of the Tribulation period are rapidly approaching, and the rapture of the Church precedes the Tribulation period, then the rapture must be coming even faster.

Thus, we began to ask ourselves, what are some of these signs that are now setting the stage for the coming Tribulation period? We selected the following *seven* signs as deserving of analysis to be covered in this series:

1. Signs related to Israel
2. Signs related to international politics
3. Signs related to economics
4. Signs related to technology
5. Signs related to spirituality
6. Signs related to society
7. Signs related to understanding Bible prophecy

Therefore, this series is dedicated to exploring the *seven* signs related to the soon return of Jesus Christ. As a result of this teaching, may we all grow in our understanding of the unique time in which we now live.

1. Signs Related to Israel

There are several signs meriting discussion concerning the modern state of Israel. These include Israel's miraculous political rebirth in 1948, the recapturing of Old Testament Jerusalem in 1967, Israel's ambition to rebuild her third Temple, and her desire for peace at any cost with her hostile neighbors. In the last installment, we examined Israel's mountainous regions and earthquake-prone topography. In this installment, we will focus on *Israel's burgeoning wealth*.

Israel's Burgeoning Wealth

Another sign related to the nation of Israel is that she must become phenomenally wealthy. In fact, such wealth will serve as the catalyst for the last days invasion of the nation of Israel according to Ezekiel 28:12. This verse describes the motive of Israel's attackers in the last days, when it says, "to capture *spoil and to seize plunder*, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have *acquired cattle and goods*, who live at the center of the world" (italics added). For the nations to invade Israel to seize "spoil, plunder, cattle, and goods," Israel obviously must first acquire such wealth in the last days.

Yet, for nearly two millennia after Israel's eviction from her land and worldwide dispersion at the hands of the Romans, her land lay economically dormant, existing only as a mere barren expanse. In fact, Mark Twain visited that area in 1867 and then wrote about it in his books *The Innocents Abroad*, which was published in 1869. He described the area as follows:

...A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds... a silent mournful expanse.... a desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action.... we never saw a human being on the whole route.... there was hardly a tree or shrub

anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country. (Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, Complete, 1st ed. [A Public Domain Book, 1869], 267, 285, 302. These quotes can be found in chapters 47, 49, 52.)

Yet, following the return of the Hebrews to her ancient homeland, beginning with Israel's War of Independence on May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel gradually began to create a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that outstripped that of her surrounding neighbors. According to the 2005 edition of the CIA Fact Book, Israel had achieved a GDP of 123 billion dollars. This number is quite large in comparison to that of her surrounding neighbors, such as Egypt (\$81 billion), Syria (\$26 billion), Lebanon (\$21 billion), and Jordan (\$12 billion).

According to the Jerusalem Post:

Despite a population of only slightly more than 7 million people...Israel is now home to more than 7,200 millionaires...Of the 500 wealthiest people in the world, six are now Israeli, and all told, Israel's rich had assets in 2007 of more than \$35 billion dollars... Israel's GDP is almost double that of any other Middle Eastern country. (Matthew Kreiger, Jerusalem Post, cited in David Jeremiah, *What in the World Is Going On? 10 Prophetic Clues You Cannot Afford to Ignore* [Nashville: Nelson, 2008], 175.)

In fact, the recently estimated value of the mineral deposits found in the Dead Sea alone are enough to make the modern state of Israel the financial envy of the world. Although there is a wide variation of estimates, many different sources estimate the mineral wealth of the Dead Sea in the trillions of dollars. One news source explains:

The value of the minerals of the Dead Sea is estimated at five trillion dollars. This estimate appears to be optimistic but it is supported in part by the report of the Crown Agents of the British Colonies entitled "Production of Minerals From the Waters of the Dead Sea"...This official report estimates the minerals, except oil, in 1925 as follows: Magnesium Chloride, 22,000 tons, value 600 billion dollars; Potassium Chloride, 20,000 tons, value 75 billion dollars; other minerals valued at 1,200 billion dollars; or a total of about three trillion dollars, exclusive of oil. (<http://www.matterofprinciple.net/011/11/rothschilds-palestine.html> [accessed December 15, 2011].)

Israel is also in the process of utilizing natural gas from the Mediterranean Sea recently discovered off her northern coastline. Todd Strandberg explains that in the summer of 2010:

...huge deposits of natural gas were found along Israel's northern coastline...Israel is actually sitting on top of a vast amount of oil. According to Harold Vinegar, the former chief scientist of Royal Dutch Shell, the Shefla Basin holds the world's second-largest shale deposits outside the United States, from which around 250 billion barrels of oil—about the same as Saudi Arabia's proven reserves...Estimates of global deposits range from 2.8 trillion to 3.3 trillion barrels of recoverable oil...The technology curb has now reached the point where shale is becoming an exploitable resource...the Shefla shale is in a hospitable location. It also contains oil of the light, sweet variety that is easy to refine into gasoline or other common end products. Most of all, the Jews have proven themselves to be very talented at exploiting resources. If they can't make shale oil work, I doubt any nation can. (Todd Strandberg, "Could Israel Become a Major Oil Exporter," online: www.bibleprophecy.com, accessed 26 May 2015.)

Also, the nation of Israel appears poised to discover oil on the Golan Heights, which promises to keep Israel independently wealthy for the foreseeable future. Israel's recent oil discovery is described in the following news clip:

After more than a year of round-the-clock drilling, large amounts of oil have been found on the Golan Heights. Estimates are that the amount of oil discovered will make Israel self-sufficient for very many years to come. Afek Oil and Gas chief geologist Dr. Yuval Bartov told Channel 2 News, "We are talking about a strata which is 350 meters thick and what is important is the thickness and the porosity. On average in the world strata are 20-30 meters thick, so this is ten times as large as that, so we are talking about significant quantities. The important thing is to know the oil is in the rock and that's what we now know." Three drillings have so far taken place in the southern Golan Heights

we can open our doors again .

Please pray for:

- fruitful ministry, bringing the Gospel and call to discipleship at JBLM
- develop airmen as disciple-makers in their own networks of people
- protection, encouragement and strength for our family
- wisdom, opportunities and effectiveness to continually develop this ministry
- opportunities to share Christ with our neighbors

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which have found large reserves of oil. Potential production is dramatic - billions of barrels, which will easily provide all Israel's oil needs... (Globes Correspondent, "Huge Oil Discovery on Golan Heights," online: <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-huge-oil-discovery-on-golan-heights-1001071698>, accessed 09 October 2015.)

Of course, this recent Israeli oil discovery brings to mind one of the ancient predictions given by Moses all the way back in 1406 B.C. as recorded in Deuteronomy 33:24. Concerning the blessings that will come to the tribe of Asher, Moses here predicted: "Of Asher he said, 'More blessed than sons is Asher; May he be favored by his brothers, And *may he dip his foot in oil* '" (italics added). Interestingly, consultation with a Bible map indicates that Asher, during the days of Joshua, was located in the Northwest portion of the nation adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea, which is the same general area where the above described natural gas discovery was made.

How interesting that in our general lifetime Israel has not only been restored politically but transformed from a mere barren wilderness (Lev. 26:43; Ezek. 38:8) into an economic wonder and envy of the modern world. Such a transformation is first necessary to furnish the economic incentive for the last days invasion of Israel, as is predicted in the pages of God's prophetic word (Ezek. 38:12). All of this to say that Israel's burgeoning wealth is yet another of the many key signs indicating that we are rapidly approaching the events of the Tribulation period. In our next installment, we will leave our emphasis upon signs related to Israel and instead begin to focus on signs related to international politics.

(To Be Continued...)

Scripture for the Month

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "*The just shall live by faith.*" Romans 1:16-17

Join us Wednesday September 2, 2020 at 6:45 p.m. as we kick off our Children and Youth Wednesday night programs!

