

PALANSKI



ARMAGEDON

POPRIŠTE POSLEDNJEG POKOLJA

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ARMAGEDDON

THE BATTLE FOR JERUSALEM

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INTRODUCTION

Biblijska proročanstva, a posebno ona koja se odnose na završne događaje istorije sveta, oduvek su izazivala pažnju ljudi. **In this book we will focus on probably the most famous, the most talked about, the great battle - ARMAGEDDON!** Međutim, kao i u pogledu mnogih drugih stvari, ni ovde na žalost nema jedinstvenog mišljenja među hrišćanskim teolozima o tome kako shvatiti ovu bitku. **What are some of the common theories of Armageddon?** Uz zanemarljive razlike jasno se izdvaja nekoliko potpunop oprečnih gledišta.

Most believe that this is a battle that takes place in the middle east. They say that the name *Armageddon* predicts the precise geographic location of the final battle of Gentile armies against Israel in the tiny little valley called Megiddo.

Aders think that the battle of Armageddon will be a worldwide conflict pitting rebellious man and evil spirits against the Creator and His loyal followers, the great controversy between good and evil.

Treæi pomeraju ovu bitku za još hiljadu godina kasnije. When Christ returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. Those whom Christ raises will reign with Him for a thousand years

(Rev. 20:4). At the end of the thousand years the wicked will be resurrected. Satan leads the wicked against “the camp of God's people, the city he loves” (Rev. 20:9), which, with Christ, have descended from heaven by this time. John the Revelator says: “They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.” Revelation 20:9. Prema gledištu ovih tumaèa, to konaèno uništenje grešnika ognjem predstavlja Armagedonsku bitku.

Who is right? Odmah da kaŕemo da ovi treæi zaboravljaju da je Armagedon opisan u okviru sedam zala, a sedam zala se moraju dogoditi pre Hristovog drugog dolaska. Tako nam ostaju samo prva dva tumaèenja za razmatranje. Ova knjiga je pokušaj da se odgovori na to pitanje ko je u pravu, kada æe se, gde æe se i šta æe se zaista dogoditi.

1.

ISRAEL - GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

Za Izrael se po mnogo èemu može reæi da je izuzetan narod. Njegovo postojanje predstavlja svojevrsni istorijski fenomen, koji se ne može drugaèije objasniti, i pored èesto opreènih pokušaja, osim božanskim pozivom i Božjom milošæu.

“Hebrew origins begin essentially with Abraham the son of Terah (Genesis 11), whose origin is located in the region of Ur in southern Mesopotamia, less than thirty miles from Larsa, where Habiru are found about 1900 B.C. Ur was an extremely important center in this very period. Terah is said to have moved with his household about six hundred miles to Haran in northwestern Mesopotamia, and after Terah died Abraham took his own immediate family and began the long journey to Canaan.” 1)

Avram se nijednog trenutka nije premišljao, kad ga je Gospod pozvao da napusti Ur, jer je shvatio da Bog želi da ga otrgne iz sredine koja je svojom strašnom bezbožnošæu predstavljala stalnu opasnost za njega i njegovu porodicu:

“ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ” Hebrews 11:8.

Osим što je, vođen Božjim Duhom, pošao prema zemlji koja æe pripasti njegovom potomstvu u veè-no nasledstvo, Gospodnja namera je istovremeno bila da preko ovog vernog èoveka i njegovog potomstva saèuva i proširi po svoj Zemlji znanje o sebi kao jedinom i pravom Bogu. **Abraham became in a special sense the „Friend of God” (James 2:23) and „he is the father of all who believe” (Rom. 4:11).** Avram je bio spreman na neogranièenu poslušnost i poverenje kad su u pitanju Božja volja i Božji planovi s njim. **On arrival to the Promised Land, that is to Canaan, he received the two main promises from the Lord:**

“Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.” Genesis 13:14-16.

In Abraham God found a man ready to yield unqualified obedience to the divine will and entered into solemn covenant relationship with him (Genesis 15:18; 17:2–7). The Abrahamic Covenant was the promise of a special blessing for Abraham's descendants: a “chosen” people. But it is obviously not for their benefit alone, but that, through them, all people would be blessed!

Avramovi potomci su se konaèno formirali kao nacija tek nakon izlaska iz egipatskog ropstva. Na putu za Obeæanu zemlju, na gori Sinaj, uèinili su zavet sa Bogom.

“The purpose of the Exodus was not merely to free a group of slaves for their own sake, but for something far greater in scope and significance,

the creation of a new nation. The direct relationship between God and the Nation was the new element created by the forces of history and circumstance. From that point on, and throughout the entire Bible henceforth, the new Covenant, a national pact between God and His people, sealed by the act of the Exodus, replaced the older, individual covenants between God and the patriarchal leaders.” 2)

The Jews were chosen by God to be His special people. Na Sinaju su osim Zakona deset zapovesti, ispisanog prstom Božjim (inscribed by the finger of God) (Deuteronomy 9:10) i određenih propisa i pravila vezanih za obrede u Svetilištu, dobili i upozorenje pod kojim uslovima mogu računati na Božje blagoslove (Leviticus 26:1-13), odnosno zbog èega ih sve može stiaei prokletstvo (Leviticus 26:14-39). Vrhunac Božjeg gneva, koji ih može stiaei, jeste rasejanje po narodima (I will scatter you among the nations). Pogledajmo šta sam Bog kaže:

“I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. I will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins.” Leviticus 26:31-33.

Za sve to vreme æe njihova zemlja, koju budu izgubili, poèivati, jer nije poèivala u dan subotni, koji je po Božjoj èetvrtoj zapovesti predviđen za poèiva-nje i ljudi i zemlje:

“Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest

and enjoy its sabbaths. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.” Leviticus 26:34.35.

Međutim, ono što treba posebno naglasiti jeste da ovo rasejanje nije nužno podrazumevalo i uništenje Jevreja. Bog je uvek računao sa ostatkom koji æe se pokajati, a još više sa svojom vernošæu zavetu koji je sklopio sa njima. Tako u nastavku èitamo:

“Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also because of their fathers' sins they will waste away. ‘But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers--their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies--then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my decrees.” Leviticus 26:39-43.

Divne li Božje milosti! Na žalost, Jevreji su još pod Sinajem, èetrdeset dana nakon što su primili Zakon i sklopili zavet sa Bogom, pogazili svoju reè i odbacili Boga time što su napravili zlatno tele (**golden calf**) i klanjali mu se (**Exodus 32**). *Ali ih Bog nije odbacio niti je pogazio svoju reè zbog toga.* On je ostao veran svome zavetu. I ostææe zauvek. Èak i kad bude bio prisiljen da ih raseje po narodima, On kaže **“I will not reject them or abhor them so as to**

destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them.” (Leviticus 26:44). On æ i dalje ostati ono što jeste - “the Lord their God”. (Leviticus 26:44).

Kanaan becomes Eretz Yisrael

“Canaan was the home of the patriarchs, and it was with this land that the God of the patriarchs was associated. Moses and all later leaders recognized this fundamentall fact... In the view of the Biblical writers there could have been no Israel without God and the Holy Land.”³⁾

Kako je Kanaan postao **Eretz Yisrael**, odnosno Zemlja Izraela?

U to vreme zemlja Kanaan, koja se nalazila između Sredozemnog mora i reke Jordana, bila je nastanjena malim plemenima, od kojih je svako imalo svog kralja. Kad su Izraelci pod vođstvom Jošue stigli do Jordana, najpre su osvojili utvrđeni grad Jeriho. Slabija plemena zahvatila je panika, pa su pustila Izraelce u svoje gradove i sela; ona koja su pružila otpor ili su proterana ili podjarmljena. Tako su se Jevreji naselili u zemlji kanaanskoj, koja je sada postala zemlja Izraela (**Eretz Yisrael**).

Posle smrti Jošue (**Joshua**) (1410-1385 B.C.) sinovi Izraela nisu imali zajedničkog vođu, veæ su njihovim plemenima upravljale sudije, sve dok nije izabran prvi car - Saul. Sa izborom cara prestala je teokratija u Izraelu, ali je Bog i dalje vodio svoj narod. **God eventually rejected Saul, the first king, because of his continual disobedience. David replased Saul. Ancient Israel’s Golden Era came during the tenth century B.C., when David ruled Israel. This powerful king wisely governed the**

tribes of Israel, forging them into a unified nation. In the days of David the land was renamed "Israel" after the new name God had given the patriarch Jacob, whose twelve sons were the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. He captured Jerusalem and made it his capital (2 Samuel 5:6-10) and moved the ark of the covenant. David had purposed to build the Lord a house, but had been told that because he was a man of blood he would not be permitted to do so. Nakon njegove smrti na izrailjski presto je došao njegov sin Solomon.

"Solomon inherited the task of fulfilling the plans that time and circumstances had permitted his father David only to formulate and dream about; and to this program he added plans and dreams of his own. Continuing and extending the pact with Phoenicia, Solomon imported vast amounts of timber from Lebanon and recruited large numbers of engineers, overseers, and artisans for the building of the Temple." ⁴⁾

When the Temple was finished, it was a masterpiece of ancient architecture until its destruction at the time of the Babilonian Exile.

"Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold, and he extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold. So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary." 1. Kings 6:21.22.

After Solomon died a power struggle ensued, resulting in a division of the people. The northern ten tribes were still called Israel, but the southern two tribes, and the land which they occupied, was called Judea, after the name of the larger of the two tribes, Judah. Kada su i jedni i drugi otpali od

Boga zadesila ih je slièna sudbina. **The northern kingdom of Israel had succumbed first to the might of the Assyrians. In 722 B.C. Sargon II of Assyria conquered this kingdom and took its capital, Samaria. Some of 30,000 survivors were carried off to Mesopotamia. The southern kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon.**

“The Babylonian Captivity of the Jews had, like the first preliminary shocks before earthquake, already been foreshadowed in a small way in 602 BC, when the last king of David’s line, Jehoiakim, was taken to Babylon along with his mother, his court, noble families, scholars and craftsmen. They were treated hospitably, as an enrichment of the lives of the Babylonian upper classes. In Jerusalem, however, unrest was brewing, and in 588 BC it broke out into open revolt. A Babylonian army was dispatched. In vain, the prophet Jeremiah warned the leaders in Jerusalem against forming an alliance with Egypt against Babylon. From the Temple and in the streets he warned against further resistance to the Babylonians, but his warnings fell on deaf ears.

Many months of siege left the people of Jerusalem weakened by hunger, and the Babylonians succeeded in breaking through the walls at their weakest point, on the northern side near the present Damascus Gate. City and Temple were stormed and burnt down. Nebuchadnezzar had thousands put to death, especially members of the noble families. The family of King Zedekiah were tortured and butchered before his very eyes; then his own eyes were put out. Those Jews who survived were carried off to captivity in Babylon.”

5)

The prophet Jeremiah records the result of their disobedience:

“This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” Jeremiah 25:11.

It is interesting th question why exactly 70 years? There was a special reason for that:

“*The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.*” 2. Chronicles 36:21. (emphasis added)

The Lord indicates that the 70 year Babylonian captivity would allow the Land to enjoy its seventh-year Sabbath rests which had been ignored by the Jews since their entry into the land under the leadership of Joshua.

“And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied. ‘If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over. You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you. I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing

aroma of your offerings. I will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. “” **Leviticus 26:25-33.**

Ove pretnje je istorija doslovno potvrdila.

Sa odvođenjem Jude i Venijamina (**Benjamin**) sada se svih dvanaest plemena našlo u ropstvu, prepušteni na milost i nemilost zavojevaèima. Ali ni tada Bog nije zaboravio svoj narod, a još manje se moglo govoriti o tome da je bio odbaèen ili uništen. Gospod je bio sa njima. U ropstvu. Delio je sa njima sve njihove patnje i nevolje nastojeæi da ih vrati na put istine i pravde. Sedamdeset godina. Po isteku tog perioda, po svom obeæanju i milosti, vratio je svoj narod u Obeæanu zemlju.

Povratak iz vavilonskog ropstva

Israel went into captivity a divided people. When the captivity ended and the Persian king, Cyrus, allowed them to return to their land under his rule, they went back as one people.

The first book of the Chronicles 9:3 pominje Judu, Venijamina, Jefrema i Manasiju (**Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh**), plemena koja su bila meðu onima koja su se vratila iz izgnanstva. **According Ezra 6:14-17 they offered twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and according Zechariah 8,3-5.13** i Izrael i Juda bili su meðu povratnicima iz izgnanstva. Upravo ovi povratnici iz ropstva, koje su saèinjavali pripadnici svih dvanaest plemena, bili su oni koji su postali novi Izrael u to vreme.

Jerusalim razoren, Hram spaljen

Na žalost, vremenom je ponovo došlo do sunovrata. Ovoga puta još strašnijeg. Bog je vekovima strpljivo pokušavao da upotrebi svoj narod, da sačuvaju i prenesu drugim narodima spasonosno znanje o Bogu, međutim, ponovo je morao da ispuni svoje pretnje prokletstvom, izrečenim još u Mojsijevo vreme.

Istorija nam potvrđuje da se katastrofa koja je zadesila jevrejski narod sredinom prvog veka naše ere, u vreme robovanja Jevreja pod rimskom vlašću, odvijala upravo prema ovom scenariju. Jevreji se nisu mogli pomiriti sa činjenicom da nad njima vladaju pagani. Zato su 66. godine n.e. podigli ustanak:

“Rome then dispatched Vespasian to Judaea with the 2nd legion, which had recently conquered Britain. When Vespasian became Emperor in AD 69, he appointed his son Titus commander-in-chief; he now had four legions and numerous auxiliaries at his disposal in Judaea. After bitter fighting, the Romans succeeded in breaching Jerusalem’s defences in the north, near the Damascus Gate. Of the Jews taken prisoner, every day hundreds were first tortured at the inner walls, and then crucified, in order to discourage the defenders.

On the ninth day of the month of Ab, in the summer of the year 70, the Roman soldiers succeeded in breaking through the final ramparts of the inner Temple. They set it in fire, killed thousands of priests, Levites and civilians, and burned down the residential neighbourhoods too. Titus razed the whole city to the ground, with the exception of the three towers Phasael, Mariamne and Hippicus. He also left standing the Western Wall of

the Temple, in order to protect his tenth legion, who were encamped behind it, from the Jewish guerillas.

The city and the Temple were destroyed, but not the Jewish religion, nor the will of the survivors to resist.” 6)

Posle prvog razaranja svetog grada i Hrama od strane Vavilonaca, Izrael je kao narod odveden u vavilonsko ropstvo, gde je, kako smo videli, proveo 70 godina. Ali nije bio odbaèen. Po isteku tog perioda vraæen je u svoju domovinu. Bog nije toliko omrznuo na njih da ih potre i raskine zavet svoj sa njima, jer je On Gospod Bog njihov (**Leviticus 26:44**).

Da li se to isto može reæi i posle drugog razaranja svetog grada i svetog Hrama? Ili je Izrael konaèno odbaèen? Na ovo pitanje odgovoriæemo u sledeæem poglavlju.

References:

- 1) Harry M. Orlinsky: **Ancient Israel**, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 1954, p. 18.
- 2) **Ibid.:** pp. 39.40.
- 3) **Ibid.:** p. 43.
- 4) H. M. Orlinsky: **op.cit.** p. 79.
- 5) Nachum Tim Gidal: **Jerusalem**, Könemann, Köln 1995, p. 11.
- 6) Nachum Tim Gidal: **op.cit.**, pp.19.20.

2.

DA LI JE IZRAEL ODBAËEN?

Hrišæanski teolozi nemaju jedinstven odgovor na ovo pitanje. **Does the Church replace Israel as the people of God? What happens to Israel? Are all the promises given in the covenants fulfilled or are we still waiting for them to be fulfilled?** Pogledajmo kako svoj stav objašnjava amerièki teolog **Hans K. LaRondelle:**

“Christ’s final decision regarding the Jewish nation came at the end of His ministry, when the Jewish leaders had determined to reject His claim of being Israel’s Messiah. Christ’s words in Matthew 23 reveal that Israel’s guilt before God had reached its completion (Matthew 23:32). His verdict was therefore: ‘I tell you that *the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit*’ (Matthew 21:43; emphasis added). This solemn decision implies that Israel would no longer be the people of God and would be *replaced* by a people that would accept the Messiah and His message of the kingdom of God.”
1)

I mnogi drugi teolozi uèe da je Izrael nadomešten drugim narodom, poslušnim i vernim, koji je došao od svakoga naroda, plemena, jezika i kolena. Pre nego što sa biblijskog aspekta pogledamo koliko su ovi stavovi ispravni i taèni, dobro je prisetiti se istorije hrišæanstva i videti koliko je taj hrišæanski

narod zaista bio poslušan i veran. Dobro je isto tako uporediti Jevreje od Avrama do Hrista sa hrišæanima od Hrista do danas, pa videti ko je bio poslušniji i verniji. Oni koji danas napadaju Jevreje, recimo što su subotu, koju je Bog nakon stvaranja odvojio, posvetio i blagoslovio, opteretili sa hiljadu ljudskih propisa samo sa jednim ciljem - da bi je saèuvali, dobro je da se prisete da su hrišæani tu istu subotu vrlo brzo izbrisali iz Božjeg Zakona i zamenili paganskom nedeljom, koja je bila posveæena bogu sunca. Ko je u tom sluèaju uèinio veæi greh? I ko je poslušniji i verniji? Ili, ako je Bog odbacio Jevreje zato što ga nisu propovedali drugim narodima, koliko je onda Bog prihvatio hrišæane koji su ga propovedali ognjem i maèem? Setimo se lomaèa, krstaša, inkvizicije, setimo se konkvistadora u nekadašnjim španskim i portugalskim posedima Srednje i Južne Amerike! Da li su Jevreji tako postupali?

God's eternal promises

Ako je Izrael konaèno odbaèen, onda je Bog, ako uopšte smemo tako reæi, izneverio svoja obeæanja. Setimo se šta im je rekao pod Sinajem:

“Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, *I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord.*” Leviticus 26: 44.45. (emphasis added)

Kao što možemo zapaziti, Bog je u ovom tekstu dao Jevrejima pet obeæanja, i sva se ona odnose na

vreme kada budu rasejani po narodima, odnosno “**when they be in the land of their enemies**”. Evo tih èvrstih obeæanja:

1. **He will not reject them.**
2. **He will not destroy them.**
3. **He will not break His covenant with them.**
4. **He is the Lord their God.**
5. **He will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors.**

Ako povežemo prvo i drugo obeæanje, onda zakljuèujemo da sa odbacivanjem nužno ide i uništenje. Drugim reèima, da je Bog odbacio svoj izabrani narod, On bi ga i uništio (**destroy**). Međutim, s obzirom da Jevreji i dan-danas postoje, jasno je da nisu uništeni, a to onda znaèi da ih Bog *nije* odbacio! Prema tome, On je i dalje Gospod Bog njihov (**the Lord their God**) (kao što i sam kaže!). On *nije* raskinuo niti æe raskinuti zavet svoj sa njima (**to break his covenant with them**) (kao što i sam kaže!). On æe se *njih radi* opomenuti zaveta sa njihovim precima (**He will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors**) (kao što i sam kaže!).

Još jedno obeæanje koje nalazimo kod proroka Jeremije snažno podupire ovu misao o veènoj izabranosti Izraela:

“This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar--the Lord Almighty is his name: ‘Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,’ declares the Lord, ‘will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.’ This is what the Lord says: ‘Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below

be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done,' declares the Lord." Jeremiah 31:35-37.

The text emphasize the everlasting nature of God's covenant with Israel.

"The covenant was permanent. It was immutable, irrevocable, and unchangeable. Israel's perpetuity was inexorably linked to the perpetuity of the physical ordinances of the sun, moon, stars, and Earth. If these ordinances disappear, then Israel will disappear. But as long as they remain, Israel will remain." 2)

Drugim rečima - ne postoji ništa zbog čega bi ih Bog odbacio, a kamoli uništio. To, međutim, ne znači da je svaki Jevrejin kao pojedinac zaštićen pred Bogom samo zato što je Jevrejin. Ne. Bog odbacuje pojedince koji mu namerno i svesno greše (i veliki je broj takvih primera u Bibliji), ali narod Izraela - ne odbacuje. Za Njega je on i dalje izabrani narod. Vrhunac Božjeg gneva je uništenje njihove države i njihovog carstva, a ne njih samih. Ovu misao nalazimo kod proroka Amosa, koji verno prenosi Božje pretnje:

"Surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth--yet *I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,*' declares the Lord. 'For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground. All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.'" Amos 9:8-10. (emphasis added)

Did God reject his own people?

Dva hrišæanska autora, **Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman**, od kojih je jedan Jevrejin, odbijaju svaku pomisao da je Izrael odbaèen:

“God did not throw aside the nation even when they rejected Him as their King. He still worked with and through them. Nor did He reject them completely even after their leaders had refused the counsel and rejected the only One who could have saved the nation. God’s great miracle of grace is that in spite of all their tragic history, Israel is still fulfilling Bible prophecy.” 3)

Pogledajmo šta o ovome piše jedan drugi Jevrejin, koji je takođe postao hrišæanin. To je apostol Pavle. Njemu, naime, neki teolozi pripisuju da on u **Romans 9:30.31** potvrđuje da je hrišæanska Crkva u Božjem planu zauzela mesto jevrejske nacije. Evo, šta on piše:

“What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.” Romans 9:30.31.

Gde se ovde spominje odbacivanje jevrejske nacije i zauzimanje njenog mesta od strane hrišæana? Nigde. **It simply says that the Gentiles have obtained the righteousness, but Israel hath not obtained. That is all.** Osim toga, ovde se Rimljanima poslanica ne završava. Znajuæi da æe ga neki pogrešno shvatiti i tumaèiti, Pavle se vraæa ovom problemu i kaže:

“I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not

reject his people, whom he foreknew.” Romans 11:1.2. (emphasis added)

Koliko je jasno ovo što apostol Pavle kaže? Ne može biti jasnije! Zato je čudno i nepojmljivo što ima suprotnih mišljenja! Danas bi Pavle verovatno bio pinuđen da kaže: “Pitam sad: kako vi uopšte zaključujete da je Bog odbacio svoj narod?” Dakle, nema ni govora o tome da je Bog odbacio svoj narod. Pišući ovo on je najverovatnije imao na umu reči proroka Samuila (**Samuel**) :

“For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own.” 1. Samuel 12:22. (emphasis added)

Gospod je, kao što vidimo, svoju ljubav prema ovom narodu, vezao za svoje ime, a to se ne može i ne sme pogaziti. To obećanje nalazimo i u proročkim rečima psalmiste Davida:

“For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.” Psalm 94:14. (emphasis added)

Međutim, šta se desilo da Izrael nije postigao (**attain**) ono što je tražio i čemu je težio, i ono što je Bog od njega očekivao? I sam Pavle se još jednom pita, ali ima i odgovor:

“Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!” Romans 11:11.12.

Kao što vidimo, po apostolu Pavlu, Jevreji nisu niti odbačeni (**Not at all!**) niti sasvim pali (**Not at all!**). **They have only stumbled.** Međutim, upravo

zahvaljujuæi tome, spasenje i bogatstvo je došlo mnogobošcima (**Gentiles**). I sad se apostol s razlogom pita:

“How much greater the blessings will be, then, when the complete number of Jews is included?” Romans 11:12. - TEV

Zaista, šta li æ se tek tada dogoditi? Šta li æ se dogoditi kad se Jevreji budu uspravili? Koliko æ to tek bogatstvo biti za svet! Koliko æ blagoslova poteæi zahvaljujuæi njihovom posredovanju? Do kojih æ sve krajeva zemaljskih dopreti vest o Božjoj ljubavi?

The good and the wild olive tree

Nadalje apostol Pavle u obraæanju hrišæanima upoređuje svoj narod sa pitomom maslinom (**the good olive tree**), èije su neke grane, na žalost, odlomljene zbog neverovanja (**they were broken off because of unbelief**):

“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree! I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.' As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; *but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.* Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all." Romans 11:17-32. (emphasis added)

Iako je potpuno jasno ono što nam apostol Pavle želi reći, pogledajmo ipak još jednom neke misli iz ovog teksta:

1. Israel is the good olive tree, a hrišćani su samo grane sa divlje masline, koje su nakalemljene na pitomu maslinu tamo gde su neke njene grane odlomljene zbog neverovanja (**they were broken off because of unbelief**). To znači da Bog nije posekao celu pitomu maslinu niti je zamenio divljom masli-

nom. Izrael nije “poseèen”, niti odbaèen, niti zamenjen nekim drugim Izraelom!

2. Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.

3. God shall, according to the prophecies (Psalm 14:7; Isaiah 59:20), turn away their ungodliness and take away their sins.

4. Oni su i dalje Božji izabrani narod. Bog ih i dalje voli. **“But as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs.” Romans 11:28.**

5. For God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.

Apostel Paul did not want to be ignorant of this mystery da ne bi hrišæani mudrovali po svojoj mudrosti. Na žalost, dešava se upravo suprotno. Kao što smo i videli.

I na kraju jedno zanimljivo poređenje:

Kad su Jevreji izašli iz egipatskog ropstva, pretpostavlja se da ih je bilo, zajedno sa ženama i decom, oko dva miliona. Od dva miliona u Obeæanu zemlju ušla su samo dvojica - Halev i Isus Navin. Da li je Bog tada raskinuo svoj zavet sa jevrejskom nacijom? Nije. Kako ga je onda mogao raskinuti u vreme Hrista, kada je daleko više bilo onih koji su mu bili verni. Setimo se samo vitlejemskih pastira, starog Simeuna i Ane, Jovana Krstitelja i svih onih koje je on krstio, Jovanovih uèenika, Hristovih uèenika, Hristove braæe, Nikodima, Lazara, Marije, Marte, Jaira, slepog Vartimeja, udovice sa dve lepte i mnogih drugih znanih i neznanih.

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3.

RASEJANJE IZRAELA -

NEMINOVNOST SPASENJA

Orusejanju Jevreja napisane su hiljade i hiljade stranica. Planirani obim ove knjige ne dozvoljava nam ni da u kratkim crtama opišemo sve oluje i bure koje su razvejale ovaj narod po celom svetu. Ostaje nam samo toliko mesta da jednim kratkim pregledom ilustrujemo kako je i kada sve to počelo i da po-kušamo da odgovorimo na pitanje kako æ se sve to završiti.

“Jewish history from the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 through the twentieth century is not a pretty story. Although a small remnant of Jewish people continued to live in the land of their forefathers, the vast majority ended up in the

diaspora (literally, the ‘scattering’), a popular Jewish term to describe everywhere outside the land of Israel. These diaspora Jews lived in foreign countries where the terms *aliens* and *exiles* more appropriately described their plight. Their ‘host’ countries usually were far from hospitable. Wherever they wandered in the medieval world, they never were accorded citizenship.

Not only were they hated, they often were caught between warring factions and suffered the consequences. When the European Crusaders launched their expeditions in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries to free the Holy Land from the Moslems, they slaughtered the Jewish people and annihilated dozens of Jewish communities along the way. When the Black Death spread through Europe from 1348 through 1350, many people blamed the Jewish, claiming they had poisoned wells. Thousands of Jewish people were burned to death, especially in Germany. Even the pope, not always a friend to the Jewish people, opposed such baseless accusations. But the mobs, infected with blind hatred, could not be dissuaded.

The infamous Spanish Inquisition, launched by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, finally led to the Jewish people’s complete expulsion from Spain in 1492 and then from neighboring Portugal in 1496. This forced exile of nearly 200,000 people for no other reason than the fact that they were Jewish indelibly marked both the Jewish psyche and Jewish history.

The little-known Chmielnicki Wars in 1648 led to the slaughter of nearly 100,000 Polish Jews by Cossack warriors. The czars of nineteenth-century Russia often blamed the Jewish people for

whatever economic ills beset the serfs in their empire.

In 1881 the infamous pogroms broke out and continued sporadically until World War I. Local mobs, often urged on by their Orthodox priests, attacked Jewish communities, murdering thousands of innocent men, women, and children for being so-called Christ-killers. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish people fled to the New World. Those who somehow survived the pogroms and remained in Eastern Europe eventually faced the worst of all Jewish tragedies - the Holocaust. From 1933 to 1945, through a series of repressive laws; labor camps; and, finally, gas chambers, the Nazis obliterated approximately six million Jewish people - simply because they were Jewish.” 1)

Sve ovo nam pokazuje da su se oni koji su se kao grane sa divlje masline nakalemili na pitomu maslinu, ponašali u skladu sa svojim poreklom - kao *divlji*. Nisu hteli da priznaju da ih nosi stablo pitome masline, već su hteli da stoje sami.

Sa islamom su stvari bile malo drugačije. Sredinom 7. veka, posle desetogodišnje borbe (630-640), na istorijskom poprištu Bliskog istoka pojavila se nova sila - Arapi. Kao što je poznato, oni će tokom narednih vekova biti novi gospodari u Palestini. Odnos islama prema nemuslimanskim verskim zajednicama u to je vreme bio trpeljiviji nego odnos hrišćana prema inoverticima. Posle dugogodišnje zabrane, Jevrejima je ponovo dozvoljeno da žive u Jerusalimu.

Nasilno rasejani, Jevreji su postali manjina i u svojoj zemlji i u svim zemljama u koje su proterani. I neće biti države, u kojoj se neće osećati tuđima i nepoželjnima. **Throughout the centuries, they have**

suffered untold misery and unending persecution by the other nations. Posebno u hrišæanskim zemljama.

Ovaj odnos prema Jevrejima imao je strahovite posledice, tako strašne da im je pretila opasnost od potpunog istrebljenja. Na pragu novoga doba oni su i kao verska i kao društvena skupina postali malobrojni - sredinom 17. veka Jevreja je bilo manje od jednog miliona! Može se reæi da je to direktno ispunjenje pro-roèanstva iz Danila 12,7 da æe se “po vremenu, po vremenima i po po vremena” **(it shall be for a time, times, and a half)** svršiti “rasap sile svetoga naroda” **(he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people)**. Meðutim, sa slabljenjem uticaja crkve, njihov broj je poèeo da raste izuzetno brzo, tako da je pred drugi svetski rat dostigao 17 miliona. Ali to je i period ponovnog jaèanja crkve. Papa je sklopio ugovor ne samo s italijanskom, veæ i sa ostalim dræavama. I s dræavnicima. Pre svega sa Hitlerom (20. jula 1933). Nemaèki istorièar **Deschner** o tome kaæe:

“Prema svedoèenju celokupnog nemaèkog episkopata papa je utemeljio ugled Adolfa Hitlera i uzdigao ga, na jedinstven naèin -, što je Hitler sa pravom mogao da oznaèi kao ‘iskreno priznanje’ i ‘neopisiv uspeh’, a to mu je pred celim svetom iznenada dalo legitimitet.” 2)

Papa je utemeljio ugled Hitlera. Hitler je doneo Holocaust, a Holocaust je odneo šest miliona jevrejskih ærtava. Crkva nikada nije podigla svoj glas protesta protiv takve Hitlerove politike, a i zašto bi, kad je i sama vekovima sprovodila poguban antiju-daizam. Hitler ga je samo nastavio.

The existence in spite of everything

Throughout all history, the God's chosen people were the targets in programs, resulting in their merciless persecution, being constantly hard opposed and culminating in Hitler's attempt to eradicate them in his vile death factories.

“No more fascinating history was ever recorded than that of the Jew. Have you ever thought about it? Every nation that was ever conquered and driven out of its homeland has, within two or three centuries, disappeared having been amalgamated and absorbed either by their conquerors or at least by surrounding nations. Note these: the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Moabites, the Hivites, the Philistines, the Vandals, the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, even the Babylonians. Even onetime rulers of the world such as the Babylonians and the Romans have entirely disappeared.

Not a single individual from any of these nations can be found in the world today. But what about the Jews? They were conquered and driven from their homeland by the Romans in A.D. 70. But were they absorbed by the people who conquered them! No! Every other nation that suffered a similar fate has disappeared, but the Jew has remained. He is still a Jew no matter where he may be found...

That very fact challenges our sociologists. The Jews are still a nation - a miracle indeed. Nations have come and nations have gone but Israel still lives on; even though for nearly two thousand years these persecuted people have been without a king, without a homeland, without even

a temple. Their dream, however, had been that someday according to statements of their prophets, they would return. This has kept the flame of hope burning in their hearts. And return they did. God made a promise to the Hebrew race through Abraham, when He said:

‘And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.’ Genesis 12:3.

Ponder this. Those who have blessed the Jewish people have themselves been blessed. But what has happened to those nations which have persecuted the Jews? Take Babylon as an example. When Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the kingdom of Judah, destroyed their temple and their city, and took the Jews as captives to Babylon, it was never his intention to permit the Jews to return to their homeland. But God declared through His prophets that they would be conquered. History records how the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon. The same God who said the Babylonians would be conquered also said the Persians would permit the Jews to go back to rebuild their temple and later their city, Jerusalem. More remarkable still, the Persians even paid the building costs!

Now think: The Babylonians are not with us today. As a nation they have gone into oblivion. They amalgamated with other nations and have been lost. On the other hand the Persians, who befriended the Jews permitting them to go back to their homeland, are still in existence. Their country is known today as Iran.

Now let us think about Rome. They attacked the Jews and scattered the nation. Three centuries later barbarian nations came from the north and

from the east and attacked the empire at its heart. The 'eternal city' Rome was finally overthrown and the empire destroyed. All that is left of the once-strong empire of Rome are the vast ruins and broken sculptures showing the violence and vengeance of the barbarian hosts that swept in. The proud palaces of Caesars are desolate today. (...)

When Rome conquered Israel and drove the Jews from their homeland, she took multitudes of slaves from Israel to the capital. These slaves largely built the Colosseum in Rome. But where are the Romans today? They have disappeared, having been amalgamed among the nations. There are no real Romans, as such; they are gone. But what about the Jewish nation whose annihilation their conquerors were determined to accomplish? They are still here.”³⁾

I pored èinjenice da su skoro dva milenijuma bili bez države, oni postoje. **The exile of ancient Israel did not mean the end of God's plan for His people. They never lose their identity. How can we explain this phenomenon?**

Ovo neprekidno trajanje jevrejske nacije izaziva u nekima èuđenje i divljenje, ali je mnogo više onih koji oseæaju božazan i netrpeljivost, nezadovoljstvo i zavist.

Mnogi tvrde da postojanje Jevreja nema istorijskog smisla. Neki su došli do potpunog besmisla porieuaèi èak postojanje ove najstarije nacije na svetu.

Što se tièe vodeæe hrišæanske crkve ona kaže da Jevreji postoje kao živi dokaz istinitosti Svetoga pisma i hrišæanstva. Jevreji su dali Mesiju, ali pošto su Ga se odrekli, sada postoje kao dokaz da ova hrišæanska dogma nije izmišljena.

U 17. i 18. veku dugoveènost Jevreja objašnjava se njihovom ekonomskom funkcijom. Oni su navodno simbol kapitalizma, a njihova religija je u svojoj suštini religija trgovaca.

Ima onih koji su postojanje Jevreja pokušali da objasne neprijateljstvom naroda među kojima su oni živeli, jer nisu dozvoljavali da se Jevreji integrišu.

Neki su išli èak tako daleko da su naglašavali biološku osnovu dugoveènosti Jevreja. Po njima Jevreji poseduju jak nagon za samoodržanjem, kao neki živi organizam.

The well-known historian H.G.Wells says that in all centuries “one people only held together... and they were able to do this because they had got together this literature of theirs, their Bible. It is not so much the Jews who made the Bible as the Bible which made the Jews...

The Jews were a new thing, a people... held together and consolidated out of the heterogenous elements by nothing but the power of the written word...

Not only a new kind of community, but a new kind of man comes into history with the development of the Jews...

The Hebrew prophets ... mark the appearance of a new power in the world, the power of individual moral appeal.” 4)

The Jewish experience simply does not fit human theories and explanations.

“One of the greatest historians of all time was Arnold Toynbee, whose classic ten-volume work, *A Study of History*, traces the rise and inevitable fall of twenty-six civilizations.

Despite all his brilliance, Toynbee could not adequately explain the phenomenon of the ‘Jewish civilization’. According to his philosophy of history, civilizations rise then eventually fall, never to rise again. Jewish history, however, did not fit Toynbee’s scheme. Yes, the Jewish nation rose and fell. But it survived after its fall and, amazingly, returned to its ancient land, reconstituted its national existence, and even resurrected its ancient language from the dead. No other nation has ever accomplished this feat.

Toynbee could not comprehend the Jewish peoples’ survival because he was unwilling to consider God’s promises. The Lord God declared through His prophet that Israel will never cease from being a nation (Jer. 31:36), and He has kept that promise by preserving His Chosen People through all their dark nights of suffering. Apart from God, no other explanation exists. Toynbee referred to the Jews as the ‘fossils of history’. A fossil is an ancient object that really should not be here today but is somehow ‘frozen in time’ - out of place but here nevertheless.

From a human viewpoint, the Jewish people should not be here. With all they have endured, they should have disappeared long ago. More magnificent civilizations, such as the Assyrians, Hittites, and Babylonians, have been consigned to the dustbin of history. But, in familiar words of an Israeli folk song, ‘*Am Yisrael Hai!*’ (‘the people of Israel live!’).

Their ancient persecutors and murderers have vanished from the stage of human history, but little Israel keeps playing its role in the divine

cosmic drama. And Israel will continue to do so, not because of its cunning, savvy, or wit, but because of the promises of God.” 5)

Svim ljudskim mišljenjima o neprekidnom trajanju Jevreja možemo suprotstaviti duboku i nadahnutu misao apostola Pavla:

“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. *God did this so that men would seek him* and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” Acts 17:26.27. (emphasis added)

Gospod je, dakle, svima, a to znaèi kako pojedincima tako i narodima, postavio **in advance** vremena i granice njihovog postojanja, ali sa jednim jedinim ciljem - da traže Gospoda (**that they should seek the Lord**). Narodi koji nisu umeli da iskoriste svoju istorijsku šansu da traže Gospoda, nego su, naprotiv, ratovali protiv Njega, a svoje vođe i gospodare proglašavali bogovima i služili im kao bogovima, bili su osuđeni na propast i zaborav. Jevreji nikad nisu prestali da traže Gospoda. To što veæi deo njih u Isusu Hristu nije prepoznao Mesiju, ne znaèi da su odbacili ideju o Mesiji. Njihova vera i nada i dalje je usmerena na dolazak Mesije.

God has in fact protected the Jewish people, their religion, values and culture against the great pressures to assimilate, against almost constant terrible anti-Semitism, against horrendous persecution down through the ages. The very existence of the Jews today, the recovery of their language, their regathering to the land of their fathers, are

surely among the greatest miracles of human history.

Neminovnost spasenja

Nezaobilazno je i mišljenje, upravo zato što je istinito, koje zastupa **Juda Löw**, veliki rabi, poznat kao Maharal iz Praga (1525-1609). On je tvrdio, naime, “da sama činjenica postojanja dijaspore krije u sebi neminovnost spasenja.”⁶⁾

Zadržimo malo pažnju na ovoj misli i posmatrajmo stvari sa aspekta samog autora i njegovog vremena, jer su se okolnosti od 1948. godine strahovito izmenile. **Juda Löw** želi da nam kaže da Jevreji kao narod nemaju celovitost - a postoje; nemaju teritorijalnu koncentrisanost - a postoje; nemaju nezavisnost - a postoje; nemaju jedinstvo - a postoje. Lišeni su svih svojstava jedne nacije - a postoje. Kako je to moguće? Koji je smisao te zagonetke? I da li je to uopšte zagonetka? Ili èudo? Èudo - da, ali èudo koje se može razumeti. Oèigledno da Jevreji postoje da bi imali celovitost, da bi imali teritorijalnu koncentrisanost, da bi imali nezavisnost i da bi imali jedinstvo. Drugim reèima, to što su rasejani po svim narodima, a nisu uništeni, navodi na zaključak da je neminovno njihovo ponovno sabiranje (**regathering**), odnosno, kako to izrièito kaže rabi Maharal, u pitanju je “**neminovnost spasenja**”.

Kao što smo rekli, okolnosti su se od 1948. godine strahovito izmenile, ali možda ne i u dovoljnoj meri. Sabiranje koje je poèelo daleko pre toga dovelo je te godine do formiranja moderne države Izrael, koja je već 1967. godine povratila stari Jerusalem. Kako

æ se stvari dalje razvijati, ostaje nam da saèekamo, ali se proroèanstva o sabiranju Izraela moraju ispuniti.

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4.

THE REGATHERING OF ISRAEL - A VISION OF THE PROPHETS

Izrael je bio rasejan, rascepan, bez teritorije, bez nezavisnosti i jedinstva. Međutim, sva ta svojstva jednog naroda, kojih je on na žalost bio lišen, izražavao je u želji za celovitošæu, u težnji za teritorijalnom koncentrisanošæu, u nadi za nezavisnošæu i u veri da æ jednom postiaei to tako neophodno i nadasve dragoceno jedinstvo.

The comfort in God's promises

Sve vreme u srcima razasutih Jevreja gorela je neugasiva vatra sa plamenovima želje, težnje, nade i vere, koje je svaki vetar nevolja samo sve više i više raspirivao i razbuktao. Njihov ideal postao je povratak u zemlju otaca.

Jevreji nikada nisu prestali da traže Boga. Niti Bog njih. Nikada nije presahla njihova nada u dolazak Mesije niti nada u povratak u Svetu zemlju, što im je sam Gospod obećao i dao, ali i oduzeo zbog grehova kojima su je oskrvnili. Divnu utehu mogli su naći tada, a i danas, u Gospodnjim rečima koje je zabeležio prorok Sofonija (**Zephaniah**):

“From beyond the rivers of Cush [Ethiopia] my worshipers, my scattered people, will bring me offerings. On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill. But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid. *Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem!* The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. *The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, ‘Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.’* ‘The sorrows for the

appointed feasts I will remove from you; they are a burden and a reproach to you. At that time I will deal with all who oppressed you; *I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered.* I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. *At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home.* I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth *when I restore your fortunes* before your very eyes,' says the Lord." Zephaniah 3:10-20. (emphasis added)

The prophet Micah writes about the gathering of God's people, who were driven out, in the last days, when "the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it." (Micah 4:1):

"In that day,' declares the Lord, *'I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief.* I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The Lord will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever. As for you, O watchtower of the flock, O stronghold of the Daughter of Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to the Daughter of Jerusalem.'" Micah 4:6-8. (emphasis added)

Oni koji su u tuđini èitali knjigu proroka Amosa, mogli su razumeti zašto su ostali bez Obeæane zemlje. Ove stihove veæ smo citirali, ali da ih ponovimo:

"Surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth--yet *I will not totally destroy the*

house of Jacob,' declares the Lord. 'For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground. All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.' " Amos 9:8-10. (emphasis added)

Zlo ih je ipak zadesilo (**disaster overtake**). Grešnici koji su otvoreno èinili greh poginuli su, a carstvo koje su svojim gresima uèinili grešnim zartro je sa Zemlje (**destroy it from the face of the earth**). Ali "**the house of Israel**" nije. **It was only sift among all nations**. Za njega postoji nada da se vrati na Obeæanu zemlju. Ali kad se bude vratio, postoji i nada da obnovi carstvo, da ponovo stekne svoju državu i svoju nezavisnost. Ove utešne misli mogu se naæi u nastavku Amosovog teksta:

"In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be..." Amos 9:11.

The tent of David je simbol države Izrael, koja je u vreme cara Davida doživela svoj vrhunac. Međutim, veæ posle njegovog sina Solomuna, pojavila se pukotina (**broken places**) u ovom carstvu, kada je ono podeljeno na severno i južno. Nakon toga oba ova carstva bila su razvaljena (**ruin**). Severno, Izrael, razvalili su Asirci, a južno, Judu, razvalili su Vavilonci. Posle vavilonskog ropstva, sa promenljivom sreæom Jevreji su bili u vreme Persijanaca i Grka i porobljeni i slobodni, da bi konaèno pod Rimljanima doživeli nacionalnu tragediju. I pored svega, ostale su utešne i pouzdane reèi da æ sam Bog opraviti i sagraditi **the tent of David as in**

the days of old. This is the tent that God wants to restore.

This promise of Lord was mentioned also at the apostolic council in Jerusalem (49 A.D.). Završne reči apostola Simona Petra (**Simeon Peter**), koji je govorio o rezultatima propovedanja evanđelja među neznabošcima i o njihovom obrađanju u hrišćanstvo, bile su: **“We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”** Acts 15:11. Na to se nadovezao apostol Jakov (**James**), koji je u tim rečima prepoznao prorečanstvo proroka Amosa, i rekao:

“Simon has described to us how God *at first* showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ‘*After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’.*” Acts 15:14-17. (emphasis added)

Na tom saboru u Jerusalimu (**council in Jerusalem**) bio je prisutan i apostol Pavle (**Acts 15:12**). Zato ne čudi što se ova ista misao može naći i u njegovoj poslanici Rimljanima. Setimo se tih reči, jer smo ih već citirali:

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. *And so all Israel will be saved*, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant

with them when I take away their sins.’ ” Romans 11:25-27. (emphasis added)

The gathering of Israela and the building of the “David’s tent”, that is renewal of Jewish state, is of a big importance not only for Israel, but for other nations as well. We read that the Lord said: “‘Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’.” Acts 15:16.17.

Dakle, vraæanje Izraela u Obeæanu zemlju, ponovo podizanje Davidovog doma, odnosno same dræave Izrael, biæe podsticaj i za druge ljude i za druge narode da traæe Gospoda (**seek the Lord**). To je razlog viæe zaæto je Gospod ævrst u svojoj odluci kad je u pitanju sabiranje Izraela:

“I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,’ says the Lord your God.” Amos 9: 14.15. (emphasis added)

Èuvanje Izraela u rasejanju (**exile**) potvrðuje da æe on biti prikupljen. I reæe Gospodnja, data preko proroka Miheja, u to nas potpuno uverava:

“I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people.” Micah 2:12. (emphasis added)

Pogledajmo sada kako se Gospod obratio proroku Jezekilju (**Ezekiel**) i objasnio mu razloge zbog

kojih je kaznio svoj izabrani narod, a potom razloge zbog kojih æe ga sabrati i obnoviti:

“Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman’s monthly uncleanness in my sight. So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. *I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions.*” Ezekiel 36:17-19. (emphasis added)

To su bili razlozi za rasejanje: Obeæanu zemlju, koja im je data u nasledstvo, Jevreji su oskvrnili svojom neèistotom (**uncleanness**), svojim prestupima, svojim bezakonjem, svojim nasiljem i idolopoklonstvom. Sve je to pokazivalo da su se potpuno odvojili od Boga i da su bili nedostojni blagoslova koje su primali. Kazna je bila neminovna. Ali ne kazna uništenja, veæ kazna rasejanja. Rasejanje po narodima trebalo je da ih pouèi da se vrate sa svojih zlih puteva na put Gospodnji i da narodima, meðu kojima su živeli, pruže priliku da preko njih upoznaju pravoga i živoga Boga. Ali se desilo nešto sasvim suprotno:

“And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, ‘These are the Lord’s people, and yet they had to leave his land.’” Ezekiel 36: 20.

I tamo gde su došli, Jevreji su svojim životom, koji je bio u suprotnosti sa Božjim svetim Zakonom, nastavili da obešæašæuju (**profane**) sveto ime Božje, jer su svi narodi, meðu koje su došli, znali da su oni Gospodnji izabrani narod koji je izašao iz Njegove

zemlje. Zbog njihove nevernosti i bezbožnog života neznabošci su stekli potpuno pogrešno saznanje i utisak o Bogu. Jedini i živi Bog, koji se u dalekoj prošlosti divno otkrio preko ovog naroda, sada je izjednačen sa svim paganskim bogovima. Time je Božje sveto ime bilo oskvrnjeno i osramoæeno. Gospod je morao nešto preduzeti da bi opravdao svoje ime. Evo šta On sam kaže šta je uèinio:

“I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. ‘Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: *It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.*” Ezekiel 36:21-23. (emphasis added)

Neverovatno! Kakve li èudne i neobjašnjive milosti i ljubavi! Ako bi èovek branio svoju èast i štiti svoje okaljano ime, on se nikad ne bi odlueio na ovakvo rešenje. Nikad èovek ne bi sebe potvrđivao preko onih koji su ga osramotili. Ali Bog nije èovek. Njegove misli nisu naše misli, niti su Njegovi putevi naši putevi. Èudni su putevi Gospodnji. **God will show the holiness of His great name, which has been profaned among the nations.** On æe ujedno saèuvati svoj narod, koji je izabrao i sa kojim je sklopio zavet. Verujemo apostolu Pavlu, koji u Rimljanima poslanici za svoj narod kaže:

“As far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.” Romans 11:28.29. (emphasis added)

The Lord promises that He will be sanctified in Jews before the nations, where they have profaned His holy name. In what way?

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. ” Ezekiel 36: 24-28. (emphasis added)

Može li se sumnjati u ova obećanja? Sme li se sumnjati? Smeju li se ovako jasna obećanja izvrtati i tumačiti po svojoj volji? Bog jeste rasejao svoj narod, to je činjenica, ali je isto tako činjenica da ga nije odbacio. On æe svoju decu, kao što i sam kaže, ponovo uzeti iz naroda i pokupiti iz svih zemalja, i dovesti u njihovu zemlju. Ne mogu se, prema tome, blagoslovi koji su obećani ovom narodu prenositi na druge. Ne može se nasleđivati njegovo ime, njegovi blagoslovi i njegova zemlja. Izrael nije lešina koju mogu svi komadati.

Oživljavanje suvih kostiju (dry bones)

Ezekiel, chapter 37 plainly predicted that the Jews would one day be regathered from the various nations of the world, back to their own land, Israel:

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ I said, ‘O Sovereign Lord, you alone know.’ Then he said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. Then he said to me: ‘Son of man, *these bones are the whole house of Israel*. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign

Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; *I will bring you back to the land of Israel.* Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. *I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.* Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.” Ezekiel 37:1-14. (emphasis added)

“While this prophecy given to Ezekiel approximately 2500 years ago had a vital meaning for God’s people in that day, it has an even greater meaning for us today. Israel, without a homeland for nearly two thousand years, has been dead. The dry bones in the valley were a perfect picture of this scattered, homeless multitude.”¹⁾

Gospod još uvek prikuplja suve kosti svoga naroda i vraća ih u zemlju Izraelovu. O tom èudu koje se dešava pred našim oèima, Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman pišu:

“While the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt was, up to that time, the greatest event in human history since creation, yet the regathering of the scattered Jewish people in our day seems equally great and is claiming the attention of the whole world. When this scattered, persecuted people find their way back to the land of their fathers and establish themselves as a nation that too, is miraculous.”²⁾

The skeleton, the muscles, and the skin are in place, but there is still one part of the prophecy which awaits fulfillment. That is the spiritual rebirth of the people. This is symbolized by God breathing life into Israel. To æ biti vaskrs ovog nar-

oda, kojeg Bog nije zaboravio. Sliènu misao nalazimo i kod apostola Pavla:

“For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but *life from the dead?*” Romans 11:15. (emphasis added)

Nakon duhovnog preporoda, nakon rađanja iz mrtvih, uslediaèe veliki i bogati blagoslovi. **In every respect.** Jer usta Gospodnja rekoše :

“I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel! ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. They will say, ‘This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.” Ezekiel 36:29-36.

Novo vreme milosti

Postoji u Bibliji i jedno posebno zanimljivo proroèanstvo, koje nalazimo u knjizi proroka Danila. Na žalost, mali broj teologa obraæa pažnju na njega, a još je manje onih koji ga pravilno shvataju. U kontekstu predmeta o kojem govorimo i ono može biti vrlo znaèajno, ne samo zato što pokriva jedan ogroman istorijski period, veæ i zato što prièa prièu i o Jevrejima i o hrišæanima. Evo kako ono glasi:

“It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.” Daniel 8:14.

S obzirom da je ovde u pitanju proroèanstvo, u tumaèenju treba primeniti pravilo po kome dani u proroèkom raèunanju vremena odgovaraju godinama - **“a day for a year”**(Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). Prema tome, 2300 dana predstavljaju 2300 kalendarskih godina.

S obzirom da prorok Danilo nije razumeo utvaru o oèišæenju Svetinje (**Daniel 8:14**), anđeo Gabriel dolazi i obraæa mu se reèima: **“Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision.” Daniel 9:23.** Tako je deveto poglavlje knjige proroka Danila u stvari objašnjenje osmog poglavlja.

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city .” (Daniel 9:24). The 70 “sevens” or weeks, that is 490 years, were decreed or “determined” and for the Jews and Jerusalem. The underlying Hebrew verb is *chathak* and it means “to cut” or “to divide”.

“Toward the end of the 70 years of Israel’s captivity in Babylon, God told Daniel that He had allocated to the Jews and the city of Jerusalem a probationary period of 70 weeks.

During this time, by repenting and preparing themselves for the Messiah's coming, the Jewish nation was to fulfill God's purposes for them.

Daniel also wrote of 'reconciliation for iniquity' and a bringing in of 'everlasting righteousness' as marking this period. These Messianic activities indicate that the Saviour was to come within this time (Dan. 9:24).

Daniel's prophecy specified that the Messiah would appear 'seven weeks and sixty-two weeks', or a total of 69 weeks, after 'the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem' (Dan. 9:25). After the sixty-ninth week the Messiah would be 'cut off, but not for Himself' (Dan. 9:26) - a reference to His vicarious death. He was to die in the middle of the seventieth week, bringing 'an end to sacrifice and offering' (Dan. 9:27). (...)

Daniel states that this period was to begin with 'the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem' (Dan. 9:25). This decree, giving the Jews full autonomy, was issued in the seventh year of the Persian King Artaxerxes and became effective in the fall of 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:8, 12-26; 9:9). According to the prophecy, 483 years (69 prophetic weeks) after the decree 'Messiah the Prince' would appear. Four hundred and eighty-three years after 457 B.C. brings us to the fall of A.D. 27, when Jesus was baptized and began His public ministry. (...)

In the middle of the seventieth week, in the spring of A.D. 31, exactly 3 1/2 years after Christ's baptism, the Messiah brought the system of sacrifices to an end by giving His life." 3)

The 490 years ended in A.D. 34. When we cut off 490 years from the 2300 years, we are left with 1810 years. Since the 2300 years were to extend 1810 beyond A.D. 34, they reach to the year 1844.

Prema tome, u ovom proročanstvu od 2300 godina imamo dva velika perioda - jedan za Jevreje, drugi za hrišæane. Prvi je trajao 490 godina (od 457. pr.n.e. - 34. n.e.), a drugi 1810 godina (od 34 - 1844. g). Ono što nas sada interesuje, a na šta komentatori ne obraæaju pažnju jeste pitanje: Èije je vreme posle 1844. godine? Kome ono pripada? S obzirom da se proročanstvo i ne bavi ovim pitanjem, lako je zakljuèiti da ovo vreme pripada i Jevrejima i hrišæanima! A to dalje znaèi da vreme milosti nije isteklo za Jevreje, kako to neki tvrde, i da nakon 1844. godine treba oèekivati buđenje i Jevreja i hrišæana. Moždja je upravo ovo proročanstvo imao apostol Pavle u vidu kada je napisao:

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’” Romans 11, 25-27.

Sliañ stav, videli smo, zastupali su i apostoli Simon Petar (**Simeon Peter**) i Jakov (**James**). Podsetimo se Jakovljevih reèi:

“Simon has described to us how God *at first* showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ‘*After this I*

will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things.” Acts 15:14-17. (emphasis added)

Dakle, još jednom: nakon 1844. godine treba oèekivati buðenje Jevreja i buðenje hrišæana. Koliko je realno ovo oèekivanje? Meðu hrišæanima je u to vreme nastao snažan adventni pokret, usmeren na išèekivanje i objavljivanje skorog Hristovog drugog dolaska i drugih važnih istina vezanih za poslednje vreme. Bilo je to direktno ispunjenje proroèanstva iz Otkrivenja 14, gde je ovaj pokret prikazan trojicom anđela koji objavljuju veeno evanđelje celome svetu.

Što se tièe Jevreja, njih je poèetkom XIX veka u Palestini bilo tek nekoliko hiljada duša. Njihov pravni i ekonomski položaj bio je veoma tegoban, ali to nije obeshrabrilo druge Jevreji da se i dalje ne useljavaju u zemlju, tako da ih je sredinom XIX veka bilo 12.000 i to veæinom sefarda.

The first modern, organized wave of Jewish immigration is known as the First Aliyah. Aliyah is a Hebrew word meaning ascent and refers to those Jews who ascend or go up to the land of Israel. The First Aliyah 1882. godine iz temelja je izmenila prilike u zemlji, jer su je èinile osobe koje su u vraæanju svome domu videle put nacionalnog preporoda.

Turske vlasti su strahovale da æe porast jevrejskog stanovništva izazvati još jaèe mešanje stranih država u poslove potpuno oslabelog Otomanskog carstva, te su veæ maja 1882. godine zabranile dalje useljavanje. Uprkos tome, 1882. godina pokazala se prelomnom. Upravo su tada useljenici prispeli u broju

koji je prevazišao sve imigracione talase tokom prethodnih stoleæa, i osnovali prva poljoprivredna naselja.

The First Aliyah was followed by four other waves of immigration. The Second Aliyah (1904-1914) was sparked by a fresh wave of persecution of Jews in Russia. An estimated 40,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine during this time.

Jevreji su hteli kuæi. Za njih je odlazak kuæi istovremeno bio **alija** - “**go up**” uznošenje. Duhovni uznošenje. Međutim, sa žalošæu se mora primetiti da je bio ne mali broj i onih Jevreja koji su nastojali da se ukljuæe u nejevrejsko društvo, da ostanu tamo gde su, da ne idu kuæi. I bez obzira što su se odricali svoga porekla i svoje nacionalne prošlosti, takva nastojanja ipak su nailazila na strahovit otpor antisemitizma.

Radi efikasnije politiæke borbe protiv sve veæe diskriminacije Jevreji su bili prinuđeni da stvaraju svoje organizacije, s obzirom da nije mnogo pomagao otpor i borba pojedinaca. Međutim, to je istovremeno za antisemite i judeofobe svih boja bio neoboriv dokaz da su hrišæanske zemlje ugrožene jevrejskom premoæi, što je imalo kobne posledice po jevrejski narod.

In 1933, the year Hitler came to power, Jewish immigration to Palestine markedly increased. Coming primarily from Central Europe, these Jews brought with them a great deal of capital, as well as skills and experience in industry, science, banking, medicine, law and international commerce. By 1936, the Jewish population of Palestine was close to 400,000.

Oni koji su ostali u Evropi bili su izloženi divljanju nacizma i njegovim demonskim metodama. Evropsko jevrejstvo bilo je osuđeno na smrt. Jedina nada ostala je drevna domovina. Strašni pogromi, u kojima je jevrejskom narodu kao nikada u istoriji zapretilo konačno istrebljenje, potpuni genocid, kako u zemljama u kojima je vladao nacizam, tako i u samoj Palestini, nisu mogli da spreče da se ne desi èudo!

Novo stvaranje Erec Izraela (Eretz-Yisrael)

Posle skoro dve hiljade godina rasejanja, razorenosti, lutanja, ali i nepresušnih mesijanskih nadanja i oèekivanja, došlo je do novog stvaranja Eretz Yizrael-a.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Yisrael; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Yisrael to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution.

On May 14, 1948, on the day in which the British Mandate over a Palestine expired, the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum, and approved the following proclamation, declaring the establishment of the State of Israel.

“ERETZ-YISRAEL [(Hebrew) - the Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood,

created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'pilim [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Yisrael in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and reaffirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Yisrael and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Yisrael the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations. (...)

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel."

Tako su reći proroka Osije našle svoje konačno ispunjenje:

"For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days." Hosea 3:4.5.

Istovremeno su se ispunile i reći proroka Amosa o ponovnom podizanju opalog i razvaljenog "šatora Davidovog" ("David's fallen tent") :

"In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be." Amos 9:11.

It was 1,878 long years after the destruction of the Second Temple when God, in His mercy, returned the Jewish people to control of the land He had promised would be theirs forever.

Na žalost, povratak Jevreja u domovinu i stvaranje savremene države Izraela za neke hrišæanske teologe nije događaj, za koji bi trebalo tražiti potvrdu u Božjoj Reči? Oni oholo kažu: **The present-day return of the Jews to Palestine and the establishment of the modern state of Israel do not imply reinstatement as God's people, present or future. Whatever the Jews, as a nation, may do, now or in time to come, is in no way related to the former promises made to them. With the crucifixion of Christ they forever forfeited their special position as God's chosen people.**

No, ideal proroka nije bio samo obnova države Izraela, veæ i obraæenje i potpuna duhovna obnova jevrejskog naroda. Da li æe do nje doæi? Na ovo pitanje pokušæemo da damo odgovor u sledeæem poglavlju.

References:

- 1) Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman: **All Eyes on Israel**, Revised Edition 1977, Harvest Press, Incorporated, Fort Worth, Texas, USA, p. 77.
- 2) *Ibid.*: p. 70.
- 3) **Seventh-day Adventists Believe...**, A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines, Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington DC, pp.41.42.

5.

THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL - THE QUESTION OF TIME

Nosnovu dosadašnjeg prouèavanja zakljuèili smo da je Izrael bio i ostao Božji izabrani narod. Uprkos svemu što se sa njim dogodilo, on nije odbaèen. Bog se nije pokajao za sve darove koje je darivao ovom narodu, niti za poziv (**Romans 11:29**) da on bude **“His people, His treasured possession” (Deuteronomy 7:6)**. Najgora kazna koja ga je mogla stiaæi, stigla ga je. Bilo je to rasejanje, rasejanje, ali ne i uništenje. I s obzirom da Bog nije nameravao da uništi svoj izabrani narod, to je ujedno znaèilo da æe

ga jednom i vratiti u Obeæanu zemlju, u zemlju koju mu je obeæao, i da æe ga po svojoj milosti spasti. Vraæanje Izraela na stara ognjišta veæ je oþoèelo. I nastavlja se. A sa povratkom doæi æe i obraæenje. U to nema sumnje. Samo je pitanje vremena kada æe se to dogoditi.

Aliyah - the return and conversion

Aliyah, “ascension” or “going up” is the arrival of Jews from exile or Diaspora to live in Eretz Yisrael - the Land of Israel. Those who “go up” for this purpose are known as olim - a term used in the Bible when the Children of Israel went up from Egypt (Genesis 50:14) and - at a later period - for the exiles who returned from captivity in Babylon (Ezra 2:1,59). The call of Cyrus, King of Persia, in 538 B.C., - “Whosoever there is among you of all His people, his God be with him, - let him go up.” (Ezra 1:3) - has been used as a watchword for aliyah.

It was aliyah that re-created the Jewish Commonwealth in the Land after the Babylonian Exile, provided the community with some of its prominent spiritual leaders during the Second Temple and reestablished the State of Israel in modern times.

Ostaje da se saèeka da jevrejski narod doþivi i svoj duhovni uspon, potpuno vraæanje Bogu, jer to je i smisao viševjekovnog oèuvanja u rasejanju i vraæanja u svetu zemlju. Neka od veæ navedenih biblijskih proroèanstava to su i potvrdila. Setimo se proroka Sofonije:

“From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshippers, my scattered people, will bring me offer-

ings. But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the Lord. *The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid.*” Zephaniah 3:10.12.13. (emphasis added)

Setimo se velièanstvenog obeæanja da æ Bog posvetiti svoje veliko ime, koje je Izrael oskvrnio među narodima i da æ narodi poznati da je On Gospod, kad se posveti u njima (Ezekiel 36:23):

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.* You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.” Ezekiel 36: 24-28. (emphasis added)

“The Scripture indicate that after the nation has returned there is to be a great awakening among the Jews. Might this not, in part, be what the ancient prophets spoke of as the ‘latter rain’? A great spiritual refreshing is clearly predicted at the end of the age. There will be a great worldwide spiritual harvest.

From the study of prophecy we learn that when the Jews go back to the land of their fathers, most of them return in unbelief, their hearts like stone. And they will continue to have hearts of

stone until God Himself intervenes by His Holy Spirit and gives them hearts of flesh. This is exactly what happened to Saul of Tarsus, who later became such a great teacher. God dealt with him, removing his heart of stone and giving him a heart of flesh. What God did for that one man, and what He did for thousands of other Jews of that generation, He evidently purposes to do in some mysterious way for many thousands of Jews before the end of human history. And that is already beginning. The ancient prophets pictured a great turning to God among the Jewish people before the coming of the Messiah. Would it not be wonderful if this were to begin in the land of Israel and from there spread to Jews all over the world? Not that every Jew will accept Yeshua as the Messiah and his personal Saviour, but the Scriptures indicate that thousands will hear God's call and turn to the Lord as they did on the Day of Pentecost when three thousand believers were immersed in one day! (Acts 2:41)." ¹⁾

Setimo se i neobièno uzbudljive vizije o suvim kostima, koje predstavljaju "the whole house of Israel" (Ezekiel 37:11), a koje Gospod veæ danas prikuplja pred oèima celoga sveta. Prikupljanje suvih kostiju ne bi imalo nikakvog smisla, ako iza toga ne bi stajala namera da se one i ožive. Stoga Gospod kaŹe proroku:

"Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; *I will bring you back to the land of Israel.* Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. *I will put my Spirit in you and you*

will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.” Ezekiel 37:12-14. (emphasis added)

Izrael neæe ostati bez Božjeg Duha! Duhovni preporod tek æe doæi. Samo je pitanje vremena kada æe se to ostvariti.

The taking away the sins of Israel

Prisetimo se i kategoriène izjave apostola Pavla o uklanjanju greha Izraela:

“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’” Romans 11:25-27. (emphasis added)

The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, video je slavnu buduænost jevrejskog naroda u tome što æe oni konaèno naæi Gospoda i ostati Mu verni. To je i objavio preko proroka. U to nas uverava prorok Isaija:

“A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous.” Isaiah 10:21.22. (emphasis added)

Komentarišuæi ove stihove poznati amerièki duhovni pisac **Ellen G. White** kaŹe:

“At the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple laid in ruins, many thousands of the Jews were sold to serve as bondmen in heathen

lands. Like wrecks on a desert shore, they were scattered among the nations. (...) Maligned, hated, persecuted, from century to century theirs has been a heritage of suffering. (...)

God has comforted their hearts in affliction, and has beheld with pity their terrible situation. He has heard the agonizing prayers of those who have sought Him with all the heart for a right understanding of His word. (...)

It is to this class that Isaiah referred in his prophecy, ‘A remnant shall be saved.’” 2)

Proroku Isaiji pridružuje se i Hosea, koga smo već citirali, a koji je proročkim pogledom sagledao vreme kada æ se Jevreji vratiti i pristupiti Gospodu i blagosti (**his goodness**) Njegovoj:

“For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. *They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.*” Hosea 3:4.5. (emphasis added)

Izraz **“the last days”** ima puno eshatološko značenje i odnosi se u pravom smislu reći na kraj istorije èoveèanstva. Ako prihvatimo èinjenicu, kakvu nam Biblija sugeriše, da je naše vreme poslednje vreme, onda su Jevreji zaista dugo vremena bili **“without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol”**, jednom reći, nisu imali organizovan ni politièki ni verski život. Sve je bilo razoreno i ukinuto. Tek 1948. Izrael ponovo dobija svoju državu, a ispunjenju drugog dela proroèanstva svakako idemo u susret, s tim što ne treba prevideti

i daleko veæu jevrejsku zajednicu izvan granica ove države, tzv. dijasporu.

U komentaru na pomenute stihove **Ellen G. White** kaže da je Izrailjcima “**trough Hosea was given a prophecy that set before them the privilege of having a part in the final restoration that is to be made to the people of God at the close of earth’s history, when the Messiah shall appear as King of kings and Lord of lords.**”³⁾

The privilege of having a part in the final restoration oni sigurno neæe propustiti.

“While we could, of course, apply the expression ‘the final restoration’ in a spiritual sense, yet the context implies that the writer had in mind the re-establishment of Israel as a nation which is regarded by many outstanding Bible scholars as an unmistakable sign that Messiah is about to come as King of kings and Lord of lords. If so, then what is to be done must be done quickly for time is running out. These words: ‘Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God’ (verse 5), have special meaning. Nothing could be more emphatic nor easier to understand. Furthermore, this writer says it will happen in ‘the latter days’ It would be difficult for ‘the children of Israel’ to return without a homeland to return to.”⁴⁾

Sve æe ovo uèiniti da se veliko Božje ime proslavi po narodima. U to nas uverava prorok **Zephaniah** kad govori o konaènom izbavljenju “sino-va Izrailjevih” (**the children of Israel**):

“At that time I will deal with all who oppressed you; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. *I will give them*

praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. *I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth* when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes," says the Lord." Zephaniah 3:19.20. (emphasis added)

Verujemo da æe to biti vreme kad æe se ispuniti i reði proroka Zaharije (Zechariah) :

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'" Zechariah 8:23.

Ovaj stih pokazuje da Jevreja ima po svim narodima i svim jezicima, i da æe njihovo obraæenje podstaæi mnoge da im se pridruæe u æelji da naðu Gos-poda. Slièno iskustvo otkriveno je i preko proroka Isa-ije:

"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. *Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.'* The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isaiah 2:2.3. (emphasis added)

The preparing the way of the Lord

God has a plan with His people. One day Israel will receive Jesus as her Messiah and experience redemption and resurrection as a nation.

Božji narod treba u poslednje vreme da uèestvuje u pripremi puta za dolazak Mesije. Veoma cenjena hrišæanska spisateljica **Ellen G. White** je o tome još 1905. godine pisala:

“There will be many converted from among the Jews, and these converts will aid in preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight in the desert a highway for our God. Converted Jews are to have an important part to act in the great preparations to be made in the future to receive Christ, our Prince. A nation shall be born in a day. How? By men whom God has appointed being converted to the truth. (...) The predictions of prophecy will be fulfilled. (Manuscript 75, 1905)” ⁵⁾

Dve vrlo znaèajne misli izdvajamo iz ove tvrdnje. Prva je **“A nation shall be born in a day”**. Reè je o jevrejskom narodu. Šta to praktièno znaèi? To praktièno znaèi da æe doæi do duhovnog preporoda u ovom narodu. **In a day**. Ovaj **“a day”** možda ne treba shvatiti ni bukvalno ni proroèki, odnosno ni kao vreme od 24 èasa, ni kao vreme od godinu dana. Možemo ga shvatiti kao vrlo kratak vremenski period, jer pisac ovde ne govori proroèkim jezikom. Pisac samo ima u vidu predskazanja proroka. I to je ujedno druga misao koju želimo da naglasimo: **“The predictions of prophecy will be fulfilled.”** Ova tvrdnja E.G. White nam otkriva da su proroci veæ odavno predskazivali obraæenje Izraela u poslednje vreme. Treba li sada postaviti pitanje - koji proroci? Svakako, svi oni koje smo veæ naveli - **Zephaniah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Hosea, Zechariah**, apostol **Paul**. Prorok **Zechariah** nam èak i otkriva tajnu koliki je broj toga naroda koji æe se roditi u jedan dan:

“In the whole land,’ declares the Lord, ‘two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet *one-third* will be left in it. This *third* I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’” Zechariah 13:8.9. (emphasis added)

New covenant - new way

Preko proroka Jeremije Gospod nam otkriva svoju nameru u vezi sa novim zavetom, koji æe uèiniti sa svojim izabranim narodom:

“‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make *a new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.’” Jeremiah 31,31-34. (emphasis added)

The concept of the *berit* between God and his chosen people, translated as *covenant*, means something closer to *promise*, or *pledge*. Jeremiah's

“new covenant” is not a replacement of the existing covenant, but merely a figure of speech expressing the reinvigoration and revitalization of the existing covenant. The people of Israel possess an old covenant yet a new covenant, truly an everlasting covenant.

Has the New covenant been made as yet or is this future?

The New covenant has not been made as yet. It started clearly in v. 33 that this covenant is to be made with the nation or house of Israel, which includes both the ten tribes and the two tribes (Israel and Judah, v. 31). It is to be made “after those days,” that is, after the Diaspora and after the completion of the regathering of the Jews to their homeland.

The Lord will be jealous for his land

Kao prorok, pred èijim su se oèima nizali događaji poslednjeg vremena, nezaobilazan je svakako Joilo (**Joel**). Reè Božja, koju je on verno zabeležio, kaže **“Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.”** (Joel 2:18). **The Lord will no more make them a reproach among the nations. He will return them to their land:**

“The Lord will reply to them: ‘I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; *never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.*’” Joel 2:19. (emphasis added)

Izrael ne treba više da se boji:

“Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the Lord has done great things.” Joel 2:21.

The great things are the great blessings - zelena pasišta u pustinji, rodna drveta, bogati plodovi smokve i vinove loze, rani i pozni dažd na vreme (**the former and the latter rain**), pune žitnice, prepune kace (**vats**) vina i ulja, izobilje hrane, sitost, zahvalnost Gospodu za sve (**Joel 2:22-26**). Bog æe sve to uèiniti da bi Izrael shvatio da je On sa njim:

“Then you will know that *I am in Israel*, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.” Joel 2:27. (emphasis added)

The Lord will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh

I kad se bude sve to dogodilo, kad budu došli veliki materijalni blagoslovi, onda æe doæi do nezapamæenih duhovnih blagoslova:

“Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. JOE 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; *for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls.*” Joel 2:29-32. (emphasis added)

Ovo je, nema sumnje, kao i sva prethodna, eshatološko proroèanstvo. **The prophecy for “those**

days”, for the last days. Iako se apostol Petar veæ pozvao na njega da bi objasnio èudo koje se dogodilo na dan Pedesetnice (**the day of Pentecost**), when the apostles were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:4), njegovò ispunjenje tek treba oèekivati. U veæoj meri i u veæem obimu. At Pentecost only apostles received the gift of tongues and the power of the Holy Spirit, but in the last days sons and daughters will prophesy, old men shall dream dreams, young men shall see visions, and upon the servants and upon the handmaids will God pour out His spirit. Ali neæ svi biti dostojni izlivanja Duha niti spasenja. Samo oni koji prizovu ime Gospodnje spašæ se. The Lord will call the remnant of His people “before the great and terrible day of the Lord come”.

Pišuæi Rimljanima poslanicu, videli smo, po apostolu Pavlu, Jevreji nisu odbaèeni (**By no means!**). Zato se apostol sa razlogom pita:

“But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!” Romans 11: 12.

Zaista, šta li æ tek uèiniti njihova punoæa? I kad æ ona doæi? Punoæa æ doæi sa ispunjenjem predivnih obeæanja u knjizi proroka Joel-a 2:27-32. Pu-noæa æ doæi sa izlivanjem Duha Svetoga na svako te-lo (**pour out my Spirit upon all flesh**). To æ biti jedino sredstvo i jedini naèin da mogu progledati i pogledati na Onoga koga su proboli (**they will look on me the one they have pierced**):

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they

have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.” Zechariah 12:10. (emphasis added)

Kad Jevreji budu u probodenom Hristu prepoznali Mesiju koga su vekovima sa èžnjom oèekivali, kad budu ispravili ono što su promašili i budu nadoknadili ono u èemu su zaostali, koliko æe to tek bogatstvo biti za svet! Na žalost, za sada možemo samo nasluæivati kako æe to sve biti.

Deliverance in mount Zion and in Jerusalem

Veæ pomenuta spisateljica **Ellen G. White** nasluæuje te dane:

“There are among the Jews many who will be converted, and through whom we shall see the salvation of God go forth as a lamp that burneth. (...) There are among them many who will come to the light, and who will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power. The Lord God will work. He will do wonderful things in righteousness. .” (*Manuscript 87, 1907*) ⁶

How can **Ellen G. White** be sure that through they **“we shall see the salvation of God go forth as a lamp that burneth”**? Rekli smo da je ona èitala proroke. I ne samo èitala, veæ duboko prouèavala i verovala biblijskim prorocima. U ovoj njenoj tvrdnji kriju se reèi jednog starozavetnog proroka. Ona, dakle, ne priòe, veæ jednostavno preprièava to proòeanstvo. A reè je o proroku Isaiji. Isaija je zapisao ono što mu je Gospod kazao:

“For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the

righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” Isaiah 62:1. -KJV(emphasis added)

I u jednom i u drugom sluèaju upotrebljen je izraz “*as a lamp that burneth*”.

Potvrdu nalazimo i kod proroka Joila. I on je, kao i Isaija, zapisao:

“For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance.” Joel 2:32.

Ellen G. White says that the converted Jews “**will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power**”. Gde je to mogla naæi? Takve izjave nalazimo i kod proroka Isaije (Isaiah) i kod proroka Miheja (Micah). Tako je Isaija zapisao:

“The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 2:3. (emphasis added)

Micah writes:

“In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Micah 4:1.2. (emphasis added)

Èudesnu silu (**wonderful power**) za objavljivanje nepromenljivog karaktera Božjeg zakona verovatno æe obraæeni Jevreji dobiti kada se budu pronašle ploèe Zakona, koje su sakrivene još od vremena vavilonske opsade Jerusalima. Možda baš na to misle proroci Isaiah i Micah kad kažu da æe iz Siona

izaæi Zakon (**The law will go out from Zion**)!

Sion i Jerusalem doživeæe u tim danima slavu koja se neæe moæi sakriti pred licem celoga sveta. To æe videti svi narodi:

“The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, *give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.*” Isaiah 62:2-7. (emphasis added)

Ovo je poziv Gospodnji svima onima koji veruju Gospodu, Njegovim obeæanjima i Njegovim planovima da ne umuknu (**keep not silence**), da ne æute o Jerusalmu i Njegovom izabranom narodu, jer Bog nije odbacio ni Jerusalem ni narod koji je izabrao da mu bude svet i da proslavi Njegovo ime. Autor ove knjige se, kao što vidite, odazvao ovom pozivu.

Isusova najava obraæenja Jerusalima

Da æe do obraæenja Jerusalima u poslednje vreme doæi, može se zakljuèiti i na osnovu reèi koje je sam Gospod Isus Hristos uputio ovom gradu:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” Matthew 23:37-39.

Šta vidimo? Jerusalim nije prihvatio Hrista koji je pokazao milost prema njemu. **Their house was left, desolate. For many centuries.** Ali taj isti Jerusalim æe radosno pozdraviti Hrista kada bude došao: **“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”** Ove reći pokazuju da se Jevreji moraju pre toga vratiti u Jerusalim i doživeti duhovno obraæenje.

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6.

ARMAGEDDON - THE BATTLE FOR JERUSALEM

Among many visions apostle John received at Patmos island at the end of 1st century AD, which spread prophetic light on various events in both the Church and the world history, indisputably the most interest is aroused by the Armageddon vision:

“Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. (...) Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.” Revelation 16:13.14.16.

The Revelation interpreters usually claim that this is the only place in the Bible where the word Armageddon is mentioned. Therefore it is difficult for them to determine the right meaning of the word, moreover either its geographical location. For instance, an American theologian George Vandeman writes:

“Where will this battle be fought? History offers no record of any place called Armageddon, but

the Bible gives us some hints. Our text says the word *Armageddon* comes from the Hebrew. In that language, the word combines *har*, which means ‘mountain’, and *mageddon*, which many connect with Megiddo. So the name Armageddon can be understood as ‘mountain of Megiddo’.

The mountain of Megiddo - here is a clue we can work with. Back in Old Testament times Megiddo was a small but important fortress city north of Jerusalem near the plain of Esdraelon. Once in Scripture this plain itself is called the plain of Megiddo. That might appear to be a logical location for warfare, but we remember that Armageddon involves, not a plain, but mountain.

We must find a mountain of Megiddo - a mountain with some spiritual significance for the armies of heaven.

Visiting the site of ancient Megiddo might help us understand Armageddon. We drive eastward from the Mediteranean port city of Haifa and follow the Carmel ridge. After passing the northeastern ridge of Carmel we locate the ruins of the ancient city. Looming large over the landscape at Megiddo is Mount Carmel. Maybe Mount Carmel solves our dilemma. Does it represent Mount Megiddo, the scene of Armageddon? Did something happen at Carmel that could help us understand Armageddon?

Long ago, Mount Carmel hosted a dramatic showdown between God and His enemies. The prophet Elijah summoned the nation to appear on the mountain. He challenged them to judge between true and false worship. (...)

God won a great victory that day at Carmel. He defeated the enemies of His covenant, as He will again once for all at Armageddon.”¹⁾

George Vandeman says, “We must find a mountain of Megiddo.” However, instead onto mountain of Megiddo, Mr. Vandeman goes to Mount Carmel and adds, “Maybe Mount Carmel solves our dilemma.” Unfortunately the dilemma isn’t solved in that way, because if Mount Carmel is at stake, the Bible should have surely recorded it. Therefore if the word Armageddon just means “mountain of Megiddo”, then not only its literal interpretation but also symbolical makes no sense.

An American theologian Hans K. LaRondelle tried to find out the meaning of the word Armageddon into Septuagint, the Greek translation of the New Testament:

“Interestingly, the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, transcribes the name of the city of Megiddo usually as Mageddo (2 Chron. 35:22; Judges 1:27; Joshua 12:21). But on one occasion it paraphrases the expression ‘the plain of Megiddo’ as ‘the plain of slaughter’ or destruction, namely, in Zechariah 12:11 (*ekkoptomenou*: ‘of being cut down’).

The name *Har-Magedon* in the Greek original of Revelation 16:16, as Mountain of Destruction, indicates the nature of the event that will take place when the demonic spirits have gathered or united all political powers of the antichrist against God and the people of Christ. Destruction will be their destiny in God’s providence.”²⁾

However, no one of these interpretations lead us to the problem solution that is to genuine goal. Even less one should rely on these translators’ interpretations of some words. That’s why all these proposals should be rejected and search for better solutions.

The correctly interpretation of the word *Armageddon*

Better interpretation is different of the preceding ones by second part of the word Armageddon that is not derived from the word *Megiddo* but out of the word *moed*, which means *assembly*. *Har Moed* simply means: “Mount of assembly” or “Mount of the congregation”! It’s talking about the Mount of God!

“You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on *the mount of assembly*, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.” Isaiah 14:13. (emphasis added)

North is a cardinal point which is imputed to God in the Old Testament. This is the place from where God rules. Satan intention was to raise his throne right there, and to become equal with the Most High (“I will make myself like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14). The Mount Zion, where Solomon built the Temple, was located in the north side.

“It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is *Mount Zion*, the city of the Great King.” Psalm 48:2. (emphasis added)

In the same Temple, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, the prophet Ezekiel saw the glory of the God of Israel (Ezekiel 8:3.4). The offerings were slaughtered “at the north side of the altar before the Lord” (Leviticus 1:11). Therefore, Zion is the Mount of assembly. Zion is the *Har moed*, that is Armageddon.

This interpretation is also reached by an American theologian Jacques B. Doukhan, but with a difference, which strayed him from the truth yet:

“As in Daniel 11, which tells about the gathering of all the powers of the North and South, the prophecy of Revelation 16 points to the gathering of ‘the kings of the earth, of the whole world’ (16:14). No wonder then, that the prophet uses the name Armageddon to designate the last convulsions of human history. Armageddon means ‘the mount of the gathering’. This Hebrew word expresses the great gathering of the powers of the world, a meaning which fits the context of Revelation 16 (cf. vv. 14,16) perfectly. Moreover, the figure of Babel, which plays an important role here, is also conveyed by the Hebrew phrase Armageddon, ‘mount of gathering’. The only other biblical passage using it is Is. 14:13-14, which indeed portrays the usurpation by Babel. The fact that Revelation 16 refers to Isaiah 14 constitutes another connection with Daniel 11, which also has the latter in its background. Both Dan. 11 and Is. 14 speak of a power which relates itself to the North.

Armageddon reminds us, by association, of the ambition of Babel to sit on the throne of God, above the stars, on the mount of the gathering (Armageddon).

Moreover, the motif of ‘mount’ and the expression ‘the farther sides of the north’ in Is. 14:13,14 convey a specific association of ideas which undoubtedly points to Mount Zion. As Jon D. Levenson notices: ‘The expression *yarkete zapon* ‘the utmost peak of Zaphon’ appears in Ps. 48:3 as an epithet of Mount Zion, the whole expression being in synonymous parallelism with ‘the city of the great king.’ ...

In that event, Zion would also be perceived as reaching into the highest heavens, above the clouds and the stars.’ Now the passage of Revelation 16 makes sense while confirming the vision of Daniel 11:45. All the gathering for the last battle will take place at ‘the glorious Holy Mountain.’ If the reference to Isaiah 14 is correct, this mountain is nothing but the ‘heavenly’ Mount Zion.”³⁾

The reference to Isaiah 14 is correct, but the conclusion, that the chapter is about “heavenly Mount Zion”, is unfortunately not correct. I say unfortunately, because Doukhan has overlooked the fact that the Satan was thrown out of heaven and no battle after Cross will take place in heaven (see Revelation 12).

There is another possibility, maybe more acceptable, for the interpretation of the word Armageddon. It could be rendering *Har Migdo* (“hill of his glory”), in which case it refers to Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

As we see, the word Armageddon does not appear only one time, but more times in the Bible. For that reason only its literal interpretation makes sense.

The influence of the demonic spirits

Therefore Zion will be the place of a horrible battle, the battle of all battles. The spirits of devils, working miracles, will go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And He will gather them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon, that ist Har moed or Har migdo.

The goal of their attack will be the Mount of the assembly or the Hill of His glory, that is Zion. But Zion is not only a place in Israel. Zion is synonym for the whole Israel.

How real is this statement that the demonic spirits will lead the leaders of the world in this battle? If we know that Jesus Himself said for Satan that he is “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44), then it can be concluded that the spirits of devils have always been influencing the leaders of the world. All the battles and wars, led and being led nowadays, are slaughterhouse of nations, and demons surely enjoy in the bloody feasts.

The Lord’s judgment to nations

By such a development of last day’s events all the Old Testament prophecies talking about severe attacks of God enemies against His people are in perfect harmony. Among the prophets told about the battle we will firstly set aside Joel. He is, as we seen, announced return of the chosen people to the Promised Land, after which would follow their conversion (Joel 2:27-32), and then an attack by their century-old enemies:

“In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink. ‘Now what have you against

me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland. ‘See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. (...) Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O Lord! ‘Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!’ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. *The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.* The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. *But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.* ‘Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.’” Joel 3:1-7.11-17. (emphasis added)

What do we notice here? God will first of all bring back the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem to their borders. Thereafter He will bring all nations down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, which the American theologian Hans K. LaRondelle interprets as “the combined valleys around Mount Zion”⁴). There God will enter into judgment against them

concerning His inheritance, His people Israel, for they scattered His people among the nations and divided up His land. At the same time He will be the refuge and the stronghold of his people. After this great tribulation the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. This is very important to notice, because that sequence of events is announced by other prophets and by Jesus Christ as well (Matthew 24:15-29).

Descending of the Lord to the Mount of Olives

About gathering of adversary nations and pouring of God's wrath on them, we read at prophet Zephaniah:

“Therefore wait for me,” declares the Lord, ‘for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them--all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger. (...) *At that time I will deal with all who oppressed you*; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame.” Zephaniah 3:8.19. (emphasis added)

The conversion of Israel will provoke the enemies of God:

“A day of the Lord is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. *Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations*, as he

fighters in the day of battle. *On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. (...) This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other.* ” Zechariah 14:1-4.12.13. (emphasis added)

Obviously the descending of the Lord onto the Mount of Olives is not the Second Coming of Christ. When He comes second time, Christ will not step on the earth, but “we will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Therefore, this is an event, which precedes Second Coming of Christ. This is an intervention of God Himself to save His people.

Mihael, the Great Prince, defends His people

The sequence of already mentioned events is the same as in the book of prophet Daniel (11:40-45; 12:1, 2). An introduction to chapter 11 of the book is found in previous chapter 10, in which archangel Gabriel expresses comforting words to the prophet, who was mourned for three weeks.

“Now I have come to explain to you what will happen *to your people* in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.” Daniel 10:14. (emphasis added)

This is the key text for understanding of whole chapter 11. Unfortunately, it is fully overlooked by commentators. Now no wonder why there are so many unfounded statements and incaution in some interpretations of the chapter. Please notice what God said to Daniel, “Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future.” It is quite clear that the words “to your people” refer to Daniel’s people that is Jewish nation. Therefore that what come next cannot be applied partially to the Jewish and partially to Christian people, as proposed by some commentators! What chapter 11 describes refers to the Jewish history only.

Daniel 11:3 announces Alexander the Great. All the scholars agree with that. In the 4th century B.C. Alexander the Great conquered much of the known world - including Judaea and Jerusalem. But with the early death of Alexander (323. B.C.) his kingdom was broken and divided in four parts (Daniel 11:4). It did not go to his posterity (Daniel 11:4) but was divided between his four generals - Lysimachus, Seleucus, Ptolemy i Cassander.

From verse 5 the prophecy describes just what is happening in two of four parts of the Greek disintegrated kingdom, and these were Egypt, called King of the South, because it was located southward of Judea, and Syria, King of the North, for it was northward of Judea. Another two parts are not important, because they were not in touch with God’s people. The reason why the prophecy deals with Egypt and Syria is because there was the Holy Land and God’s people between them which would have been interchanged by both kings. The wars, which would have been led between King of the South and King of the North, will always have been aimed to conquer Judea and

Jerusalem that is to overcome God's people. Judea looked like a boat pounded by waves from both sides alternately.

“With the victory of Seleucus over Ptolemy in 198 B.C., the tables were turned. From 175 B.C. Seleucus' brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, brutally implemented a policy of Hellenizing his territories, including the unconditional worship of the Greek gods.

In 169 B.C. under the pretence of wanting to restore order between the conservative and Hellenizing factions among the citizens, Antiochus gave orders for the Temple, along with its treasury and the sacred adjuncts of religious practice, to be looted. The result was a general uprising.”⁵⁾

The text in Daniel 11:32-35 describes just the rebellion of the Jews against the Seleucids:

“The year 167 B.C. saw the start of the organized struggle - under the leadership of a priest named Mattathias from the priestly house of Hasmon - against Antiochus' overmighty army. (...)

Under the Hasmoneans, as the descendants of Mattathias are known, the kingdoms of Judaea and Israel were reunited for the first time since their separation, and there followed a period of peace and prosperity. The Hasmoneans ruled in Jerusalem until the city fell to the Romans in 63 B.C., and again from 40-37 B.C.“⁶⁾

What happened with the King of the North, that is with the dynasty of Seleucids?

“The empire gradually shrank until it was reduced to (roughly) Syria; Antiochus III managed to reassert his authority for a time, until he was defeated

by the Romans and driven from Asia Minor in 191-190. The remains of the Seleucid empire were extinguished by the Romans in 64 B.C.”⁷⁾

The same fate befell King of the South, too, the dynasty of Ptolemy’s:

“The dynasty survived until 30 B.C., when a defeated Queen Cleopatra and her lover-ally Mark Antony committed suicide, and Egypt became part of the Roman Empire.”⁸⁾

The simple and logical conclusion to be drawn is: Along centuries, all of them, Jews, King of the North (Syria), and King of the South (Egypt) lost their independency. Therefore it has no sense to consider Rome as King of the North from then onward, as some theologians do. In regard to what Rome would be King of the North, knowing that the Romans already entered Syria, Israel, and Egypt? Such an interpretation is even more senseless after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Jews were scattered all over the world. They didn’t need to look for neither King of the South nor King of the North afterwards! The Kings are just geographical terms meaning Syria and Egypt, and having their significance only while Israel exists between them. That relation among these three entities was interrupted for many ages, and therefore for many ages there is no any mention in the prophecy about either King of the North or King of the South. The prophecy was discontinued with verse 39 in .

And then it comes “the time of end” (verse 40). In the time of end, King of the North and King of the South are mentioned again. What does it mean? It simply means that not until the time of end the original relationship between the two will be established.

King of the North will be Syria again that is all the countries it covered at the proper time. King of the South will be Egypt again that is all the countries it included at the proper time (Egypt and Libya). There will be between them, of course, Israel again. And this prophecy points out to a certainty of Jewish state restoration. And, really, we have this relationship from 1948 on.

Israel, the Jewish State in Palestine, was born on May 14, as the British finally left the country. On the very first day of Israel's independence, all of Israel's neighbors declared war against them. Five Arab armies (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq) immediately invaded Israel. The Jews won their war of independence. The Arab war to destroy Israel failed.

That was just beginning. And it was not ended likewise. In the year of 1956, there was so called the Sinai Campaign, a defensive war of Israel against Egypt. In the year of 1967, there was one more similar war, lasted just six days, and against the same enemy again. It is historically called just like that – Six-Day War.

“Within six days the lightning war was over. The people of Israel, although outnumbered forty to one, vanquished their foes and more than tripled their territory - one of the most brilliant feats in military history.”⁹⁾

On 6. Oktober 1973, on Yom Kippur, the new war broke out:

“Egypt und Syria rolled their Soviet-built tanks across the border into Israel, vowing revenge for the Six-Day War.”¹⁰⁾

This war lasted for three weeks. Israel miraculously won the first war - and four more which have been waged against them during their first fifty years of existence. But these wars are not the fulfilment of the last verses of the chapter 11. They just indicate that the old enemies have held the same geographical positions and restored their old enmity. It is about to be stirred up. And with inconceivably awful and severe consequences.

Let us see now how the prophet Daniel describes the events of the end of time :

“At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him [the king of the north -] in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land [*Israel*]. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.” Daniel 11:40-45.

The dominant power in the end verses is the King of the North. The King of the North is Syria, but it was in time of Seleucids encompassed most territory of present Turkey, Iraq and Iran. That's why one may assume these four militant Islamic countries would stand for the King of the North at the time of

end. Their hatred against Israel and obvious wish to destroy it might be sufficient evidence for this assumption.

The King of the South, in time of Ptolemy, had covered territories of present Egypt and Libya, and that's why these two countries might stand for the King of the South.

As far as alarming report from the east and the north are concerned, it is difficult to say at the moment what it could be. What is important is that the King of the North will succeed in its campaign against Israel. He will invade "the Beautiful Land" and "pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain". The goal of the King of the North, who leads the surrounding nations, is Har moed, that is Har migdo! But Har moed, that is Har migdo, will be his grave, because the archangel Gabriel said to the prophet Daniel:

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered." Daniel 12:1.

At the time of great tribulation and greatest danger for Daniel's people Michael, the Great Prince, will appear in great power to defense and protect them:

"Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..." Zechariah 14:3.4.

"The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble.

But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.” Joel 3:16.

One third of people saved

All of them whose name is found written in the book of life which is before the Ancient of Days will be delivered. And there is enough number of them to talk about deliverance of whole nation. It will be the direct fulfilment of the verses which we read in the book of the prophet Zechariah:

“In the whole land,’ declares the Lord, *‘two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.* This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’” Zechariah 13:8.9. (emphasis added)

Two-thirds will be struck down and perish. Just as in a treat found in the book of prophet Isaiah: “So the Lord will cut off from Israel both head and tail...; the elders and prominent men are the head, the prophets who teach lies are the tail.” Isaiah 9:14.15. Please remember that Jesus in His prophetic sermon mentioned three times that at the time of end “false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.” Matthew 24:24. The false Christs, and false prophets are the tail, and they will be together with the elders and prominent men cut off. And one-third of the remnant, one-third of faithful and converted, will experienced their fiery baptismal.

They will be refined like silver and tested like gold). That will be God's people:

“Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; *never again will foreigners invade her.*” Joel 3:17. (emphasis added)

God dwells in Zion, on His holy mountain. That why it will never be conquered by its enemies. Jerusalem will be holy, holy because of presence of the One who is holy. And He will be the defense against strangers.

Gog and Magog destroyed

Prophet Ezekiel, where Har-moed will be battlefield of terrible slaughter and ruin of God's people enemies, gives the description of this last battle. The Lord Himself turns to Gog in Magog land:

“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. (...) ‘Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them. After many days you will be called to arms. In *future years* you will invade a land that has recovered from war, *whose people were gathered from many nations* to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been *brought out from the nations*, and now all of them live in safety. You and all your troops and *the many nations with you* will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land. ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. You will say, ‘I will invade a land of unwallled villages; I will attack a

peaceful and unsuspecting people--all of them living without walls and without gates and bars. I will plunder and loot and turn my hand *against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations*, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land.' (...)' Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. *In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land*, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel? At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them. This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign Lord. In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign Lord. Every man's sword will be against his brother. *I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.*

And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”
Ezekiel 38:3.7-12.14-23. (emphasis added)

This battle will take place “in future years”. It indicates that this battle is still outstanding. Where will it take place? In the land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:8). That also means that the Jews at that time will already be „gathered from many nations" (Ezekiel 38:8) and brought back in their country. After that their material and spiritual regeneration will follow. Israel will be “a peaceful and unsuspecting people” (Ezekiel 38:11). The enemy will know that as well, because the Sovereign Lord says: “In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?” Ezekiel 38:14. Gog will know and probably consider it as a weakness of Israel and a favorable advantage for an attack. But God will protect His people and execute judgment upon the enemy with plague and bloodshed; He will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him (Ezekiel 38:22). These hail stones will weigh around 100 pounds. They will devastate anything they hit, and they have been stored and are ready to go! (Job 38:22,23). Gog must fall:

“On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals.” Ezekiel 39:4.

The Lord will visit not only Gog when it attacks Israel, but its country too, it come out from:

“I will send fire on Magog and on those who

live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel 39:6.

When once the enemy is defeated, then God’s people will see how great Lord’s mercy was toward them.

“Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up--the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For *seven years* they will use them for fuel. (...) ‘On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those who travel east toward the Sea. It will block the way of travelers, because Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called the Valley of Hamon Gog. ‘For *seven months* the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. ” Ezekiel 39:9.11.12. (emphasis added)

The list of shields, arches and arrows, as well other weapons should not lead us to doubt if the battle of the end of days is in question. We must take into consideration that this message of God had to be given in such a way that it could be clear and understandable by the prophet himself, too. What Ezekiel would have thought if tanks, aircraft carriers, helicopters, supersonic airplanes, various rocket systems, nuclear weapons, or something even more sophisticated had been listed?

E. G. White about the battle of Armageddon

Let’s now see what is going to precede Armageddon battle as per E.G. White words, providing us a background to conclude what the nature of

the battle itself is:

“Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. (...) All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.”
11)

As we can see Ellen G. White says that the nations of the world are eager for conflict and that they will have deadly instruments of warfare, but they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon. It is clear therefore that the battle of Armageddon will be battle with deadly instruments of warfare, but not only the great controversy between good and evil. The next quotation verifies that, too:

“When God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.”¹²⁾

Now what is at stake is strife, not persecution. In a strife, two sides are confronted each other, believing one is able to overcome another. In a persecution there is no strife. It is only that a weaker side withdraws before a stronger one, because it is not able to resist. If no pen can picture that strife, then warring powers that fight each other using all available weapons are at stake.

Based on another Ellen G. White statement, we can conclude where the battle will take place:

“The Saviour’s prophecy concerning the visita-

tion of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law." 13)

Let's pay our attention to the statement in order to understand it fully! E.G. White says that according to the Christ's prophecy Jerusalem should be desolated once again. The first desolation was terrible.

"During the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. almost two million Jews were either slaughtered, starved to death, or sold into slavery - which was even worse than death for it was actually a living death." 14)

This suffer will, however, comparing to the upcoming one, be just a faint shadow. Disaster of the chosen city, especially the second desolation, should help us to understand what the doom of the world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His Law. It practically means that another desolation will take place before Second Coming of Christ. In the same way it means that the chosen people will, before the Second Coming of Christ, turn back to the chosen city and experience terrific attack by it's surrounding nations, century-old enemies.

Christ't prophecies about the desolation of Jerusalem

On the question of His disciples: "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3.), Christ said among other things:

"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by

armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be *great distress* in the land and wrath *against this people*. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Luke 21:20-24. (emphasis added)

It is well-known that the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but it is illogical to take this destruction from the first century as the sign of Christ's coming and of the end of the world. More than nineteen long centuries divide us from that bloody and horrible event. Therefore the sign must be repeated. Bloodier and more horrible. And when it appears, it is only then that the first prediction of close coming of the world end, that is Christ's Second Coming.

In the announcement of Jerusalem desolation we also may notice that Jesus, among others, had emphasized: “For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.” Luke 21:22. Based on cited biblical prophecies, that is the events predicted, we unavoidable conclude that all the events not fulfilled as written with the first desolation. A great deal of Old Testament prophecies related to the doom of Jewish people is directed to the time of end, so they must fulfill first, and then Jesus' words about destroy of Jerusalem. The days of vengeance are about to come!

The first desolation of the holy city Jerusalem

might be called first Armageddon battle, but what we must specially emphasize is that *no Christian perished during the siege of Jerusalem.*

They remembered His words:

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.” Luke 21:20.21.

There was no way out of the city surrounded by the Roman army. But out of such a strong impenetrable encirclement God had found exit for those who were faithful to Him.

“But God’s merciful providence was directing events for the good of His own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour’s warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety - the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan.”¹⁵⁾

Those who believed Christ were protected and freed, those who were not – they were left defenseless to their enemies. So Christ’s prophecy about desolation of Jerusalem fulfilled literally. According to the

same Christ's prophecy and some Old Testament prophecies as well, turn is coming for another desolation of Jerusalem. We can be quite sure that God will defend His people in the hardest time, His holy name and His Holy Mountain – Har migdo.

“When Gog attacks the land of Israel” (Ezekiel 38:18), God “will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.” (Ezekiel 38:22). This will not be first time that God fight in this way against enemies of His people. At one time it was in Egypt (Exodus 9:18-26), and second time against the five kings of the Amorites in time when Israel led by Joshua took over land of Canaan:

“After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.” Joshua 10:9-11.

War against God's people ist war against God. This will be the reason for Gods intervention to deliver His faithful covenant people.

The description of Armageddon in Revelation

“Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out

of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. (...) Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (...) Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.” Revelation 16: 13.14.16.18-21.

As we can see, besides the word Armageddon it spreads the description of things that will come. Therefore, should the word Armageddon not been understood literally but symbolically, then a symbolical meaning would have be found for all the rest. What the lighting and thunders would mean if this were the case? What the big earthquake? What the cities? What the islands and mountains? What the great hailstone about the weight of a talent? Now all this is the evidence rather for a literal interpretation of the word Armageddon.

As it can be easily noticed, the description of the battle in the Revelation fully corresponds to the description given by the Old Testament prophets. So for instance John mentions “a severe earthquake”, and Ezekiel says that it will be “a great earthquake”

(38:19). Joel adds “the earth and the sky will tremble” (3:16). John speaks that “every island fled away”, Ezekiel says that God “will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands” (39:6). The prophet from Patmos says that “the mountains could not be found”, Ezekiel says - “the mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground.” (38:20). John announces “from the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each”, Ezekiel says “great hailstones” (38:22-KJV).

It remains only to clear up what the *great city* split in three parts in the book of Revelation is. It is obvious that Babylon the Great is not at stake, as interpreted commonly. We notice that “the great city” stands contrary to “the cities of the nations”. Therefore “the great city” can only be Jerusalem. It’s splitting into three parts we have already explained in commentary of Zechariah’s prophecy (Zechariah 13:8, 9). So that based on the Revelation itself one may conclude that the Armageddon battle is fighting for Jerusalem!

The opening of the sixth seal

There is an astonishing similarity between the descriptions of the Armageddon battle in all of the texts cited so far and the description following after the Sixth Seal opening in the Revelation. First of all let’s see how John the Revelator saw when Jesus, presented as the Lamb of God, has opened the Sixth Seal:

“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a *great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned*

blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’“ Revelation 6:12-17. (emphasis added)

Please now remember once again the text from the Revelation 16, which directly describes the Armageddon battle:

“Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (...) Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and *a severe earthquake*. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. (...) *Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.* From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.” Revelation 16:16.18.20-21. (emphasis added)

Obviously this description of the Armageddon battle is just a repetition of the events described related to the Sixth Seal because both texts mention the great earthquake as a key element, as well every mountain and island moved out of their places, and they were not found.

For John the apostle may also be said that after the Sixth Seal opening, he saw the same thing God revealed in vision seven centuries before to prophet Joel:

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. *The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.* The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; *the earth and the sky will tremble.* But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. ‘Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.’” Joel 3:14-17. (emphasis added)

It can also be freely said that John in the Sixth Seal saw that what so long ago had been heard from lips of Lord Jesus Christ, recorded by evangelist Luke in the following words:

“‘When you see *Jerusalem* being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in *Judea* flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be *great distress* in the land and *wrath against this people.* They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. ‘*There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the*

heavenly bodies will be shaken.“ Luke 21:20-26.
(emphasis added)

Probably, evangelist Luke was present at the Jesus’ speech, and he would, as Mathew did, more truly hand down the Lord’s words as far as the upcoming events with the Sun, the Moon, and stars are concerned. That signs at the celestial bodies, Mathew the evangelist described as follows:

“Immediately after the distress of those days’ *‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.*” Matthew 24:29. (emphasis added)

Besides listing of the same disasters in nature, a common thing for all the texts is a list of the same participants in the event. There are the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty(Revelation 6:15),the kings of the whole world (Revelation 16:14), multitudes in the valley of decision (Joel 3:14), that is according Jesus the armies that will surround Jerusalem (Luke 21:20). Therefore Jerusalem will be the target of the gathered enemies of God’s people. Judea is the battlefield. There shall be wrath upon this people. “But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.” Joel 3:16.

The real reason for the battle

Of course the Armageddon battle will be a battle for Jerusalem, but true motive can only be Zion, and Zion hardly has any sense without the Temple. Therefore a question is asked whether the Temple

would be built up again. Certainly it will! Somebody may be surprised by this categorical answer, but it can be clearly concluded based on the visions of few prophets. So prophet Isaiah says that in the last time there will be the house of the God of Jacob:

“In *the last days* the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, ‘*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.* He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 2:2.3. (emphasis added)

Almost the same thought is found in the book of Micah the prophet:

“In *the last days* the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.* He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Micah 4:1.2. (emphasis added)

And prophet Ezekiel throughout nine chapters of his book devotes to a description of this new Temple (Ezekiel 40-48). There is an interesting item in the description, repeated also at Joel’s and Zechariah’s. Ezekiel namely says:

“The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and *I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east* (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from

under the south side of the temple, south of the altar.” Ezekiel 47,1. (emphasis added)

In the description of the battle of Armageddon Joel says that in the time “a fountain will flow out of the Lord’s house” (Joel 3,18). The prophet Zechariah claims the same: “On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.” Zechariah 14,8.

These prophecies clearly show that in the time of the battle of Armageddon the Temple will be already erected. Such a fountain existed neither at Solomon’s Temple nor at Herod’s, but it exists in Ezekiel’s description of the Temple (Ezekiel 47:1-12). Therefore the vision of Ezekiel the prophet refers to third Temple.

Besides, the glory of the Temple, described by prophet Ezekiel, never fulfilled. So his vision refers neither to the time of the Temple renovation after the Jews come back from the Babylon nor in the time of the Temple rebuilding during reign of king Herod. It is exclusively a vision of the third Temple at stake.

How the Jews consider a possibility for new Temple build up?

When the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 the period of the second exile began. The Jewish people were soon to be scattered throughout the earth. But they did not forget Jerusalem or the Temple Mount. Their daily prayer was for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. The traditional Jewish prayer book contains the following passage:

“Because of our sins we were exiled from our country and banished from our land. We cannot go up as pilgrims to worship Thee, to perform our duties in

Thy chosen house, the great and Holy Temple which was called by Thy name, on account of the hand that was let loose on Thy sanctuary. May it be Thy will, Lord our God and God of our fathers, merciful King, in Thy abundant love again to have mercy on us and on Thy sanctuary; rebuild it speedily and magnify its glory.”

Nowadays more and more interest for this question come into life. In some pious Jewish circles there is an opinion supported that the Messiah coming must be preceded by the Temple raising. Here is one opinion from the Internet:

“The Third Temple can only be built on the same location which the G-d of Israel indicated to King David in prophecy and where the First and Second Temples were built. The Third Temple and the Holy of Holies cannot be relocated by even one centimeter to the north or south. Only G-d controls war and peace and the destiny of Israel. There is no doubt that G-d is testing Israel today on the Temple Mount, which is the key place in the world. G-d expects Israel to rebuild His house on the correct position on the Temple Mount with no fear of the Moslem enemy which, at the end of the seventh century CE, built the Dome of the Rock on the most holy place of the G-d and people of Israel and desecrated the hill of G-d and revolted against the Word of G-d. G-d promised the people of Israel that in the endtimes He would redeem His holy hill and Jerusalem together with the people and land of Israel and He would protect them and fight for them against the enemies who would try to prevent His prophetic endtime plans for Israel.”¹⁶⁾

With the building of the Temple obligatory goes the question of the Ark of the Covenant. About the place where it is hidden Ellen G. White says:

“Before the temple was destroyed, God made known to a few of His faithful servants the fate of the temple, which was the pride of Israel, and which they regarded with idolatry, while they were sinning against God. He also revealed to them the captivity of Israel. These righteous men, just before the destruction of the temple, removed the sacred ark containing the tables of stone, and with mourning and sadness, secreted it in a cave where it was to be hid from the people of Israel, because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. That sacred ark is yet hid. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted.”—4SG 114, 115 (1864); 1SP 414 (1870); SR 195.

And about whether it would be found, Ellen G. White writes:

”The precious record of the law was placed in the ark of the testament and is still there, safely hidden from the human family. But in God’s appointed time He will bring forth these tables of stone to be a testimony to all the world against the disregard of His commandments and against the idolatrous worship of a counterfeit Sabbath.”—Ms 122, 1901 (1BC 1109).

Are the Jews already on the trail of the Ark of the Covenant?

“In 1982, while the Rabbinical Hasmonean Tunnel along the western wall of the Temple Mount was being cleaned prior to being opened to the public, the rabbi of the western wall, Rabbi Yehuda Getz z’l, and his workers discovered a gate in the wall which was blocked, not by the original Herodian stones, but by stones from much later. This gate was cleared and

opened and they discovered a beautiful Herodian tunnel, the direction of which was straight to the area of the Dome of the Rock. Rabbi Getz identified this gate as being the gate and tunnel of the priests which was built by King Herod and was only used by the priests to enter directly into the Temple with no need to come into contact with ordinary Jews and thus keep their extra purification. This is the reason that the tunnel was called the Gate and Tunnel of the Priests. The existence of the gate and this tunnel is recorded in the Mishnah, Talmud, Josephus and other holy and historical sources as being in the same location where it was discovered. The tunnel, which led directly to the Temple and the building of the Holy of Holies when it was discovered in 1982, also went in the direction of the Dome of the Rock. This was final proof that the location of the Dome of the Rock is the location of the Temple and the rock under it is the rock which was in the Holy of Holies...

One of the most exciting results of the discovery of the Gate and Tunnel of the Priests could be the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was hidden in 606 BCE by King Josiah, 20 years before the destruction of the First Temple. It was hidden under the Temple Mount when this king commanded the High Priest to hide it because he felt that the destruction was soon to come and he wanted to save this most holy item from falling into the hands of the enemy or of being destroyed. Through the Mishnah and Talmud we know that it was hidden underneath the Temple Mount... The room was under the Temple and the tunnel led to it. This was another proof that the Temple existed in the same place where the Dome of the rock was built. The High Priest could

hide the Ark which should be under the Holy of Holies and this tunnel led to this place.“ 17)

The hidden Ark of the Covenant with the tables of the law is there, there is no doubt, it will be found. When God made known to a few of His faithful servants the fate of the temple and the ark, then He will also made known in appointed time to a few of His faithful servants the place of the ark. When will come that appointed time? It will come when the Jews would be worthy of it that is when a spiritual rebirth would have happened among them. And when the Ark of the Covenant is once found, it cannot be located anywhere. Therefore it is necessary to build a temple, on the site where both the first and second Jewish Temples once stood, there where six centuries later the Dome of the Rock was built (691 A.D.) when the Mohammedans occupied Palestine. The living God is not a god of underground, so His Ark will not stay permanently beneath the earth! And with the Ark found, the Shekinah meaning visible presence of God will be available.

It is inappropriate in books like this tells anecdotes, but I think that an anecdote about Napoleon is very illustrative:

The story is told of Napoleon walking through the streets of Paris. As he passes by a synagogue, he hears the sounds of people weeping inside. So he turns to his assistant and asks, “What’s going on with the Jews?” “Today is Tisha B’Av,” came the reply, “and the Jews are mourning the loss of their Temple.” Napoleon looked toward the synagogue and said, “If the Jews are still crying after 1800 years, then I am certain the Temple will one day be rebuilt!”

Therefore the Temple will be built for sure moreover in the correct historical place where the Arabs built the Dome of the Rock. But the building of the Temple will unite all the Islamic world for revenge and attack on Israel. Only this can be the real reason for the battle of Armageddon, that is for the battle of Har Migdo!

The purpose of the building of the Third Temple

Those who don't even accept the idea about Third Temple building up quote as their strongest argument that the Temple had lost every meaning by Christ's death at the cross of Calvary. In that way already cited great authors Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman ask:

“We ask what would be the purpose if this temple, called by some ‘Tribulation Temple’, even if it were built and the sacrifices reinstated? The whole Mosaic system of types, wonderful as they were, was only a ‘shadow of good things to come’ (Hebrews 10:1). THOSE SACRIFICES POINTED FORWARD TO THE COMING MESSIAH. When the type met the Antitype it naturally passed away, having no further purpose.”¹⁸⁾

However, did the Temple have just that role, and did all the sacrifices point out to the Calvary? Here are some facts which the Temple opponents don't take into consideration:

1) It is not that all the sacrifices pointed out to the Calvary. Most of them – yes; but some of them – not. Those, which pointed out to the Calvary, were

abolished with the Calvary, but those, which were not pointed out to the Calvary, still have a sense. Such is the case with Yom Kippur feast (The Day of Atonement). Yom Kippur points out to the Heavenly Judgment, and it comes far away after the Calvary. When the Heavenly Judgment is finished and the words "It is finished!" heard, as it was heard at the Calvary (John 19:30), it is only then that the earthly Yom Kippur will lose its sense. So according to the plan of salvation, it is sensible to announce it by the rites foreseen for it. And for the rites the Temple is required.

2) If someone fully understood the meaning of the sacrifices and the meaning of the Temple, it was certainly apostle Paul. However, how it was that he was willful to go to the Temple even after the Calvary and offers the sacrifice? Let's see:

"The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them." Acts 21:26.

3) Why Peter and John after the Calvary and the Pentecost went to the Temple if it had lost any sense?

"One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon." Acts 3:1.

4) A condition for one to be called an apostle was that he had to be with Christ. The apostles themselves laid that condition where Judas once was not with them (Acts 1:21, 22). When Paul was indeed was with Christ, considering that in all his epistles he calls himself an apostle? On the road to Damascus?

No. It is not then that he was with Christ. At that occasion he just heard Him and was told to receive further instructions later on (Acts 9:6). That “later on” happened at the Temple. Here is what he himself says:

“A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. ‘Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see *the Righteous One* and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ ‘When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the *Lord* speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’” Acts 22:12-18. (emphasis added)

Why Christ showed Himself to Paul at the Temple and made him an apostle if the Temple had lost every sense after the Calvary?

5) If the Temple after the Calvary had lost every sense, then it could serve for any purpose. However, a miracle of God demonstrated that it was not the case exactly.

Shortly after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the mad Emperor Gaius Julius Caesar Germanicus - nicknamed Caligula (“little boots”) - attempted to desecrate the Temple. He gave an order to set up his statue in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The Jews were willing to sacrifice their whole nation before they would allow the Temple to

be defiled. Petronius marveled at their courage and ceased with the process so confrontation was temporarily averted. An enraged Caligula commanded that Petronius be put to death. Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus records that Caligula himself died soon thereafter and due to bad weather at sea, the letter ordering Petronius' death arrived three weeks after the news arrived of Caligula's death. Petronius was not executed and the Temple was spared this particular abomination.

6) After the Babylonian exile the Jews built a second temple on the same site as Solomon's temple. This second temple did not contain the ark, which was not seen again after Nebuchadnezzar's final attack. "The most holy place was vacant except for a stone, which served as a substitute for the ark on the Day of Atonement. This temple continued in use until near the time when Christ appeared. Then Herod's temple took its place." ¹⁹⁾ Herod's temple also did not contain the Ark of the Covenant. How it is that the Temple was not lost its sense without the Ark of the Covenant? How the rites could be performed at all without this most holy thing? If Jesus called the Temple "my Father's house" (Luke 2:49) and "a house of prayer" (Mark 11:17) once when the Most Holy was just a stone, how much more important Third Temple should be when it is finally equipped with the Ark of the Covenant?

7) "The presence of a literal Temple will not be an anachronism. Rather it will be the physical locality of the Lord's rule on the earth from Jerusalem, as God promised (Ps. 132)." ²⁰⁾

How long will be the great distress

Prophet Daniel calls this great tribulation “a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.” (Daniel 12:1). Jesus adds: “There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people.” Luke 21:23. He says also: “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Luke 21, 24.

Considering all the horror coming with it, we are now interested in how long the great tribulation could last? Please remember what Jesus advised to His followers:

“Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again.” Matthew 24: 20. 21.

Obviously from this advise, permeated with unspeakable love, that the Lord wants this tribulation not to take place neither in winter nor on Sabbath. Now the great tribulation is a certain and unavoidable thing. It will come, and have to come. But God out of His love wants not only to save bare existence of His faithful children, but also to spare them of all the sufferings and plagues which winter brings along, and at the same time to preserve their sabbatical peace. Consequently, I believe that the storm will raise and cease once when there is no winter there and between two Sabbaths. Moreover, it will not last even from Sabbath to Sabbath because Jesus said so.

“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.” Matthew 24:22.

These “days” should not be interpreted as per the principle “a day for a year”, because there is no in the words of Christ any symbolic. For if interpreted in this way, then we would have more years of tribulation, and it also means that we would have several winters and many, many Sabbaths. Therefore, this great tribulation will last less than six days, which is how many days we have between two Sabbaths. This contemplation is quite logical, if things are viewed also from the aspect of contemporary ways of war waging and modern militant weapons – speedy aircrafts, warships, vehicles, and various long-ranging artilleries. Of course the fact that Israel is a very small country should not be overlooked. The total land and water area of Israel is 20,770 sq km. Israel is on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea in the Middle East between the countries of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. A little far away are Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, and others. As it is seen, the very pure Muslim countries are at stake, some of them open, and some hidden enemies. Although these countries are politically separated so far, in the future, not so distant from this time, they will polarize around the King of the North and of the South, united in hatred against Israel and by a wish to cancel it from a map of the world.

The number of the Jews in Israel will increase more and more. It is quite certainly. Out of about ten millions more, living abroad, many of them will turn back in the country of their ancestries. But let’s imagine that the Armageddon battle will take place in nearest future. It means that even at the moment, in Israel, according to a prophecy of Zechariah, should be one-third of converted Jews (Zechariah 13:8,9), which

stated in figures gives at least two millions of those who are ready for the coming of Messiah. Two millions of those who direct their eyes toward heaven waiting for the Savior's coming! Isn't it a fascinating number? Big enough to talk about the possibility of "birth of a nation". But no matter how this figure may look fascinating now, it will be too bigger once when many millions of those who are nowadays scattered around all the countries and nations. Surrounded from every side by a sea of their enemy's hatred that want to erase them from the face of the earth, they will place an unshakable faith in the Lord, who will be their only refuge. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Israel. At the end of the great distress, when the armies of the world surround and invade Jerusalem, the Lord will return to fight for Israel.

When will this battle be fought?

There is no reliable answer on this question, or, better to say, no complete answer. A complete answer means to know exact day, month, and year; an incomplete one – just one or two of these three data. Let nobody find fault with this, but I am convinced I know first two data – the day and the month. I mean that the battle for Har moed will be fought on ninth day of the Jewish month Av!

And I must immediately say that this is not any kind of prophecy. This is only a conclusion based on an analogy. Please remember the first and the second desolation of Jerusalem that is the Temple as it's most holy place.

Tisha B'Av - the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av - marks the destruction of both the first

and second Temples. The First Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.. The Second Temple was also destroyed on Tisha B'Av, in the year 70 CE, by the Romans who controlled the Land of Israel at the time. Under the leadership of Titus, the Romans killed innumerable Jews, and exiled the survivors throughout the Roman Empire. This marked the end of Jewish sovereignty over their homeland for almost 2000 years.

What can be concluded out of this? If the Providence had a reason to link the two desolations by the same day and month, then it is quite logical to assume that the third desolation would take place on the same day and the same month, too. Consequently, on 9th of Av.

More disasters befell the Jews on Tisha B'Av.

It was on that day, in 135 C.E. that the Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans was crushed and the city of Betar, the stronghold of the rebellion, was captured and destroyed. It was on Tisha B'av of the following year that the Temple Mount was plowed under by the Romans. Perhaps this was fulfilment of Jeremia's prophecy: "Zion shall be plowed like a field." Jeremiah 26:18. In 136 CE. Hadrian set up an idol in the Roman Temple on the Temple Mount.

In 1095, Pope Urban II declared the First Crusade, in which tens of thousands of Jews were killed, and many Jewish communities destroyed. Jerusalem fell on 15 July 1099. It was also Tisha Be'Av, when that happened:

"The slaughter was terrible, the blood of the conquered ran down the street /i.e. what is now David Street, and its extension, Chain Street/, until men splashed in blood as they rode. At nightfall, 'sobbing for excess of joy', the crusaders came to the

Sepulchre from their treading of the winepress /the allusion is to the massacre of the inhabitants at the top of David street, until a stream of blood flowed down to the entrance to the Temple compound/, and put their bloodstained hands together in prayer.”²¹)

On Tisha B’Av 1290, Edward I expelled all Jews from England.

Between 1347 and 1350 AD there was “black plague” raged throughout Europe, which took away many lives. Of course, the Jews had been accused for that. On the 9th of Av in a place in Catalonia 300 people was slaughtered.

On Tisha B’Av in 5144 (July 6, 1384), in Tarega, Catalonia, the Spanish made a real slaughter of the Jews accusing them for fabricated poisoning of a well. This madness was spread out to other European countries, resulting in extermination of whole Jewish communities.

King Ferdinand of Spain issued the expulsion decree ordering all Jews to leave Spain, setting Tisha B’Av 1492 as the final date for them to leave.

In the same way, in Jewish 20th century history, Tisha B’Av was a tragic day.

World War I broke out on Tisha B’Av. As a direct effect and continuation of the evil of this war, National Socialism in Germany and Communism in Russia were appeared. Both of them will soon destroy European Judaism.

Deportation of the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto began on Tisha B’Av.

Tisha B’Av is the day when the gas chambers introduced in the camp of Treblinka in 1942, which was the beginning of the Holocaust.

From where so much tragic in the day originat-

ed? According to the Talmud, God cursed this day when the spies sent by Moses in the Promised Land were back with an ‘evil report’, assuming that the God’s people could not take it over. Judgement was decreed that the generation of the Exodus would not enter the promised land. (Num. 14: 29ff.)

As it can be noticed, the Jewish month Av, according to the lunar calendar, corresponds to our July/August. Thus it is summer month. Not winter’s. Please remember the words of Christ: “Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.” Matthew 24:20. When Jesus advises His followers to pray that their flight from Jerusalem would not have to take place on a sabbath or in the winter, that means that He will also pray. And when He prays for something, then it will be so! Therefore, it is one reason more that the great tribulation meaning Armageddon can be expected in this summer month. And between two Sabbaths. Most probably from Sunday to Thursday, for Friday is the day of preparation for the Sabbath.

Israel after Armageddon

Roy Allan Anderson and Jay Milton Hoffman found a rule in all the contemporary wars led by Israel. We read about it in their book “All Eyes on Israel”:

“As we look back over the years we can see some strange things have resulted from the four Arab-Israeli conflicts. Growing out of each of the wars - 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 - Israel lengthened her borders. For example, before 1967, Israel possessed 8,000 square miles. But after that war, her territory

had extended to 34,000 square miles and her population had doubled. More important still is the fact that after nineteen centuries the city of Jerusalem has again become her capital.”²²⁾

Please don't forget the miracle happened in 1948, too:

“When Britain gave up the responsibility of governing Palestine in 1948, immediately the Jews proclaimed Israel as an independent state. And this was recognized by the leading countries of the world. At that time there were not more than about 650,000 Jewish men, women, and children in Israel. But they were surrounded by more than one hundred million in the Arab nations. When Palestine was partitioned between the Arabs and the Jews by the United Nations, the Arabs did not accept that partition and expressed their discontent in a very real way. Hostilities began under the title of ‘The War of Liberation’, the purpose of which was to exterminate the Jews. But at the end of that war, Israel had actually gained about fifty percent more land than the United Nations, in the original plan, had allotted them.”²³⁾

How it will be after the Armageddon battle? We saw based on the prophecy of Zechariah (13:8, 9) that Israel will lose in this war two-third of it's inhabitants, but this time it will come out with much larger territory. It will be final territory promised to be given even to Abraham:

“On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates...’ Genesis 15:18.

The southern border of the Promised Land is ‘the river of Egypt.’ This phrase designates the Nile. The northeastern border is ‘the river Euphrates.’

This promise has been repeated later on to whole Jewish nation, too:

“I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River. I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you.” Exodus 23:31.

On the remark of those who says that these promises are conditional, David M. Levy writes:

“God entered into the Mosaic (Old) Covenant with nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. This covenant was not the first one God made with mankind, but it was the first one He made with Israel as a nation. The Mosaic Covenant was written 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant and did not alter, annul, or abrogate the provisions of the first (Abrahamic) covenant (Gal. 3:17-19), which was unconditional, irrevocable, and everlasting.

Many people today confuse the Mosaic Covenant with the Abrahamic Covenant and claim that the Promised Land no longer belongs to the Jewish people because the nation lost it due to sin. However, God guaranteed Israel permanent ownership of the land, not through the Mosaic Covenant but through the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:7-21; 17:6-8; 28:10-14).

The Mosaic Covenant promises were conditional. The prerequisite was that Israel obey the commandments in order for God to fulfill His covenant promises to bless them (Ex. 19:5). But Israel failed to keep the covenant’s provisions. The fault was not with

the Law, for the commandments were ‘holy, and just, and good’ (Rom. 7:12). The fault lay with mankind’s sinful nature, which rebelled against the conditions stipulated in the covenant. The covenant itself was limited in power and could not impart spiritual life of righteousness to sinners (Heb. 8:7-9).”²⁴)

Now the promises given to Abraham and Israel as nation related to the Promised Land have to be fulfilled, and will be fulfilled after the Armageddon battle. Prophet Ezekiel writes about boundaries Israel will have at that time:

“This is to be the boundary of the land: On the north side it will run from the Great Sea by the Hethlon road past Lebo Hamath to Zedad, Berothah and Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer Hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. The boundary will extend from the sea to Hazar Enan, along the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This will be the north boundary. On the east side the boundary will run between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This will be the east boundary. On the south side it will run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Great Sea. This will be the south boundary. On the west side, the Great Sea will be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo Hamath. This will be the west boundary. You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among

the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the alien settles, there you are to give him his inheritance, declares the Sovereign Lord.” Ezekiel 47:15-23.

Thus the Promised Land is to encompass the territory from the Euphrates in the north-east, ‘the entrance of Hamath’ (Num 34:8; cf. Ezek 47:15; 48:1) in the north, the Great Sea, that is, the Mediterranean in the west (Num 34:6; Josh 15:4; cf. Ezek 47:28), the River of Egypt (Gen 15:18) or the Brook of Egypt (Num 34:5; Josh 15:4, 47) respectively in the south, and the wilderness (Exod 23:31; Deut 11:24; Josh 1:4) in the east. Thus the Promised Land is to include the territory of both Transjordan and Cisjordan from the Nile to the Euphrates (Exod 23:31; Deut 1:6-8; Josh 1:2-4).

With a lot of trust in God’s promise Thomas C. Simcox writes:

“During the reign of King Solomon, Israel came fairly close to possessing the totality of the land as God had delineated it to Abraham. But she still fell short. According to Scripture, one day the nation of Israel will extend from the Mediterranean Sea eastward all the way through Iraq to the Euphrates River. It will include all of Jordan, parts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and possibly parts of Lebanon and Syria.”²⁵⁾

Can we have doubts about these promises? We should not, because after them is written: “Saith the Lord God.” Ezekiel 47:23.

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Književnim i prevodilačkim radom bavi se već tridesetak godina. Član je Udruženja književnika Srbije i Udruženja književnih prevodilaca Srbije od 1975. godine. Do sada je objavio 31 knjigu.

Prvu knjigu, zbirku poezije “Čekamo pohode zala” objavio je u beogradskoj Prosveti 1972. Zatim je usledilo 7 knjiga poezije za decu, od kojih posebno treba istaći zbirke “Vesela slovca za osnovca”, “Čekam kruške poleduške”, “Velika letnja pometnja” i “Ljubav, ah–a, ljubav”.

Pesme su mu prevedene na nemački, italijanski, hebrejski, slovački, makedonski i bugarski jezik. Kao pesnik za decu zastupljen u desetak antologija.

Od knjiga sa duhovnom tematikom izdao je sledeće: “Hrišćanstvo bez Hrista” (1993); “Rat gospodara vremena” (1994) (i na nemačkom: “Der Kampf der Herrscher der Zeit”, 1998, prevod Angela Fischer); “Biblija kaže, ali crkve uče”, (1995); “Proročanstva sa Patmosa”, (1996); “Od Boga do zmije”, (1997); “Bog voli svoju decu” (1997), (i na slovačkom: “Hospodin miluje svoje deti, Bratislava 1998, prevod Miroslav Demak); “Ko sam ja?, 120 imena Isusa Hrista”, 1997); “Veština propovedanja”, (1998); “Knjiga bez pečata – knjiga proroka Danila (1998 – tri izdanja); “Logos i kosmos”, (1998); “Deset reči ljubavi”, (1999 – dva izdanja).

Godine 1999. dobio je nagradu na konkursu Saveza jevrejskih opština za knjigu pesama “U senci anđela”.