

Israel's Place in the Plan of God  
 The Songs of Ascent, Psalms 120—134  
 by Dr. David L. Cooper

### Psalm 124

#### Israel, The Nation of Destiny

1. If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side, Let Israel now say,
2. If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side, When men rose up against us;
3. Then they had swallowed us up alive, When their wrath was kindled against us;
4. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, The stream had gone over our soul;
5. Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
6. Blessed be Jehovah, Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
7. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
8. Our help is in the name of Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth.

Have we any evidence in any portion of the Word concerning the rising up of mankind in general against the people of Israel? Every prophetic student will answer in the affirmative. For instance, a classic passage dealing with this subject is found in Zechariah, chapter 14. There we are told that God declares His intention to gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle. Note the fact that it is God who is the one superintending and controlling in this situation. In His doing this, He gathers all the nations against Jerusalem to battle. Zephaniah the prophet likewise foretold God's action along this line. "Therefore wait ye for me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy" (Zeph. 3:8). Even earlier than Zephaniah, the prophet Micah foretold the same final crisis of the nation of Israel.

11 And now many nations are assembled against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye see our desire upon Zion. 12 But they know not the thoughts of Jehovah, neither understand they his counsel; for he hath gathered them as the sheaves to the threshing-floor (Micah 4:11,12).

From these quotations and others that could be adduced, we see that God plans to bring all the nations against Jerusalem to battle. We have every reason to believe that these armies will be equipped with all modern weapons. This is what is known in the New Testament as "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" (Rev. 16:12-16). (Some people call this the "battle of Armageddon." I, however, prefer using the scriptural term, and call it "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," (for such it is.) Do we know why Israel, possibly the smallest nation upon the face of the globe, has survived such terrific trials and ordeals? The reason is that this people is the nation of destiny. God created them when He performed a biological miracle upon the bodies of Abraham and Sarah (Isa. 43:1). This nation, likewise, has been preserved of God for a definite, specific purpose. It is impossible for men or demons to destroy this people: 31 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I

was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more. 35 Thus saith Jehovah, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that waves thereof roar; Jehovah of hosts is his name; 36 If these ordinances depart from before me, saith Jehovah, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith Jehovah: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith Jehovah (Jer. 31:31-37).

### Israel At The End Of The Tribulation

Israel is urged at the end of the Tribulation to say, according to Psalm 124,

2 If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side, When men rose up against us; 3 Then they had swallowed us up alive, When their wrath was kindled against us ...

The Eternal God is above all nature and is in all nature. He is the Sovereign of the universe. The nations are no more than the fine dust of the balances, or a drop of water in a bucket. He can deal with them more easily than we can a particle of dust lying on the balance.

Israel will get over on God's side, and being thus related to Him, he will be saved. God will not abandon the ground of holiness and righteousness and get over on man's side; but, when man forsakes his sin, comes over on God's side, and puts his trust in the Savior, then God will work in his behalf in a special way, as is indicated in Psalm 124. Thus Israel, when he is brought to the end of the Tribulation, will see clearly that it is to the overruling providence of God that he owes his survival at that time.

In verses 4 and 5 the nations that try to exterminate the Jew from the face of the globe are spoken of as "the waters," the "stream," and "the proud waters." Whenever waters are used in the Scriptures symbolically, they always signify nations of peoples in a state of unrest, in a condition of flux and instability. At times the "flood waters," especially, are used to symbolize the armies of the nations. (See Dan. 9:26; Rev. 12:13-17; Isa. 8:5-8.) Thus Israel will be saved by divine interference and interposition at the close of the Tribulation—by the Almighty.

### God Praised For The Deliverance Wrought

In verses 6-8 the viewpoint is also that of the end of the Tribulation, and Israel is delivered from his enemies. Of course, this is simply the remnant—the believing, trusting remnant, that survives.

This remnant will speak of Jehovah saying:

6 Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth.

Wild animals, when used symbolically, as in Daniel, chapter 7, always signify world governments, political empires. It is clear that the prophet is here thinking of the final world empire under the Antichrist, as this

beast that seizes upon the nation of Israel as his prey. Though this wild, ferocious beast catches the nation, has it in his mouth, ready to crush the life out of the people of Israel, they are delivered, because it is God Almighty who does that.

In verse 7 the psalmist changes the figure and, still speaking of the deliverance, uses these words:  
7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

The world government is represented as having set a snare, or a trap, for the Jewish people, just as the fowler sets a trap for a bird. But this trap, or snare, of the civil power in the end time is broken, and Israel is delivered. The one, of course, who breaks the snare is none other than Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Then the nation, in the conclusion of the psalm, exclaims,

8 Our help is in the name of Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth.

It is a wonderful thing to be on God's side and to have Him working all things together for the good of one who loves Him, and who is called according to His purpose. We joyfully anticipate the time when Israel will be thus delivered. When he is, then it will be as life from the dead—as set forth by the Apostle Paul in Romans, chapter 11.