

Cleansing of the World

While trouble and turmoil are now increasing among the nations, particularly in the Levant, events are focussing on the State of Israel. Bible prophecy refers to the appearing of Messiah (Christ) as *"king of the Jews"* (**Mark 15:2**) to Israel at a time when the Jewish state is threatened with extinction (**Zechariah 12:10**). He arrives also in the midst of an earthquake high on the Richter scale (**Zechariah 14:4**). The people will recognize that this is the one whom their ancestors had "pierced", and that he is the promised "seed" or descendant of David, his Anointed heir to the throne (**1 Samuel 7:12**).

Having rescued the nation from an overwhelming foreign invasion (**Joel 3:16**), he will then replace the Knesset and rule as King (**Zechariah 14:9,16**). His loyal brethren in the faith will already have been raised from the dead and made immortal, and these he will appoint as ministers in his government (**Revelation 5:9-10**).

His first order of business as King will be the purifying of his nation - *"two thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one third shall be left in it: I will bring the one third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested"* (**Zechariah 13:8-9**). Because these descendants of Jacob, having returned to the promised land, have not all *"prepared their hearts"* (**1 Chronicles 22:19**) by *"seeking the Lord"*, two-thirds will fail the test and perish. All because their characters are entirely moulded in the God-rejecting and unclean humanism of "liberty, equality and fraternity" (**Revelation 16:13-16**).

This cleansing of Israel will not be the first. In preparing the nation for Messiah's first coming, God separated them into what he figuratively described as *"two baskets of figs"* (**Jeremiah 24:1**). The good ones he sent into captivity into Babylon for seventy years, who emerged purified forever of idolatry. The others, escaping, as they thought, to Egypt, were destroyed.

The next work of Jesus as King reigning in Jerusalem, is described in **Malachi 3:3** regarding the purifying of the mortal priesthood who will serve in his Temple which he will build in Jerusalem (**Ezekiel 40-48**).

Having purified Israel, all of whom will have become believers in *"the promise made by God to our fathers"* (Abraham, Isaac & Jacob - **Acts 26:6**), he will turn his attention on a similar cleansing of the other nations - the Gentiles. *"The time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"* (**1 Peter 4:17**). If numerical equivalence were included in this statement, then one might expect two-thirds of humanity to perish before the "prince of peace" brings the world entirely under his control.

Nevertheless, God has made it clear that he has *"no pleasure in the death"* of those who reject him (**Ezekiel 33:11**), and *"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (**1 Timothy 2:4**). So those who respond in humility to Christ's call to *"fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come"* (**Revelation 14:7**) will survive the troubles. But those who stubbornly rebel *"against the Lord and against His Anointed"* (**Psalms 2:2**) will fall when *"the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth"* (**Jeremiah 25:33**).

The signs of the times point towards the near return of Jesus, when he will joyfully receive all those who have not

ignored the Creator's command for "*all men everywhere to repent*" (**Acts 17:30**), but have made the choice of preparing their hearts by believing the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.