



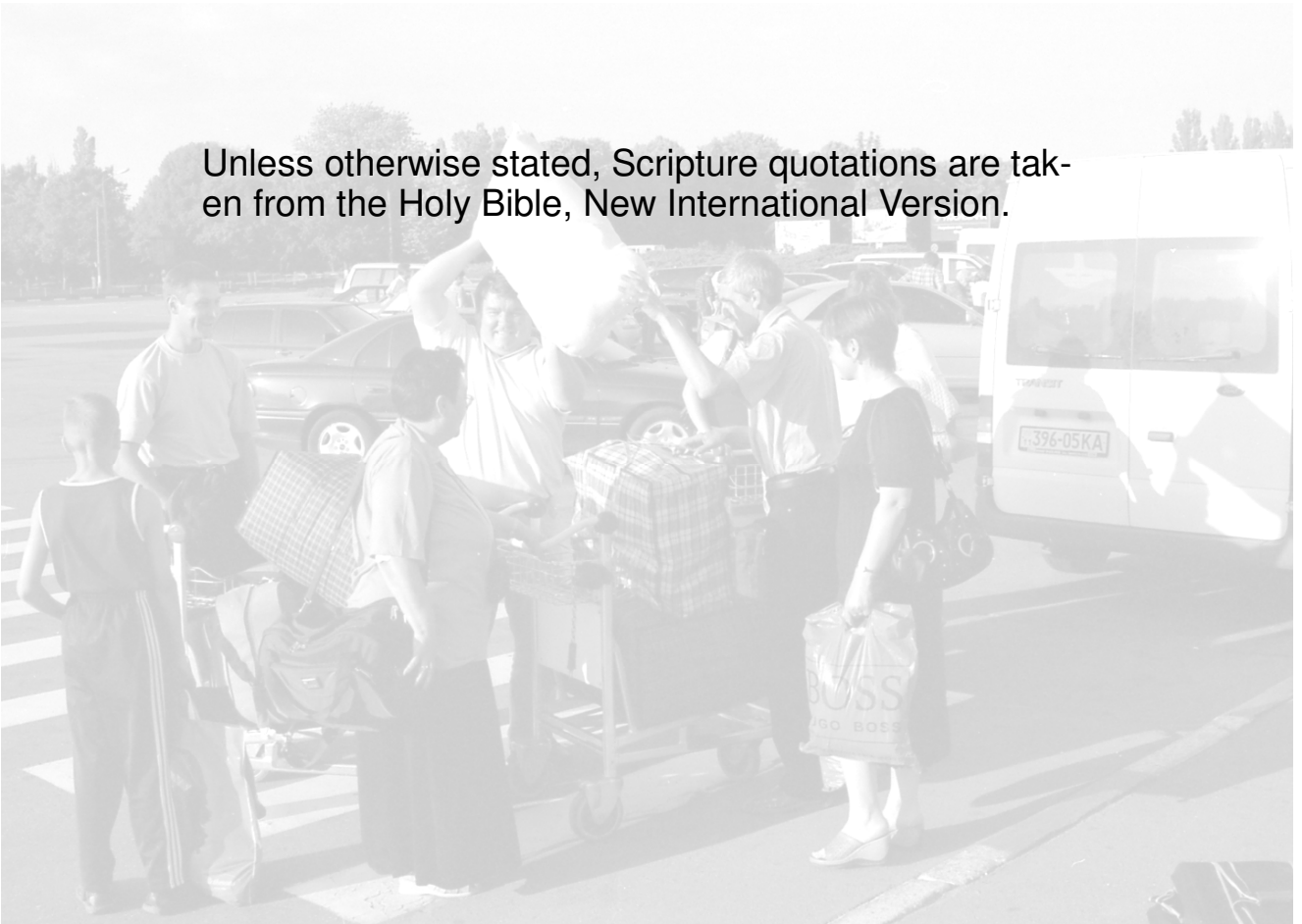
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# The Great Return in its Biblical Setting

By Fred Wright

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version.



# The Great Return

## In its

### Biblical Setting

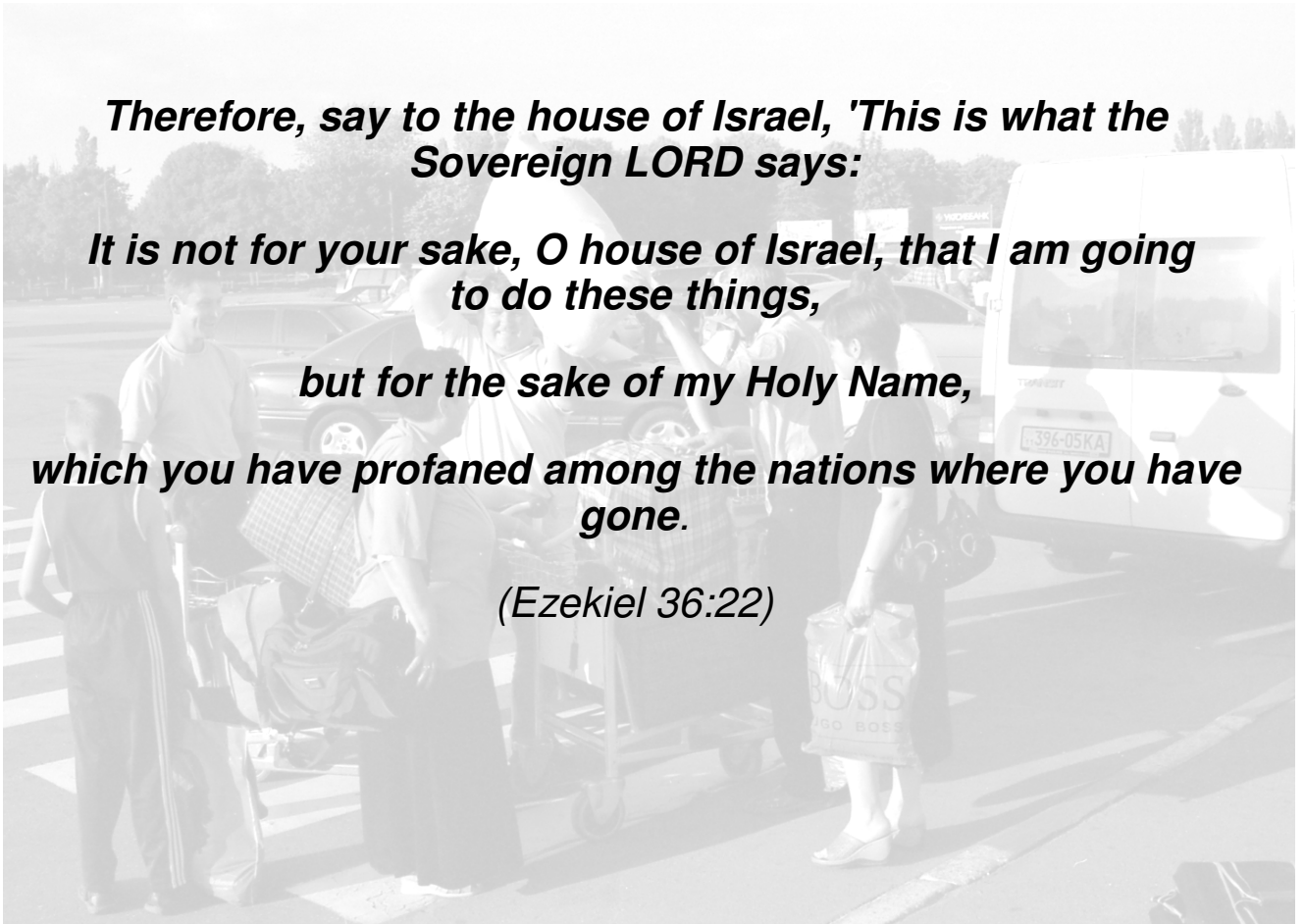
***Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:***

***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.***

***(Ezekiel 36:22)***

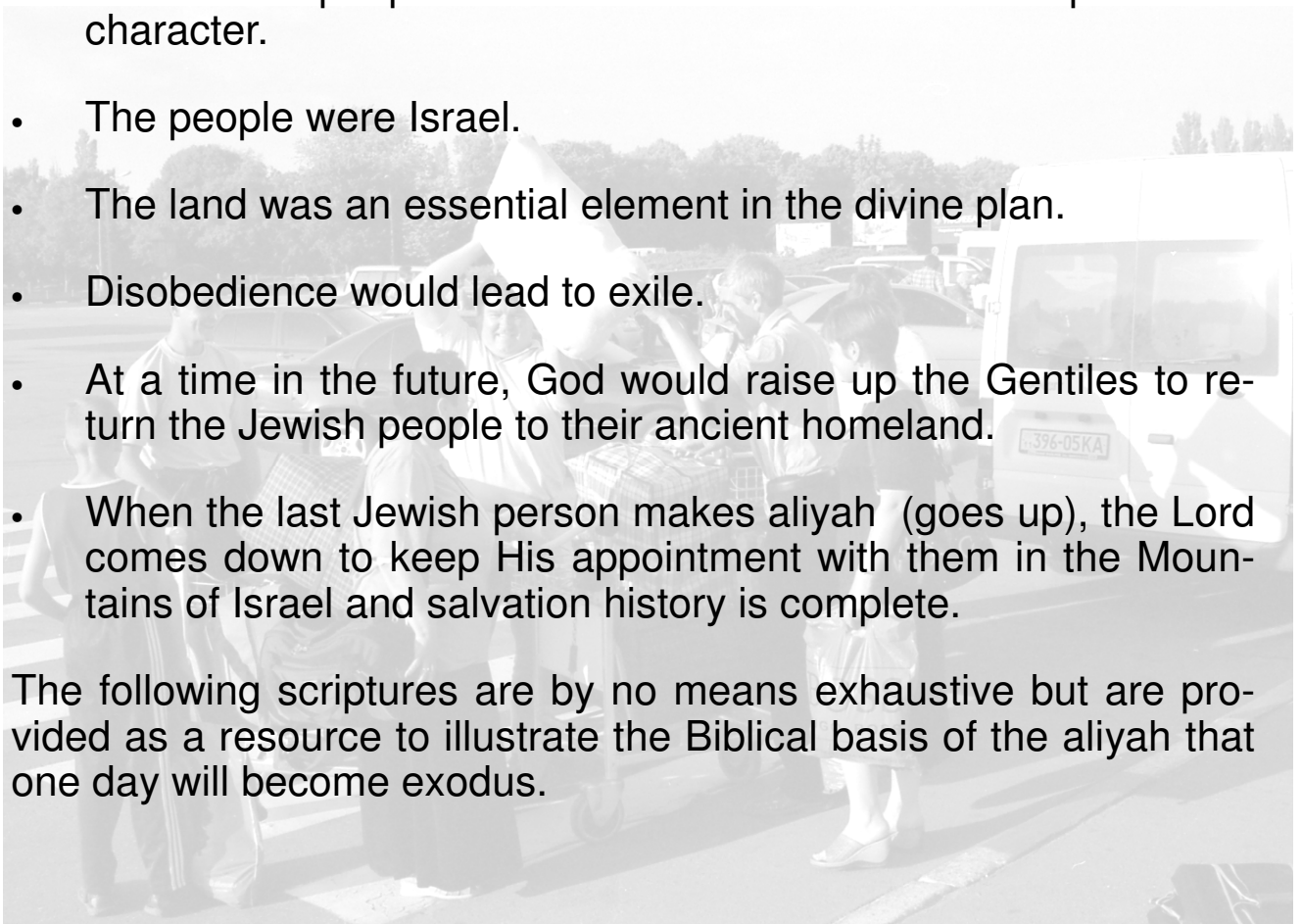


## INTRODUCTION

One could spend a lifetime combing the scriptures to provide a list of texts to justify aliyah, and in particular Christian involvement. It has been suggested that there are at least 700 texts that refer to this wondrous fulfillment of prophecy we are witnessing in our day. The truth of the matter is **that the whole body of scriptures evolve around the following issues:**

- God took a people for Himself to be a visual example of His character.
- The people were Israel.
- The land was an essential element in the divine plan.
- Disobedience would lead to exile.
- At a time in the future, God would raise up the Gentiles to return the Jewish people to their ancient homeland.
- When the last Jewish person makes aliyah (goes up), the Lord comes down to keep His appointment with them in the Mountains of Israel and salvation history is complete.

The following scriptures are by no means exhaustive but are provided as a resource to illustrate the Biblical basis of the aliyah that one day will become exodus.



## Exile

If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. . . . 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. (Lev 26 14-33 extracts)

You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God. Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess. Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. **Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot.** There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. (Deut 28: 62:65)

Again the word of the LORD came to me: "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. 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.' **I had concern for my Holy Name**, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. (Ezek 36:16f)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1-5)

Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion. (Isaiah 60:9)

## **The Lord Will Arise and Will Have Mercy on Zion**

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. (Deut 30:1-5).

You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity. The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. For the Lord will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory. (Ps 102:13-16)

## **He Issues His Call**

Hear the word of the Lord, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.' (Jer 31:10)

The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit a wife who married young, only to be rejected, says your God. For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep

distressed in spirit, a wife who married young, only to be rejected, says your God. For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. (Is 54:6-7)

## **They Return Upon the Highway of Holiness**

And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. (Is 35:8)

And it will be said: Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people. (Isaiah 57:14)

## **He Plants His People**

I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord. (Jer 23:3)

I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart. (Jer 24:6b-7)

This is what the LORD says: 'I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain. (Zech 8:3)

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)

nations. Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you

## He Seeks His People

For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. **I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.** I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. **I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel,** in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. (Ezek 34:11-16)

## He Gathers His People

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them. . . and I will assuredly plant them in this land, **with all My heart and with all My soul.**" (Jer 32:37- 41)

See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return (Jer 31:8)

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 2:12-13)

"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. (Micah 4:6-7).



Lift up your eyes and look about you. All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. (Is 60:4 )

## **He Rescues His People**

In those days, at that time, declares the Lord the people of Israel and the people of Judah together will go in tears to seek the Lord their God. They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces toward it. They will come and bind themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten. (Jer 50:4-5)

I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord (Ezek 34:25-31)

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God (Zech 8:7).

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 honour 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 honour and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes, says the Lord. (Zeph 3:19-20)

This is what the LORD says: In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out', and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up. See, they will come from afar, some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan. (Is 49:8-12)

## He Calls the Gentiles

The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob. **Nations will take them and bring them to their own place.** And the house of Israel will possess the nations as menservants and maidservants in the Lord's land. They will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors. (Is 14:1-2)

But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, Send them back. (Is 42:22)

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders. (Is 49:22)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1-5)

Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion. (Isaiah 60:9)

### **None will be Left Behind**

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord. (Ezek 39:25-29)

And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the Lord. (Is 66:20)

### **It Will be Greater than the Exodus from Egypt**

However, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when men will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers (Jer 16:14)

## **They Return Upon the Highway of Holiness**

And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. (Is 35:8)

And it will be said: Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people. (Isaiah 57:14)

## **He Keeps His Appointment With Them**

For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "I myself will search for my sheep and look after them ... Who will tend them and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord. (Jer 23:3)

I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart. (Jer 24:6b-7)

For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. (Ezek 34:11-13)

For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD, there in the land the entire house of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts, along with all your holy sacrifices. I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show myself holy among you in the sight of the land of Israel, the land I had sworn with uplifted hand to give to your fathers. (Ezek 20:40-42)

into the land of Israel, the land I had sworn with uplifted hand to give to your fathers. (Ezek 20:40-42)

## **They Are All Restored to Him**

'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. I will save you from all your uncleanness. (Ezek 36 :24-29)

At that time," declares the Lord, "I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they will be my people. (Jer 31:1)

I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul. (Jer 32 37-41).

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will show myself holy among them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God. (Ezek 28:25-26)

## **The Land is Restored**

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 built what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it. (Ezek 36:34-36)

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling, O sacred mountain.' People will live together in Judah and all its towns—farmers and those who move about with their flocks. I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint (Jer 31:23-25)

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;  he gathers the exiles of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds Ps 147 (2-3).

## **They Will Rejoice in Him**

Let the redeemed of the LORD say this; those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. (Ps 107:2-3)

They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord; the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more (Jer 31:12).

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad (Ps 14:7)!

## **It is a Sign to the Nations**

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glori-

## **It is a Sign to the Nations**

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. (Is 11:10-12).

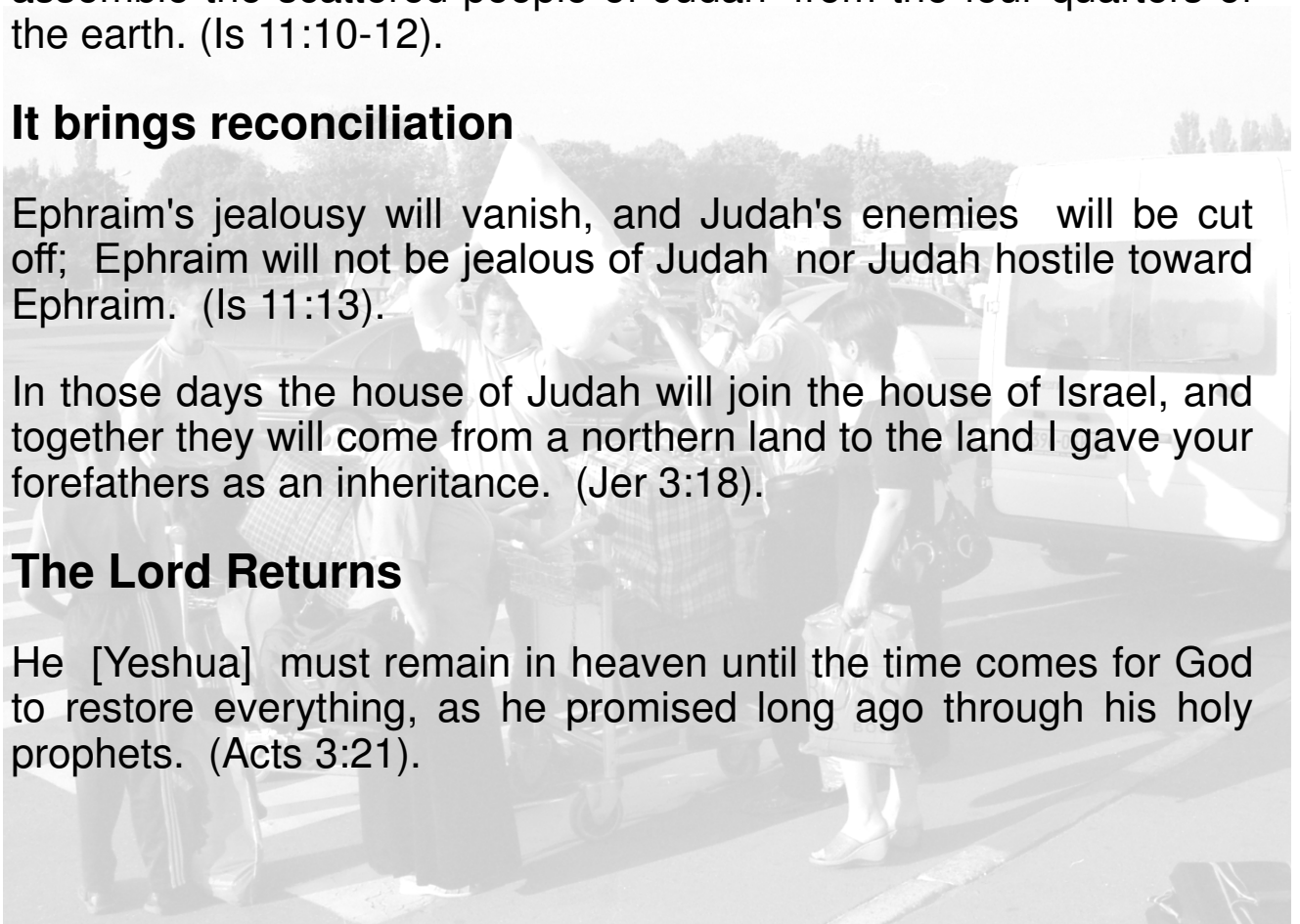
## **It brings reconciliation**

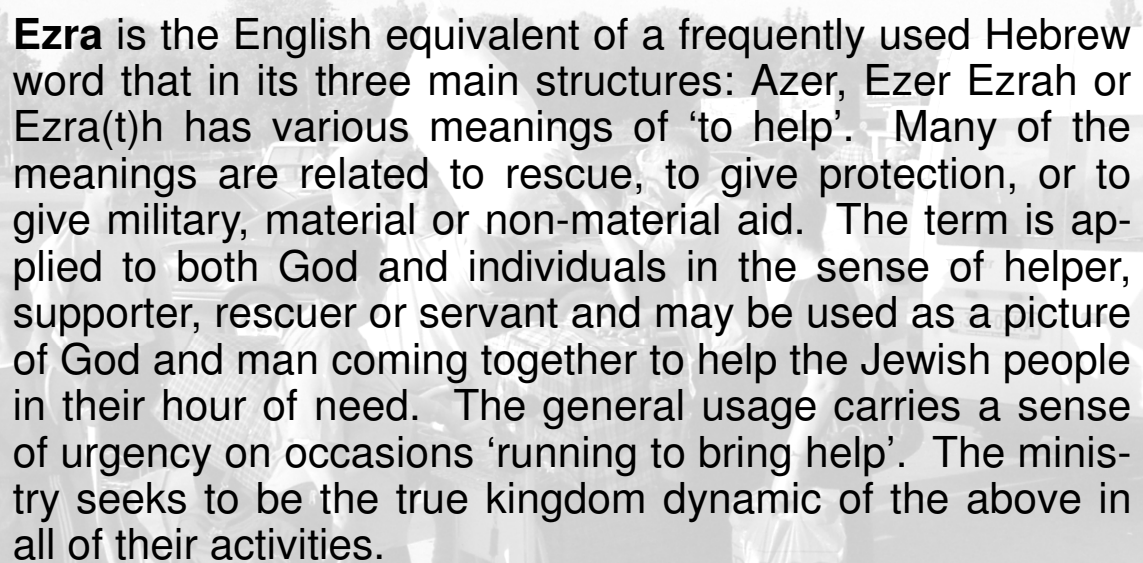
Ephraim's jealousy will vanish, and Judah's enemies will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim. (Is 11:13).

In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance. (Jer 3:18).

## **The Lord Returns**

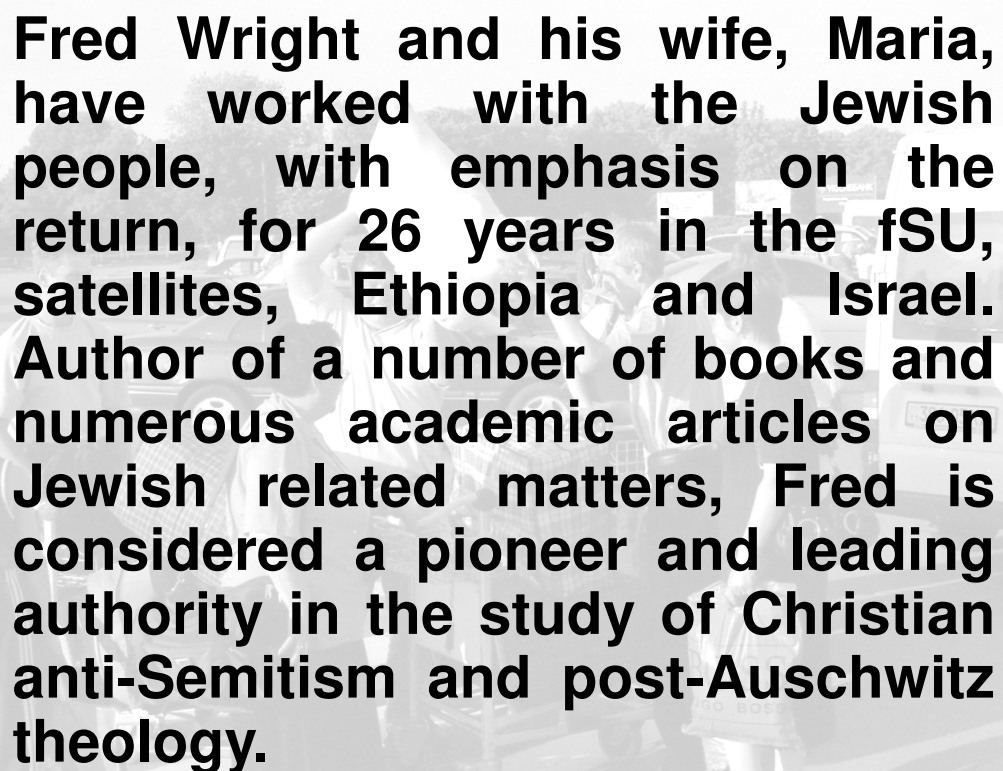
He [Yeshua] must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. (Acts 3:21).





**Ezra** is the English equivalent of a frequently used Hebrew word that in its three main structures: Azer, Ezer Ezrah or Ezra(t)h has various meanings of 'to help'. Many of the meanings are related to rescue, to give protection, or to give military, material or non-material aid. The term is applied to both God and individuals in the sense of helper, supporter, rescuer or servant and may be used as a picture of God and man coming together to help the Jewish people in their hour of need. The general usage carries a sense of urgency on occasions 'running to bring help'. The ministry seeks to be the true kingdom dynamic of the above in all of their activities.





**Fred Wright and his wife, Maria, have worked with the Jewish people, with emphasis on the return, for 26 years in the fSU, satellites, Ethiopia and Israel. Author of a number of books and numerous academic articles on Jewish related matters, Fred is considered a pioneer and leading authority in the study of Christian anti-Semitism and post-Auschwitz theology.**