

Amazing Oct. 7, 2023 prophecy fulfilled in Judah (Zephaniah chap. 2)

By Mikkel S. Kragh

What would you say, if I told you that the Hamas attack on the State of Israel on October 7, 2023, and following Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip, was prophesied in the Bible 2,600 years ago?

Right now, the eyes of the world are fixed on the situation in Gaza, and the State of Israel in general. On October 7, 2023, Hamas militants launched a bloody attack on the Israeli settlements and a festival along the border to the Gaza Strip, where more than 1,000 Israeli Jews were killed. In response, the Jewish State invaded the Gaza Strip and has so far killed at least 60,000 Palestinians, the vast majority of them civilians, and destroyed or seriously damaged 93% of all buildings in the Gaza Strip, and is now intentionally starving the 2 million Palestinians still alive in the Gaza Strip.

By now, most describe the Israeli onslaught in Gaza as a genocide. At the same time, the Jewish State is increasingly becoming a pariah state on the world scene.

From a Christian perspective the situation seems like a prelude to the Second Coming of Christ. And that's because it is!

The prophet Zephaniah

The Bible prophecy about the Gaza War that started on October 7, 2023 is recorded in the Book of Zephaniah chapter 2. The Book of Zephaniah is one of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. It has only three chapters. Zephaniah prophesied approximately 640-623 BC during the reign of the God-fearing King Josiah of Judah.

Zephaniah's prophecy

In the 2nd chapter of Zephaniah, the prophet describes that one day, in the distant future, Judah would return to the land of Israel and settle primarily along the sea coast of the land of Israel, and completely dominate and terrorize the Philistines, and especially the Philistines in Gaza:

“[1] Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

[2] Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.

[3] *Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.*

[4] *For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.*

[5] *Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.*

[6] *And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.*

[7] *And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.”* (Zephaniah 2:1-7)

Judah would live on the sea coast

In verse 7, we read that it is the remnant of the House of Judah that is going to inhabit the sea coast. This is odd, because the sea coast was certainly a part of the land that God promised to Israel, but the ancient Israelites of the Old Testament almost never brought any significant part of the sea coast under their control. Instead, the sea coast was most of the time controlled by Canaanites, Amorites and Philistines.

This was, however, fulfilled with the Zionist settlements in the early 20th century and the founding of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948, where the majority of Israeli Jews today live along the sea coast, very unlike the Biblical Israelites and Judahites that lived in the hillside country further from the coast. Today 40% of Israeli Jews live in Gush Dan (Hebrew meaning the Block of Dan) around Tel Aviv.

The undesired remnant of Judah

It was not only the remnant of the House of Judah that would gather along the sea coast of the land of Israel. In verse 1, we read that it would be the “not desired” part of Judah: ***“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;”***

This part of the prophecy was very much fulfilled in the Jews that actually did move to the land of Israel. In his recent book *Lobbying for Zionism on Both Sides of the Atlantic* (2024), the anti-Zionist Israeli historian Ilan Pappé writes how Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism, in the first two decades of the 20th century tried to get wealthy German and English Jews to support the Zionist project, but they were not interested. At the same time, thousands of Eastern European Jews, especially from the Russian Empire and Romania, wanted to leave Eastern Europe and move to America and Western Europe, but the authorities in the West – as well as the well-to-do Jews in the West – were not interested in absorbing huge numbers of East European Jews, many of whom were Communists and Socialists.

The well-to-do English Jews did not want large numbers of East European Jews to enter England, because that could get themselves suspected of being Communists, since many East European Jews of that time were Communists. They also did not want to support Herzl's Zionist project, because they were generally regarded as good loyal Englishmen, but if they supported an emigration effort to Israel, they might be seen as having dual loyalties.

The only Jews who at that time did respond positively to Theodor Herzl's Zionist ideas were the undesired East European Jews, whom nobody wanted. Western Europe did not want them, America didn't want them, Western European Jews didn't want them, and American Jews didn't want them. Nobody wanted to accept the thousands of undesired East European Jews. Therefore, many of them moved to the land of Israel, thus fulfilling Zephaniah's prophecy.

The Holocaust

In verses 2-3, Zephaniah prophesied that the undesired remnant of Judah that did not move to the sea coast of Israel would suffer under a great calamity:

"Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger."

Did the Jews of Eastern Europe that did not move to the land Israel prior to World War 2 suffer under a great calamity? They certainly did. It was called the Holocaust, where millions of Jews died. And just like Zephaniah had prophesied, the Jews that had moved to Israel escaped that calamity.

Judah's destruction of Gaza

All these prophecies were fulfilled in the Jewish settlements prior to the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. And now we finally come to the part of the prophecy concerning October 7, 2023.

When the State of Israel was established in 1948, the Zionists drove out a large part of the Palestinians and completely dominated the remaining Palestinians. The Palestinians that remained within the pre-1967 borders of the State of Israel were eventually granted something close to the same rights as Israeli Jews. The situation for the 5 million Palestinians in the West Bank (a.k.a. Judea and Samaria) and Gaza is, however, completely different. They have lived under permanent military occupation since 1967, have no rights, and are essentially treated like subhumans. While the fate of the Palestinians is tragic, it is also a fulfilment of Bible prophecy, because Zephaniah prophesied that the undesired remnant of Judah would dominate the Philistines one day in the distant future:

"For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up."

Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant."

And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.” (Zeph 2:6-9)

The ancient Philistines were a part of the so-called Sea Peoples, that were a group of different tribes from Greece, the Balkans, southern Italy and Sardinia that invaded the Levant and Egypt in the 12th century BC. The ancient Philistines ceased to exist as an ethnic group sometime around the 3rd century BC.

However, a nation emerged many centuries afterwards which also referred to itself as Philistines. That nation was the Arabs of Palestine, which refer to themselves as ‘al-Filasṭīniyyūn’ (Arabic meaning Philistines). Palestine is the Roman name for the land of Israel, and means the ‘Land of the Philistines’. When the Zionists drove out the Arabs of Palestine, the Zionists unintentionally turned the Arabs of Palestine into a nationality: Palestinians. That was because the Zionists only drove out Palestinian Arabs, not Jordanian Arabs, Egyptian Arabs or Lebanese Arabs. Thereby, the Arabs of Palestine became Palestinians, and thus, the Philistine ethnicity re-emerged after thousands of years.

Gaza prophecy only fulfilled in 2023!

If you read the latter part of Zephaniah’s prophecy, you will notice that the prophet is speaking only about the Philistine (i.e., Palestinian) cities in and around Gaza, and not the Philistines/Palestinians in the rest of the Holy Land, such as the West Bank (a.k.a. Judea and Samaria).

Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron were three of the five great cities of the Philistines. Prior to 1948, Ashkelon and Ashdod were mostly populated by Arabs, whereas Ekron had been uninhabited for around two thousand years. In 1948 they all became a part of the Jewish State of Israel, and the Arabs were driven out and replaced by Jewish migrants. Today, Ekron is an archaeological site and a tourist destination, while Ashkelon and Ashdod are large cities with almost entirely Jewish populations of 230,000 and 160,000, respectively.

The part of Zephaniah’s prophecy about Gaza: ***“And Gaza shall be forsaken”*** (Zeph 2:6) was, however, not fulfilled in 1948, because Gaza City has remained a city since 1948 with a population of 600,000 in 2023.

After the Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip after October 7, 2023, Gaza City has, however, been completely destroyed, and is today a pile of rubbles. Thus, Zephaniah’s prophecy about Judah returning to the Holy Land was partly fulfilled with the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948, but only completely fulfilled with the Israeli destruction of Gaza City following October 7, 2023.

How could Zephaniah write future history?

While the news and images from Gaza and Israel has caught the world’s attention, it should also make you ask: How could the prophet Zephaniah prophesy these events 2,600 years before they took

place, and with such detail? The answer is that he could only do it because he was moved by the Holy Spirit of the God of Israel, the Creator of the Universe.

The Jews are Judah, not all Israel

Another important fact we can learn from Zephaniah's prophecy is the tribal identity of the modern Jewish people. Zephaniah explicitly wrote that the people that would fulfill the Jewish Zionist settlement of Palestine and the 2023 Gaza War were the 'not desired remnant of Judah'. This goes to show that the primary tribal identity of the modern Jewish people is Judah.

The Jews of today do not consist of all the 12 tribes of Israel. The 10 Tribes of Israel were deported by the Assyrians in and around 721 BC, and later migrated to Europe, where they formed the nations of north-western Europe, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the Nordic nations, and their daughter nations across the world.

Zephaniah's prophecy also goes to show that the Jews of today are primarily descended from ancient Judah. There are many who claim that the modern Jews are primarily descended from Gentile converts such as the Khazars or the Edomites, and only have an insignificant relationship with the ancient tribe of Judah.

This is not the case. If it was the case, the Jews would not have fulfilled the Bible prophecy in Zephaniah about Judah returning to the Holy Land. But the Jewish people do fulfill that prophecy, and that is Divine proof that the modern Jewish people are Judah. Bible prophecy does not lie.

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