



Credit: From the film "The Moses Controversy"



Moses standing before
the children of Israel

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Israel couldn't live without it...

The Power of God's Word!

(A 3 PART SERIES)

By Shira Sorko-Ram

Have you ever thought about how God dealt with his people before there was the written Word of God? Enoch had no Bible. Neither did Noah – or Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Our Bible teaches us that though these men didn't have the written Word, God spoke to them face to face. But the Bible doesn't say anything about God speaking

to the children of Israel the long period after they became slaves. Yet God was listening to their cries and knew their sorrows. And He had a plan.¹

In a world-changing moment of history, Moses appeared on the scene. By the strangest of coincidences, while a paranoid Pharaoh was attempting to decrease the number of the children

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of Israel by killing male babies, Moses was taken into the household of Pharaoh and raised by a royal daughter.

The importance of these circumstances cannot be overstated when we realize Egypt was one of the most advanced civilizations in the world. And Moses, as an adopted royal, received the finest education the world could offer at that time. For sure he knew hieroglyphics.

Non-believing archeologists have long declared Moses could not have written the Torah, as no one could write Hebrew at that time. But new archeological evidence (page 6) may eventually put another nail in the coffin of atheistic denial. Every new archeological discovery made here in Israel keeps proving the Bible is, after all, true and accurate.

According to the Bible, Moses led Israel out of Egypt around 1445 B.C. And Moses spent the last 40 years of his life leading the children of Israel in the wilderness and writing down the words that God Himself dictated to him in Hebrew. The Torah – the Five Books of Moses – was immediately recognized by the people of Israel as an authorized book given to Moses by God.

The testimony of the entire Old Testament is consistent: When the government and spiritual leaders of Israel served God and were providing their citizens with the Word of God, their nation prospered – every time.

And Moses read it to all the people:

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.²

The Scriptures suggest there were around 2,000,000 people who followed Moses out of Egypt. Without microphones, he obviously had to have help – a lot of help – to dispense the Word of God to these people.

By writing it down, the Torah would be able to reach unlimited numbers of people. The Lord told him to select one tribe – the Levites – to serve the Lord and the people as spiritual ministers. They were to copy the scrolls of the Torah and place a copy alongside the Ark of the Covenant.³

It must have been an organizational challenge out in the desert to read the full Torah to all Israel! What a task!

But Moses knew that the leaders of Israel had to be immersed in the Word of God in order to serve the Lord with all their hearts. In fact, Moses had commanded *all future kings of Israel to write their own copy of the Law* from the Levites' copy.

...and [the king] shall read it all the days of his life...that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, that he may prolong his days in his kingdom...⁴

JOSHUA

But Moses' successor, Joshua, picked up the mantle to take possession of the land God promised Israel. During Joshua's 52 years⁵ of leading Israel, he chose Shiloh as the spiritual

center for Israel. Joshua set up the tabernacle of meeting there which housed the Ark of the Covenant, together with the Torah scrolls. Joshua was faithful to get the Word of God into the hearts and minds of the children of Israel.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.⁶

Furthermore, he added his own book that carries his name, recording the events that happened after they entered the Promised Land.

And not surprisingly, as long as Joshua and the elders of his generation were alive, Israel served the Lord. But that doesn't mean it was an easy job. As each tribe began to possess the land God had allotted them, they began moving into distant areas across the Promised Land.

JUDGES

Here is where the difficulties really began. Over a period of nearly three centuries, twelve different judges, living in different areas, rose up mainly as military leaders to ward off attacking enemies as they conquered the land God had promised them. They were not particularly spiritual for the most part.

As the tribes relocated to distant areas, many moved further and further away from their God. Their lives became filled with idol worship and extreme violence. A few judges such as Deborah and Gideon were godly people. Yet there seemed to be a continuing deterioration in the quality of

judges, finally arriving to the likes of Samson. Warrior, yes. Man of God, no. Without strong godly leadership, reading and obeying the Torah became less and less a priority. Rampant violence, sexual sin and idol worship took over. Tribal wars cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

The sad book of Judges ends with:

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.⁷



Samuel the prophet painted by Claude Vignon

SAMUEL

Yet there was a remnant throughout the tribes who stayed near to God. Under Samuel's leadership, he brought order to at least a part of the newly formed nation. A mighty prophet, he served his people by going on a circuit to three main cities – Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah plus his own city of Ramah – and judged Israel. As judge, he was teaching the Law of Moses and the book of Joshua to his people. Before Samuel died, he also added the books of Judges and Samuel to the written Word of God. Nevertheless,

there were surely many towns and villages far away from the spiritual center of Israel. It is doubtful that every Israelite was receiving a steady diet of the Word of God.

DAVID AND SOLOMON

The period of Kings came next. The House of Israel probably heard more Scripture during King David and Solomon's reigns than any other period since the death of Moses. Clearly from the Scriptures, King David, though he started out as a shepherd, became an educated judge, musician, writer, poet and prophet.

David brought order to the entire priestly and Levitical tribe – all 38,000 of them! His favorite way of bringing the word of God was through prophetic and worship songs, together with historical psalms of God's interaction with Israel through the centuries. He appointed 4,000 to be musicians who worshiped with song and musical instruments.

It is hard to accentuate enough how powerful his "Words of God" set to music impacted Israel through the ages. His songs were sung or read throughout the centuries, and they carried much divine revelation in their lyrics. David was most certainly an intense student of the available books of the Bible in his generation. He loved the Word of God! The first Psalm reads:

Blessed is the man... His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.⁸

David made sure the Israelites were paying tithes to the Levites under his reign so that the Levites and priests could study the written word of God and administrate. In Bible days, there would always be a majority of Israelites who could not read or write. But as long as the leadership – the kings, priests, Levites and prophets – were immersed in the Word of God, they would bring a culture of godliness to their people.

Solomon's fame as a brilliant and wise king was known far and wide. It would seem, however, that as Solomon's lifestyle became more carnal, he spent less time with the Lord and His Word. He forgot the Torah scripture:

Neither shall [the king] multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.⁹

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Because of Solomon's arrogant son who clearly lacked the wisdom of God, the kingdom was ripped apart. The Ten Tribes of Israel never had a single righteous king after that – with the partial exception of Jehu – until they were exiled to Assyria! It is safe to say, none of their 20 kings kept a copy of the authorized Word of God near them. The people had no one to teach them the Word of God.

In fact, these wicked kings of Israel did not allow their citizens to even visit Jerusalem to worship, out of fear that they might give their loyalty to the Kings of Judah. The kings of the Ten Tribes actually built walls to keep their people out of Judah, out of the place where the Word of God remained, beside the Ark of the Covenant.

Oded, a prophet in Judah, said of the Northern Kingdom of Israel: **For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest and without law...**¹⁰

Yet there *were* prophets of God among the Ten Tribes during the years of the Northern Kingdom. Isaiah, Hosea, Amos and more were voices at that time. But when Elijah challenged the Israelites, saying,

How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.¹¹

But the people didn't know who to choose! Even after his great victory over the prophets of Baal, Elijah ran for his life against the incredibly wicked Jezebel, convinced he was the last believer alive. Yet God revealed to him He had 7,000 men who had not bowed to Baal. Nevertheless, the cup of wickedness continued to fill up.

Such a disastrous condition could only lead to a tragic final end. After less than 200 years, God had had it. The Ten Tribes went into exile, never again to be heard from.

THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH

Judah also had a total of twenty kings before Nebuchadnezzar hauled them off to Babylon. Only a few were righteous.

Solomon's immediate descendants were mediocre to bad: Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa. But it was the next

king, Jehoshaphat, who brought Judah back to being a righteous, godly nation. God protected him, even when he made missteps, and protected his nation against fierce enemies. The Bible says:

[He sent his leaders] to teach in the cities of Judah...So they taught in Judah and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people.¹²



Unfortunately, for the next 150 years, most of Judah's kings were not model ambassadors for the Lord. Some started out halfway good, and then as their power grew, turned downright evil.

Only two other kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, were truly godly kings. Hezekiah repented of the many sins of his fathers, and recognized the desolation that their neglect of God and His Word had brought upon themselves. **He opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.**¹³

The Levites took all the garbage out of the deserted Temple, and for eight days cleaned the place. Then he commanded the Levites to go into the House of God with praise and worship. He was determined that the spiritual leadership of Judah would be focused in leading the people to love the Lord. He commanded his people to support the priests and Levites so **they might devote themselves to the Law of the Lord.**¹⁴

And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.¹⁵

Hezekiah saw revival among the people of his kingdom. But in his prosperity, even Hezekiah became proud at the end, and his son Manasseh was a complete disaster. Manasseh reigned for 55 years, and was perhaps the most wicked of all the kings of Judah. Again there was a total vacuum of the Word of the Lord. Again the people were starving.

Amazingly, Manasseh's grandson, Josiah, became the most godly of all the kings of Judah after David. (Perhaps he had a godly mother?) Josiah became king at eight years' of age. At the age of 16, he began to seek "the God of his father David." He tore down every idol he could get his hands on. At age 26, he decided to make repairs to the Temple. As the High Priest Hilkiah was cleaning, he *found* the "Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses." Josiah was shocked at what was written, and tore his clothes.

Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning

the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book.¹⁶

There was a great revival during his reign. Josiah literally cleansed the country of all the abominations the children of Israel had served. The

In Bible days, there would always be a majority of Israelites who could not read or write. But as long as the leadership – the kings, priests, Levites and prophets – were immersed in the Word of God, they would bring a culture of godliness to their people.

Scripture states: **All his days they did not depart from following the Lord God of their fathers.**¹⁷

Tragically, Josiah was killed in battle at age 39 after ruling for 31 years. Three of Josiah's sons and one grandson ruled for the next 22 years and six months. Each was more wicked than the last. Under these wicked kings, the leaders and priests **"transgressed more and more, and defiled the house of God."** Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, and others tried desperate-

ly to warn the four sons of Josiah, but to no avail. The Kingdom of Judah had lasted some 325 years. Now it was the end of all Israel. The country was so decimated from the sword, famine and disease that Nebuchadnezzar found only 4,600 Jews worth taking into exile.

Yet there were still strong Jewish followers of the one true God. The priest, Ezekiel, who was deported to Babylon with the last king, Zedekiah, publicly prophesied and wrote a book of his visions – as to why disaster had overtaken Israel. Daniel, apparently from the royal line of the kings of Judah, and his three friends kept their intimate relationship with God, even though it almost cost them their lives. They clearly had access to the Law of Moses and the book of Jeremiah, and likely all the written books until then. Daniel confessed the sins of his people and himself as he quoted the commandments and curses in the Torah. He prayed diligently because *he saw in the Book of Jeremiah*, that, the Jewish people would return to their homeland in 70 years. There was still HOPE!

The testimony of the entire Old Testament is consistent: When the government and spiritual leaders of Israel served God and were providing their citizens with the Word of God, their nation prospered – every time.

When Israel did not have the Scriptures and godly leadership, they fell back into sin, and their nation declined – and was ultimately destroyed. Every time. Israel is our example of how God deals with individuals and with nations. All the time. ■

*To be continued next month:
From Ezra to Yeshua the Messiah.*

¹Exodus 3:7-8 ²Exodus 24:7 ³Deuteronomy 31:24-26 ⁴Deuteronomy 17:18-20 ⁵jbqnew.jewishbible.org (<http://bit.ly/33x3Gzt>) ⁶Joshua 8:35

⁷Judges 21:25 ⁸Psalms 1:1-2 ⁹Deuteronomy 17:17 ¹⁰II Chronicles 15:3 ¹¹I Kings 18:21 ¹²II Chronicles 17:9 ¹³II Chronicles 29:3 ¹⁴II Chronicles 31:5

¹⁵II Chronicles 31:21 ¹⁶II Chronicles 34:21 ¹⁷II Chronicles 34:33b



Oldest Alphabet Identified as Hebrew

The Bible says Moses wrote down the Law of God and gave it to the children of Israel. It was immediately accepted as authentic by his successor, Joshua, and all God-fearing Jews, down through the centuries.

However, modern critics are convinced that Hebrew

Hebrew block letter	Projected Proto-Hebrew original letter	Middle-Egyptian hieroglyphic exemplar
א	𐤀	𐤀
ב	𐤁	𐤁
ג	𐤂	𐤂
ד	𐤃	𐤃
ה	𐤄	𐤄

flourished no earlier than 1200 B.C. Modern scholars agree that different Semitic languages are problematic to tell apart in their earliest stages, so it is difficult to ascertain which might be the beginnings of early Hebrew.

The issue is, when did the children leave Egypt? And did Moses write the Torah in the



Alphabetic inscriptions on an ancient stone slab have been identified by a researcher as Hebrew. A drawing of the slab's inscriptions shows early Hebrew letters next to corresponding modern Hebrew letters (green).

Photos courtesy of Douglas Petrovich.

Hebrew language? According to the Old Testament, Israelites spent 434 years in Egypt, from 1876 B.C. to 1442 B.C. And there is no Jewish tradition that the Law of Moses was written in any other language than Hebrew.

Now an archeologist and epigrapher, Douglas Petrovich of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada, believes Hebrew speakers, seeking a way to communicate in writing with other Egyptian Jews, simplified the pharaohs' complex hieroglyphic writing system into 22 alphabetic letters (sounds).

"There is a connection between ancient Egyptian texts [hieroglyphics] and preserved alphabets," Petrovich said. Scholars have generally assumed for more than 150 years that the oldest alphabetic script known (which Petrovich studied) could belong to any of several Semitic languages.

But Petrovich says his big break came in January 2012. While conducting research at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, he came across the word "Hebrews" in a text from 1874 B.C. that includes the earliest known alphabetic letter.

With his entire fledgling alphabet, he translated 18 Hebrew inscriptions from three Egyptian sites.

Several biblical figures turned up in the translated inscriptions, including Joseph, his wife Asenath, and Joseph's son, Manasseh. Moses is also mentioned.

Of course this possible breakthrough will not be met with excitement by many epigraphers, who doubt that Moses ever existed! But Petrovich believes he has discovered Hebrew in its earliest form! ■

Science News: [link: www.bit.ly/oldestalphabet](http://www.bit.ly/oldestalphabet)

Prayer Line in Israel

Email your prayer request to prayer@maozisrael.org from anywhere in the world!

Maoz Partners with Moti Cohen To Feed Tel Aviv!

For four months now we have been reaching our goal of making 1,000 meals for the poor and needy every month through our project Feed Tel Aviv.

Who exactly are these needy individuals in Tel Aviv we're reaching out to? The answer is, Jews and Arabs, men and women, prostitutes and drug addicts. The homeless. Whoever is hungry.

What these people have in common is that all of them are hungry. We've noticed these people aren't just hungry for food; their souls are hungry for the Word of Truth.

After they've sat and satisfied their physical hunger, some of them begin asking spiritual questions. Therefore, whenever we serve the immediate physical hunger of the needy, we also end up sharing the gospel, giving witness to what Yeshua has done in our lives and talking about the biblical prophecies which tell about who Israel's Messiah is.

All of this important work we are doing is thanks to your generous support. Therefore, it's important for me to say "thank you" with my whole heart in the name of all of those who receive food from us every week – both physical and spiritual food.

Please remember to keep the Feed Tel Aviv project in your prayers. We know it is the Lord's will that we support the poor and needy in our city, Tel Aviv. ■

*Moti Cohen, Elder
Tiferet Yeshua Congregation*

The man standing in the foreground dressed in black is ultra-Orthodox of Sephardic descent [Jews who come from Arab countries]. Next to him in line is a secular, Ashkenazi Jewish man [from Europe or Russia], and next to him is an Arab Muslim man. The man at the head of the line is a Sudanese refugee. From the picture, you can see that we're serving a diverse cross section of the Israeli population.



Translating this Bible into HEBREW

COMING IN
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\$500,000

\$449,000

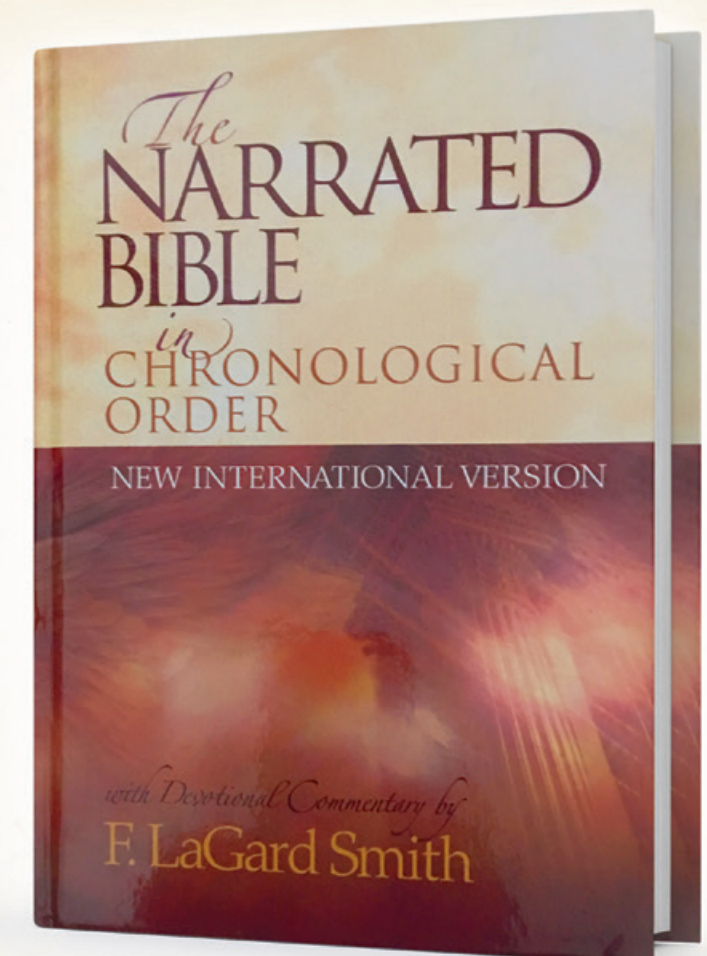
We began the translation of *The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order* exactly two years ago this month! We have one more year to finish!

The Messianic Bible scholars are progressing beautifully!

Amazingly we have received \$449,000 towards this project. Only \$51,000 to go!

You can invest with us to bring the Hebrew Bible back to our Jewish people!

You can sponsor one or more pages of this Bible in Hebrew for **\$250** per page. (**£200, €223, CAD \$330**)



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to go out of 2,000!*

PROGRESS
TO OUR
\$500,000*
GOAL

For the word of God is **LIVING** and **POWERFUL**, and **SHARPER** than any two-edged sword

We have learned from the Bible itself that the “secret” of the spiritual and physical well-being of Israel is that they have access to the Word of God! Whether they hear it or read it, the Word awakens and nourishes their souls and spirits to eternal life.

For two thousand years, the Jewish people living in exile read mainly the Five Books of Moses and the Psalms. The problem is the ultra-Orthodox read it through the filter of Talmudic and rabbinical literature. The pure Word of God was muddled. The secular Jews did not read it at all.

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord.” Amos 8:11

But these are the days of Redemption for Israel!

One of the greatest victories for the Kingdom of God will

KINGS, JEREMIAH

Jer.
44:20-23

PAGANISM JUDAH'S DOWNFALL. Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, who were answering him, “Did not the LORD remember and think about the incense burned in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem by you and your fathers, your kings and your officials and the people of the land? When the LORD could no longer endure your wicked actions and the detestable things you did, your land became an object of cursing and a desolate waste without inhabitants, as it is today. Because you have burned incense and have sinned against the LORD and have not obeyed him or followed his law or his decrees or his stipulations, this disaster has come upon you, as you now see.”

Jer.
44:24-28

JUDGMENT AGAINST IDOLATERS. Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah in Egypt. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You and your wives have shown by your actions what you promised when you said, ‘We will certainly carry out the vows we made to burn incense and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.’”

“Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows! But hear the word of the LORD, all Jews living in Egypt: ‘I swear by my great name,’ says the LORD, ‘that no one from Judah living anywhere in Egypt will ever again invoke my name or swear, “As surely as the Sovereign LORD lives.” For I am watching over them for harm, not for good; the Jews in Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all destroyed. Those who escape the sword and return to the land of Judah from Egypt will be very few. Then the whole remnant of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word will stand—mine or theirs.’”

Jer.
44:29-30

PHARAOH'S FATE A SIGN. “‘This will be the sign to you that I will punish you in this place,’ declares the LORD, ‘so that you will know that my threats of harm against you will surely stand.’ This is what the LORD says: ‘I am going to hand Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt over to his enemies who seek his life, just as I handed Zedekiah king of Judah over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the enemy who was seeking his life.’”

Jer. 51:64b

END OF JEREMIAH'S MINISTRY. The words of Jeremiah end here.

What a disheartening experience this must be for Jeremiah—off in a foreign country, separated from his scattered family, and surrounded by idolatrous Hebrews who have not even begun to learn the lesson of Judah's fall. Now in his older years Jeremiah must indeed have a broken heart. But surely in the kingdom of the Messiah about whom he has confidently prophesied he will receive great reward. ☐



THE EXILED NATION

(Ca. 585-535 B.C.)

Ezekiel's Restoration Prophecies

Twenty years have passed since the first captives were deported from Judah and the exile was begun. Now the city of Jerusalem has fallen and the exile of the nation continues with greater magnitude. It will be another fifty years before the exile will end.

It is evidently some six months before one of the survivors of the Jerusalem slaughter finally makes his way to the prophet Ezekiel in Babylonia. Ezekiel gets a few hours' advance warning of Jerusalem's fall when, on the evening before the messenger's arrival, Ezekiel is suddenly unable to speak. Undoubtedly he recalls the day the siege against Jerusalem began—the day of his wife's death—when God told him that his mouth would be opened when the messenger from Jerusalem arrived with news of the fall. Just as promised, Ezekiel's temporary muteness disappears the following morning before the messenger arrives. With this dramatic confirmation of his earlier predictions regarding Jerusalem, Ezekiel sets about once again to take God's word to the people. He reminds them that the desolation has not yet ended, but assures them that it will end soon, and that the promised restoration will begin. The time for healing will come quickly, and so Ezekiel changes his focus to comfort a scattered and defeated people.

JERUSALEM'S FALL ANNOUNCED. In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has fallen!” Now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent.

Ezk.
33:21,22
(586 B.C.)

REASON FOR DISPOSSESSION. Then the word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, the people living in those ruins in the land of Israel are saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, yet he possessed the land. But we are many; surely the land has been given to us as our possession.’ Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you eat meat with the blood still in it and look to your idols and shed blood, should you then possess the land? You rely on your sword, you do detestable things, and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife. Should you then possess the land?’”

Ezk.
33:23-26

be the return of the People of the Book to their Book, the Divine Words of God.

The difficulties of reading the Scriptures over the centuries have been many. After Israel's dispersion in 70 A.D. the Hebrew language died, with only the ultra-Orthodox still reading the Hebrew Bible. Many of them could pronounce the words but without really understanding the meaning.

Today, Israelis speak Hebrew! One of the great miracles of our century! However, many of the words in the Bible – some written more than 2500 to 3500 years ago – are unintelligible to the modern Hebrew reader.

The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order makes the entire Bible much more intelligible than ever before. On each page is a dictionary for difficult words. And there are beautifully-written introductory explanations of each section. Most fascinating of all is to grasp the whole timeline of events of the Bible in chronological order.

This is a revolutionary Bible that will bring many Israelis to read God's Word and to understand that God is speaking to them! Both the Old and the New Testaments reveal Yeshua who is the Word of God made flesh, to the people of Israel.

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