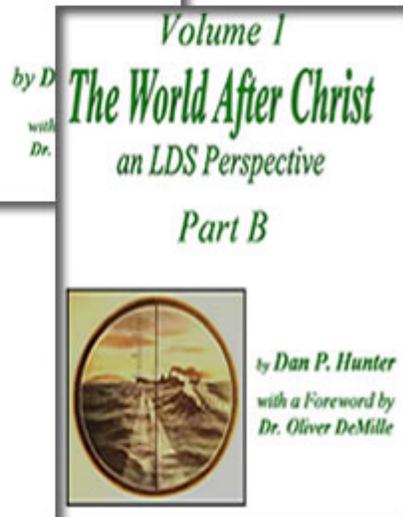


Volume 1
The World After Christ
an LDS Perspective
Part A



The World After Christ, an LDS
Perspective
(0 A.D. - Present)

VOLUME 1

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The Re-Birth of Zionism

The World After Christ, an LDS Perspective, Volume 1.

"The Re-birth of Zionism," pages 391-401.

Jews were not the only ones who felt the time was ripe for the return of the Jews to their traditional homeland. Any Christian scholar who studied his Bible with any degree of honesty knew that it was in the wisdom of Heaven to bring about the establishment of a Jewish kingdom before the Second Coming of the Savior. Just before the Ten Tribes disappeared beyond the Tigris river, the preoccupation of all their prophets was the message of hope which pointed to the great restoration of Israel in the last days. Joel was the first one to speak in revelation concerning this great event and Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah followed immediately after. Below is a list of some of the prophecies about the return of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

The Bible	The Book of Mormon
Isaiah 43:6	I Nephi 10:14
Isaiah 54:7-8	II Nephi 29:13
Jeremiah 31:6-9	III Nephi 15:11-22
Amos 9:14	III Nephi 17:4
Zechariah 2:6-9	Ether 13:10-11

In 1840, an early apostle of the Mormon faith was specifically designated by Joseph Smith to make the difficult journey to Palestine and dedicate that land for the commencement of that great gathering about which the Bible and Book of Mormon spoke. His name was Orson Hyde, who was Jewish by lineage himself, but had converted to Christianity. Traveling without purse or script, he crossed the Atlantic, visited the principal Jewish communities in Europe, stopped briefly at Constantinople, Cairo and Alexandria, and finally reached the Holy City. Hyde reported back to the Church after his return that the idea of the Jews being restored to Palestine was gaining ground, and many Jews were even then returning to Palestine to die, and it could be seen that the "great wheel" of the gathering of the Jews was in motion. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, vol. 4, pages 459) Orson Hyde recorded prior to his travels in Europe the following vision.

In the early part of March last (1840), I retired to my bed one evening as usual, and while contemplating and enquiring out, in my own mind, the field of my ministerial labors for the then coming season, the vision of the Lord, like clouds of light, burst upon my view. The cities of London, Amsterdam, Constantinople, and Jerusalem all appeared in succession before me; and the Spirit said unto me, "Here are many of the children of Abraham whom I will gather to the land that I gave to their fathers, and here also is the field of your labors. (LeGrand Richards, Israel Do You Know?, page 197)

Early on the morning of October 24, 1841, he ascended the slopes of the Mount of Olives on the outskirts of Jerusalem and offered a dedicatory prayer over the land for the promised return of the Jews.

O Thou! Who art from everlasting to everlasting, eternally and unchangeably the same, even the God who rules to the heavens above, and controls the destinies of men on the earth, wilt Thou not condescend, through thine infinite goodness and royal favor, to listen to the prayer of Thy servant which he this day offers up unto Thee in the name of Thy holy child Jesus, upon this land, where the Sun of Righteousness set in blood, and thine Anointed One expired...

Now, O Lord! Thy servant has been obedient to the heavenly vision which Thou gavest him in his native land; and under the shadow of Thine outstretched arm, he has safely arrived in this place to dedicate and consecrate this land unto Thee, for the gathering together of Judah's scattered remnants, according to the predictions of the holy Prophets – for the building up of Jerusalem again after it has been trodden down by the Gentiles for so long, and for rearing a Temple in honor of Thy name...

O Thou, Who didst covenant with Abraham, Thy friend, and Who didst renew that covenant with Isaac, and confirm the same with Jacob with an oath, that Thou wouldst not only give them this land for an everlasting inheritance, but

that Thou wouldst also remember their seed forever. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have long since closed their eyes in death, and made the grave their mansion. Their children are scattered and dispersed abroad among the nations of the Gentiles like sheep that have no shepherd, and are still looking forward for the fulfillment of these promises which Thou didst make concerning them; and even this land, which once poured forth nature's richest bounty, and flowed, as it were, with milk and honey, has, to a certain extent, been smitten with barrenness and sterility since it drank from murderous hands the blood of Him who never sinned.

Grant therefore, O Lord, in the name of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to remove the barrenness and sterility of this land, and let springs of living water break forth to water its thirsty soil. Let the vine and olive produce in their strength, and the figtree bloom and flourish. Let the land become abundantly fruitful when possessed by its rightful heirs; let it again flow with plenty to feed the returning prodigals who come home with a spirit of grace and supplication; upon it let the clouds distill virtue and richness, and let the fields smile with plenty. Let the flocks and the herds greatly increase and multiply upon the mountains and the hills; and let Thy great kindness conquer and subdue the unbelief of Thy people. Do Thou take from them their stony heart, and give them a heart of flesh; and may the Son of Thy favor dispel the cold mists of darkness which have beclouded their atmosphere. Incline them to gather in upon this land according to Thy word. Let them come like clouds and like doves to their windows. Let the large ships of the nations bring them from the distant isles; and let kings become their nursing fathers, and queens with motherly fondness wipe the tear of sorrow from their eye.

Thou, O Lord, did once move upon the heart of Cyrus to show favor unto Jerusalem and her children. Do Thou now also be pleased to inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye towards this place, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is Thy good pleasure to restore the kingdom unto Israel – raise up Jerusalem as its capital, and constitute her people a distinct nation and government, with David Thy servant, even a descendant from the loins of ancient David, to be their king.

Let that nation or that people who shall take an active part in behalf of Abraham's children, and in the raising up of Jerusalem, find favor in Thy sight. Let not their enemies prevail against them, neither let pestilence or famine overcome them, but let the glory of Israel overshadow them, and the power of the Highest protect them; while that nation or kingdom that will not serve Thee in this glorious work must perish, according to Thy word -- "yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted...." (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, vol. 4, pages 456-457)

Today, a garden of five and a quarter acres commemorates Orson Hyde's visit. It covers part of the Mount of Olives across the Kidron Valley from the east wall of the Old City, not far from the Garden of Gethsemane. Paths meander through the trees and other vegetation typical of Palestine, leading eventually to a 150-seat amphitheater that features a large brass plaque. On this plaque are passages from Orson Hyde's dedicatory prayer in both English and Hebrew. The passages were not written in Arabic so as not to offend those of the Islamic faith. Located not far from the Orson Hyde Garden is the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. It is located on the northern half of the Mount of Olives, adjacent to the Mt. Scopus campus of Hebrew University.

Prominent Christians both in Europe and America caught the spirit of a Messianic Era for the Jews. In 1844 a British society was formed to encourage the restoration of the Jews to their homeland. By 1858, a small trickle of immigration had begun. There were enough new arrivals to justify the building of a Jewish settlement just west of the Old City. Ten years later another nearby settlement was started. Thus began the building of modern Jerusalem, just west of the old city walls. The first organized movement did not come until 1882. When the Russian government of the Czar began an official persecution of the Jews in 1881, it gave the necessary momentum to propel several groups of Jews toward their promised land. These organized persecutions of the Jews were called pogroms. In 1882, groups of Jewish youths calling themselves Hoveve-Zion (Lovers of Zion) formed a movement to promote immigration to Palestine. The Hoveve-Zion started what was called practical Zionism, which favored establishing Jewish settlements in Palestine. In 1890 there was an upsurge of immigrants when the Jews were banished from Moscow. By 1902, there were approximately 25,000 Jews in Palestine. By 1914, there would be 85,000 Jews in Palestine. The year 1947 saw the population of Jews in Palestine swelling to 600,000 compared with an Arab population of 1,200,000. This influx generated first distrust, and then fear on the part of the Palestinian Arabs.

In 1897, the first conference of the World Zionist Organization was held in Basel, Switzerland, with the aim of reestablishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Its founder was Dr. Theodor Herzl. He was shocked by the anti-Jewish sentiment in a country of such enlightenment as France during the famous Alfred Dreyfus case. Herzl was a reporter from Austria who reported on the Dreyfus trial. Dreyfus was a Jewish French army officer who was arrested on October 15, 1894, on suspicion of spying for Germany. In December, a military court found him guilty. He was suspended from the army and given life imprisonment. In 1899 he received a second trial, but it was a mockery, because feelings against Jews were so bitter in the army. Testimony favorable to Dreyfus was barred, and the court again found him guilty. He

was sentenced to ten years in prison, but was pardoned by French President Emile Loubeet after he spent only a few days in prison. People throughout the world protested the trial. Finally, in 1906, the case was reviewed by the highest court in France, and Dreyfus was declared innocent.

Dr. Herzl felt the Jews must shortly gather together or suffer severe persecution. His idea was to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine through diplomatic negotiations with the Turkish government and by the purchase of the land from the Arab landholders. This first Zionist congress gathered in 1897 and discussed the erection of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem; the creation of a Jewish national fund to assist immigrants; the setting up of a Jewish world bank in London to finance colonization; adopting the design for a blue and white national flag; and the adoption of a national anthem, which is called Hatikvah. By 1904, a new wave of immigration had begun, and as a result, 40,000 Jews arrived in Palestine between 1904 and 1914. One of the young people who arrived during this time was David Ben-Gurion, who would play a prominent role in the future of Israel, becoming its first Prime Minister in 1948. Dr. Herzl would become its first President, also in 1948.

Ben-Gurion was born in Poland in 1886. In 1906 he went to Palestine as a farm laborer and by 1910 he was editor of a weekly Hebrew magazine. He was expelled from Palestine by the Turks early in World War I for conspiring to form a Jewish state. In 1935 he was elected chairman of the Jewish Agency which made him virtually prime minister of the shadow government which was evolving into the framework for a Jewish state. After the United Nations Partition Plan was announced for the creation of Israel, Ben-Gurion took over as head of the provisional government, then directed the successful defense of the nation in 1949.

The Balfour Declaration

The year 1917 was a critical year for the Allies during World War I. The United States had just entered the war, but the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia had virtually demolished the eastern front. As the tides of war swept back and forth across Eastern Europe, hundreds of thousands of Jews were caught in the ebb and flow of the conflict. Earlier, before the Bolshevik Revolution and when the Russians were advancing, they had treated the Jews as spies and enemy aliens. When they were forced to retreat, they conducted a mass evacuation of the Jews in case they should reveal military secrets to the enemy. The Zionist leaders began to feel tremendous pressure to help these suffering people. In response, American Jews raised millions of dollars in relief funds. However, with the latest victories of the British in the Middle East, Palestine was becoming liberated from the Ottoman Turks. Arabs who hoped to win independence from the Ottoman Turks supported the European Allies. Britain promised to help create independent Arab governments in the Middle East after the war. Britain also agreed with France to divide the Middle East into zones of British and French rule and influence.

A proposal made by the Zionist Organization to the British government was to make Palestine part of the British Empire with a policy which would allow Jews to freely migrate and settle in Palestine. One of the principal leaders behind the movement to influence the British government to issue a decree for a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine, was Dr. Chaim Weizmann. He was a Jewish chemist and scientist who worked for Britain during World War II to improve her military arsenal by improving methods of making better explosives. He was also, by this time, president of the World Zionist Organization. His military discoveries greatly aided Britain's war effort. The British leaders contacted all available Arab leaders and found them favorable to this arrangement of allowing the Jews to return to Palestine. With such positive sentiments, the Foreign Secretary of Britain, Arthur James Balfour, issued the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. (W. Cleon Skousen, Fantastic Victory, page 221)

When the Balfour Declaration was issued during World War I, British forces were fighting to win Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. Great Britain wanted to control Palestine because of its location near the Suez Canal which links the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. The British believed the Balfour Declaration would help gain support of this goal from Jewish leaders in Great Britain, the United States, and other countries. In 1922, the League of Nations endorsed the Balfour Declaration and gave Britain a mandate, or an order to rule, over Palestine. (See map 37 in the Appendix) Jews who supported the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine believed the Balfour Declaration pledged Britain's support for just such a goal. Yet the leaders of a growing Arab nationalism movement in Palestine claimed the declaration allowed for such a homeland only if Arabs agreed to it.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

In 1920, the Zionists came to realize that their national home was still a long way from becoming a reality. A fictitious document began to circulate, known as The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. This was supposed to be the secret program of a Jewish world conspiracy to bankrupt the gentile nations, corrupt their culture, pervert their morals, and then set up a world wide Jewish dictatorship. When Adolf Hitler wrote Mein Kampf (My Struggle), he included an attack against the Jewish race, and blamed most of Germany's problems on the German Jews. The document Hitler used to support his claim was the Protocols as the foundation for his accusations. The document was first published in Russia in 1903 by the secret police of the Russian Czar as a basis for the blood purges of Jews in Russia. The forged document described all the techniques that could be used to destroy representative types of governments and western Christian cultures, thereby permitting the Jews to seize political power throughout the world. The document was accepted as evidence of a great Jewish deception.

The rumors associated with the Protocols stated that the Jewish desire for a national home in Palestine was only camouflage and only a very small part of the Jews' real objective. The rumors about the Protocols put forth the view that the Jews had no intention of settling in Palestine or any other country, and that their annual prayer that they may all meet "next year in Jerusalem" was merely a piece of make believe. Imagine hearing or reading of these rumors which were often printed in the introduction to the printed copies of the Protocols, and then finding false statements in the Protocols such as the following:

We are interested...in the diminution [smallest of size], the killing out of the GOYIM [non-Jews]. Our power is in the chronic shortness of food and physical weakness of the worker because by all that this implies he is made the slave of our will, and he will not find in his own authorities either strength or energy to set against our will....By want and the envy and hatred which it engenders we shall move the mobs and with their hands we shall wipe out all those who hinder us on our way. (W. Cleon Skousen, Fantastic Victory, page 286)

The British retreated from their once firm position of establishing a national home for the Jews. Many Zionists viewed the mandate as support for increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. In their hopeless attempt to meet the wishes of both Jews and Arabs, the British had sought to ensure that most of Palestine would be reserved for the Arabs. Winston Churchill, who was Colonial Secretary for Britain, created a mostly independent country called Transjordan that occupied the part of Palestine on the eastern side of the River Jordan, as well as a considerable part on the west bank. Fearful of the hostility of the large Arab population, the British proposed limits on Jewish immigration. The first big backward step for the Jews was a direct result of the Arab riots of 1920 and 1921. In an effort to pacify the Arabs, it was proposed to make a separate Arab state in Palestine. Until the outbreak of World War II, Britain struggled to find a balance and a solution to the Arab and Jewish problem. There were periods of peace and periods of conflict between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine. In spite of the Zionist efforts to show good faith in supporting the British during World War II, the British military leaders looked upon the training and arming of the Jews in Palestine as just asking for trouble. The Jews felt that they needed to arm themselves for protection against the growing violence of the Arabs against the Jews. The British limited the importation of arms to the Jews in an effort to keep the peace in the region. This led to the development of secret extremist groups such as the Stern Gang and the Irgun, who decided to take the offensive against the British and the Arabs alike. They secretly stored arms and explosives and trained personnel in commando tactics against the day when they might be needed.

The British, after the war, shut down immigration of Jews to Palestine to a trickle. The British were so adamant about restricting immigration that they would scour the coastal regions of Palestine, spying out Zionist ships which came in the night loaded with Jewish refugees seeking to escape the persecution they had experienced in Germany and other places in Europe. Refugees who had previously reached Palestine, and now anxiously awaited the arrival of loved ones, watched in disbelief as they saw the British officials force these ships back out to sea, denying them permission to come ashore. The Jewish terrorists groups reacted to this treatment by setting off a bomb in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in June 1946, killing 95 persons, both British, Jews, and Arabs, and wounding another hundred. By 1947, the situation in Palestine had become so volatile that British officers were being kidnaped and executed in retaliation for Jews who were being arrested and hanged. The British didn't help the situation when in 1947 they refused to allow the immigrant ship Exodus to land Jews in Palestine who were fleeing Germany and sending them back to Germany.

The British finally had their fill of Middle Eastern problems and told the United Nations that the U.N. would have to take over the administration of the Palestinian territory. Britain gave the date of May 14, 1948, as the final day Britain would have a presence in Palestine. After that date, they would withdraw all their peace keeping forces, and turn the territory over to the U.N. The U.N. immediately began to hold hearings on the Arab-Israeli problem. In August, 1947, the U.N. committee looking into the problem recommended that Palestine be partitioned, with designated areas for the Jews and the Arabs. The country of Palestine was made up of 1,200,000 Arabs and only 600,000 Jews by this time. The

U.N. had considerable difficulty in deciding the boundaries of the new Jewish state. Although in Palestine there were areas and towns that were predominantly Jewish or Arab, the two peoples lived side by side and it was impossible to declare a given area to be Jewish or Arabic without upsetting the minority population.

The U.N. General Assembly approved a partition plan by a two-thirds majority on November 29, 1947. (See map 38 in the Appendix) The U.N. gave the date of May 15, 1948, as the day the partition of Palestine would take effect, and that at that time the Jews would have a homeland in Palestine. The Jews accepted the partition proposal but the Arabs would not. Since the Arab population's leaders in Palestine had totally rejected the partition, and were assured of support from other nearby Arab states, and since partition was the only solution that had been internationally accepted as the replacement of the British mandate, it was clear that as soon as the British departed there would be a violent struggle between the Jews and Arabs, each fighting for what they regarded as their territorial rights. Within three days the Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria had declared an unofficial war against the Jews and launched a campaign of widespread guerrilla warfare against the Jews and the newly approved State of Israel.

For six months the Jews struggled to build up some kind of an organized defense and tried to smuggle weapons in from any country which would sell them arms. As a result of the restrictions imposed by Britain against the importation of weapons to the Jews, only light weapons ever got through. The Palestine Arabs vastly overestimated the strength of the Jews and generated a profound fear of their capacity to retaliate. When the Jews would mount resistance to Arab attacks, the Arabs would fold up and flee en masse. With so many of the inhabitants of the new Jewish state being Arabic, the economy of Palestine depended on the Arabs staying to maintain a stable economy in the area. The fleeing Arabs caused a major problem for the Jews, because the services and resources collapsed in the areas where the Arabs would flee. The Jews would send out into the streets vans with loudspeakers telling the Arabs that they would not be harmed and would be well looked after. The Jews saw no problem with having Arabs live within the partitioned area that had been designated by the U.N. for the independent nation of Israel. The Arabs could not accept this idea, and were determined not to see an independent Jewish nation established in the area at all. When the Arabs saw their leaders leaving in a hurry, they all packed what they could and joined in the flight. Thus began the "Arab Refugee" problem in the Middle East. It was and still is a problem generated by the Arabs, not by any forced eviction of Arabs by the Jews. What added more to the problem was that the Arab leaders began a campaign to encourage their people to flee Palestine and set up temporary camps in other Arab lands such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Gaza, until the Jews were pushed out of the Middle East.

The State of Israel Becomes a Reality

As the deadline drew near for the withdrawal of the British from Palestine, the Arab nations moved up their armies to the partitioned borders of Israel, ready to invade at midnight, May 14, 1948. The Arabs were coming in with tanks, planes, and cannons, whereas the British had prevented the Jews from importing the heavy armaments which they had purchased so the Jews had been forced to store these weapons in foreign warehouses. The situation looked extremely bleak for the Jews. Jews had less than a thousand rifles and about the same number of machine guns, and for these there was enough ammunition for only a few days of fighting, and 11 planes. The Arabs were to invade Israel with a force of about 30,000 men from several directions to the Jews' 12,000. One of the weaknesses of the Arabs was the difficulty of coordinating the separate armies, due partly to geography but much more to the rivalries and suspicion which soured the relationships between Arab nations. The second was the circumstance that the invading soldiers were not fighting for their own homelands. They were fighting somebody else's war whereas the Jews were fighting for their survival.

At this point in the story of the birth of the modern State of Israel, the reader is reminded that the Lord makes reference in Zechariah 12:2-3 about how he will fight the battles for Israel in the last days. The Book of Mormon speaks of three Nephites who were permitted to tarry upon the earth until the Lord's Second Coming, and the same promise was given to John the Beloved in the Bible.

Behold, I was about to write the names of those who were never to taste of death, but the Lord forbade; therefore I write them not, for they are hid from the world. But behold, I have seen them, and they have ministered unto me. And behold they will be among the Gentiles, and the Gentiles shall know them not. They will also be among the Jews, and the Jews shall know them not. (III Nephi 28:25-28)

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (John 21:20-23)

The Lord speaks of the fact that the Jews nor the Gentiles will know of the presence of the three Nephites, or of John the Beloved for that matter, as they go among men performing their tasks for the Lord. Joseph Smith received additional information about John and what the Lord meant by this statement.

And the Lord said unto me: John, my beloved, what desirest thou? For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you. And I said unto him: Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee. And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people. And for this cause the Lord said unto Peter: If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? For he desired of me that he might bring souls unto me, but thou desiredst that thou mightest speedily come unto me in my kingdom. I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire; but my beloved has desired that he might do more, or a greater work yet among men than what he has before done. (Doctrine and Covenants 7:1-5)

To demonstrate the fulfillment of these promises made by the Lord to Israel, the following account is given here for the reader to consider. In the September 1950 issue of the Jewish paper, *The Jewish Hope*, Arthur U. Michelson published an article relating two incidences between the Arabs and the Jews during this war for Independence. This article has been reprinted in the book *Israel! Do You Know?* by LeGrand Richards.

It was marvelous what God did for the Jews, especially in Jerusalem, during the fighting with the Arabs. Though quite a few months had passed since the victory of Israel's army in Israel, they were still talking about what had taken place. Everywhere I went I heard how God had intervened in their behalf, and how He helped them to win the battles. One of the officials told me how much the Jews had to suffer. They had hardly anything with which to resist the heavy attacks of the Arabs, who were well organized and equipped with the latest weapons. Besides, they had neither food nor water because all their supplies were cut off. The Arabs, who had a great army in strong position, were determined to destroy the Jews, while the Jews were few in number, without any arms and ammunition. The two or three guns they possessed had to be rushed from one point to another, to give the Arabs the impression that they had many of them. The Jews had quite a few tin cans which they beat as they shot the guns, giving the impression of many shots. But as the pressure was too great, they were unable to hold the lines any longer and finally decided to give up the city. At this critical moment God showed them that He was on their side, for He performed one of the greatest miracles that ever happened. The Arabs suddenly threw down their arms and surrendered. When their delegation appeared with the white flag, they asked, "Where are the three men that led you, and where are all the troops we saw?" The Jews told them that they did not know anything of the three men, for this group was their entire force. The Arabs said that they saw three persons with long beards and flowing white robes, who warned them not to fight any longer, otherwise they would all be killed. They became so frightened that they decided to give up. What an encouragement this was for the Jews, who realized that God was fighting for them. (LeGrand Richards, *Israel! Do You Know?*, pages 229-230)

God performed the same miracles on other fighting fronts, for He wanted to show the nations that He had turned to the Jews again, and like in the olden days, would help them to conquer the land. The Arabs were especially strong in the Negev District, not far from Beersheba, for they were backed by a large Egyptian army. The Jews were encircled by the Egyptians, and humanly speaking, had absolutely no chance to escape. One morning to the amazement of the Jews, the Arabs and the Egyptians suddenly gave up the fighting and surrendered. The Jews were at first skeptical, because they couldn't believe that the Arabs and Egyptians would give up their strong position and surrender. But when they saw how the Arabs threw down their arms, they learned that God had intervened for them. When they asked the Arabs and Egyptians for the cause of their surrender, they told them that they saw an old man with a long beard who was dressed in a white robe, and who warned them not to fight any longer, otherwise they would all perish. This man was seen and heard by almost all the enemy troops. A great fear came over them and they decided to give up the fight. These and other stories I heard from various Jews who fought on the battle fronts. We could never have conquered Palestine because we were so few and without arms and ammunition. (Ibid., pages 232-233)

The United States was the first country to grant official recognition of the new nation of Israel and this came within an hour after midnight on May 15. Fifteen other nations, including the Soviet Union, soon did the same. This was encouraging for Israel, but the cold facts were that Israel was going to have to fight for her existence absolutely alone. Israel had only light weapons, no artillery, no tanks, no fighting planes, no battleships. Only gradually could these be brought in during the first months of the war following the removal of the British blockade. Had the Arabs hit the Israelis with their full potential early in the war, perhaps the outcome would have been different. For some reason, however, the Arab build-up was slow. By early 1949, Israel had defeated the Arabs and gained control of about half the land planned for the new Arab state. By mid-1949, Israel had signed armistice agreements with Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. This the Arabs wisely did before Israel got even more of the land that the U.N. had designated for the Arabs. The formal peace treaties were not signed however because the Arab nations refused to recognize the existence of Israel.

No other parcel of land has had so hectic a history of ownership as the Holy Land. Following is a list of the ruling powers in control of this territory (from A Beka, World History and Cultures, page 478):

Number of Years	Ruling Powers in Control
1,521 years	Israel (1451 B.C. - A.D. 70)
564 years	Rome (A.D. 70 - A.C. 634)
465 years	Arabs (634 - 1099)
89 years	Crusaders (1099 - 1188)
329 years	Egypt (1188 - 1516)
402 years	Ottoman Turks (1516 -1918)
30 years	England (1918 - 1948)
	Israel (1948 - present)

The net result of the war of 1948, started by the Arabs to stifle Israel at birth, was quite an unexpected enlargement and strengthening of the new Jewish state. The war had produced the Israel Defense Force (IDF), and created an Israel twice the size the U.N. had envisioned. The Arabs of the territory occupied by Israel, who once had formed an overwhelming majority of the population, had largely disappeared. There were now two refugee problems, 800,000 Jews who had been expelled from Arab countries, and the 800,000 displaced Arabs of Palestine, who by 1949 were distributed in camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Israel made room for their own refugees but the Arab nations neglected the Palestinian refugees, encouraging them not to make new lives for themselves in their new countries. This neglect left a people who felt they had been wronged, and would bring about the birth of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1965, who would struggle for the formation of their own homeland in the region.