

# An Enduring Earth



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**HENRIKSEN**

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## Abbreviations

BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
Chron.	Chronicles
Cor.	Corinthians
Cp.	Compare
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes
Eph.	Ephesians
ESV	English Standard Version
Gen.	Genesis
Hab.	Habakkuk
JPS	Jewish Publication Society Hebrew-English Tanakh
Matt.	Matthew
NIV	New International Version, translation of the Bible
Rev.	Revelation
Sam.	Samuel
v	Verse
WEB	World English Bible
Zech.	Zechariah

Where a scriptural quote has no source noted the quote is from the King James Version. The English translation that was chosen based on it being the closest to a word for word translation, or clearest, while still being in modern English from the original Hebrew.

## Source of Illustrations

**Page 54** Map source is Oxford Bible Atlas Ed May, H.M. 1962. p69 Oxford University Press, London.

# Chapter One



## The Concept of Eden Restored

The concept of an Edenic paradise is comprehended by possibly half the world's population. Not only is the concept deeply embedded in Western culture, it is also comprehended by much of the Eastern world with the spread of the understanding of the Koran's ideal of the reward in Paradise.

The ideal of Eden represents a strong desire for a better world, a more perfect world. The Eden ideal is aligned to '*Utopia*' meaning '*no-place*' from More's book written in 1515, in which he explains a perfect agrarian society, where each person tends their garden. Whenever those in the Western world speak of a more 'natural world', they are expressing a desire for a return to Eden.

This was tried by Thor Heyerdahl in 1934 when he searched for a place to live with his wife in harmony with nature. The failure of his experiment led to his conclusion that "one can't buy a ticket to Paradise."

This conclusion was even more poignant in 1974 when he wrote in *Fatu-hiva, back to nature*.

From all parts of the world we suddenly begin to hear the desperate voices of doom-prophets who tell us with computer curves and convincing statistics that mankind is heading for a total catastrophe. Their opponents- we would call them lullaby men- are equally busy telling the masses to sleep in peace. Science can take care of everything.

More and more young people are getting confused. They protest and try to get away. They run away from comfort...

The escapism Heyerdahl observed in the youth of the 1970's as they sought to change their world proved not to lead anywhere. At the turn of the millennium modern youth is still confused and they are either seeking a better world, an Eden, or trying to forget the possibility of oblivion as they “eat, drink and be merry” .

The word 'Eden' has a meaning in Hebrew, which encompasses the idea of being 'soft', 'pleasant' or 'a delight'. It means a soft pleasant garden. However, the Hebrew Bible states that the garden of Eden was taken away due to sin by Adam and Eve, through disobedience. The description of the changes to the environment in the curse recorded in the scriptures are an accurate observation of the world as it now is.

“Cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles will it bring forth to you; and you will eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your face will you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Gen 3:17-19 World English Bible)

The growth of food crops is a battle against nature for all of the world's population. Modern farming relies on pesticides and weed control and, though mechanical aid is used, human sweat is still required. And all people are subject to disease that eventually, sooner or later, leads to death.

World leaders, philosophers and academics hope for something better, but it seems the human race is further from achieving Eden than ever. New scientific discoveries are tending to show human activity has a damaging effect on the planet at all levels, from the global climate to the local waterways. The world seems to be a fragile place, with an inbuilt tendency to decay and to suffer catastrophe.

But the greatest catastrophe may be the human power to destroy each other in war. Since the proliferation of nuclear weapons, people have feared mutually assured destruction (MAD).

For many years the Christian world has added to the sense of impending world destruction with talk of 'Raptures' and people being left behind.

The English translations of the Christian Bible may seem at first to support this.

The nations were angry, and your wrath came, as did the time for the dead to be judged, and to give your bondservants the prophets, their reward, as well as to the saints, and those who fear your name, to the small and the great; and

to destroy those who destroy the earth. (Revelation 11:18 WEB)

It seems, therefore, the Christian should expect that the earth should be destroyed by those who do not respect God. However, Strong's, a respected authority on the text, indicates the word 'destroy' in the original Greek, is *diaphtheirō*, and means to rot thoroughly, to ruin (passively decay utterly, figuratively pervert), corrupt, destroy, perish. The context determines the meaning. As the passage is from Revelation, this context indicates the 'earth' symbolises the *people* on it, not the physical items such as plants, trees and lakes. The passage could be rendered to "corrupt and cause to rot those who corrupt and cause to rot the earth." In more simple English. God will get rid of the bad apples that are rotting others. The passage is about a moral state and not the environmental state.

In fact the Bible is virtually silent on the issue of the natural environment. It is about people: their hope, their relationships and their future.

It seems a return to Eden is humanly impossible and, instead, the world is tending to decay and be subject to either natural or human induced catastrophe. And even if the planet is not a victim of catastrophe, some are predicting, based on their reading of events on the earth and the Christian Bible, that the earth is to be destroyed. Much evidence seems to be pointing to the destruction of the earth. Why would we be bold enough to say with confidence that the earth will endure?

## The Earth Will Endure

The evidence of the entirety of the scriptures favours an enduring earth. It says of Messiah, also the Christian saviour:

He shall judge the people with righteousness...

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. (Psalm 72:2-5)

In other words there will come a time when there will be equitable judgement on earth. At that time the people on the earth will reverence that saviour for as long as the psalmist can see into the future. And again,

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah. (Psalm 89:34-37)

King David of ancient Israel is promised that the son born after his death would have a reign that lasted a long time, as long as the sun endured. How long will the sun endure? It is to be noted that 'forever' here is not infinity, but a limited time, which is as long as the sun endures. With our current scientific knowledge we know this is a very long time in a human time scale. This king's reign will last a very, very long time.

These two passages by David inspire the title of this book: *an enduring earth*.

Each of the following chapters can stand alone, and will, from different viewpoints, explore in detail the evidence in the Bible as to why the earth will endure.

And why we can indeed expect a new Eden on earth in the future.

# Chapter Four



## Voice of the Prophets

There are common themes in the writings of the Old Testament prophets, which when read together, present a clear picture of the future. These themes are taken up in the New Testament by the Messiah and the Prophets.

### The Prophets wrote of a Messiah

References to a Messiah in Isaiah and Moses used by Jesus and the Apostles have been explored. The word 'Messiah' is an Anglicised version of the Hebrew for “anointed”, which is the ceremonial mark of becoming a King or High Priest in Israel. Following are some references to the idea of a saviour king/priest.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. (Genesis. 49:10)

A star will come out of Jacob. A sceptre will rise out of Israel, and shall strike through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth. (Numbers 24:17 WEB)

when thy (David's) days be expired..I will raise up ... of thy sons;.. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son:.. his throne shall be established for evermore. (1Chron. 17:11-14 cp 2 Samuel 7:12-16)

The prophets refer to this concept of a king

Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. (Jeremiah. 23:5).

Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you be little among the thousands of

Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace... and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.. (Zechariah 12:10)

This idea of a saviour king from Judah is clearly a common theme, and Zechariah indicates he would be 'pierced'.

Luke in the Acts writes that Peter stated to a multitude that,

“Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He has so fulfilled ... and He shall send Jesus Christ, who was before preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began ...

Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” (Acts 3: 18-24)

Peter uses an interesting phrase here when he speaks of the “*restitution of all things*”. He says that “*all*” the prophets spoke of this. The meaning of this phrase is to be found in the Prophets' writings. It will be shown that this includes the coming of a king and the revival of the nation of Israel in the 'last days' as God's witness of His promise to all mankind of the reliability of the Word of God.

### **The Prophets wrote of Israel's future Destiny**

The Prophets not only wrote and prophesied of the Messiah's death and resurrection, but also of the Kingdom of God, the destiny of Israel and the other nations.

In Isaiah 43: 9-12, the Lord says of Israel, “*Ye are my witnesses.*” The nation of Israel, despite their alienation from God, stand as a 'sign' of the truth and promises of the Bible. Men are always looking for signs and miracles, as confirmation

of the veracity of God's existence and truth of the Bible, but there can be no greater miracle than the revival of Israel as a modern nation. The Jewish people have survived despite relentless persecution and attempts to annihilate them by such nations as the Romans, the Russians and their pogroms against the Jews and Hitler's Holocaust of World War 2.

Romans 11 deals extensively with Israel. Romans 11:1 begins with the question, *"Has God cast away his people?"* The answer is "No!". Romans 11: 25 states that *"blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."* When will this occur? Luke provides the answer. In Luke 21: 24, Jesus prophesied what would happen to the nation of Israel.

"Israel shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Since 1967, Jerusalem has been in the control of the Jews, for the first time in almost 2000 years and this is significant for us today as it fulfils Jesus' prophecy. It also fulfils many Old Testament prophecies as this regathering is a constant theme.

### **The Prophets stated that the Jews would be Scattered and Regathered**

If we search the prophets, we find that they all write about a regathering of the Jews, in the last days, out of all nations into which they have been dispersed. In the prophecy of Isaiah, the return of the Jews to the land of Israel is mentioned many times.

The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob unto the mighty God. (Isaiah 10: 21) and

The Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, "yet will I gather others to him". Isaiah 56:7-8

In Isaiah 61:4 it is recorded that Israel

Shall raise up the former desolations and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

This world's present generation stands in the privileged position of witnessing these amazing events fulfilling prophecy. Jeremiah also makes frequent references to the return of the Jews to their traditional homeland.

“I will bring them again into their land.” (Jeremiah 16: 15-16)

“I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them” (Jeremiah 23:3)

He that scattered Israel will gather him. (Jeremiah 31: 10)

Ezekiel also develops this prophetic theme where it is stated,

“...when I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered”. (Ezekiel 28:25)

## **The Prophets Speak of Many Nations' Futures**

The future of nations other than Israel are described. Most often this is in the context of a battle, or of judgement.

Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will punish all Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners. (Jeremiah. 9:25-26)

This verse describes modern Jordan (Amman and Moab). The prophet Ezekiel mentions many nations.

Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal...I will bring you forth,.. Persia, Ethopia, and Libya.., all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer.. the house of Togarmah in the uttermost parts of the north; even many peoples with you...

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions of it, shall tell you, Are you come to take the spoil?..

You shall come up against my people Israel,.. it shall happen in the latter days,.. that the nations may know me... I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am Yahweh. (Ezekiel 38:1-23 WEB)

Gog is a title for the leader of a group of nations North of Israel. Rosh is Russia. They are opposed by “the merchants” who are linked to Saudi Arabia (the modern Sheba and Dedan).

I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. (Joel 3:2)

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle (Zech. 14:2)

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, (Haggai 2:7)

It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. (Isaiah 66:18)

The prophets speak of a gathering of nations. Some focus on the nature of the war or judgement and others focus on the aftermath, which will reveal the glory of Yahweh.

## **A Future House of Prayer Detailed**

Ezekiel writes of Israel scattered and regathered, a major war followed by peace and righteous rule. He follows this by his prophecy of a Temple, devoting a large proportion of his text to it. The Temple that Ezekiel describes in so much detail has not yet been built. So much of his prophecy was devoted to this Temple, that we must conclude that it is important in the Divine scheme. Ezekiel is not the only prophet who refers to a Temple, to a House of the Lord.

Other prophets, although in not so much detail, refer to a house of the Lord, which is to be built in the future. They all clearly agree on its location.

Micah 4:1-3 states that the location is to be Mt Zion and Jerusalem. He writes *“in the last days... shall the mountain of the house of the Lord be established.”* Many nations shall *“go up to the Mountain.”* People will be taught of God, for *“the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”* God will judge the nations. Here, again, in this prophecy, the vision is given of the House of the Lord.

In Isaiah 56:6-7, Israel and the sons of strangers (Jew and

Gentile) *“that join themselves to Yahweh, to serve him, and to love the name of Yahweh... even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my House of Prayer”*. Again there is here an association of a House of Prayer and a mountain, an altar, sacrifices and burnt offerings. It shall be called 'an House of Prayer for all people'. Isaiah refers to the gathering of the 'outcasts of Israel' which refers to modern Israel since 1948. In his ministry, the Messiah quoted from this section of the Old Testament.

Isaiah 60 describes a glorious time when the Lord *“will glorify the house of my glory.”* This house has walls, offerings and gates. Verse 14 speaks of the *“city of the Lord, the Zion”* as a literal house and location. Isaiah 66 describes Jerusalem and a time of peace when *“all flesh come to worship before me”*. People will come on horses, in chariots and on swift beasts to bring an *“offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.”* (verse 20) If this is not a literal house, why are there such vivid images of vessels in the house and the transportation of people created? There is no event in history that can be related to this prophecy.

Joel 3 states that when the *“Lord your God (is) dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain, then shall Jerusalem be holy.”*

Amos 9:10-14 presents a time of trouble after which the Lord *“will raise up the tabernacle of David... I will raise up its ruins and I will build it as in the days of old”* and in verse 14, the time is clearly specified, *“I will bring again the captivity of my people and they shall build the waste cities.”* Since 1948 the Jews have once again established their homeland and brought the land of Israel from a wasteland to a productive land and established cities as prophesied.

Isaiah chapter 2 states that *“in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established... all nations shall flow unto it.”* There will be a time of peace and the Law of the Lord shall go out of Zion and Jerusalem.

Isaiah, also states that the Lord will arise *“to shake terribly the earth”* (Isaiah 2:21). This is also developed in other prophecies. Haggai 2:6 records that *“I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.”* Isaiah 24:15-23 describes judgements that will come on the inhabitants of the earth.

“The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard and shall be removed like a cottage,” and then “Yahweh of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his ancients gloriously.”

The topography of the land will be greatly changed. Zechariah 14:4 states that the mount of Olives shall *“cleave in the midst thereof... half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south”* with the effects of an earthquake. *“All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem”* A massive earthquake will change the landscape and cause widespread devastation in Israel and elsewhere.

Haggai 2:6-9 presents the shaking of the earth. God says that “I will fill this house with my glory” and that “the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.” The former house built by King Solomon was destroyed and the prophet here states that another house of prayer will be built.

Zechariah 14:8-9, 16, 20 describes a time of turmoil and upheaval followed by peace, *“The Lord shall be king over all the earth”*. The people will go up to Jerusalem to worship and keep the feast of tabernacles. Verse 20 details the 'Lord's house', 'pots' and 'bowls', which indicates a literal building. What reason could there be for such detailing of these things other than to impress upon us that there will be a house of prayer built in the future?

In Zechariah 6:12-13 we are told that the Branch (the Messiah) *“shall build the Temple of the Lord.”* He shall sit upon the throne and in verse 15, *“they that are afar off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord.”* Here also is a reference to 'strangers', the Gentiles, being involved in the construction of

this house. Zechariah 8:3,22 states that the Lord “*will dwell in Zion*” and Jerusalem will be “*called a city of truth*”. In verse 22 it is recorded that people from many nations will go up to Jerusalem to pray and worship.

Malachi 3:1-3 speaks of the Lord coming to his temple. The Messiah's first coming did not fulfil this prophecy completely as we read in verse 12 that “*all nations shall call you blessed for ye shall be a delightful land.*” Since A.D, 70, Israel could not be regarded as a 'delightful' land. It has seen conflict and desolation by Romans, Turks and Arabs.

### **The Temple, King and Future Peace on Earth**

The Psalms make frequent references to a time of peace that coincide with a temple that would be established in Jerusalem. There was no temple built in Jerusalem during David's lifetime, but David longed for the time when the Lord would reign in Jerusalem. This time of peace and righteous rule are also described in the Psalms. In Psalm 2: 6 it is stated that .

Yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of Zion

which follows the subjection of the rulers of the earth that

Took counsel together against Yahweh and against His anointed.  
(verse 2)

The Psalmist in Psalm 48: 8 looks forward to the time when God will dwell in His city and ‘*God will establish it forever.*’ Psalm 72 beautifully depicts a time of peace when

He shall judge thy people with righteousness ... In his days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace as long as the moon endures. (vs. 2 and 8) and

All nations shall serve Him ... let the whole earth be filled with His glory. (vs 11 and 19)

The psalmist sees the time when

I will worship towards thy holy temple ... and the kings of the earth shall praise thee. (Psalm 138: 2-4)

There are many Psalms that place the worship of Yahweh, the

God of Israel, in Jerusalem, when both Jew and Gentile will bring offerings to the Temple.

The writings of the Prophets are generally dismissed as having been fulfilled and Israel cast off. Much has been 'spiritualised' in the concept of a 'spiritual house of faithful believers'. The faithful in the Bible are styled a 'spiritual' house, but this does not give any reason for the negation of the promises detailed in the Prophetic writings.

Jesus endorsed Isaiah when he quoted the words of Isaiah 56:7 saying to the Jews, *“My house 'shall' be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves”*(Matt. 21:13). He envisaged a future Temple, obviously not Solomon's temple but that of Ezekiel's prophecy, a far grander temple, in a future time, when justice, peace and righteousness will prevail on this earth. This is clearly indicated by His use of the future tense, 'shall'.

### **The Prophets speak of Future Glory on Earth**

The themes that occur in all the prophets include the regathering of Israel after being dispersed among many nations; a shaking of the earth as in an earthquake; Yahweh's House of Prayer for all nations in the mountain of the Lord, which is Zion; Jerusalem as a holy city; Yahweh's Law going forth from Jerusalem and people from all nations going to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh.

A lot of what the Prophets wrote about has not yet come to pass. If Jesus gave his followers the advice to place importance on the Prophets, it should follow that the Christian should also take heed to their writings.

In 2 Peter 1:19-20, Peter advises, *“We have a more sure word of prophecy...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”* Peter warns in 2 Peter 2:1-2 about 'false' teachers *“who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.”* It is to the Word of God that we must go, not to man's vain

philosophising, thoughts and feelings.

Jesus endorsed the Prophets. What better example can we have? Jesus and the Apostles taught out of the Prophets and they showed that some prophecies had been fulfilled, but that also many prophecies still had to be fulfilled.

In Acts 13:27, we are warned by the apostle Paul that the Jewish leadership conspired to kill their Messiah, “because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets.” This is powerful as Paul is speaking of himself, as he had rejected the disciple Stephen's understanding of the prophets' writings when he assisted in killing Stephen. What might we be guilty of if we heed not the words of the prophets?

The constant reference by the prophets to the House of the Lord, the mountain, the city of the Lord, the offerings, the law, those who travel out of all nations to worship at Jerusalem, the pots, the bowls, the transportation of people from afar and many other aspects of a new world order are far too literal to be ignored and to do so could be to our peril.

Finally, there is a constant theme in the promise repeated *four times* that:

“As truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord (Yahweh).” Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk. 2:14; Psalm 72:19; Isaiah 11:9.