

November 1, 2025

The Story of Jonesport and Jaffa

Last week I had shared the prophecy given to the land, where God's people would once again be reunited with the land, both being tantamount to the promise of the Covenant Adonai made with Avraham and reiterated through the covenant established through Moshe and would be prominent as it pertains to the New Covenant.

To remind you, when Adonai makes a promise as it pertains to prophecy, there will first be preparation followed by proof.

Today I want to share with you something that is close to you, because of the State where you live, Maine. This is the story of Jonesport and Jaffa.

While in the midst of the Third great awakening, yet still feeling the impact of the Second Great Awakening, a man by the name of George Jones Adams, a preacher would make his way to Maine and ultimately convince 157 people to make a significant change in their lives, by not only moving to Jaffa, an Ottoman controlled city in the land of “Palestine” renamed by the Romans, otherwise known as the Promised Land – Israel.

*The **Second Great Awakening** was a Protestant religious revival during the late 18th to early 19th century in the United States. It spread religion through revivals and emotional preaching and sparked a number of schismatic movements. Revivals were key to the movement and attracted hundreds of converts to new Protestant denominations. The Methodist Church used circuit riders to reach people in frontier locations.*

The Second Great Awakening led to a period of antebellum social reform (Post Civil War) and an emphasis on salvation by institutions. The outpouring of religious fervor and revival began in Kentucky and Tennessee in the 1790s and early 1800s among the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. New religious movements emerged during the Second Great Awakening, such as Adventism, Dispensationalism, and the Latter Day Saint movement. The Second Great Awakening also led to the founding of several well-known colleges, seminaries, and mission societies.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Great_Awakening

I am going to share several excerpts from an article written by Virginia M. Wright “Strange Pilgrimage” published in *Down East Magazine*’s August 2016 edition...

Wright Wrote: “Over the course of 25 years, *Adams had cut a tumultuous path through New England and the Midwest. As a young man, he’d worked as a tailor’s apprentice in Boston and spent his spare time with a theater company, where he acquired his flair for dramatics. After he attended an evangelical revival meeting, he thought he’d found his calling as a Methodist preacher, but he was soon swept up in the newer, rising Mormon movement. He traveled to*

Nauvoo, Illinois, where he so impressed Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that he was sent on a recruitment mission to England. There, he would fill meeting halls — more than 2,000 people attended his sermon in Liverpool alone — and deftly debated the sectarians and Protestant clergymen who came to oppose him.”

It is important to know about this man George Adams, in that his influence led to 157 people to follow him.

Wright Wrote: “But every time Adams soared, he fell — hard. In Boston, a celebratory drink with the cast of Richard III sent him into a spiral of drunkenness that caught the attention of theater critics. In Nauvoo after Smith’s assassination in 1844, he reached for the bottle and the company of a young widow, prompting Smith’s successor, Brigham Young, to expel him. In Springfield, Massachusetts, where Adams had reinvented himself as the founder of the Church of the Messiah, he turned to booze when a newspaperman learned of his checkered history and hounded him in print.”

What happened? After being expelled, Adams would go on to form his own church and what I would call denomination in that he would evangelize his way to Maine.

Wright Wrote: “Adams was back on his game as he proselytized from York to Rockland to Surry to Sullivan, and he found a particularly warm reception in Addison and Jonesport, isolated fishing and shipbuilding communities whose main link to the outside world was the sea. He, his second wife, Lil, and their 10-year-old son, Clarence, settled down between the two, in the village of Indian River, and before long the Church of the Messiah claimed more followers than the Methodist and Baptist congregations combined. It no doubt helped recruitment that Adams’ first proselytes included two prominent and influential residents — L.L. Wass, the former deacon of the Baptist church, and Abraham McKenzie, the postmaster and justice of the peace.”

McKenzie shared this with the Bangor Daily News years later...

Wright Wrote: “Aided by a commanding presence and a tongue of surpassing glibness, he was enabled to control and sway his hearers at will.”

A true evangelist, he had the gift to speak and capture the attention of those who would hear him.

As would be common at the time, publishing a paper and transmitting it was also the case for Church of Messiah... “The Sword of Truth and the Harbinger of Peace” was co-published by both Adams and McKenzie. It was used to promote colonizing the Holy Land. Greatly influenced by the Second Great Awakening, while in the midst of the Third Great Awakening...

...was a significant religious movement in the United States, occurring from approximately 1855 to 1930. It was characterized by intense religious activism and a strong emphasis on social reform. This period was marked by the belief that humanity could achieve a moral

transformation that would lead to the Second Coming of Christ.

The time frame is very significant. You have Preacher George Adams, greatly influenced by the likes of Joseph Smith, a product of the Second Great Awakening and the hunger for the Second coming of Messiah as part of this Third Great Awakening. Two immense forces coming together to spur what would come to fruition on August 11, 1866.

*Wright Wrote: "Mark T. Wentworth, 34, of Surry, who on August 11, 1866, went down to the remote fishing village of Jonesport and loaded the labeled and pre-cut parts of his new house onto the lower deck of the barque Nellie Chapin. Then Wentworth, his 30-year-old wife, Adelaide, and their four children — Fanny, 5; Clinton, 4; Mark DeWitt, 2; and Lilli, 4 months — joined 151 fellow members of the Church of the Messiah as they set sail for Jaffa, in the Ottoman Empire, some 5,000 miles away. Led by charismatic preacher George Jones Adams, these Down East farmers and tradesmen were chasing after a biblical prophecy: they aimed no less than **to hasten the Second Coming** by preparing the Holy Land for the return of the Jews."*

This idea to "hasten" meaning...

1. To move or act swiftly. *synonym: speed.*
2. To cause to move or act swiftly.
"The guard hastened him out of the room."
3. To cause to happen sooner than otherwise would be the case.
"negotiations that hastened the end of the war."
4. To speed up; accelerate.
"fanned the wet paint to hasten drying."
5. To move with celerity; to be rapid in motion; to act speedily or quickly; to go quickly.

*In non-Messianic Judaism, "hastening the end" has a somewhat different flavor. According to Chapter 7 of Raphael Patai's *The Messiah Texts*, it means forcing God's hand. A number of legends recounted there tell how Hasidim and Kabbalists impatient for the Messiah tried to compel him to come by means of "the powers of saintliness they had acquired by years of ruthless mortification of their flesh." In each case, of course, they were prevented-by death, by Satan, or by some sin which they committed.*

By "forcing God's hand" it implies that we have power that would compel Him to set aside His plan and respond to us. Throughout Scripture, it has been the opposite...God acts and we respond. I became aware of such a premise during my first years as a believer when I was told, He could come at any time and that our prayers could "hasten" His return. This premise is based on a single verse in Kefa's second letter...

2Pe 3:12 as you wait for the Day of God and work to hasten its coming. That Day will bring on the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt from the heat;

As we wait, we are to work to hasten His return appears to be rather contradictory.

Kefa, influenced by Isaiah 60:22...

Isa 60:22 The smallest will grow to a thousand, the weakest will become a mighty nation. I, Adonai, when the right time comes, will quickly bring it about."

KJV - **Isa 60:22** A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

See the confusion?

The KJV puts the emphasis on our control while Stern's JPS 1917 version conveys that what Adonai will do, will be done in His Time... "when the right time comes"

Hence this is the mindset at the time of the Second and Third Great Awakenings. This is the influence behind George Adams and the compulsion of those who would follow him to the land.

Wright Wrote: "Their sense of religious purpose was genuine, Shettleworth says, and not all that eccentric in the cultural milieu of the mid-19th century. The Second Great Awakening, a massive revival movement, was sweeping the country. Roving evangelists and adherents of end-times prophecies were common. There had been a number of American and European Christian settlement efforts in the Holy Land, some more successful than others. "Religion was a huge force in people's lives," Shettleworth says. "There was a whole spectrum of religious beliefs and organizations in Maine at the time.""

It is true they were seeking Bible prophecy but did they truly know what they were part of doing? They were hoping that they could hasten the return of Messiah by causing the Jews to return to the land. How much did they know and understand about the Passage I shared with you last Shabbat – Ezekiel 36:1- 15?

How God was preparing the land and promising the land that His people, their people would once again inhabit the land.

Eze 36:8 But you, mountains of Isra'el, you will sprout your branches and bear your fruit for my people Isra'el, who will soon return.

Eze 36:9 I am here for you, and I will turn toward you; then you will be tilled and sown;

Eze 36:10 and I will multiply your population, all the house of Isra'el, all of it. The cities will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.

Eze 36:11 I will multiply both the human and animal populations, they will increase and be productive; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were before—indeed, I will do you more good than before; and you will know that I am Adonai.

Eze 36:12 I will cause people to walk on you, my people Isra'el; they will possess you, and

you will be their inheritance; never again will you make them childless."

Yet, the reality for those from who would travel to Jonesport, load their barge The Nellie Chapin with their prefabricated homes and belongs, setting sail for the Holy Land would be a rather stark reality.

Prior...

Wright Wrote: "Many people around Jonesport distrusted the silver-tongued preacher, and skepticism came from as far away as Beirut, where American Presbyterian missionary Henry Harris Jessup predicted the Mainers' failure in a letter to the New York Times. "They will find the Holy Land too hot for them in more senses than one," he wrote, a reference to Jaffa's reputation as a dangerous place for foreigners. Just a few years earlier, a family of missionaries had been brutally attacked by a Bedouin gang. One man was killed and two women were raped, an incident that the US government labeled the "Outrage at Jaffa." In the eyes of their contemporaries, then, the Jonesport colonists had some radical ideas and a risky plan, but they weren't cultists as they sometimes have been portrayed."

First was the legality of their claim...

Wright Wrote: "The voyage took a relatively uneventful 42 days, but the pilgrims' troubles began almost as soon as Jaffa was in sight. That's when Adams learned that the land purchase he'd entrusted to US Vice Consul and money-changer Hermann Loewenthal had been rejected by the sultan of Turkey. The group had a choice: go home or camp on the beach until Loewenthal found other arrangements."

What did they do?

Wright Wrote: "They chose the beach — but first, they had to get there. Because of the shallow harbor, the Nellie Chapin was forced to anchor two miles offshore. Furnishings, clothing, farm equipment, house timbers, and, from George Adams' cabin, a startling couple-dozen empty liquor bottles were unloaded onto rafts and floated to the beach under a blistering sun, a process that took days."

Wright Wrote: "They camped for six weeks in a makeshift village, which Mayo Smith, the Boston spiritualist, described in a letter to the Boston Traveler: "Never was seen a more interesting or motley collection of tents. They were extemporaneously built of old remnants of parti-colored cloths; conspicuously prominent were bedclothes of every hue and fabric, but a dash of rain and a dash of wind prostrated these multiformed houses of the hour." Sturdier tents using the house parts had since been erected, Smith continued, and "nearly all are contented and happy. Some of tender health have been made strong. One of our number — a little child, sick when it entered ship — died a few days since. One was born since landing, which keeps our number complete. It is singular that as in the Mayflower, one death balanced one birth, and thus preserved the primitive number of self-made exiles. ""

Adonai spoke of the harshness and calamities the land would cause as a result of her barren

state and the lacking of her people.

Eze 36:4 therefore, mountains of Isra'el, hear the message of Adonai Elohim—this is what Adonai Elohim says to the mountains and hills, the streams and valleys, the desolate wastes and the abandoned cities, now preyed on and derided by the other surrounding nations—

Eze 36:5 therefore this is what Adonai Elohim says: "In the heat of my jealousy I speak against the other nations and all of Edom, since, rejoicing with all their heart, they have arrogated my land to themselves as a possession and, with utter contempt, seized it as prey." '

There appeared to be conflicting reports regarding the experience of the colonists.

Wright Wrote: "For the next several weeks, McKenzie penned good-natured updates about farming, giving only the slightest hint of the Mainers' deteriorating morale when he noted that Loewenthal had been suspended "but not turned out of office" by the US Consul after colonists complained that he'd overcharged them for land and goods."

Wright Wrote: "Back home, however, the newspapers were filling up with letters from disaffected colonists — Mayo Smith chief among them — who accused Adams of drunkenness, lying about their prospects for success in the Holy Land, and misusing their money. They'd given him their savings, they said, and now they had nothing, not even title to the land on which their houses stood, to show for it. Adams and his supporters countered their claims with glowing letters about the dark, rich soil, the abundance of available land, the vigorousness of their crops, and the friendly natives."

Wright Wrote "The picture was so confusing that, in March of 1867, Secretary of State William Seward sent an agent, Eclectic magazine editor Walter Bidwell, to find out what was going on. "The majority of [colony members] express themselves entirely satisfied with their situation and prospects," one of Bidwell's traveling companions, James Sanford, reported in the Chicago Evening Journal. "They say that they have had an abundance to eat and drink during their sojourn here, and now have about 300 acres under cultivation, which bid fair to produce a large yield of corn, wheat, potatoes and the necessities of life.""

Wright Wrote: "But Bidwell and Sanford never met with Adams' detractors, several of whom were in Jerusalem that day appealing to US Consul Victor Beauboucher for help. Their money was gone, and their crops had failed without irrigation under the scorching Middle East sun. They wanted to go home. At the end of April, 20 of the defectors were transported to Alexandria, Egypt, by the US Navy steamer Canandaigua. In late May, another 32 found passage to the U.S., courtesy of J. Augustus Johnson, the US consul general for Syria, who paid their way "because he could not bear to see American citizens begging of Arabs in their misery to avoid dying of starvation in the streets of Jaffa," according to Charles Hale,

Johnson's counterpart in Egypt."

Wright Wrote: "At the end of July, another nine people, including Edwin McKenzie and his family, found passage home. Finally, in early October, the Quaker City collected the 44 "shamefully humbugged." Back in the U.S., the colonists scattered; only a few families returned to Maine. Their houses in Jaffa were sold to the German Templers, a Protestant sect who also sought to hasten the Second Coming. Learning from the mistakes of Mainers, the Germans avoided farming and instead built hotels and industries. Their community thrived, until

they were expelled after World War I. As for Adams, he would leave the land of his shattered dream in 1868 and was occasionally reported to be preaching in cities around the U.S. One Sunday in 1873, a former colonist recognized Adams' passionate voice drifting out the window of a Philadelphia meeting hall, but when confronted, the preacher denied knowing him.

To this day...

Wright Wrote: "The houses sit on the outskirts of the port of Jaffa, that most ancient of cities rising like a terraced pyramid over the Mediterranean Sea. By Jaffa standards, the dwellings are practically new — just 150 years old — but that's not what turns heads. It's that they're made of wood, an uncommon building material in Israel, where the old structures are stone and the new ones are concrete and few have such steeply pitched roofs.

Two of the houses in this oddball trio have been coated in stucco, nudging them a bit closer to the local aesthetic. The third, at Auerbach Street 10, wears richly stained umber clapboards, the handiwork of its American owners, Reed and Jean Holmes, who have worked for the past 30 years to save these buildings and restore dignity to their builders. A clue to the founders' identities is etched in red crayon on a timber displayed on the first floor of the Holmeses' home: M.T.W. Jonesport, Maine.

That being the home of Mark T. Wentworth

Wright Wrote: "The Holmeses enlisted the support of a blossoming Tel Aviv preservation movement and the Maine State Preservation Commission, and they recruited a Massachusetts builder experienced in repairing 19th-century houses. Their first project in 1990, the house of Addison sea captain Ackley Norton, became home to a popular French restaurant and the inspiration for another property owner to renovate Rolla Floyd's house. In 2002, the Holmeses purchased and restored Auerbach Street 10, now not only their home, but also the Maine Friendship House, a museum dedicated to the story of the Mainers who came here 150 years ago..."

The colony from Jonesport experienced and accomplished two things.

1. They experienced the brutality of the land prior to the Jewish peoples return.
2. They were forerunners in preparing the land for the return of Messiah even though they would not see it happen nor would the majority of them remain in the land for a substantial period of time.

All this occurred 82 years prior to the declaration of the State of Israel.

I want to close with the following from Mark Twain, who wrote about the land and did so at a time comparable to that of the Jonesport Colonists...

Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, they are dull of color, they are unpicturesque in shape. The valleys are unsightly desert fringed with a feeble vegetation that has an expression about it of being sorrowed and despondent. The Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee sleep in the midst of a vast stretch of hill and plain wherein the eye rests upon no pleasant tint, no striking object, no soft picture dreaming in a purple haze or mottled with the shadows of the clouds. Every outline is harsh, every feature is distinct, there is no perspective—distance works no enchantment here. It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land.

[Concerning the Jezreel Valley] There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent—not for thirty miles in either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride ten miles, hereabouts, and not see ten human beings.

Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Nazareth is forlorn... Jericho the accursed, lies a moldering ruin... Bethlehem and Bethany, in their poverty and their humiliation, have nothing about them now to remind one that they once knew the high honor of the Saviour's presence... Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and has become a pauper village. The note Sea of Galilee... and its borders are a silent wilderness; Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala, Bethsaida and Chorazin, and the "desert places" round about them where thousands of men once listened to the Saviour's voice and ate the miraculous bread, sleep in the hush of a solitude that is inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes.

Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land?

Surely there is no place we have wandered to that is able to give it such touching expression as this blistering, naked, treeless land.

To this region one of the prophecies is applied: "I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and I will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate and your cities

waste.” [[Leviticus 26:32-33](#)]

No man can stand [in this deserted area] and say the prophecy has not be fulfilled.

Strange Pilgrimage - <https://downeast.com/history/strange-pilgrimage/>

Second Great Awakening - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Great_Awakening

Third Great Awakening - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Great_Awakening