

# The Seven Wonders of Jewish History

## Part One: Our Survival Wonder #1 - An Eternal Nation

### Source #1 - Bamidbar Rabbah (11:2)

הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו  
אחר כותל מערבי של בית המקדש.

למה?

שנשבע לו הקדוש ברוך הוא שאינו חרב לעולם ושער הכהן ושער חולדה לא חרבו לעולם,  
עד שיחדשם הקדוש ברוך הוא.

משגיח מן החלונות

זו זכות אבות.

מציץ מן החרכים

זו זכות אמהות.

### Source #2 - Yirmiyahu (31:36)

אם-ימשו החקים האלה מלפני נאם-יהוה גם זרע ישראל ישבתו מהיות גוי לפני כל-הימים:

If these laws should ever be annulled by Me declares G-d, only then would the offspring of Israel cease to be a nation before Me for all time.

## Wonder #2 - Dispersion in Exile

### Source #3 - Devarim (4:27)

והפיץ יהוה אתכם בעמים ונשארתם מתי מספר בגוים אשר ינהג יהוה אתכם שמה:

HaShem will scatter you among the peoples, and only a scant few of you shall be left among the nations to which HaShem will drive you.

## Wonder #3 - Anti-Semitism

### Source #4 - Devarim (28:65)

ובגוים ההם לא תרגיע ולא-יהיה מגוח לך-רגלך ונתן יהוה לך שם לב רגז וכליון עינים ודאבון נפש:

Yet even among those nations you shall find no peace, nor shall your foot find a place to rest. HaShem will give you there an anguished heart and eyes that pine and a despondent spirit.

### Source #5 - Tehillim (83:5)

אמרו לכו ונכחידם מגוי ולא-יזכר שם-ישראל עוד:

They say, "Let us wipe them out as a nation; Israel's name will be mentioned no more."

**Summary: The Torah's supernatural predictions - that we would be an eternal nation despite being dispersed and hated - have been fulfilled**

*Part Two: Our Influence  
Wonder #4 - A Small Nation*

**Source #6 - Devarim (4:27)**

וְהִפְיִץ יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם בְּעַמִּים וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם מִתּוֹ מִסְּפָר בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִנְהַג יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה:

HaShem will scatter you among the peoples, and only a scant few of you shall be left among the nations to which HaShem will drive you.

*Wonder #5 - A Light to the Nations*

**Source #7 - Devarim (28:37)**

וְהָיִיתָ לְשִׁמָּה לְמִשְׁלַל וְלִשְׁנִינָה בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־יִנְהַגְךָ יְהוָה שָׁמָּה:

You shall be a consternation, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples to which HaShem will drive you.

**Source #8 - Melachim I (9:7)**

וְהִכַּרְתִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדְמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי לְשִׁמִּי אֲשַׁלַּח מֵעַל פְּנֵי יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁלַל וְלִשְׁנִינָה בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים:

then I will sweep Israel off the land that I gave them; I will reject the House that I have consecrated to My name; and Israel shall become a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

**Source #9 - Divrei HaYamim II (7:20)**

וְנִתְשָׁתִּים מֵעַל אֲדָמַתִּי אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי לְשִׁמִּי אֲשַׁלֵּךְ מֵעַל פְּנֵי וְאֶתְנַנּוּ לְמִשְׁלַל וְלִשְׁנִינָה בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים:

then I will uproot them from My land that I gave them, and this House that I consecrated to My name I shall cast out of my sight, and make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

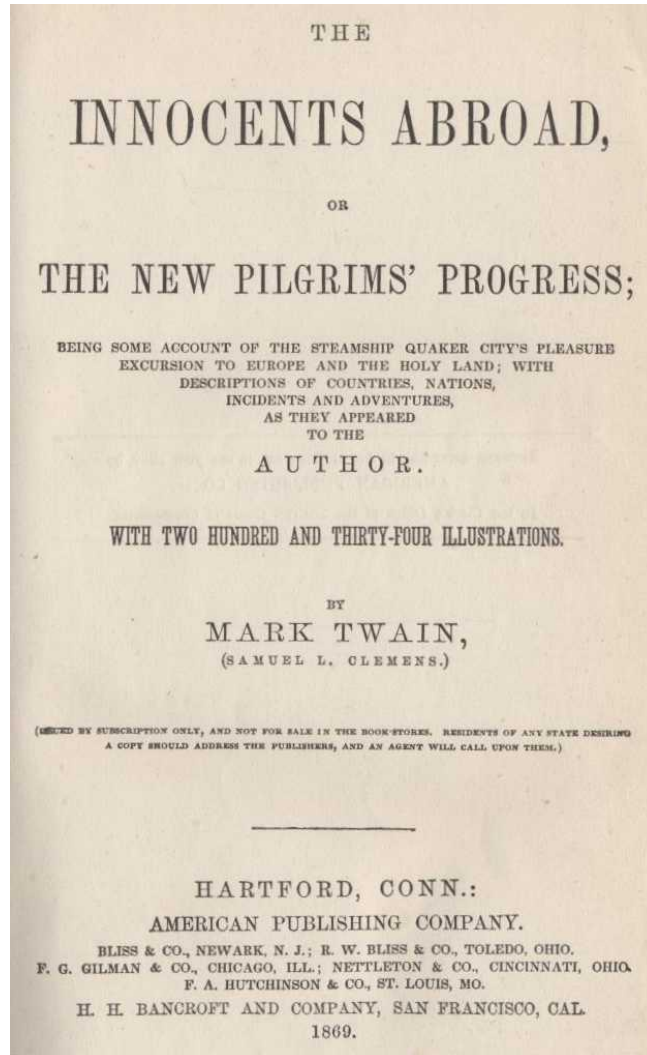
**Source #10 - Yeshayahu (49:6)**

וַיֹּאמֶר נִקְלָה מֵהָיוֹתֶךָ לִי לְעַבְדֵי לְהַקִּימֵם אֶת־שִׁבְטִי יַעֲקֹב וְנִצְוִי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשִּׁיב וְנִתְתַּיֵּר לְאֹר גּוֹיִם לְהָיוֹת יְשׁוּעָתִי עַד־קִצְחָה הָאָרֶץ:

And [HaShem] has said: "It is too little that you should be My servant In that I raise up the tribes of Jacob And restore the survivors of Israel: I will also make you a light of nations, That My salvation may reach the ends of the earth."

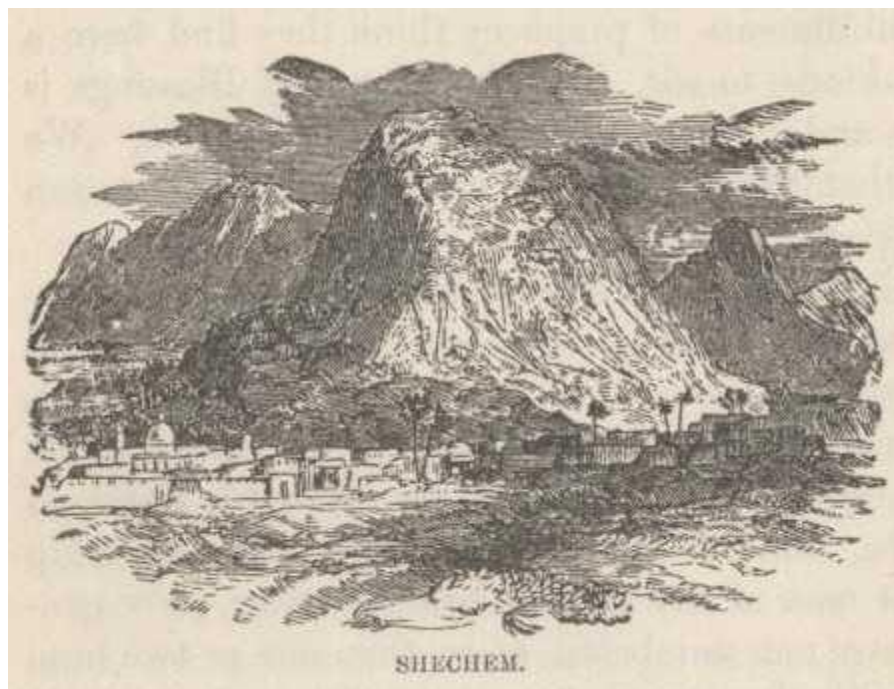
**Summary:** That the Torah predicted that such a tiny nation would serve as a "light unto the nations" testifies to its Divine authorship.

*Part Three: Eretz Yisrael*  
*Wonder #6 - The Bond Between Klal Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael*



## CHAPTER LII.

The narrow canon in which Nablous, or Shechem, is situated, is under high cultivation, and the soil is exceedingly black and fertile. It is well watered, and its affluent vegetation gains effect by contrast with the barren hills that tower on either side. One of these hills is the ancient Mount of Blessings and the other the Mount of Curses and wise men who seek for fulfillments of prophecy think they find here a wonder of this kind—to wit, that the Mount of Blessings is strangely fertile and its mate as strangely unproductive. We could not see that there was really much difference between them in this respect, however.



Shechem is distinguished as one of the residences of the patriarch Jacob, and as the seat of those tribes that cut themselves loose from their brethren of Israel and propagated doctrines not in conformity with those of the original Jewish creed. For thousands of years this clan have dwelt in Shechem under strict tabu, and having little commerce or fellowship with their fellow men of any religion or nationality. For generations they have not numbered more than one or two hundred, but they still adhere to their ancient faith and maintain their ancient rites and ceremonies. Talk of family and old descent! Princes and nobles pride themselves upon lineages they can trace back some hundreds of years. What is this trifle to this handful of old first families of Shechem who can name their fathers straight back without a flaw for thousands—straight back to a period so remote that men reared in a country where the days of two hundred years ago are called “ancient” times grow dazed and bewildered when they try to comprehend it! Here is respectability for you—here is “family”—here is high descent worth talking about. This sad, proud remnant of a once mighty community still hold themselves aloof from all the world; they still live as their fathers lived, labor as their fathers labored, think as they did, feel as they did, worship in the same place, in sight of the same landmarks, and in the same quaint, patriarchal way their ancestors did more than thirty centuries ago. I found myself gazing at any straggling scion of this strange race with a riveted fascination, just as one would stare at a living mastodon, or a megatherium that had moved in the grey dawn of creation and seen the wonders of that mysterious world that was before the flood.



## CHAPTER LIII.

A fast walker could go outside the walls of Jerusalem and walk entirely around the city in an hour. I do not know how else to make one understand how small it is. The appearance of the city is peculiar. It is as knobby with countless little domes as a prison door is with bolt-heads. Every house has from one to half a dozen of these white plastered domes of stone, broad and low, sitting in the centre of, or in a cluster upon, the flat roof. Wherefore, when one looks down from an eminence, upon the compact mass of houses (so closely crowded together, in fact, that there is no appearance of streets at all, and so the city looks solid,) he sees the knobbiest town in the world, except Constantinople. It looks as if it might be roofed, from centre to circumference, with inverted saucers. The monotony of the view is interrupted only by the great Mosque of Omar, the Tower of Hippicus, and one or two other buildings that rise into commanding prominence.

The houses are generally two stories high, built strongly of masonry, whitewashed or plastered outside, and have a cage of wooden lattice-work projecting in front of every window. To reproduce a Jerusalem street, it would only be necessary to up-end a chicken-coop and hang it before each window in an alley of American houses.

The streets are roughly and badly paved with stone, and are tolerably crooked—enough so to make each street appear to close together constantly and come to an end about a hundred yards ahead of a pilgrim as long as he chooses to walk in it. Projecting from the top of the lower story of many of the houses is a very narrow porch-roof or shed, without supports from below; and I have several times seen cats jump across the street from one shed to the other when they were out calling. The cats could have jumped double the distance without extraordinary exertion. I mention these things to give an idea of how narrow the streets are. Since a cat can jump across them without the least inconvenience, it is hardly necessary to state that such streets are too narrow for carriages. These vehicles cannot navigate the Holy City.

...It seems to me that all the races and colors and tongues of the earth must be represented among the fourteen thousand souls that dwell in Jerusalem. Rags, wretchedness, poverty and dirt, those signs and

symbols that indicate the presence of Moslem rule more surely than the crescent-flag itself, abound. Lepers, cripples, the blind, and the idiotic, assail you on every hand, and they know but one word of but one language apparently—the eternal “bucksheesh.” To see the numbers of maimed, malformed and diseased humanity that throng the holy places and obstruct the gates, one might suppose that the ancient days had come again...

...Jerusalem is mournful, and dreary, and lifeless. I would not desire to live here.

## *Wonder #7 - Returning / Teshuva*

### **Source #11 - Devarim (30:1-2)**

וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבֹאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתְתָּ אֶל-לְבָבְךָ בְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִדִּיחָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה:

When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which your G-d has banished you,

וְשִׁבַּתְתָּ עַד-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם אֶתְּךָ וּבְנֵיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ:

and you return to your G-d, and you and your children heed G-d's command with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin upon you this day,