

## God's Providence #5

"God's providence is best seen in the rearview mirror." We are studying God's providence by stories, from scripture or from history, showing how God directs all things to accomplish His ultimate purpose.

### **Story #15: Israel's War of Independence, 1948, the Ship *Lino* (O Jerusalem, by Larry Collins and Dominique PaPierre, especially chapters 12, 22, and 45)**

In 1917 there was a "Balfour Declaration", supporting the establishment in "Palestine" of a national homeland for the Jews. As a result of the defeat of the Ottoman empire in WW1, the "British Mandate" gave Britain temporary authority over "Palestine", including modern Israel and Jordan. What started out well, however, over the years turned to be favorable treatment of the Arabs, and antagonism to the Jews, so that by the end of WW2, the British were effectively doing all they could to hinder Jewish immigration and restrict any arms from getting into the country (unless destined for the Arabs). The Jews were doing what they could to drive the British out, and eventually the British did decide to pull out. It was well understood that at that point the surrounding Arabs would immediately launch a war to kill the Jews and take the land. Because the British were preferring the Arabs and restricting the Jews, under a loosely-pretended neutrality, the expectation was for a quick and bloody slaughter.

As a result of WW2, Europe was awash in military surplus of all kinds. Jews and Arabs alike were doing what they could to buy arms and take them to the area for the coming war. Because of the British naval blockade, however, for the Jews it was easier to buy arms than to get them where they needed to be. Most ship owners were unwilling to risk the blockade, and for the Jews, confiscation of the arms was too big a risk, so they decided to stockpile arms where they could until the end of the Mandate, and then hope they could get them into the country fast enough to prevent slaughter by the Arabs.

The Jews' agent in Europe to buy arms was Ehud Avriel, using money from Jewish American donors. He arranged for a tramp steamer, the *Nora*, to smuggle a load of Czech rifles past British customs by loading the rifles and then covering them with 600 tons of onions. One day the Yugoslavian shipping agent who had found the *Nora* for Avriel happened to congratulate him on being able to get another ship for rifles, the *Lino*. Avriel knew it wasn't him, and rightly guessed that it had to be the work of the Syrians.

He knew that a Syrian ship would be permitted past the British, so they decided to try to sink the ship. A Jewish pilot unsuccessfully combed the Mediterranean for days trying to locate the ship. But then they found that a storm had driven the *Lino* back to the port of Malfetta, where a port inspector discovered the rifles. They suspected the arms were really intended for an Italian Communist Party uprising though, so the government seized the ship and placed it under military guard in the port.

This gave the Jews an opportunity. They sent a couple of frogmen out to sea in a raft, and at night they came in close enough for the frogmen to swim up and attach an innertube filled with TNT to the ship below the water line. For detonators they used containers of potassium plugged by newspaper. After setting it up, they broke vials of sulfuric acid, which would eat through the paper, but take long enough for the frogmen to get away. At 4 in the morning it finally blew up and the *Lino* sank to the bottom of the harbor with 6000 rifles and 8 million rounds of ammunition.

Although the ammunition was a total loss, the Syrians were able to use frogmen to bring up the rifles, treat them against corrosion, and recreate them. The Syrian agent then went looking for another ship to get the arms to the Arabs. He couldn't find one locally, but the hotel proprietor gave him a reference to a shipping agent in Rome. For a million lire, he chartered a ship called the *Argiro* to ship the rifles to Alexandria. "Unfortunately" for him, what he did not know was that the ship went to Tel Aviv because the ship was owned by the Israelis!

While the details of this story are ironic to any observer, to us they are evidence of God's providential hand. Why would we say this?

1. God promised the land of ancient Canaan to Abraham's seed, "forever". Gen. 13:15
2. God said whoever blesses them would be blessed and curses them would be cursed. Gen. 12:2-3
3. God said he would scatter them to the nations, which was done in 70AD and 135AD by the Romans. They remained in Diaspora for all that time, often in great persecution and affliction, yet they maintained faith in God, such as they knew. God preserved them as a distinct people and nation, even without a country to call their own. Deut. 5:25-31, Lk. 21:24
4. He nevertheless gave many prophecies of their eventual return to the land, which began to be realized in the Zionist movement, and their victory in the 1948 war when they became an actual country and nation as the modern state of Israel. This was followed by the reclamation of old Jerusalem in the 1967 war. Isa. 11:11-12, Ezek. 37
5. The eventual result will be a war of the nations against Israel, the return of Christ as their all-along Messiah, the salvation of the surviving remnant of Israel, and the establishment of the 1000-year reign of Christ as the literal King of Israel. Zech. 14, Rev. 19

**Story #16: Mitsuo Fuchida (see articles in [christiantreasury.org](http://christiantreasury.org) and [christianhistoryinstitute.org](http://christianhistoryinstitute.org), also Fuchida's book, From Pearl Harbor to Calvary)**

If you have seen the movie Tora! Tora! Tora!, the most accurate movie done on the attack on Pearl Harbor, you will recognize Mitsuo Fuchida as being the squad leader of the first wave of the Japanese attack. What the movie does not show is what happened to him later, during and after the war.

During the attack his plane was hit 21 times with anti-aircraft fire yet he was unharmed. At the Battle of Midway, he would have been in the air but for an attack of appendicitis. Later he was ordered to Tokyo from Guam, just before the Japanese lost that battle. He had been a staff officer under Vice Admiral Kakuta, and so would have committed suicide along with Kakuta by seppuku (ritual disembowelment by sword, to restore honor after battle loss). He was in Hiroshima on 8/5/1945 but was sent to Tokyo. The next day the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. Following the blast he was sent into Hiroshima as part of an assessment team, and he was the only member of the team who did not die of radiation poisoning.

After the war he was embittered against the US, and thought that we had treated their POWs just as badly as they had ours. He tried to find Japanese POWs to prove it, but found his former flight engineer, who told of a young woman, Peggy Covell, who treated the prisoners with kindness and respect, even though her missionary parents had been captured and beheaded by the Japanese in the Philipines. In fact, they had asked for, and were granted 30 minutes first, to pray for their executioners!

Then he came across a man in Tokyo, who gave him a pamphlet about Jacob DeShazer, one of the Doolittle Raiders whose plane went down in Japanese-controlled China and horribly treated as a POW. He hated the Japanese, but after 2 years he asked for a Bible and was allowed one for 3 weeks, resulting in his salvation. After that he learned Japanese and treated his captors with respect. After the war he returned to Japan to preach the gospel and even started a church in Nagoya, which he had bombed in the war.

Fuchida could not understand what could possibly motivate Peggy Covell and Jacob DeShazer, as it was contrary to everything he knew and believed regarding honor and revenge. He bought a Bible in 1949, and was especially moved by Jesus words, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." In 1950 he received Christ, and thereafter started an evangelistic association and travelled, giving his testimony, and writing books. He said "Looking back, I can see now that the Lord had laid his hand on me so that I might serve him."

What an example of God's grace, but also of his Providence, in preserving Fuchida's life repeatedly, and using the events of Peggy Covell's and Jacob DeShazer's lives to bring him to Christ, and then to use him in ministering to others!

**God has providential control of your life too, and eventually many seemingly unrelated events will come together to bring to pass his will in you, for you, and through you. He will use you for His glory.**