



Lessons in Higher Learning

God's Hand in The Restoration of Israel

Center of Focus

“Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for My Holy Name... And I will not hide My Face anymore from them, when I pour out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.” Ezekiel 39:25-29

One good look at the headlines each week, and every believer should be thankful and be reminded that God is still on His throne and in control. I can tell you that when you live in Jerusalem, that reassurance is more tangible and reliable than anywhere else I have ever been. To know that you are at the center of focus for the Creator, who always has His eyes on Jerusalem, provides a true sense of security and purpose. To be part of the revealing of His eternal covenant with His Chosen people also brings a humbling, sobering, and overwhelming sense of the miraculous.

Each day in Israel the promises of God continue to be seen. These promises are being fulfilled and the prophetic future is being revealed. Israel is moving from a nation reborn to being a nation restored. The prophet Ezekiel spoke of the restoration of the fortunes of Jacob and God pouring out His Spirit upon Israel, and I can tell you that it is happening at a tremendous pace. While the nations watch the diminishing of their empires, Israel's economy continues to remain strong in spite of fighting a war on seven fronts with its Arab neighbors. Despite the months of violent fighting and constant onslaught of rocket attacks, Israel has set new records in miracles happening on the front lines with her soldiers. Aliyah (new immigration of Jews to Israel) is on the increase as more and more hear the call to “come home.” God is pouring out His Spirit and His blessings upon His nation and His people as the strong sense of being “one nation and one family” continues to grow.

“Therefore, thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name. They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies' lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. and I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God” (Ezekiel 39:25-29).

God's Hand Over Jerusalem

What a difference a year can make in the change of atmosphere and direction. For decades US presidents had kept a commitment of a close alliance with the state of Israel. As many have kept positive rhetoric and financial assistance for Israel's security, it is a miracle that former President Donald Trump made the most tangible statement to the world by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's

capital a few years ago. While US President Donald Trump did not run as a religious or even conservative candidate, his commitment to keep his word by moving the US embassy to Jerusalem seems to have aligned with Scripture concerning Jerusalem as the Eternal Capital of Israel. That decisive action was quite opposite the atmosphere of the previous administration where former president Barak Obama used his last weeks in office to abstain on the UN resolution 2334, viewed by many as true anti-Israel politics. Watching the changing of world leaders over the last few years as Jerusalem celebrated 50 years of reunification under Jewish hands, and experiencing Israel's 70th birthday as a nation reborn have truly been both inspiring and encouraging for so many in Israel and around the world. As Christians, knowing that the Jewish Messiah will return to Jerusalem to set up His kingdom makes the times seem closer than ever before.

In observing elections over the past few years, it's good to recall **Romans 13** where Paul reminds us that the authority of God supersedes all others and is the assurance that all Christians should have that no matter who is leading nations at any given moment. They are placed there for the fulfillment of the purposes of Almighty God. God is not surprised by any election, appointment or resignation of any political figure anywhere in the world.

".... For there is no authority that is not from God, and the existing authorities have been placed where they are by God." (Romans 13:1, CJB)

An Awakening of the End

The upcoming year will bring more unveilings of prophetic fulfillment as God continues to reveal His plans of restoration for Israel. Many are waiting with bated breath to see what will happen with Israel hopefully continuing to keep Gaza under her control in order to rebuild Gaza into a beautiful Israeli Riviera. Will a man made peace come about? For Jews and Christians alike, we remain in agreement that there will be no real and lasting peace until the coming of the Messiah!

As things continue to progress in Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, so many around the world are beginning to wake up to the fact that "something's up." While Israel's rebirth as a nation was a "wake-up call" to Christian theologians around the globe, especially those fully rooted in replacement theology, the focus of so many is turning to Israel NOW more than ever. As God continues to restore the nation's land, its people, its wealth, and its ruined cities many Christians are watching and asking about the coming of Messiah. Does this all point to the prophesied end of days? If so, when will these "end of days" be here? There are, and always have been, those around the world that feel they have the answer to those questions. Yet so many predicted dates have come and gone. However, when His disciples asked the same question, Yeshua explained many of the conditions concerning the last days and let them know that ***"No one knows about that day or hour, ... but only the Father."*** Another reference concerns the times being as in the days of Noah. A quick look back to Genesis 6: ***"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"*** (Genesis 6:5, NKJV). Looking at our world full of selfish sinful desire, greed, anti-Semitism, and even anti-God conditions today, it is quite easy for even non-believers to see things painted more and more in this light of wickedness and evil. As Scripture reminds us that the intent and the thoughts of the heart are only seen by God, we must also remember that only the Father will know about that day or hour, which means the hearts of humanity will be playing a part in the timing of the end as well.

At the same time, it appears that many from different backgrounds and faiths are discussing the last days today. Jewish Rabbis say we have entered the darkest dark, just before the break of

day. The footsteps of the Messiah can be heard. Christian leaders speak with great urgency of the return of Yeshua at any moment. Even secular progressive non-believers are sensing the planet cannot take much more, and the end is in sight. It seems that deep inside the spirit of all human kind, there is a stirring of urgency. For those who understand that scripturally, Israel is the time clock of biblical prophecy, the fact that so much is now being focused on and turned to Israel has many reconsidering their past understanding and teaching.

With today's reach of technology, satellites blanket the entire earth with broadcast service, and even in the remotest of areas of continents where you find the poorest and most deplorable conditions. Yet those living there have cell phones, and satellite television. Has the message of salvation reached the whole of the earth? When examining the full text in Scripture it reads the "good news of the kingdom" and perhaps that message of the kingdom is what is now spreading as God himself is repairing the breach between Jew and Gentile and preparations for a kingdom are underway. Is it possible that the unifying of all the true believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel, is also part of that good news of the kingdom? The restoration of the understanding that we are connected to and nourished by the root of a single tree, and this is the message that has taken hold and is spreading in our time.

Crossing the Barrier of Division

The enemy is masterful at creating division within the church. When I ask my Jewish friends how much division there is in the Jewish faith, they usually mention five, six, or so different "divisions" of Judaism. In a faith group numbering, just over 15 million on the planet that's not so many. Yet I was surprised one day when I was asked the reverse question by my Jewish friend. How many divisions are there in the Christian faith? A quick Internet search will reveal numbers in the thousands, with some saying around forty-five thousand. In pondering the numbers, I remember a time when I was walking with my father during my childhood. We came upon a tree that had been struck by lightning and could not believe how the blow had turned such a strong and mighty tree into thousands of splinters heading off in different directions that no human could ever put back together. As believers many have received the revelation of the need to repair the breach between Jews and Christians. I feel the Lord is also wanting us to consider the division within our own camp. While the nation of Israel was once divided into 12 tribes and two kingdoms, it pains me deeply to think of how many "tribes and kingdoms" the "church" has today. What kind of witness is this to our Jewish brothers and sisters as we reach across the table to offer a hand of friendship and unity, while our own house is so divided?

"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." (Matthew 12:25, NKJV)

In knowing that full message, I truly believe the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is what has brought this revelation. In considering how many of you have come to this revelation, my heart continues to ache for those around us bearing the "title" of Christian, yet still not understanding their connection to the roots of the faith. Far too many are still caught up in Christian anti-Semitism, and Replacement Theology. Perhaps our personal commission may be to begin crossing the manmade divisions of denominational differences, incorrect teaching, language and cultural barriers, and begin to leave the comfort of spending time with those who are "like minded." I believe it's time to begin to spread the understanding of the kingdom beyond our own circles.

I would ask each of you to seek the Lord in finding ways to enlarge your own "tent pegs" in the year ahead. Ask the Lord to help you develop a true sense of urgency for the time and season we are in, and to keep a keen eye on developments in Israel, while reaching across those traditional division lines and sharing the message of the coming kingdom of Messiah with those who may not

fully understand it scripturally. Some statistics say that each of us has the potential to impact the understanding of thousands of people within our sphere of connection on any issue, and as many as 80,000 people over our lifetime. With today's technology that number is continually increasing, and produces a ripple effect, reaching those in your circle, and they in turn reaching out to theirs and so on. Let us all work together for the glory of our Lord, doing all things according to and in His perfect will. Let's be eager to share the message of His coming kingdom and how Israel, and especially Jerusalem, is the prophetic time piece, and the location of the throne of the coming Messiah.

As a final thought for you to consider, the families of the Land of Israel are reuniting from the four corners of the Earth. Jerusalem has been declared the Eternal Capital and its shaking off its dust and putting on new garments while the city is being rebuilt and fully restored. If there is going to be a wedding, I suggest the Bride start gathering her family together and begin preparing as well.

Kevin Howard