

March 2006

Israel and the Church

*“And she said,
‘The glory has departed from Israel,
for the ark of God was taken...’
and all the house of Israel
lamented after the Lord.”*

1 Samuel 4:22; 7:2



Israel - the chosen nation, whom God calls the 'apple of His eye', the nation chosen by almighty God to be clay in His hand, chosen to bring about His kingdom; Israel, *“to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh;”* (Romans 9:4-5)

Israel - rather than permitting God to form her in His love and wisdom, is choosing to form herself, in accordance with her own understanding, dreams and ambitions; Israel - today as in the past, is determined to go her own way.

In 1 Samuel 4, Israel deludes herself with the idea that she can take the Ark of God into the battlefield as if it were a magic totem which she can treat as she likes. When she builds the temple she turns it into a den of robbers. Her stubborn refusal to respond to the word of Jeremiah with repentance and to learn her lesson from the exile of the 10 tribes brings upon her the destruction of the temple and her exile to Babylon.

After 70 years of dreadful suffering, shame and humiliation, she returns and rebuilds the temple, yet once again it becomes a house of merchandise. When her promised Redeemer arrives and offers her the eternal kingdom, when her true King calls her to forsake hypocrisy and cease her religious activities, when her everlasting High Priest exhorts her to worship God in spirit and truth, she crucifies Him, thus Jerusalem and her temple turn to ruins and God forces her out of her Promised Land once again.

Wandering around the world for the next 2000 years, she tries in vain to understand why such calamities, pain, sorrow and tragedies come upon her. Desperately she cries, 'next year in Jerusalem'. Finally, after 2000 years, her dream comes true. In 1948 she returns to her Promised Land, but the old city of Jerusalem continues to be *“trampled under foot by the Gentiles.”* (Luke 21:24)

In 1967 Muslim Arab forces gather along Israel's borders threatening to annihilate Israel. The 6-Day War begins. But miraculously by the grace and power of almighty God, the old city of Jerusalem returns to Israel. Jerusalem is no longer *“trampled under foot by the Gentiles.”* However, Israel continues to pursue her own path, as she has throughout history. Still today she is unwilling to rely solely on God, to trust, obey and hope in Him. Still today she depends on covenants with other nations, and puts her faith, no longer in chariots and horses, in military might and worldly 'wisdom'.

Now we must look into the mirror - what do we see reflected?

We

- who have come to the cross,
- who have been cleansed from all our sin, impurity and iniquity,
- who have already been delivered from darkness to light and from death to life,
- who have become the very children of God,
- who have access to the Holy of Holies
- and the dominion which Adam lost,
- who are grafted into the olive tree with our names in the book of life,

are we walking in the footsteps of Israel?

**Are we going astray by following our own way like Israel?
Or are we relying on, putting our trust in, and obeying our Lord and our God?
Why is it that for so many, the simple truth of our Lord's teaching is no longer our true life?**

- Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.
- Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
- Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.
- Forgive up to seventy times seven!
- Love one another, just as I have loved you.
- Do not judge lest you be judged.
- Do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for you body, as to what you shall put on; is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?
- Do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself.
- He who loves his life will lose it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.
- Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.
- Give your other cheek.
- Walk the extra mile.
- Feed the poor.
- Clothe the naked.
- Look after the widows and orphans.
- Visit the sick and the prisoners.
- The strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength.
- Think others more important than yourself.
- Humble yourself.
- Receive one another as Christ also received us.
- Whether you eat or drink, live or die - whatever you do - do all to the glory of God.
- Live in unity.
- Proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom.
- Set the captives free.
- Make disciples.
- ...

**Israel entered her Promised Land but we by faith have entered the promised kingdom.
We must ask ourselves, is our promised kingdom, our living water and bread of life, our true temple
and hope which is deep within us, being "trampled under foot by the Gentiles"?**

Do we allow our Lord to deal with our lives as clay in the hands of the potter?

Are we fulfilling His heart's desire to expand His kingdom, or are we in exile seeking our own dreams and ambitions?

Do we bring Him glory, or has the glory departed? Is our ark broken? Are we lamenting?

Are we experiencing the promised abundance of life?

Dear beloved friends, whom do we truly want to please?

Why is our human reasoning preventing us from fully trusting, obeying, and placing the Lord in the very center of our lives?

What will it take for us to truly abandon our lives into His faithful hands and let Him form us in accordance with his own love, wisdom and purpose which He has for each of us?

Have we forgotten that this world is passing away and we are only passing through?

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
(Philippians 3:20)

It seems to me that the pure teaching of God’s Word, the fellowship of the saints, prayer, breaking of bread and proclaiming the Gospel, which were sufficient for the early Church, are no longer sufficient for the Church of today. To my sorrow, most of the Church is coming up with all kinds of strategies, techniques, manipulation and emotional hype, including great promises of prosperity, to attract people.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.” (2 Timothy 4:3)

May we all come to the full realization of the divine power which is within us and of the cross with all of its implications on our daily lives. We cannot afford to walk in the footsteps of Israel! We must 'put on Christ', the full armor, depend only on God, trust and obey the simplicity of His Word, follow with all our hearts the example of His walk on earth and be filled with the Holy Spirit to bear much fruit.

In the name of our Lord, I beseech you beloved, to avoid the delusion suffered by Israel. May we never regard the name of Jesus as a magic word on our lips, the way the Israelites treated the Ark of God. Remember, the kingdom which God promised to Israel shall surely come to her, but the comfort of His people and the task of provoking them to jealousy with the Gospel, the Lord has left in your hands!

After World War 2, a group of German students volunteered to help rebuild an English cathedral that had been severely damaged by German bombs. As work progressed, they become concerned about a large statue of Jesus, with outstretched arms and the inscription beneath, *“Come unto me.”*

They had particular difficulty trying to restore the hands, which had been completely destroyed. After much discussion, they decided that the hands should remain missing and they changed the inscription to: *“Christ has no hands but ours.”*

While God is restoring the physical nation of Israel for His glory, to fulfill His purpose and promises, He is also initiating a spiritual rebirth in His land.

Many believers world wide are discarding their romantic notions of Israel in response to revelation about the role of Israel in God’s plan. The Lord is using Trumpet of Salvation to teach, encourage and mobilize them to proclaim the Gospel in Israel and make disciples. Replacement theology is being attacked with sound teaching - praise the Lord - while many movements are rising to take the Church back to its roots. The Holy Spirit is shaking and shaping the body of Christ.

I dearly love you; my heart is full of praise and thanksgiving to my Lord for your dear hands which are on the plow with us. God only knows how thankful we are for your obedience to His call, for your hope, trust and reliance on Him, for your true love, faithfulness and prayers, for your joyful, generous giving to Trumpet at this most important time of building the Lord’s new center, for your participation in the summer campaigns, for all that you are in Him, we give Him glory!

“Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.” (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

*Because He lives,
Jacob & Elisheva Damkani*