

The Hope of Israel

Could prophecy be unfolding before our very eyes?

In today's world, standing at the bus stop in a large metropolitan city late at night when businesses have closed and the busses are about to make their last run, can be a fearful experience. Especially, as a couple of shady characters stand nearby in the night, seemingly to wait for the same bus as you.

Your mind starts to wonder if they are actually waiting for the bus or are they out to cause some trouble. Your concern starts to turn into fear as the men look at you and then whisper something to one another.

You try not to make eye contact, as you tend to freeze up a bit while your heart slowly begins to sink. But just then, along comes a tall and strong looking individual who is dressed in a nicely pressed military uniform. He is obviously en route to or from duty as he carries a rather large duffle bag matching his sizable build. At that moment, your fear turns into calm and you feel much more secure knowing that you're not alone. You now know someone is near that can certainly help, if there is a need.

You're Not Alone

Many of us can appreciate that kind of assurance, and one such individual was a servant of Elisha the prophet, who was filled with fear once he saw the Aramean (Assyrian) army gathered together in force in the near distance. The Arameans were at odds with Israel and their close proximity was not meant to be a friendly one, because the king, King Aram, was upset that Elisha knew his personal war planning strategies:

When the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he would confer with his officers and say, "We will mobilize our forces at such and such a place." But immediately Elisha, the man of Elohim, would warn the king of Israel, "Do not go near that place, for the Arameans are planning to mobilize their troops there." So the king of Israel would send word to the place indicated by the man of Elohim, warning the people there to be on their guard. This happened several times. The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called in his officers and demanded, "Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?" "It's not us, my master," one of the officers replied. "Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!" (2 Kings 6:8-12 NLT)

The servant of Elisha was afraid, but not for long. Once Elisha was told of the presence of the Aramean army, and then saw them, he asked Yahweh to open the eyes of his servant to see what the prophet could also see. That is, a vast Spiritual army that was more in number than those in the Aramean army:

"Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha prayed, "O Yahweh, open his eyes and let him see!" Yahweh opened his servant's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire, 2 Kings 6:16-17 (NLT).

What a sight that would be! What fear would there have been left? It can be surmised that the fear would have left the servant at that moment, and a feeling of awe and relief would have then entered.

Yahweh is for Israel

Yahweh was with Israel that day. In fact, going back approximately a thousands years from the Prophet Elisha's time, our heavenly Father had been working out a plan that was originally revealed to Abram (meaning, exalted father), whom later was named Abraham (meaning, exalted father of a multitude).

Yahweh had said to Abram in Gen 12:2, "I will cause you to become the father of a great nation." Indeed through his son Isaac who fathered Jacob, who was then named Israel (meaning, overcomes with the help of El, Gen 32:28), a great nation came forth.

The descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob became the 12-tribes that made up the small group of Israelites who grew up in the land of Goshen in Egyptian territory. They grew in the land of Egypt under the protection of Yahweh through miraculous providential workings made by the Almighty through Joseph, whom his own brothers had betrayed into slavery. Interestingly enough, their descendants became slaves for a time under the new Pharaoh who had not known Joseph, Ex 1:8. Not to worry though, because it was Yahweh's good will to work out His plan.

Take time to read of the accounts above in chapters 37 through 47 of the book of Genesis in your own Bible. It is well worth the time to review how Yahweh turned even an extremely troublesome situation into something remarkably good. This short example shows us that Yahweh is for Israel's well being.

Exodus Intervention

At the beginning of the Exodus and Yahweh's remarkable intervention from the many plagues destroying Egypt, to the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds), we find Israel officially became an independent and separate nation for the first time:

Then he [Pharaoh] called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship Yahweh, as you have said, Ex 12:31 (NASB).

The road was not as easy as everyone would have liked, and it was evident by the complaining the Israelites did, which had woefully provoked Yahweh to wrath. Yahweh declared, Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it, Num 14:22-23 (KJV). In reading through the recorded history, Yahweh was extremely patient and merciful with the people, but they continued to push the envelope, so to speak, causing their ultimate death.

There is certainly the danger that those who complain today will, in effect, turn back to the figurative Egypt that we know of as the world and its way of doing things.

However, there are people today who are trying to live correctly as they understand Scripture to teach. Regrettably, though, many of these people are taught incorrect things and are led astray. At least, for the time being, they are in a semidarkness having some truth along with good intentions. They're not outright rebellious, but they're not fully obedient either.

Israel's Shortcomings

Yahweh allowed Joshua and Caleb because of their complete faithfulness and obedience, plus all those under the age of 20 (since they were not of the age of accountability) to enter the promised land about 3400 years ago (1400 BCE), but there are still promises of a people entering a promised land in the future...the land of Israel. Some of that may be being fulfilled in part with some of the Jews entering the land of the newly formed State of Israel from the year 1948 on to our time.

The 12 tribes of Israel, because of their continued disobedience, were conquered some 700-850 years after having had many kings (some good, some bad), all after they settled into the Promised Land.

Part of the problem, from the start, was that they allowed some of the other nations to dwell among them which they were warned against doing, Deut 7:1-4. Their pagan influence and the basic human nature of the Israelites (Ex 32:9) succumbed to the wicked ways and practices that had already been there in the land previously.

Because of the backsliding of Israel and the taking on of foreign worship (1 Kings 11:33), even though Yahweh having had much patience and granting time for repentance, finally replaced His blessings with curses/punishment.

As already mentioned, the Israelites were taken captive, not as a whole, but rather as two divided groups. First, in the one group, were the northern 10 tribes made of Reuben, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph (Ephraim/Manasseh). They were carried off to Assyria (2 Kings 18:11), estimated to be around 722 BCE.

Secondly, there is the group of the Southern tribes, which are Benjamin, Levi, and Judah. Jews, for their false worship and unfaithful dealings with Yahweh, were taken captive to Babylon, about 586 BCE, 2 Kings 25:1, 9, 11.

Ephraim and Judah

Ephraim (dominant tribe of the 10) and Judah (dominant tribe of the 2; Levi received no land) are Israel. At times Ephraim is called Israel. Judah is referred to also as Israel, at times. Both make up Israel, as a whole nation of people.

The point is: Jews, though being part of Israel, does not make them Israel. It's very important to understand the difference. Saying, "Jews are all of Israel" would be like saying, "Texas is all of America." It just isn't true.

Confusion comes from those who teach that the Jews are all of Israel. To show the distinction between the two, we can see from Scripture that Israel and the Jews even fought one another in battle:

Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day, 2 Kings 16:5-6 (KJV).

In the book of Daniel we read, not of a fight, but of the distinction between Judah and Israel:

O Yahweh, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel...through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of 5 their trespass that they have trespassed against thee...Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon

us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of Elohim, because we have sinned against him, Dan 9:7,11 (KJV).

The Israelites (the northern 10 tribes), separate from Judah, were dispersed among the nations from the Assyrian captivity. And I scatter them among nations, And they are spread through lands, According to their way, and according to their doings, I have judged them, Ezek 36:19 (YLT). Israel hath been swallowed up, Now they have been among nations, As a vessel in which is no delight, Hosea 8:8 (YLT). There is no delight in the vessel since they are the “lost” tribes. Lost, meaning they are not readily identified, since they had been assimilated or merged (married) into the other peoples and cultures around them.

There are theories and some compelling evidence that America, and even Great Britain, make up a large accumulation of Israelites. Yahweh’s word does say that the descendants of Abraham would make up “a multitude of nations” plural (Gen 17:4-6), and be like, “the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered” (Gen 32:12).

After all this, does Yahweh still care about Israel? As we’ve seen from the beginning, Yahweh our Elohim cares for His people and has been working out a plan. That plan involves not just Judah, but “all Israel.” Take special note of the following verse:

For behold, I am commanding, And I will shake the house of Israel among all nations As grain is shaken in a sieve, But not a kernel will fall to the ground, Amos 9:9 (NASB). Israel is the apple of His eye (Duet 32:10), the center of the eye is the pupil and that is most precious to Yahweh, as it would be to anyone.

A Remnant

The Father will bring a “remnant” of Israel out of the whole of Israel, as Isaiah 10:22 prophesies, “For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.”

The remnant of Israel will be obedient to Yahweh’s laws:

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid, Zeph 3:13 (KJV).

They will come together in Yahweh’s kingdom and will learn and follow Yahweh’s way of life, Isa 2:3. Today we can learn this way of life, and live it, setting the example for others.

Israel Today

Many churches today claim they have replaced Israel, and are now the Spiritual Israelites that Yahweh seeks. No physical Israelites, only Spiritual. It’s called “Replacement Theology.”

Chapter 11 of the book of Romans is often referred to prove the idea. But, in context, Paul actually starts out earlier in Rom 9:2, basically saying, “to the Israelites belong the adoption as sons.” He also reminds us in Rom 9:27 that it is “a remnant that will be saved,” referring to Israelites, as Scripture plainly shows.

So why does Paul refer to “Gentiles” later in Romans chapter 11? Could the word for gentiles actually be referring to Israelites who were assimilated into the nations and so vast in number that they, “cannot be numbered”? (Gen 32:12)

In The Mystery of the Gentiles, Ted R. Weiland writes:

“The Apostle Paul identified the Corinthians to whom he wrote his first epistle as the descendants of the Israelites who departed Egypt and traversed the wilderness with Moses: ‘Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that ALL OUR FATHERS WERE UNDER THE CLOUD, AND ALL PASSED THROUGH THE SEA.....,’ 1 Corinthians 10:1.

“Paul identified these same Corinthians as gentiles: ‘Ye know that YE WERE GENTILES, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led,’ 1 Corinthians 12:2.

“Was Paul confused, double minded — or did he know something that most Christians today do not know?”

Paul tried to be clear and said in Rom 11:25-27 (KJV), For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel (Judah?), until the fulness of the Gentiles (Ephraim?) be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of [Z]ion the Deliverer, and shall turn away unrighteousness from Jacob (Father of the 12 tribes): For this is my [new] covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. Batya Wooten writes in Who is Israel?:

“O house of Ephraim Israel and House of Judah...the Father called your name, a green olive tree, beautiful in fruit and form. But because of your sins He pronounced evil against you. Yet take heart O house of Israel, take heart O house of Judah for [Yahweh] has promised: ‘It will come about after I have uprooted and scattered them, after some have become like degenerate, foreign vines, then my compassions will again be kindled and I will regather them. I will bring them back, each one to his own inheritance, each one to his own land. This is my promise. For these two olive branches are my two witnesses. And I will grant authority to them, for they are the two sons of fresh oil who are standing by [Yahweh] of all the earth.’ (Jeremiah 2:18-21; 11:10, 16-17; 12:15; Hosea 1-1; Zechariah 4:11-14; Revelation 11:3- 4)”

Is Yahweh Great? May He be praised forever, as we get a glimpse of His magnificent love for His people. We know that Yahweh’s word cannot be broken, John 10:35. Did you know James addressed “the twelve tribes” in the start of his book, James 1:1?

Israel Not Forsaken

If Christians (house of Israel?) and Jews (house of Judah) are semi-blind now, due to Satan’s influence, could it be that many of them will eventually have the blinders taken off so they can see the full truth, due to Yahweh’s intervention?

Many times people seek a higher power when they are in trouble. And we are told that specifically Jacob (all of Israel) will have trouble in the last days:

In all history there has never been such a time of terror. It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel. Yet in the end, they will be saved! (Jer 30:7 NLT)

It will be a time of such great tribulation that after all is said and done, an estimated total of two thirds of the world’s population will be destroyed, as related to us in the book of Revelation. That would leave one third that would make it (as through a refiner’s fire, Zech 13:9) into the coming Kingdom of Yahweh.

With what has been gone over so far, what we see next is indeed interesting. The World Factbook, by The Central Intelligence Agency, 2006 online edition gives the

following statistics: World population 6,525,170,264 (July 2006 est.), Christians 33.03%, Jews 0.23% (2004 est.).

Could it be that Yahweh's plan is much bigger than we have realized? Are not His thoughts higher than ours? What does Revelation reveal?

Do not injure the land, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we may seal the servants of our Elohim upon their foreheads." And I heard the number of those sealed, (one hundred and forty four thousands were sealed out of all the tribes of the sons of Israel): of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed. After these things I saw, and lo, a great multitude, which to number no one was able [to count (Gen 32:12)], out of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and crying with a great voice, saying, "The salvation is to Him who is sitting upon the throne--to our Elohim, and to the Lamb!" And all the messengers stood around the throne, and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell upon their face, and bowed before Elohim, saying, "Amen! the blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the strength, are to our Elohim--to the ages of the ages! Amen!" And answer did one of the elders, saying to me, "These, who have been arrayed with the white robes--who are they, and whence came they?" and I have said to him, "Sir, thou hast known;" and he said to me, "These are those who are coming out of the great tribulation, and they did wash their robes, and they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb; because of this are they before the throne of Elohim, and they do service to Him day and night in His sanctuary, and He who is sitting upon the throne shall tabernacle over them; they shall not hunger any more, nor may the sun fall upon them, nor any heat, because the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and wipe away shall Elohim every tear from their eyes." (Rev 7:3-17 YLT)

If the 144,000 are the bride, are the rest of the multitudes the wedding guests or bridesmaids? We cannot be absolutely sure, at this point. However, this may give some food for thought as we continue to look into Yahweh's word for understanding and are enlightened by His Spirit. We know for sure, that Israel will not be forsaken, and that they are still in Yahweh's Master Plan for the future.

Waiting for the Bus

Many are waiting for a figurative bus, so to speak, but many of those who wait, don't fully understand who they really are or just exactly what they should be doing. Many believers await a so-called rapture, to be taken away to a heavenly home. While they wait they may walk a moral path, but they don't walk with Yahshua, since many of them don't keep the law as He Himself did in obedience to the Heavenly Father.

Orthodox Jews still sit waiting for what they think would be the 1st coming of a Savior, while other Jews wait for the 2nd coming, but many of them neither call on His or

His Father's true names. Many still follow traditions that obliterate the law of Yahweh, making it of no effect.

Yahweh's people who have understanding, and who are figurative soldiers in Yahweh's army, will continue to teach and preach the truth, even into the tribulation. At the end time, the people of Israel may finally awaken out of their slumber, Deut 4:30. It is certainly hopeful that Israel will understand fully the truth of Yahweh and Yahshua and Their way of living life. It is in fact what is needed, according to Scripture, Duet 11:27-28.

It will take patience on the part of the saints to overcome the trials to come: Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of Elohim and the faith of Yahshua, Rev 14:12 (NKJV).

Though fear may initially grip Israel during the coming tribulation, there is also relief from the distress, if they will fully submit themselves to Yahweh through Yahshua the Messiah.

Now to him that is able to establish you according to my evangel and the preaching of Yahshua Messiah, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal Elohim, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith: to the only wise El, through Yahshua Messiah, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen, Romans 16:25-27 (ASV)

"For I am with you," says Yahweh, "to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished."... For thus says Yahweh: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O Yahweh, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!' Behold, I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with child, together; A great throng shall return there. They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn. Hear the word of Yahweh, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock,'" Jer 31:7-10; 30:11 (NKJV).

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me, Psalms 50:15 (NKJV).

The promises and assurance that our Father Yahweh will do what He has said He'll do are altogether true. Let us do our part by helping others learn and doing what needs to be done, under the inspiration of His Spirit ...Yahweh be magnified.

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