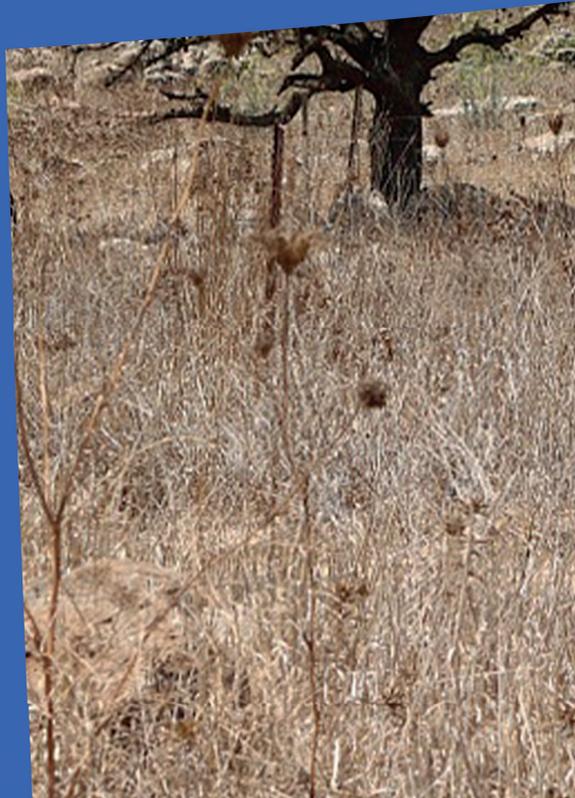




***Redemption at the heart  
of Prophecy  
Looking into the  
prophets of the Bible***

Written by Derek Rous

Produced by  
Prayer for Israel.



# REDEMPTION AT THE HEART OF PROPHECY

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## CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

One thing you can't avoid noticing in the Bible is that the life of a prophet was not an easy one. All of them enjoyed the privilege of close communion with God, but also a life of conflict, trial, pain and suffering from the community to whom they were called to serve. In the end, many faced an early death. Please read Hebrews 11:32-40

But how could you know whether a prophet was from God or not? The answer is simple. Whilst false prophets always acted as a group and wanted to speak pleasantries, never challenging the lifestyle of the people. By contrast true prophets were always loners and realists who spoke about painful truths in order to bring a message from the heart of God, which if acted upon, would bring the hearers back into a relationship with God. Theirs was an intercessory ministry and they acted as priests for people. Even so, there were times when even with their best and faithful efforts, God told them to stop because He was withdrawing Himself from speaking anymore to His people.

Take Jeremiah for example in Jer 11:14, despite identifying himself with the people by confessing their sin, God repeats Himself that He will not hear their cry 14:11-12. Jeremiah's grief reaches a peak in 20:7 when he appeals to God to relieve him of his post. With tears, he passionately lays down his commission only to find that the Word

of God in him was like a burning fire and he became weary of holding it back. Now he's in a conflict. Fear on every side but inside this burning fire! Finally, he discovers and proclaims triumphantly, "But the Lord is with me as a mighty awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten."

Perhaps that's why there are so few true prophets today - those fashioned in the Biblical mold. The privilege is great but the cost is high. Of course there are numerous prophetic ministries but how many can truly be regarded as Prophets of God bringing God's unchanging message?

## JESUS IS CENTRAL

Rev 19:10 says, "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See [thou do it] not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God - for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The book of Revelation is a true prophecy from a man suffering for his faith, designed to inform believers of things that must take place shortly [in a short time].

More importantly, its central theme is the message of redemption which had come through the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. His testimony had been at the core of Prophetic utterance from the beginning and now was at the centre of this message from John for the last days. It showed that the purpose of prophecy for Israel throughout history was to open their eyes to the redemptive plan of

God, that would finally be fulfilled and made manifest through salvation in Yeshua of Nazareth.

Redemption is the heart of all the prophet's messages to Israel, as it is to all the nations that dwell at the ends of the earth. For Israel the message of the prophets was "Return to Me! Turn back to Me!" Zech 1:8. It continues into the NT with the apostles, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19 To the world it was and still is, repent and believe the good news—"There is no other name given under heaven where by we must be saved!" Acts 4:12.

### **KINGDOM NOW?**

So the message was not primarily about preaching a "Kingdom Now" of justice and peace to the world, as commendable as it seems and "bringing in the Kingdom of God," since this could never come to pass until Jesus comes Himself to rule and reign. Every effort at righteous government over the past 2000 years through the power of a State Church has only ended in misery and failure.

Why? Because the preaching of the Gospel of Kingdom of God was never intended to set up righteous government outside of Israel, run by Jewish or Gentile Christians. Rather the job of saved believers in Jesus was to point the way to the Kingdom that could only be entered individually by faith in the person and completed work of Jesus the Messiah. 1 Cor 1:23; 2 Tim 4:2 He would be the Saviour for Israel first and then for the world – for which God also had a love. John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9. Here the world is the one

He made and not the corrupted world inhabited by Satan. Only Jesus would bring the Kingdom into reality by His coming in person to rule and reign as The King. But before that comes to pass, life will get increasingly difficult for believers in Jesus. 2 Tim 3:12 To repeat - the message of the prophets, taken up by the NT apostles was that the only way to establish the Kingdom of God was not by the efforts of men to control laws and governments, but to preach a faithful gospel message that would make citizens of the Kingdom, through repentance and faith in His finished work.

No matter how diligent, energetic and visionary people might be, the efforts of men would always be inadequate. It's one thing to yearn and pray for it but only God will build His Kingdom and the new Church needed to recognize this as it prayed the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray privately, recorded in Matt 6:9-13. Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world, if it was, then His disciples would fight. Their job was to faithfully preach the way into the Kingdom and consequently make disciples of all nations and not try to build a political entity based on God's Laws.

### **MESSAGE OF THE NT CHURCH**

Acts 3:18-26 The Apostles message to Israel after Pentecost is that prophecy has been fulfilled in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The prophets foretold it. It happened in their midst but they have just killed the prince of life. Their response was inevitable. If that's the case, "What can they do?" Acts 2:37 And the answer was – nothing – except

“Repent and be baptized” “Be saved” Acts 2:38, 40 “Repent and be converted” Acts 3:19 It wasn’t the disaster they thought, indeed quite the opposite. In fact it was all meant to happen this way. The apostle’s message to Israel therefore was full of hope because all the prophets foresaw this day “when the Salvation of Israel would come ‘to’ and ‘out of Zion.’” Isaiah 59:10 and Romans 11:26. All the prophets pointed towards this vital message that demonstrated God’s faithfulness to His people but unless Israel (as a whole) turned back to God, they would be dispersed to the ends of the earth.

### IS THE GOSPEL RELEVANT TO JEWS?

There are those who believe that Jews don’t need to convert— they are OK as they are. There are also those who believe that there are two separate covenants - one for Jews and one for gentiles. And now there are a third group who promote that Jews have already got Jesus within their midst but they just don’t recognize Him. (Mark Kinser and Messianic Orthodox movement— Post Missionary Messianic Judaism p.14 lower para) So what does Acts 3: 19 mean when it says, “Repent and be converted?” Surely, it suggests that yes indeed, they do need to convert.

The question is of course to what do they need to be converted into? For centuries, the established state church of the Roman Empire taught that they must renounce their Jewish identity and practices and be converted to gentile Christianity. But the message of the gospel was “Make Teshuvah.” Repent and be converted to God and

become saved and Godly Jews. You need to be saved. The Law will not save you only Jesus can save you.” Paul’s letter to the Romans says,

1. Gospel is to the Jew first. Rom 1:16

2. There is no partiality with God (regarding salvation). Rom 2:11

3. A true Jew is not one who is just outwardly identifiable - but inwardly. Circumcision identifies you with Israel but it needs also to be of the heart. Rom 2:28

4. By the deeds of the Law, no flesh is justified in His sight. The Law exposes sin. It’s a “Schoolmaster” to bring us to Christ. Rom 3:20; Gal 3:24

5. The Law is established through faith – believers are not to be lawless. Rom 3:31

6. “The Law is holy, the commandment holy and just and good.” Rom 7:12 God would write it on their hearts.

### PROPHECY REQUIRES CONSISTENT INTERPRETATION

If prophecies relating to Jesus are true, then so are the ones relating to Israel. Otherwise it’s a matter of personal choice. Supersessionism (SSC’s) or Replacement Theology denies the consistency of Biblical interpretation. It’s rooted in Anti-Semitism that denies the fulfillment of scripture in the return of the Jews to the Land or any blessing still remaining on Israel because of a supposed self-imposed eternal guilt for the death of Jesus. “His death be upon us and our

children.” Mt 27:25 The increasingly “gentilised” Church blamed “the Jews” for killing Jesus. In John 20:19 the KJV uses the term “for fear of the Jews” rather than “Jewish leaders”. This created the unfortunate impression that the disciples and Jesus Himself were not Jews.

Anchor verse for SSC’s is Galatians 6:16 “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” In modern translations it says “...peace be upon them who are the Israel of God.” But here it actually defines two distinct groups

(1) Jews and Gentiles who as part of the Church walk according to this rule – peace be upon them. Believers have received God’s mercy – but Israel still needs to know the grace and mercy of God and this is what it states. Israel will not know the peace of God until Jesus is acknowledged. What they need is God’s mercy through believing in Yeshua! Also Phil 3:3; Rom 2:28, 29. There is no need for Jews to become gentiles nor for gentiles to try and become Jews. Key verse is 1 Cor 7:17-24

### **THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS**

Acts 3:18-21 Three commentaries say little about what restoration here means. (New International – FF Bruce, IVP – IH Marshall, Online Critical commentary by J, F and B) Some talk of the restoration of the ideal kingdom WHEN Jesus returns but none really deal with the prophetic fulfillments necessary

BEFORE the return of Jesus.  
Here Peter is referring to the greatest

restoration or restitution that will take place in the Latter days, which is the return of the Jews to the Land as a precursor to His return – even though in difficult and challenging times for Israel and the World as a whole. (See also Jesus prophecies in Matt 24)

### **OT PROPHETS WERE NOT AFRAID TO TALK OF THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL**

Jeremiah 31 – the New Covenant was to be made first with Israel and Judah. Ezekiel 36 – talks of the restoration of Israel first to the Land and then restoration to God. Hosea chapter 5 talks of

Israel’s stubborn rejection of God, so much so that it caused Him to withdraw Himself. But as with God, He is always a merciful God. The purpose of this withdrawal is positive and constructive so that in the trouble that inevitably came upon them, they would cry out to God and He would answer them. Hosea 5:15

In the end, when all prophecies will find their fulfilment, Zechariah declares, “Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day and become MY PEOPLE”. Jerusalem shall again become the focal point of all things. Zechariah’s focus is on Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah. Zechariah 2:7-12 Isn’t it a lot more edifying to listen to the true prophets of God rather than false ones?