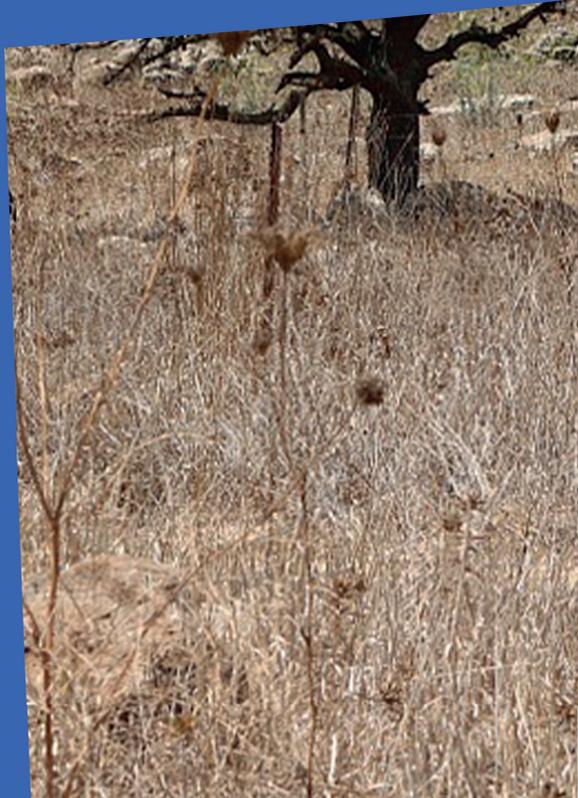




*Remembering the
Household of Faith
Looking into the
prophets of the Bible*

Written by Derek Rous



Produced by
Prayer for Israel.

REMEMBER ESPECIALLY THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

"Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith"

In these perilous times when all that we hold dear is under threat; in the Church as well as in the world that has been so influenced by the Christian Faith, we rejoice that the faithful remnant of His Church still upholds the Biblical testimony to the truth of God's Covenant faithfulness to the Jewish people, irrespective of Israel's spiritual state. In the end, it is God Himself who remains faithful, not willing that the people of Israel would be erased forever, nor anyone else who desired to be joined to the Lord would similarly perish (Isaiah 56:3-7; 2 Peter 3:9).

In these latter days, He has created the conditions and made the way for Israel to return from all parts of the world where He had scattered them, back to the Land that He gave to them as an everlasting inheritance. His purpose is that He would redeem them as a nation and that they might enjoy the blessing of a living relationship with Him.

Praise God for all that this generation in particular, has seen take place - in spite of the efforts of the nations to thwart it. stands as a powerful reminder of this fact that no nation can fulfil its evil intentions against the Lord and His anointed. Read: Instead the Lord laughs at the impudence of the nations that so challenge Him and His plans and purposes in the earth.

RETURN TO THE LAND

But thank God, not just for the physical return of the Jews to the Land to demonstrate to the world that there is a God in Heaven who cares for His people and is well able to change history but that so many Jewish people are returning to Him through the redemptive work of Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel. But interestingly, it's often through the witness of gentiles who have received such a deep love for the Jewish people and appreciation of the their own place in the redemptive process. We all can share Paul's overriding desire expressed in Romans 10:1 *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israile is that they may be saved."*

So, we marvel at God's ways of bringing the Jews back to the Land, not just in the past 20 or so years but increasingly over the last 130 years. Today, there are many who continue to help in a variety of ways the work of Aliyah but we must never forget the many committed gentile and Hebrew Christians, as they were previously known, who since the reformation have reached out to Jewish communities across Europe, stirring them to read the prophecies of scripture which foretold the return to the Land in the latter days. You can read of their lives and work in books like "Jewish Witnesses for Christ"

by A. Bernstein available from Keren Ahvah Meshihit.

As they provoked them to read the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others; then to take active steps to return to Zion and rebuild the ancient walls of the cities, remember too

that they used the occasion to also speak to them of the Messiah Jesus.

RETURN TO THE LORD

Just as at the beginning when Peter preached his second recorded sermon in Acts 3. The Jewish nation were reminded that even though the prophets spoke of the restoration of all things in relation to the Kingdom and the Land, he also forcefully spoke to them of Jesus, the “prince of life” who had been killed but whom God had raised from the dead.

Peter and all in the early church were fearless in their preaching of the cross and the resurrection. He preached ***"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"*** (Acts 3:19). They all ‘comforted’ Israel (Isaiah 40:1) with the uncomfortable truth that Jews were not safe and sound just by being Jewish but needed to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

The first sermon on the day of Pentecost was fired like an arrow towards the heart of all those who had, in their ignorance, brought about the crucifixion of Jesus.. ***"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs... you have crucified and put to death: who God Raised up... "*** (Acts 2:22-24) Telling the truth was the only way to shake Israel out of its complacency – its self righteousness and bring them into a true and meaningful relationship with the Father. They heard that there was ***"No other name under heaven where-***

by we must be saved" (Acts 4:12) and Israel needed to be saved!

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS IS STILL FOR THE JEW FIRST

How can anyone think today that there is another way of salvation for Jewish people? Or perhaps even worse, that Jewish people are spiritually secure as they are? If this is true and that Jews don’t need to be saved by believing in Jesus, then for whom did He come and for whom did He die? Why was the Early Church born and why did the new Jewish believers suffer for the Gospel to the Jew first?

Romans 11:26 makes clear that God will save ‘all Israel’ in the end – Praise the Lord! But first, does that mean every Jew who ever lived just because he was born Jewish? And second, is it going to be by another way other than by grace through faith in Jesus the Messiah of Israel whom the early church believed was the only Saviour, Redeemer and Atonement for sin? If God is going to save them because they are Jewish, irrespective of their response, then why did Peter demand repentance from them at Pentecost?

Another confusion of our age is the belief that because of the “sins of the Church” – ie. the history of church persecution which created the conditions for the holocaust to take place, the church has lost the right to speak to Jewish people of Messiah Jesus. It is said to be too painful a subject to bring up. Instead we are to “love Israel” and only endeavour to bring compassionate support and material comfort to them. This I fear leads to the inevitable consequence amongst

some who have a genuine 'love for Israel' to fail to recognise and appreciate what God is actually doing in the lives of Jewish people. God is redeeming His people all over the Land! Is this a mistake?

WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY TO WITNESS TO THE MESSIAH JESUS?

Sharing good news of Jesus amongst Jews, just as to anyone else is a not a matter of delivering a set of theological statements like a chess game designed to bring about checkmate. No-one is truly won for the truth if the victor is only interested in glorying in his own academic cleverness. People are won for the Lord when they are shown love, care and concern by people who know how to explain the meaning of life from God's perspective because they know themselves what it means to wallow in futility and emptiness. Jewish people are like everyone else – only more so! Yes, they have a unique history and experience and this needs to be clearly learned and appreciated. But the message to Jew and gentile in these increasingly confusing and challenging days is the same. Jesus is Saviour and Lord. There is no other way. How to say it remains the challenge. But one powerful explanation is as follows:

FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

On a visit to Arad, a PFI prayer group were able to visit an artist and sculptor by the name of Rick Weinicke. Rick has created an amazing piece of sculpture that depicts the suffering Crucifixion of Jesus and parallels it to Jewish suffering in the Holocaust. An accompanying DVD explains this powerful challenge to Jewish people

in particular, to understand that Jesus was and is there in their suffering and is the only one who can bring some explanation of it all for them. Jewish people are beginning to visit this unique static witness, that powerfully challenges the senses and draws a response in the heart.

So, what is the right way? Clearly, it is "By all means" using words that back up a life that shows love and compassion in a variety of ways. And who are the best people to do this? Again, we thank God that in the Land of Israel, in our time, Jewish believer is once again powerfully living and witnessing to the Risen Lord Jesus, to all who will hear. And we need to support this Body of believers by Prayer and by our material giving. Please help us to do that.

Derek Rous