



**The
Chosen
People**



Volume XIX, Issue 6 July 2013

WHOSE HOLY LAND?

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TO WHOM DOES THE LAND OF ISRAEL BELONG?



Dear friend,

Shalom! I am writing as I prepare to return to the U.S. after spending two weeks in Israel. The work in the Holy Land is going well—including evangelism, discipleship, congregational planting, feeding the poor and elderly, and children’s work. I also spent quite a bit of time working on preparations for the Isaiah 53 Campaign in Israel, and I will tell you more about these plans in the near future! The opportunities to reach Jewish people for the Messiah Jesus in Israel are astounding.

There is no question in my mind that the Land of Israel should and must be a focus of our work in the days ahead. There are now more than six million Jewish people living in the Holy Land. Unfortunately, not everyone is as excited about the Land of Israel as I am!

In fact, the questions, “Who has the right to the Land of Israel?” and, “To whom does the Land of Israel really belong?” are becoming an increasingly widespread focus of attention. Is it the Jewish people? The Palestinians? Maybe the Land belongs to the Bedouin tribes that have lived there for many centuries?

The answer to this burning question is not found in U.N. Resolution 181,¹ in which the United Nations recommended the establishment of Jewish and Arab states, paving the way for the modern state of Israel. Neither is it found in the declaration of Israeli independence made on May 14, 1948.

The answer is simple in my mind. The Land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel—the Jewish people. Let me give you a few reasons why I believe this with all my heart.

King David sang, “...the earth is the Lord’s...” (Psalm 24:1) and it is He who determines the boundaries of nations (Acts 17:26, Psalm 74:17, Deut. 32:8). Therefore, the Land of Israel, like every other nation, belongs to the God of Israel and whomever He decides should be His stewards!

The Lord told Abram that both he and his descendants would be given the Land (Gen. 12:1-3). This promise was also given to the sons of Abraham,

Isaac, Jacob and to their descendants (Gen. 17:19-21, 26:1-5, 35:9-15).

We cannot ignore the present political realities and complexities of the crisis, yet we should base our personal understanding of the issues upon the Bible. *I believe the Land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel, whom God created from the loins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.* Of course, this does not mean that others who are not Jewish cannot live in and enjoy the Land and nation of Israel!

It does mean that Israel today needs our prayers, understanding and involvement in encouraging the nation and the inhabitants of the Holy Land to seek the Holy One of Israel.

Do the Jewish People Have a Moral Right to the Land of Israel?

Many Christians are asking whether the Jewish people of today have a moral right to possess the Land of Israel. This may shock you, but I would answer—no. Jewish people today have not earned the moral right to possess the Land of Israel. Why would I make this bold assertion?

Let's be frank: most Israelis are quite secular. Their values are not grounded in the Hebrew Bible, much less in the New Testament. Today's Messianic movement in Israel makes up less than 0.02% of the population. In other words, fewer than 10,000 of the current Jewish population of more than six million Jewish people in Israel follow Jesus as their Messiah.

It is also true that Israel is similar to many secular countries. I am sad to say that Israeli society is plagued by an increasingly high number of abortions, an increasing advocacy for gay marriage, and a growing problem with prostitution. In other words, modern Israel—like any other nation, including our own—is anything but holy!

However, I think this is the wrong question. If nations were measured on the basis of morality, then every

country in the world would be forced to forfeit the right to possess its land.

There is a deeper question that must be asked.

Do the Jewish People Have a Divine Right to Possess the Land of Israel?

To this question, I would answer yes. The Jewish people do in fact have a divine right to the Land of Israel—at any moment in history since the day of Abram—based upon God's covenant. This is the only deed of ownership that really matters. By a confluence of events that reflects the hand of God, the Jewish people once again became the possessors of the Land of Israel in 1948.

As the Word of God declares—and as history has shown—the Lord is able to cast the Jewish people out of the Land if it is His will (Deut. 28, Lev. 26, etc.). Yet He is the same God who is able to bring the Jewish people back to the Land as He chooses. And regardless of world politics, the peace and security that God promised to the Jewish people in the Land will take place during the Messianic Kingdom, when all who dwell there will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus the Messiah.

A Bright Future for the Land of Israel

I believe the Bible teaches that the Jewish people cannot fully enjoy the Land of Israel until they turn to the Messiah Jesus, and until Jesus returns as King to rule on His rightful throne in Jerusalem! At that time, the promises of God will be gloriously fulfilled when the wolf lies down with the lamb, our weapons of war are transformed into tools for farming, and the curse that fell upon the world through sin will be lifted. *Yet the Abrahamic deed assures the Jewish people of the right to live in the Land whenever they are able.*

Therefore, the Jewish people have a right to the Land *based on the promise of*

God. This right is not based upon national righteousness. The complete fulfillment of this promise will only come about at the second coming of Jesus (Rom. 11:12, 15, 25-29). Until then, I believe the Jewish people have a right to the Land of Israel, even if they will never deserve it based on their own merit. Possession of the Land, as with all the promises of God, is based upon His generous and benevolent character and we will always be undeserving of His goodness and thankful for His grace.

Nonetheless, I believe that the creation of the modern state of Israel is a sure sign of God's faithfulness and power. We have no doubt that one day the Lord will complete what He started and the nation of Israel will become a Holy Land when the remnant of Israel turns to Yeshua the Messiah. As Paul promised,

Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
(Rom. 11:28-29)

Evangelism and the Promise

This is why Your Mission to the Jewish People continues to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, both outside and inside Israel. Our ministry staff serves among Jewish people in nations representing 96% of the world's Jewish population. We believe that there is no hope of personal salvation outside of Jesus for either Jew or Gentile. Proclaiming this life-giving message to Jewish people is why Chosen People Ministries exists!

Yours for the salvation of Israel,


Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

1 http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/un181_eng.htm

The Future of Israel According to Moses

The fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, when viewed in light of the travails of the Jewish people throughout much of their history, is one of the most sobering passages of the Hebrew Scripture. Set at the moment when the children of Israel are poised to enter and occupy the Promised Land, these verses are part of the account of Moses' exhortations and warnings to them at this momentous turning point.

Here we find Moses reminding the children of Israel that although God's promises are bestowed by grace, their benefits are maintained by faithful obedience—and may be forfeited, at least temporarily. First and foremost among Moses' concerns is that Israel remain true to the God of their redemption, and that they resist the temptation to fall into the sin of idolatry. If they fail in this respect, *"The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you."* (Deut. 4:27)

Jewish history has been, in large measure, a record of this prophetic word; suffering in exile has been Israel's unhappy lot on more than one occasion. The bitter fruit of landlessness has cost the Jewish people dearly, as they have been vulnerable to oppressors, mocked and reviled.

Yet even in the midst of chastisement, the Lord is faithful to extend an open hand: *"But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul...He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."* (Deut. 4:29, 31)

The Apostle Paul emphasizes this foundational truth concerning the Jewish people in his letter to the Romans: *"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."* (Rom. 11:11, 29)

Among those gifts is the restoration of Israel, whose fullness will be revealed and perfected through faith in the Messiah who has never forsaken her, even in the darkest moments of her troubled history.

Is Israel the Promised Land?

In Genesis 12:1, God tells a childless seventy-five-year-old man and his sixty-five-year-old wife, *"Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you."* The land of Ur was a thriving metropolis at the time when Abraham was told to leave it—and the land of Canaan, where God was sending Abraham, was a virtual wasteland in comparison. Yet Abraham obediently left with his wife and their little entourage.

Then, in Genesis 12:2, God makes a startling promise: *"I will make you a great nation."* Since no sixty-five-year-old woman is able to give birth by natural means, God would make a nation by supernatural means. This was something that Abraham and his wife Sarah did not understand, as evidenced by their attempt to fulfill the promise through Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid, and the birth of Ishmael.

Those who would replace Israel with the Church also do not understand the supernatural creation of the nation of Israel. A ninety-year-old woman having a baby fathered by a one-hundred-year-old man is just as miraculous as a virgin teenage girl giving birth.

Later in the verse, God promises that Abraham's name would be great and that he would be blessed and be a blessing to others. Then, in verse three, God promises blessings for those who bless Abraham and his seed, and curses for those who curse Abraham and his seed. In Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed; this is clearly fulfilled with Jesus the Messiah two thousand years later.

Does God promise land to Abraham's seed? Genesis 15:18 states, *"On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'" Clearly, there is a*

promise of land—an area that is much greater than the country of Israel today. This promise was later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob as well (Gen. 26:3, 28:13).

The Mystery of Deuteronomy 28

At the conclusion of the Torah, God promises to give Israel “the land” and to elevate the nation above every other nation of the earth (Deut. 28:1). This promise reiterates God’s covenant with Abraham to give Abraham’s descendants the land stretching from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:17-21). Although God reinforces His promise to Abraham, His restatement also suggests that Israel’s possession of the land depends on the nation’s consistent obedience (Deut. 28:2).

If the nation chooses to rebel against God, He warns the people that their disobedience will lead to their ruin; God will uproot them from their land and scatter them amongst their enemies (Deut. 28:58-68). This ultimately raises the question as to whether or not Israel’s disobedience invalidates God’s promise of a national homeland for the Jewish people. If the Torah ended with this warning, then it would appear that God’s relationship with the Jewish people is dependent upon the nation’s obedience. This is not, however, the complete story.

God establishes a covenant with Israel, despite knowing the nation will shortly rebel against their Redeemer and begin worshipping other gods (Deut. 31:20). God consistently seeks to restore His relationship with the nation, promising to return Israel to her land and restore the fortunes He took from their ancestors (Deut. 30:1-10). The Torah warns about the consequence of national disobedience, but also prescribes a means of restoration to the land. Even after exile into Babylon, the prophets anticipate a time when God will forgive Israel and restore the nation to the land He promised Abraham (Ezek. 36:16-38).

Therefore, Israel’s rebellion does not nullify God’s promises to the nation. Although Israel’s disobedience will result in temporary removal from the land, the Hebrew Bible repeatedly depicts the land of Israel as the rightful possession of the descendants of Abraham. In so doing, God maintains His relationship with Israel and gives His people a homeland to demonstrate His unending love.

It is important to take God’s promises literally. The Lord will save His people and fulfill His promises to the Jewish people.

THE PEOPLE, THE LAND AND THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

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SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



Dr. Goldberg serves as International Ministries Representative for Chosen People Ministries and lives in Pineville, North Carolina with his wife, Madeline.

THE BOOK OF IMMANUEL ISAIAH 7:11-12:6

THE DEFEAT OF ASSYRIA AND THE FUTURE ESTABLISHMENT OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

The impending invasion of Judah by the combined forces of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Syria provides the backdrop to a section within Isaiah's prophecy, known as "The Book of Immanuel" (Isa. 7:11-12:6). Israel's king, Pekah, and Syria's king, Rezin, entered into a military alliance against Judah. As these two kings mobilize their armies to attack Judah, King Ahaz grows so terrified that *"his heart and the hearts of his people, trembled as trees of the forest tremble with the wind."* (Isa. 7:2)

ISAIAH – CALLED BY GOD TO COMFORT THE KING (Isaiah 7)

When King Ahaz went out to check the security of Jerusalem's water supply, God directed Isaiah and his son to bring a message of comfort to him (Isa. 7:3-4). Ahaz, "the king of no faith," refused to accept God's offer to request a sign of God's protection. Therefore, the result of Ahaz's lack of faith and refusal was a horrible invasion by Assyria, described by Isaiah in 7:17-8:18.

The Lord invites both the Egyptians and Assyrians to lead their armies against Judah (Isa. 7:18). Like

bees and flies they invade the land. No defense prevents their infestation of the country. "Assyria, the razor of God" causes Judah's demise (Isa. 7:20).

THE TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH OF JUDAH (Isaiah 8:19-9:7)

Isaiah 8:19-22 condemns false religion that seeks counsel from false spirits and those who communicate with the dead. In contrast to the present period of threat, anguish and disruption, Isaiah anticipates the coming Messianic era of deliverance, joy and peace, initiated by the "wonderful Counselor" (Isa. 9:6). The Messiah offers instruction beyond human wisdom. He will establish an everlasting kingdom in Israel, characterized by justice and righteousness (Isa. 9:7).

In this section, Isaiah oscillates between his historical situation and the distant future. This is a common pattern in prophetic literature and frequently occurs without indication between the two verses.

ISAIAH'S PROPHETIC VIEW OF HISTORY (Isaiah 9:8-10:34)

During Isaiah's life, Assyria reigned as the prevailing world power, but Isaiah depicts history as being under God's control. Therefore, Assyria

threatens Jerusalem only when God permits (Isa. 10:12).

God's sovereign control of historical events demonstrates that He can use even the wicked to serve His purposes. Isaiah provides the nation with some consolation when he predicts the complete destruction of their enemy, the Assyrians (Isa. 10:1-19).

THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM ESTABLISHED (Isaiah 11:1-12:6)

Not only is Assyria destroyed, but the future discloses the advent and rule of the Lord's kingdom. From David's father Jesse, a son will appear. When He returns, the "Spirit of the Lord" will rest upon Him (Isa. 11:2). He will reign in truth and righteousness (Isa. 11:6-9).

Israel's new era will correspond with the worldwide gathering of the Jewish people (Isa. 11:10-12). The prophet concludes this great section with a song of thanksgiving.

There will be unspeakable joy for the weary and the name of the Lord will be exalted (Isa. 12:4). The joy of their deliverance will lead the people into shouting and singing of praise (Isa. 12:5-6).

(In our next issue, we will consider the virgin birth of the Messiah.)



DONUTS, COFFEE AND SALVATION

Missionary Greg Savitt, who makes his home in Florida, was put in touch with a Jewish man whose wife is a believer. For the past year, Greg has met faithfully with him every few weeks at their favorite place for coffee and donuts.

The man was open, curious and sincerely seeking the truth. As Greg writes, “He devoured each evangelistic book I gave him.” Then Greg got a birthday present he was not expecting: “On my birthday, my dear Jewish friend finally prayed with me to receive the Lord.”

JEWISH WOMAN FINDS NEW BIRTH THROUGH TERMINAL ILLNESS

Veteran staff member Carole Bahm, who also serves in Florida, met a seventy-one-year-old Jewish woman who has suffered with cerebral palsy since birth. Recently, she was told she has stage four colon cancer and has been given six months to two years to live. She and her late husband had no interest in spiritual matters, but now that she has been confronted with her mortality, she wanted to know what happens after death—as well as the truth about Jesus. Carole spent many hours with her, sharing from the Hebrew Scriptures and how they were fulfilled in the New Testament. Finally one night, this woman received the Lord. Carole asks, “Please keep her in your prayers, as she has a lot to go through.”

NOT TOO OLD TO BE BORN AGAIN

Cathy Wilson, who ministers faithfully to many Jewish seniors in the Scottsdale, Arizona vicinity, often forms warm, personal ties with them. A 91-year-old Jewish friend, Lina* has come to faith in Jesus the Messiah! Cathy noticed that she was nodding in agreement during the Tuesday Bible study Cathy leads at the retirement center. Following the study, Cathy approached her. Lina said that she had learned a great deal from Cathy’s teaching and then expressed frustration at not having known about Jesus previously. Lina then said that she believed that she was a sinner and that Jesus had died for her sins. In the middle of a crowded room, she and Cathy prayed together for her to receive the Lord.

*name changed

PASSOVER SEDERS IN RUSSIA BRING JEWISH FAITH DECISIONS

Reports of new faith decisions from our busy Passover season are still reaching us. Kirill Polonskiy, who is helping to pioneer our revived work in Russia, reports, “We telephoned the Jewish people in our area to invite them to our Messianic Seder, and fifty-two new Jewish guests attended. We gave everyone a copy of the Hebrew Bible as well as the book *Isaiah 53 Explained*. During the meeting, I asked the people to pray with me to dedicate their lives to the Lord, and many of the new people did so! Also, Mira, our missionary in Moscow, held a Passover Seder in her local Messianic congregation. Twenty-four new Jewish visitors came to this event, of which eight prayed to receive the Lord!”

“ISRACAMPS” GROWING IN FAITH AND SERVICE

Summer camps can be a great place to make a faith decision—and it is no different in Israel. Chosen People Ministries’ first Messianic camp was conducted eight years ago for our community in Tel Aviv. At the time, there were ten children and two assistants. Since then, our worker, Maxim K., has organized and held more than forty camps. Today, more than sixty children from different communities in Israel and more than twenty assistants participate in our “Isracamps.” All the helpers are teens who have reached seventeen years of age and, most significantly, were once young campers with us. Our next “Isracamp” will be in Poland in July. More than thirty children from Israel and a group of Jewish children from Russia and Germany will be our guests.

CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES NOW PARTNERING WITH SOUTHERN BAPTISTS IN ARGENTINA

Partnership in ministry with like-minded churches has always been a cornerstone of Chosen People Ministries’ evangelistic efforts. That is why we are especially happy to announce a partnership with the Argentine Baptist Mission. One of our ministries together is the *Sababa Center* (Hebrew for “No Problem!”), a ministry to young Israeli tourists who have recently arrived in Buenos Aires. Our contact in Argentina will be Rick Kunz, who leads a Messianic congregation there. Please pray that the Lord will make this newly-formed partnership fruitful for the Kingdom.

THE PEOPLE, THE LAND AND THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

October 3-5, 2013
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- What does the Bible teach about the role of the Jewish people and the nation of Israel at the present time?
- What is God's plan for the future of Israel and her neighbors?
- How can believers in Jesus be part of God's peace process in the Middle East?

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MESSIANIC RESOURCES



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those who bless
you." (Genesis 12:3)



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