

A brief account of my testimony regarding Israel

By David Evans

There is plenty in the scriptures to show us that God still has a special love and purpose for the Jews but Christians need personal revelation on the subject. Some have been put off by faulty theology, while others appreciate the truth mentally but don't act on it.

My own revelation came quite unexpectedly around the age of 30 through a systematic reading of the Old (or 'older') Testament with no agenda other than to become more familiar with it, as I was well aware that my knowledge of it was patchy. I kept noticing the words 'Israel', 'Zion', 'Jacob' and 'Jerusalem' everywhere. I was part of the Charismatic Renewal and songs where we used those words came back to me and I realised that we had taken some scriptures out of context and were loosely applying them to the church. I started to ask a lot of questions and a long journey began, which 25 years later is still ongoing.

I had come across a few 'Prayer For Israel' type people and, to tell you the truth, I thought it was all a bit nutty. But, as I say, God gave me revelation and with that came a sense of contrition. I realised that, without ever having consciously or deliberately been anti-semitic, I had taken on board wrong attitudes and feelings. I was never actually told that the Jews were only a relic of ancient history, but everything in the church circles I had moved in implied that.

I found myself in a spiritual battle with much working against my fresh understanding. In 1992, having just joined an Assemblies of God church in Leicester, I started to go to its Prayer For Israel group but I found I couldn't join in the praying. I asked God to give me a supernatural love for the Jews and He did and I wept my way through most of the next few prayer meetings. These days I find myself, again unexpectedly, at the cutting edge of Israel-connected ministry.

In 1996, with my young family, I made my first trip to Israel and, in October 2011, I made my twelfth visit. Many Christians go to Israel because of the history of the land. I have been to the usual pilgrim sites, but what has kept me going back there over and over again is a strong connection with the present and future. God is moving there but we don't hear of it on world news! The numbers of believers and congregations has been steadily rising, particularly over the last 40 years.

Strong connections have been built up between certain congregations of believers in Israel and folk from my home city of Leicester.

For the first time since the days of the early church, teams of Israeli evangelists are starting to go out to other nations and reconciliations between Arabs and Jews are taking place on a regular basis.

Some accept the idea of a spiritual restoration of the Jews but do not see any need for them to have their covenanted land back. This article is not the place to go into all the workings of the land covenant, and I deal with this in the early chapters of my book 'Christians and Israel- The Heart of The Matter' (see our 'Resources' page).

However, many of the prophetic passages tell us specifically that God will cleanse the Jews *in the land of Israel* and that He will banish idolatry. In other words, a geographic and political restoration followed by a spiritual one and the extent of the spiritual restoration spoken of is clearly beyond anything in Israel's ancient history.

The late Derek Prince used an illustration he called the 'twin wings of an aeroplane', referring to preparing the way for the Lord's return. One is the preaching of the gospel to all nations (Matthew 24:14) and the other is the eventual acknowledgment of Israel of their Messiah (Zechariah 12: 10 & Matthew 23:37-39).

When we pray for Israel, we are tapping into that part of the 'Lord's Prayer' which tells us to pray 'Your kingdom come! Your will be done'! As Gilbert Lammerts Van Bueren of Near East Ministry, a ministry to Arabs and Jews, has said, *'Praying for Israel is praying for the coming of His kingdom. It has nothing to do with our politically correct judgements, but with joining the moving of God's Spirit'*.

If we become bogged down with media reports on Israel and 'human rights focussed', then we will fail to put praying for Israel on a different level from praying for any other nation. Israel is far from perfect but, whether we like it or not, is a centrepiece of God's end time plans.

It can be difficult to see how crucial the place of Israel is today, partly because of geographical and cultural distance. However, Israel is where it all began- and where it will all end!