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SPECIAL FEATURE INSIDE THIS ISSUE: "THE CHALLENGE OF RESTORING THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM" BY ANGUS WOOTTEN

Herald

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THE MESSIANIC ISRAEL ALLIANCE

ALLIANCE UPDATE

Announcing the MIA's Leadership Development Workshop in Las Vegas

Come and join leaders of similar callings and varied experiences as we grow together in service to the people of Israel.

Join us for midrash sessions, equipping seminars, sharing of real life experiences, praise and worship, and sweet fellowship with those who the Father is calling to shepherd His people.

The event will feature teachings from experienced leaders in Messianic Israel, including members of the MIA Shepherd's Council.

More details will be forthcoming on our website and in the next MIA Herald. Mark your calendars now.

The workshop will be held May 5-7, 2008, in Las Vegas at the House of Israel.

Enrollment in this workshop is limited and the seats will be filled quickly. As such, the workshop is restricted to those who are currently congregational leaders.

Do not delay, contact our home office immediately to reserve your place at this empowering and life-changing seminar.

Boldly proclaiming our destiny

This year Messianic Israel is going to emerge as never before. Now more than ever, it is our belief that Yahweh desires His people to boldly declare their heritage and presence on the earth. Therefore, this summer our annual International Conference will be unlike any other event we have ever hosted as we stand as one people and proclaim:

"We the people of Ephraim, being under the punishment of exile, do hereby proclaim our repentance, and our desire to be restored as part of the full nation of Israel. As sons of Joseph, we desire to be reunited with our brother Judah and his people, for the restoration of all things, as written by our prophets in the Holy Scriptures."

In preparation for this historic event and the coming year we are calling for a week

of repentance, fasting, and prayer during the end of the Hebrew calendar year 5768 (from March 30 through April 4, 2008). Our hope is that, beginning with the Biblical New Year in Abib, our God might forgive us, turn the tide of our exile, and allow us to begin our journey home in the spirit of healing and restoration.

At our International Conference in St. Louis, we will take the initial steps toward establishing legal and international recognition of the exiled people of Ephraim.

Our prayer is that all who hope for the restoration of all Israel will join us to participate in this historic event.

- THE MIA SHEPHERD'S COUNCIL



the challenge of establishing THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

BY ANGUS WOOTTEN

For the kingdoms of this world to become part of the Messianic Kingdom, the people of Israel, who have been divided for some 2,900 years, must be redeemed, reunited, and restored (Rev 11:15). To arrive at this ultimate goal, we first must realize that it is as Messiah Yeshua said, a house or kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Mat 12:25; Mark 3:24; Luke 11:17).

Herein we see the dilemma for our generation: If we cannot resolve the problems that have so long kept both the houses of Israel divided (Isa 8:14), like those who preceded us, we will perish without seeing resolution of this kingdom problem.

Restoration of Israel's kingdom is a problem of huge proportion. The middle wall of partition that stands between us seems to be gargantuan in size. It is so big that most people simply choose to leave the problem to the Messiah. But the truth is, in Messiah, that wall has been torn down. Removal of the wall has been imputed in Messiah, but we have failed to implement what He has done for us (Eph 2:14-15). So, in one way, our huge wall remains.

This wall is so big, that no one person or organization will be able to tear it down. As my wife, Batya, often says, "There is a huge wall between us, and each one of us is given a fork. That may not seem like much in light of the problem before us, but if in faith, each of us will keep chipping away at the wall, it will ultimately come down."

I agree with this principle. I also agree with the saying that "the journey of a 1000 miles begins with a single step." With the understanding that what I propose is but a beginning step that in no way replaces the end goal of our journey (Messiah's Kingdom), I now want to offer a forkful of advice as to how we might begin chipping away at the wall that stands before us. I want to offer this advice because, I think we need to be concerned for our brother Judah, and for the physical nation our Father has been using them to establish (Isa 14:1; Zec 1:17; 2:12).

The first step we need to take is to determine "who is Israel?"

We have been working on this part of the problem for years and recommend our books for those who have not yet seen the truth about all Israel in Scripture.

The second step is to have all Israel (especially those of non-Jewish Israel) lose their "exile mentality." We need to realize that, being scattered, exiled among the nations, is a punishment. Being returned to the Promised Land is a blessing. Non-Jewish Believers in Messiah have especially lost their understanding of

national identity as part of the people of Israel.

The third step is to have the people of both houses begin to walk together in some level of agreement (Amos 3:3; Mat 18:19-20). If we can have mutual agreement on the definition of who is a citizen of the earthly nation of Israel, we will have gone a long way towards achieving some level of workable unity (Eze 47:13-48:35).

Instead of people in exile with a smorgasbord of theological and eschatological persuasions, we need to realize that, the beginning of the answer to our dilemma is, a return to the central ideal of Israel as a physical nation, living in a physical land, and being in service to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Scripture we see numerous references to the restoration of the scattered outcasts of Israel to their own soil, and we see the same promise given to those who bind themselves to Israel (Isa 11:12; Ps 147:2). Such promises clearly show there will be "others" gathered in addition to those of the tribes of Israel (Isa 56:8; Ezek 47:22-23; John 10:16; Eph 1:10; 2:19). Therefore, it would not be scriptural to exclude anyone who identifies with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and desires to be a supportive citizen of the earthly Commonwealth of Israel.

David Ben-Gurion's Definition

David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Jewish Israel, reportedly was asked to define "who is a Jew?" If we substitute the word "Israelite" for "Jew," we can adopt his answer, which essentially was, "A Jew is anyone who says they are a Jew, because only a Jew would want to be a Jew." The same rule surely applies to anyone who, in this day and age, wants to openly claim that they are an Israelite who wants to be accepted as an heir of Joseph, and to stand with their brother, Judah, in the modern Nation of Israel. Only someone who truly believed in the depth of their being that such is the case, would endure that which has to be endured in order to make such a claim.

David Ben-Gurion's answer makes a lot of sense. In today's world, why would anyone in their right mind want to make the decision to return to an Israelite national identity? This is especially true when considering the current situation in the Middle East, and the prospects for individual survival that a citizen of modern Israel faces. For without the intervention of the God of Israel, all would be lost, and those that are claiming an Israelite national identity would be making a decidedly questionable decision.

Twenty-nine hundred years ago, the division of Israel was be-

tween its Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom, or Ephraim, was primarily composed of ten tribes, and the Southern Kingdom, or Judah, consisted primarily of two tribes (2 Sam 19:43; 1 Ki 11:31-35; Eze 37:15-18). However, for the past two thousand years the people who acknowledged the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their God, have been divided into two main groups. The litmus test for the Jewish people (the House of Judah), is essentially an agreement “that Yeshua is not Israel’s Messiah.” On the other hand, Christians, who many are beginning to see as representing the House of Ephraim, have an opposite viewpoint. Their bottom line is that being a true citizen in the Commonwealth of Israel requires “acceptance of Yeshua as Israel’s Messiah.”

The contention over the identity of Israel’s Messiah is the central cause of division, and it has been further aggravated by how the two groups have dealt with each other in the past over this issue. The first step in resolving the controversy is to hold this generation of Jews and Christians responsible for what they do or fail to do, and not base our appraisals on what our ancestors did or did not do.

The Christians, over the past two thousand years, have labored to establish their position as being the “true Israel of God.” Some might say that one way they choose to accomplish their goal was by eliminating their contender. Their flawed reasoning all but appeared to be, if there are no Jews in the world, then it would be pretty clear who were the chosen people. But then, in 1948, the people of Judah founded the present secular Jewish state in the land of ancient Israel, and they named their State, Israel. To make matters even worse (in the eyes of some) they chose to have the Star of David on their flag as the symbol of their Kingdom. This posed a problem in light of the Apostle James’ (Yeshua’s brother) declaration that Yeshua’s followers were being called to restore David’s fallen house (Acts 15:16-18).

Identity Crisis

Establishment of the modern State of Israel marked the beginning of an identity crisis in Christianity. If the Jews were the chosen people of Israel, who were they? What was the solution to this dilemma? The answer the Church essentially arrived at was, “The Jews were physical Israel and their destiny was to occupy a physical land. But, Christians, or the Church, were spiritual Israel, and their destiny was a spiritual kingdom in Heaven.” Unfortunately, both groups seem to be content with this solution. The Jewish people don’t want to have many Christians settle in their Jewish state, and for the most part, Christians don’t want to settle there. When it comes to the Messiah’s Kingdom, they prefer to think of it as being in Heaven.

While this has been a “feel good solution” for many, in our day, many are beginning to see that it is not an entirely Scriptural solution. Here lies the enigma. Over the past 2,000 years, the Church has seen its former identification with the Commonwealth of Israel eroded to a separate identity, or to a conglomeration of stand-alone entities with no formal affiliation to Israel apart from the spiritual realm.

We see the end-product of this feel good theology in sixty-three-

million “snatched away series books.” We see it in a book series that supposedly comforts the beguiled by making them think they will not see tribulation. We see it in works that lull people to sleep when in truth they should instead be awake and preparing for action (Isa 52:1; Rom 13:11; Eph 5:14; Rev 16:15). These books are enamoring many Christians with the ideal of being raptured out of this world into a heavenly kingdom. This is especially true for those that believe a pre-tribulation rapture is a viable option. But in fact, we are called to fulfill certain Biblical prophecies, by taking physical dominion of the land promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Nonetheless, not only is this idea of taking the land difficult to sell to Christians, it is hard to sell to Jews. Over 700,000 Israelis have left Israel, and are currently living in other countries. It would be far easier to encourage most of the Jews in Israel to come to the United States rather than convince the Jews in the United States to move to Israel. In light of this sad situation, what can we do to help reunite all Israel?

Rediscovering Our Nationalism

We find hope when we return to our Israelite roots, and when we realize that Israel is called to be a nation of people who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We also find hope beginning to bloom in our inner man when we seek to rid ourselves of our exile mentality and rediscover our call to nationhood, and by praying for our full restoration. In our distress we need to cry out to our God, then He will hear our voice and come to our aid (Exo 6:5; Psa 18:6; 40:1; 106:44).

To establish a kingdom requires three things: a King, a people, and a land. Fulfillment of Biblical prophecy regarding the Messianic Kingdom, and the return of our King, requires the restoration of all things about which YHWH spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time (Acts 3:19-21). To accomplish this restoration requires that there be physical citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, physically occupying the Promised Land until no more room can be found for them (Zec 10:7-10).

Unfortunately, Christians and Jews are not in agreement with each other on these three elements, and they have many other internal divergent positions. It is easy to see why the people of Israel have been, and are so hopelessly divided. To stop this ever increasing division and reach agreement on some level we need to stop repeating past mistakes. We need to accept that, short of Divine intervention, the vast majority of Jews and Christians are not going to accept being second class citizens. We need to come up with a solution wherein everyone is truly equal.

We Need a Common Denominator

We are dealing with fractions and to add fractions together we must have a common denominator. For example, unless you change the denominators of 1/3 and 4/6 to a common denominator, they can

never be united. However, if we change $1/3$ to $4/12$, and change $4/6$ to $8/12$, we not only can add the two fractions together but we come up with a whole number. $4/12 + 8/12 = 12/12$ or 1.

The challenge in working with the current mind set of Jews and Christians is to develop a common denominator that unites the fractions. We need to build a united Commonwealth of Israel, in which both Jews and Christians would recognize each other as equal citizens.

How do we accomplish this seemingly impossible task?

The answer is to go back to the beginning (Isa 46:9-10), to go back to a plan that once worked for us. Electing to be a nation, in spite of our differences, is the only solution at this time. It needs to be our first step. It is a step we need to take now, and later, we can decide if we want to collectively take yet another step.

If we examine ancient Israel, we see that they had broad requirements for citizenship, and that the idea of nationhood apart from faith did not exist. The words “Jew” and “Judaism” did not exist. Abraham was called an Ivri, a Hebrew, his descendants were known as Hebrews, and later as Israelites. These words are nationalistic terms that carry with them the idea of worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Israel is a nation - it started out as a family, and it is still a family. Like any family it has good and bad family members, with an enormous variety of ideals and ideas, yet they are family. To the greatest extent possible, it is our job to bring and keep the family together. We can do that with personal acceptance of the family’s (nation’s) covenant, with its God as the basic common denominator, or requirement, upon which to build mutual acceptance and family unity.

Finding Family Unity

The people of Israel are the people of the covenant, and their family’s Bibles are considered their covenant—the First, or Old Covenant for Judah, and the New Covenant for Ephraim. However, both agree that part and parcel to their basic covenant is the Covenant the God of Israel wrote on two tablets of stone, which tablets were placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Deu 6:5-22). The agreement by all who strive for family acceptance, that this Covenant would serve as a basic hallmark of Israel’s family, could allow us to take “one giant step” towards the full restoration of our nation. The steps necessary to resolve all other issues, including the Messiah controversy, and partisan and denominational beliefs, could later be addressed, but a beginning step toward ending the de facto civil war of ideas that has kept Israel divided for so long would have been taken.

We are seeing that both Jews and Christians realize the need for national identity and national unity to provide the physical numbers required to fulfill Scriptural prophecies. These necessary numbers

will only be reached when the Commonwealth of Israel includes “all Israel.” The issues of “who is a Jew” and conversion, assimilation, etc., is peripheral to the main point. The main point is the fact that all of Israel must come together for their own survival, and we must ultimately repent as a nation in order for the redemption and restoration of Israel’s Kingdom to continue. There is no other alternative.

A Kingdom for the Messiah

The people of Israel, both Christians and Jews, agree that Israel’s Messiah will one day have a Kingdom on earth. However, for Him to have a Messianic Kingdom in our generation we, together, need to be about building that Kingdom. We cannot simply say, “The Lord will do it.” If we know that it is His desire to build His Kingdom here on earth, then at the very least, hope for that Kingdom has to fill our hearts; it has to be our desire too. We have our King, the Messiah, and the land is available. The challenge is coming up with sufficient numbers of Israelites to fill that land.

Physical dominion was, is, and always will be a matter of numbers, and fulfillment of the prophesied dominion of the people of Israel requires untold millions. Surely, the numbers needed are far more than the fourteen million Jewish people in the world. The additional numbers required can be found in the lost sheep that are now scattered throughout the world. Many of these lost sheep are Christians, who are for the most part lost to a physical affinity with the people of Israel and the land of Eretz-Israel. Their goal is instead a kingdom in heaven. If we are going to be successful in gathering all Israel, we need to change the perspective of these lost sheep; we need to help them realize that they need to consider their role as equal heirs in Israel, and in helping brother Judah to establish an earthly Commonwealth of Israel.

If we are going to open the door to Ephraim’s acceptance in Eretz-Israel, by his brother Judah (and only with Judah’s blessing), we need to dramatically increase the numbers of lost sheep who realize their call to be part of the Commonwealth of Israel. To do this, we need to be about the business of doing the possible, knowing that the Holy One of Israel will do what may appear to us as the impossible (Mat 19:26).

Establishing the Messianic Kingdom is no less than a colossal challenge. However, if we will walk in the spirit of Joshua and Caleb, and like them, declare that, “We are well able to overcome our enemies and take possession of the land,” we will successfully meet our challenge. We will find that our Father will say to us, even as He said to Joshua and Caleb, “I am pleased with your good report, and I will bring you into the land and give it to you—an exceedingly good and pleasant land which flows with milk and honey” (Num 13:30; 14:6-24).

As the MIA begins the new year with an empowered vision and world-changing goals, we ask that you consider how you can contribute to the restoration of the Father’s kingdom. Your support is needed now more than ever. Please contact us today at 615.735.5072.