

Prisoners of Hope

“Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;” (Zech. 9:12, NIV).

Of everything God has given the world through the Jewish people, I believe the greatest gift is the gift of hope.

From Abraham to Moses to the prophets ... to Queen Esther ... to Jesus and His followers ... to the persecution of Jews from the time of the Roman Empire through the Middle Ages ... to inquisitions, pogroms and the Holocaust ... and to the re-birth of the State of Israel, the story is a continual story of hope.

When the founders of the modern State of Israel re-settled and re-cultivated the land of their forefathers, they inaugurated a new chapter in the hope of ages past: the dream of living (again) in the Promised Land given them by their God. A nation was born – in a day – as foretold by the prophets (Isa. 66:8).

The national anthem of the nation, born out of the ashes of the Holocaust and into war against five surrounding Arab armies, was the hauntingly beautiful Hatikvah – “The Hope.” To this day, this Israeli anthem recounts the storied past and the bright future of God’s chosen people, grounded in a biblical hope that speaks of God’s faithfulness to His promises.

Hope. One of the three greatest gifts mentioned by the apostle Paul, alongside love and faith (1 Cor. 13:13), hope is an unseen fortitude that has the ability to weather life’s most dangerous storms. It is an often irrational expectation, given by God, for a brighter future and a new tomorrow.

When we walk in this hope, we are empowered to envision and mystically participate in a time when the temporary sorrows of this world will be swallowed up by an eternal joy that is far

greater. (See Hebrews 11.)

Have you ever been around someone with that kind of hope? Hope has the ability to not only transform the individual but also to positively and profoundly influence those around them.

Rabbi Gerald Meister, z"l, my early mentor, taught us: "Hope is remembering something that is still yet to be."

When life's difficulties beat us down with a fury, hope glimmers and lights a spark in our lives once again.

Here are some reminders about hope to strengthen you on your journey:

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