

A Christian's Relationship and Responsibility to Israel

Jesus is one of Israel's own. He was born in Israel. He lived in Israel. And on Passover in Israel (Nisan 14), Jesus gave His life on the cross for the sins of the world. He resurrected in Israel. He ascended to Heaven from Israel. His first followers were descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And He is returning to Israel to establish His Kingdom.

A Christian is a follower of Jesus the Messiah of Israel, the promised Davidic King of Israel who is the Savior of the world!

As a generation witnessing ongoing attempts to discredit, devalue, dismantle and destroy Israel, we need to answer the question: What is a Christian's relationship and responsibility to Israel?

Here's a short-list:

1. A Christian is a Bible believer who stands on the Biblical promise that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people, and that in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures God is behind Israel's regathering in the land of Israel after nearly 2,000 years of dispersion. God keeps His promises and cannot cancel His character.

Standing with Israel today means standing with the unfolding plan of God in Israel's existence. Zionism is the belief that Jews have a right to a national home in Israel! Those who try to destroy Israel are in opposition to the very purposes of God (1 Chron. 16:17-18; Ez. 26:24; Rom. 9:1-5; Joel 3).

2. A genuine Christian fights against the ignorance and madness of anti-Semitism. There is no greater friend of sinners, of man, or of Israel – than Jesus. Yet tragically,

history attests of unspeakable acts that have been done against Jews by those who have worn a “mask of Christianity.” Genuine Bible-believing Christians denounce these acts! (Zech. 2:8; Deut. 7:7-9a)

3. At the heart of the Christian faith is the belief in the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31, which was promised to Israel and inaugurated by the death of Jesus on the Cross. This New Covenant is celebrated and remembered today in what is known as Communion. The Hebrew word for New Covenant is “*brith Hadasha*”—from which the phrase “New Testament” comes.

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What is the meaning of the New Covenant that Jesus inaugurated by His death on the cross?

The answer is a dynamic five-fold promise: That the law will be internalized in the hearts of believers (1 Cor. 3:16); there is forgiveness of sins available to all who believe (Heb. 8:12); Israel will be reconciled to God, just as He promised to Abraham (Rom. 11:25); all of humanity will know the Lord (Jer. 31:34); the Jewish people will be preserved throughout the ages (Jer. 31:35–37).

At a Passover Seder with His disciples just before His crucifixion, Jesus took the striped and pierced unleavened bread known as the “bread of affliction” (symbolizing the sobering cost of redemption and the new beginning out of enslavement in Egypt) in His hands and said with revelatory authority over the divine calendar and Jewish tradition, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Then Jesus took the third cup in the Passover meal, known as the Cup of Redemption or Deliverance saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19-20).

To participate in Communion is to engage in a Christ-centric

covenant affirmation of the New Covenant with all of its benefits.

And, therefore, at the heart of a Christian's faith is the belief in the redemptive plan of God from eternity past to eternity future. A plan promised to, and unfolding through, Israel and the Messiah of Israel. A plan that the nations are invited into! Paul said "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

4. Jesus is coming back to Israel and to a Jewish Jerusalem! (Matt. 23:37-39) In the context of the Passover Seder prior to His crucifixion, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25). In other words, at His second coming when Jesus sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem and establishes the Kingdom of God while restoring planet earth to wholeness with Israel at the center, the "Jesus and Passover connection" will continue in the celebration of its divine completion (Ez. 45:21).

5. A Christian believes in the whole Bible and the prophetic significance of the biblical calendar from Passover, which prophetically speaks of Jesus' death, to Tabernacles, which prophetically speaks of the final in-gathering of the nations of the world. Therefore, the Christian faith sprang forth from the Hebrew Scriptures and from the city of Jerusalem – not Rome. A Christian believes in the whole Bible and calls both Jews and Christians back to the study of the Holy Scriptures (Zech. 14:16-19; Rev. 7:9; Lev. 23:40).

6. A Christian's highest expression of blessing "Israel" and the Jewish people is demonstrating unconditional love toward Jews and helping Jewish friends (as well as the rest of the world) to know and believe in the hope and salvation of the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus, one of Israel's own.

The Gospel of Christ "... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Paul wrote this verse in the present tense which means that if the gospel is still the power of God "for" salvation and is still for "everyone who believes," then the gospel is still "to the Jew first." It is important to note that the term "first" does not merely speak of sequence, but priority.

In fact, Peter when speaking to a first-century Jewish audience in Jerusalem, underscored an "eschatological link" to Jewish evangelism by saying, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

This coincides with Jesus saying, "For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Matt. 23:39).

And Revelation 1:7 reads, "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen." The reality is, before the world "sees Him," Jerusalem will "turn to Him" (Zech. 12:10)! "And so all Israel will be saved..." (Rom. 11:26).

You can see then that there is a great spiritual battle over Jewish evangelism that we need to be aware of. Because, if Jerusalem will not see Him until she welcomes Him back, then no eye will see Him until Jerusalem receives Him!

7. A Christian believes that the Lord is a covenant maker and a covenant keeper. Israel is called God's "Firstborn" and are recipients of God's covenant with their fathers (Rom. 11:28;

Ex. 4:22). God is fully committed to Israel with His covenantal love.

One day there will be national repentance in Israel, an awakening and resurrection through Messiah Jesus, and “all Israel shall be saved.” The salvation of Israel means the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the righteous, the revival of the Church, and the restoration of the earth.

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Scott Volk, founder and director of Together For Israel, summarizes, “The Bible tells us that without Israel’s spiritual resurrection, God’s plan will not be accomplished; and Jesus will not return. That alone should compel the global Church to bless Israel. Paul made this clear to Gentile churches. He urged them to pray for Israel’s salvation, to proclaim the truth about Israel, to provide for Israel, and to provoke Israel to jealousy.”

Let us pray for Israel’s salvation in Jesus, as Paul prayed, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved” (Rom. 10:1).

Let us pray for Jerusalem’s peace. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you” (Ps. 122:6).

Let us pray that Jerusalem will become the praise of all the earth. “And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62:6-7).

Let us pray for Jewish believers on the front lines in Israel who are the “faithful remnant of Israel” and support them. (Matt. 9:36-23; Rom. 11:5; Rom. 15:25-27).

Let us pray for an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit in these last days. “I will pour on the house of David and on the

inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced" (Zech. 12:10).

Let us provoke our Jewish friends to jealousy in the genius plan of the heavenly Father in His Son the Messiah the Lord Jesus, just as Paul said, "I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:11)

Let us be unashamed of the Gospel like the Apostle Paul, and declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Jew and Gentile!

The time to favor Israel is upon us.{eoa}

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