

Is Messiah Coming Soon?

Though Jesus clearly said of His return to the earth, "Of that day or hour no one knows" (Matt. 24:36, NKJV), there are signs throughout Scripture that point to the second coming of the Lord. One of them is the increasing number of Jewish people who are coming to recognize Yeshua (Jesus) as Messiah, and another is the growing body of Messiah in the land of Israel itself.

The Messianic movement refers to the growing number of Jewish people who have become believers in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. This movement began with the Jewish disciples, continued into the first four or five centuries and then was lost. After a terrible season of forced conversions during medieval times, more reasonable attempts to help Jewish people find Jesus began during the post-Reformation period.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, established in 1809 and now known as the Church's Ministry Among the Jews; various German and Scandinavian missions beginning in the mid-19th century; and the rise of North American Jewish missions, including Chosen People Ministries-founded by a Hungarian Rabbi in 1894-all attest to the commitment of different segments of the church to Jewish evangelism. One of the high points of the modern Messianic movement occurred between the two world wars, when hundreds of thousands of Jewish people professed their faith in Jesus-primarily in Europe (see my dissertation on Jewish missions in Europe at).

After the Holocaust, the Messianic movement went through a difficult period-yet revival was in the air. In the mid-1960s, the Jesus movement roared into prominence with a large Jewish contingent in its midst. This movement of God gave rise to the modern Messianic congregational movement, which has flourished during the last 30-plus years.

The growth of the Messianic movement in Israel has been particularly remarkable. From the mid-1970s until the present day, the number of Jewish believers in Israel has grown from less than 3,000 to more than 10,000 (a conservative figure), and Israeli Messianic congregations now number close to 140.

I believe we are witnessing the gradual fulfillment of one of the signs of the end times-today! According to Scripture and most theological traditions, there is no doubt that a final Jewish remnant will cry out to God, accepting Jesus as their Messiah, which in turn will precipitate the second coming of Christ. In that day, all the promises God made to our father Abraham will come to pass as the Jewish people will be united with their land once and for all through faith in the Messiah Jesus.

How can you "hasten the coming of the Lord"? Share the gospel with Jewish people. Yet because we still live in the shadow of the Holocaust, the pogroms and the Inquisitions, you must witness sensitively and wisely.

Great evangelism is built on great relationships! Christians who are trying to find ways to share the gospel with Jewish friends and neighbors must build relationships with them, which then serve as the natural bridges over which the gospel can pass easily.

This is one of the reasons it is so important for Christians to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, take tours to Israel and participate in ministry in the Holy Land through direct evangelism, benevolence and other good works.

It is true that we cannot know the day or the hour of our Lord's return, but we can discern the signs of the times! I believe this growing remnant of Messianic Jews in Israel and across the globe-perhaps as many as 100,000-is a sign of the end times. We need to pray for and nurture the modern Messianic movement. It is prophetically profound and one of

the sure signs that the second coming of the Messiah is near.

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