

Preparing Jerusalem for The King

To be a congregation in Jerusalem is an extraordinary privilege. There is simply no other city on earth that compares to Jerusalem.

The Lord spoke through the prophet in Ezekiel 5:5, "This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations" ... Jerusalem, the center of the nations? Yes, because Jerusalem is uniquely chosen by God to be His eternal home. Psalm 132:13-14 declares, "For the Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling, saying 'This is My resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it'" (NIV).

Several years ago I attended a conference in which Teddy Kollek, then serving as mayor of Jerusalem, addressed the gathering. To my surprise, I was called to the platform to pray for the mayor. Immediately I felt my heart pumping and the blood rushing to my cheeks.

How do you pray for the mayor of Jerusalem? Yet, as I stood before the people I sensed the Spirit of God pray through me. I uttered, "Lord, you set up kings and governors to rule your people, and I know that includes mayors. Give Mayor Teddy Kollek the wisdom to know how to prepare the city of Jerusalem for the return of the King of Kings. In Jesus' name, Amen."

God is looking for people to prepare Jerusalem for the King. I believe the day of the Messiah's return is not far away. The world is experiencing excruciating labor pains—and the time between contractions is lessening. No one knows the day or the hour but we can feel something in our bones; His return is soon.

How can we prepare Jerusalem for the King's return? A look at

Psalm 48 provides us with the answer.

Witness

Knowing the time is short, we in Jerusalem need to witness while we can. In Psalm 48:12-13 we read, "Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them..." Yeshua communicated the good news using physical things in this city as tangible illustrations; whether it was a pool of water, an upper room, an olive garden or a sepulchre. The city of Jerusalem continues to be a treasure house full of illustrations for the gospel. Everywhere we walk in this city we find conversation pieces that naturally lead to spiritual things.

In Jerusalem we need to increase our witness in ways that reflect a deep understanding and love for this city. It means learning her language, knowing her history, understanding her customs and identifying with her inhabitants. When Yeshua came to live in this land, he became so much a part of this specific human context that many never even recognized that he had come from somewhere else. His enemies accused him of many things, but never of being a foreigner.

The very existence of Jerusalem today—after a sordid history of rebellion, idolatry and judgment—conveys the marvelous message of salvation by God's grace. We need to frequently remind Jerusalemites of God's eternal plan of salvation for this city. Isaiah 12:4-6 encourages to witness in the following way: "... make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the Lord for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

Authentic Praise and Worship

Psalm 48:1 says, "Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God ..." If there's any place in the world where the praises of God should be lifted high, it is in

Jerusalem. Our aim is to have worship that springs from the heart, yet is sensitive to the unique character and culture of Jerusalem. While some of our songs of praise are the same as those sung in the nations, we also sing fresh new songs composed by local believers.

A Call to Israel as well as the Nations

Psalm 48:2 speaks of Jerusalem as the joy of the whole earth. Jerusalem is not just a city for Jews, but a meeting place for people of all peoples and tongues. In 2 Chron. 2:17, it says Solomon took a census of all the aliens who were in Israel, after the census his father had taken; and they were found to be 153,600. Thousands of aliens lived and worked in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago. Solomon didn't seem to regard foreigners as a nuisance; in fact it says in the following verse, He assigned 70,000 of them to be carriers and 80,000 to be stonecutters in the hills, with 3,600 foremen over them to keep the people working (see also 1 Kin. 5:15).

In those days, foreigners enjoyed certain civic rights and privileges. They could also take part in the three great annual feasts. Israelites were warned not to oppress foreigners, since they themselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Foreigners were to be loved and treated like native Israelites, for God loves them and watches over them. Needy foreigners were to be given assistance.

Jerusalem will one day become the joy of the whole earth. Already more Christians come to Israel as visitors than Jews (ironically, even more so in times of crisis). King of Kings Community desires to serve Israelis, but also visitors, volunteers and foreign workers.

Aliens are not intruders, but welcome additions. Our congregation is called to express the tangible reality of the one new man as taught in Ephesians 2, where the wall of partition between Jews and non-Jews is abolished once and for all. In the Kingdom of God, there are simply no second-class

citizens.

Passionate Prayer

The only hope of survival for Jerusalem is God's intervention. Jerusalem's security is not her walls and citadels, but her God. Psalm 48:3 says, "...he (God) has shown himself to be her fortress." Verse 8 says, "God makes her secure forever."

We have a vital part to play in the peace and prosperity of this city. Psalm 122:6 tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. It is the prayers of God's people that will keep Jerusalem in these precarious days.

Paul tells us that our battle is not merely flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Yet, as one person said, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees."

We are committed to pray regularly for the peace and salvation of Jerusalem. The Lord speaks to us in Isaiah 62:6-7, "I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth."