

Israel's Prophetic Role With the Worldwide Church

Israel is in many ways a parable for the worldwide church: on the one hand manifestly incomplete and deficient, yet on the other beneficiary of the divine promise of "completion," "perfection" and ultimately "peace"—all of which stem from the same Hebrew root from which we get the well-known word "shalom."

"I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

Of course, both Israel and the church have seen great advances under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, yet there remains much to overcome:

1. **Compromised:** both Israel and the church are compromised by the values and influence of other gods, religions, philosophies and values. In both Israel and once majority Christian societies, the pervasive influence of Islam is aggressively seeking to replace the foundations of Judeo-Christian society; meanwhile man-centric and materialism-centric secularism seeks to push God into a corner and eventually out of the picture; while Eastern spirituality and associated narcotic addictions offer false promises of satisfaction.
2. **'Occupied':** both Israel and the church are to some extent occupied by formal institutional authorities that are not representatives of the kingdom of God. Whether it is Israel state offices providing on-demand abortion, religious offices whose rules deny Yeshua as Messiah, territories that "ethnically cleanse" the Jewish population, or church denominations that officially advocate active homosexuality or a universalist God—all

have formalized their opposition to a Scriptural understanding of the kingdom of God.

3. **Undersized:** both Israel and the church are not yet the size they should be—in Genesis 15:18 God promised Israel all of the land from what is today the Suez Canal in the south, to the Euphrates river in the north. To the whole body of Messiah worldwide, God promised a great end-time harvest (Amos 9:13), as the gospel is preached to all peoples (Matt. 24:14, Rev. 7:9).
4. **Unrealized potential:** Both the church and Israel have yet to reach the fullness of worldwide influence and effect—the kingdom of God on earth, where Israel is to be manifestly set apart for God (Deut. 26:18-19) and the church reigning (Rev. 20:4, Dan. 7:22).
5. **‘Un-enthroned’:** We have yet to see the church globally and consistently filled with the Spirit of God (Dan. 12:10), or Yeshua reigning on His glorious throne in Jerusalem (Rom. 11:26, Isa. 24:23).

The purpose of a parable is instruction. In our lostness we find truth hard to absorb. Understanding this, the greatest teacher of all gave us the gift of parables, stories that touch both heart and mind and appeal to our child-likeness.

If Israel is a parable, then there is much for the church to learn from, as the world watches the nation’s development and the heating up of the battle for the land and especially its capital, Jerusalem. Through the eyes of faith, we see Israel’s budding and now blossoming (Isa. 27:6) as the sovereign work of a God who can be trusted and has power to fulfill His Word against all odds. If God can raise up Israel in the midst of great opposition, then He can surely raise up every believer despite the worst of circumstances.

Just as the church can learn from Israel, so Israel can learn the faithfulness of God from the parable of the long and complex history of the church.

God is faithful and powerful to bring each individual, each congregation and the worldwide body of Messiah, to a place where we shake off compromise, overcome the 'occupation', reach our full 'size' and potential and see Yeshua enthroned where He should be. Our part is to cooperate with Him in focus, gaze and attention (Ps. 27), so that the pathway through the coming furnace (Matt. 24:21) becomes a delight rather than a trauma, because we see Yeshua right by our side (Matt. 25:1-13). {eo}

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