

# Israel's Time of Visitation

*IN THIS HOUR, GOD'S HOLY PURPOSES ARE BEING REVEALED AROUND THE WORLD. I BELIEVE IT IS A TIME OF GREAT SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR ISRAEL.*

It was July 2000 and in Israel not only the political climate was hot, but also the temperature—the thermometer was well over the 100-degree mark. Despite the blistering heat, I and 450 fellow Aglow women traveled to the Holy Land just as peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians began at Camp David.

It was more than just a sightseeing trip; we were on a mission ordained by God. For the next several days we traveled through Israel, praying, worshiping and loving the people. We proclaimed the love of God and the holy purposes for His people, those whom He calls “the apple of His eye” (see Zech. 2:6-8).

I had been to Israel in the past, but this time God hijacked my heart in a unique way for this very special nation. He led me into a season of revelation, impartation, and intercession related to His heart and purposes for Israel. The Word took on new meaning as I read familiar Scriptures concerning His plan to restore the people and land of Israel.

I never embraced replacement theology, which is the belief that God is finished with Israel and that the church has become “spiritual Israel,” thereby replacing national Israel. But God opened my eyes to the truth of significant passages in Isaiah, Zechariah, Ezekiel and Romans, and I began to understand that my theology was incomplete.

I came to see that the full destiny of the church will never be realized without the grafting back in of the Jewish people—the root from which we came (see Rom. 11:18-24). When that happens, and it will, we will see the coming forth of the

“one new man” spoken of in Ephesians 2:15-16.

Also during this journey, God helped me understand more fully the link between this unfolding vision for Israel and Aglow’s 1991 mandate to the Muslim world. That year, a prophetic word came to our ministry that God would give into our hands a thread that would unravel the garment of Islam, just as He was unraveling the garment of communism at that time. As a ministry, we began to seek God about what that might mean and what steps we were to take.

We started focusing prayer efforts on the Muslim world. We took prayer journeys into Muslim nations and continued to reach out heart-to-heart, one-on-one, to Muslim women.

As we look back over the years, we find that Aglow’s presence in Islamic nations has seen the greatest increase since 1991. We continue to watch God open doors into some of the most restricted nations, in very creative ways, as we move forward in this call.

**FOLLOWING HIS LEAD** During our July 2000 visit to Israel, God began showing us the connection between His calling us to Israel and Islam. Specifically the book of Esther took on powerful significance for our ministry as God brought us revelation through the story of an ordinary Jewish girl.

You will recall that God raised up Esther to be a queen who later exposed Haman’s plan to annihilate the Jewish people. She saved her people from destruction.

Haman was a descendant of the Amalekites, bitter enemies of Israel and the first tribe to attack Israel when they had entered the promised land. Because the Amalekites were, in effect, interfering with God’s plan for Israel, He declared His purpose for them: total destruction (see 1 Sam. 15:2-3).

King Saul disobeyed God’s command to destroy the Amalekite king (see 1 Sam. 8) and, in so doing, allowed the spirit of

annihilation against the Jewish people to continue down through the centuries until we see it once again functioning through Haman in the book of Esther. That spirit did not end with Haman's death on the gallows but has re-emerged throughout history.

It became clear to us that we had been called, as Esther was, to stand in the gap for the people of Israel against the spirit of Haman and the enemy's persistent attempts to annihilate them. Just as Esther, an ordinary young woman, was used by God to expose the enemy of the Jewish people, Aglow, a grass-roots ministry of ordinary women, has been called to expose the modern-day enemy of the Jewish people.

I believe one of the manifestations of the Haman spirit is the system of Islam, which views Jews and Christians as infidels. Since 1991 Aglow's call has been not only to love the Muslim people but also to expose the system of Islam.

How like God to prepare a ministry of "ordinary women" to stand in the gap so that His purposes may come forth through His people: Jew and Gentile. First He called Aglow to the Muslim world. We continue walking in that mandate, exposing the system while loving and evangelizing the people.

Now God has called us to His people, Israel, to stand with them, pray for them, support them and proclaim God's prophetic purposes for them. We are obeying His unfolding revelation—not just by spending time in our prayer closets but also by going into the land.

**FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS** We have taken two journeys to Israel since 2000. Last year we were there during the Feast of Pentecost in May and during Rosh Hashana in September.

The decision to travel to Israel in May was not made lightly or without a great deal of prayer. Following September 11, the U.S. State Department issued travel advisory warnings, and many major ministries canceled trips to Israel. Tourism to

that country was down 97 percent.

As the leader of Aglow and the person responsible for the safety of the 250 women and men who were going, I felt we couldn't go unless God spoke an exceedingly direct word to me. And He did, almost at the 11th hour!

The very weekend that a final decision was needed, I was in New York City with my family. It was a wonderful time, but my ear was bent heavenward concerning the trip.

I awoke Sunday morning and once again asked God for an answer. I asked that He make it so absolutely clear that there would be no doubt in my mind.

I took the Gideon Bible from the nightstand, and it immediately fell open to Esther 4:14: "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (NKJV). I knew God had spoken clearly and made known His will to me that we would be safe in going.

Once in Israel we found not only open doors but also open arms and open hearts. The people warmly welcomed us. Shopkeepers, waiters, hotel managers, tour guides, soldiers, mayors, and yes, even cabinet ministers and members of the Knesset, thanked us for coming.

Their sense of isolation was palpable. They were stunned that our group had traveled to Israel to express love and concern at a time when it was needed most.

Israeli women poured out their hearts to us with fear for their children and families. At an Israeli army base in the Golan Heights we prayed with soldiers, read Scripture to them and blessed them. I sensed that in a new way their hearts were open to us as Christians.

We met with Ariel Sharon's then-deputy prime minister, Dani Nave, and Amram Mitzna, the mayor of Haifa. "I had read all about you," Mitzna said, " but I was not prepared for this!"

We also met with the United Nations representative of the Women's International Zionist Organization, a leading women's group in Israel. As we traveled throughout the land, we prayed for the borders of the nation and proclaimed God's Word over the north, south, east and west.

Our journey in September was with a smaller group—just 40 of us—but was, nevertheless, a powerful time. I felt the Lord had been speaking to my heart that He was narrowing our numbers from 450 to 250 to 40 in order to shape us like the point of an arrow. We were being called to hit a target in the spiritual realm as we moved corporately through the land immediately before Yom Kippur.

Again we prayed and declared Scripture as we traveled. On Rosh Hashana we were privileged to attend two synagogue services in Tiberias. At the second service the shofar was blown to signify the opening of the gates of heaven and the calling of the Jews to 10 days of repentance, culminating with Yom Kippur.

We prayed and made prophetic declarations that there would be an open heaven over Israel and that revelation of the Messiah would come. There were many other spiritually significant moments during our time there, and we came home knowing that God had established another milestone in our journey of obedience as His mandate for this nation continued to unfold.

I firmly believe that God is moving on the hearts of Christians in this hour to stand with His people and His land. He is bringing us into a greater understanding of His end-time purposes on the earth and the significant role Israel plays.

**HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND** The Holy Spirit may be stirring your heart toward Israel as you read this article. You may be

asking yourself, What can I do? Let me offer a few suggestions that you may take to the Lord in prayer:

**Ask God to open your spiritual eyes.** Ask Him to bring revelation concerning His plan and purposes for Israel in these end times. Search the Word to hear God's heart for His people and His land, especially noting Romans 9-11 for God's promises to the Jewish people.

**Pray even more.** Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, as we are instructed in Psalm 122:6 to do. But pray, too, for the fullness of God's purposes to come forth for Israel. Pray for the revelation of their Messiah.

**Visit Israel.** Walk the land, stand in support of the people, and express God's love at a time when it is so needed. Go with other committed intercessors if you can. Aglow will be visiting Israel this year June 1-10, during the Feast of Pentecost.

Last October, at our national conference, a significant event occurred at the close of the meeting. A friend of the ministry, who is a Jew and an Israeli citizen, stated that he sees the United States as a protective wall around Jerusalem.

As he stood beside me, we intertwined the flags of Israel and America as a symbol of unity, care and protection. We led the entire assembly in singing "Bind Us Together, Lord." It sounded as if we were a heavenly choir expressing on Earth the very heart of God: that we, as Christians, would stand in unity with the land of Israel and with His people, the Jews.

I believe our Feast of Pentecost trip this year will be highly significant. The desire of my heart for this trip is to have a 1,000-voice choir in Israel petitioning God for His mercy and protection to cover the nation and its people. In fulfillment of the Word, it is time to stand with Israel and see the revelation of God come to His people.

Shalom and B'ahava Yeshua!

Read a companion devotional.

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