

# Israel—A Covenant to the People and a Light to the Nations

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

God in His infinite wisdom created a plan for the redemption of fallen man. By His divine election He preserved a seed that would extend from Adam to King David. And from this man, God would bring forth the Messiah, the Christ. He is the root and stem of Jesse, the branch and arm of God,<sup>i</sup> the lion of Judah, the Savior, and King of Israel.

With Abraham, God made a covenant to create a great nation that would become *one* with Him.<sup>ii</sup> This nation is Israel. Therefore, to understand God's redemptive plan for humanity, we must look to Israel. She is the only nation on earth to receive the direct revelation and visitation of God, and the only nation to be born of His Covenant; for it is written, *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth"* (Amos 3:2, NKJV).<sup>iii</sup>

The Lord said to Israel: *"You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* (Exodus 19:6). And then He revealed His calling to her regarding the nations— *"I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles"* (Isaiah 42:6).

You might presume this scripture is exclusively referring to Christ. However, the Apostle Paul understood his calling for the nations from Isaiah when he said: *"For so the Lord has commanded us [myself and Barnabas]: 'I have set you [made you in the NIV] as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth'"* (Acts 13:47). Israel was to bring God's message of salvation to the ends of the earth, for Yeshua said salvation is of the Jews.<sup>iv</sup>

The word *Israel* itself is comprised of the Hebrew roots *El* and *yashar*. *El* is one of the sacred names of God, and *yashar* means to go straight.<sup>v</sup> It is written, *"Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God"* (Isaiah 40:3). And Paul said, *"What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every*

*way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles [the written truth] of God" (Romans 3:1-2).*

If we understand the deeper meaning, the Lord was declaring that He would make through Israel a straight path for all the nations to walk in. Even God's promise of spiritual and material blessings to Israel was to would reveal His glory to all the nations. Israel was to shine with His brightness in this dark world so that all those drawn to His light would join themselves to the God of Israel through her. For it is written, *"In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23).*

*And, "Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. Many people shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).*

For these reasons, Israel serves as both a covenant to the people and a light to the nations. A light because she was to reveal God's truth in this dark world. And a covenant because her relationship with the Gentiles is likened to a marriage, where Israel, being God's special treasure has been given to the nations as a gift, an eternal promise that she would be a blessing to every nation and fill the whole earth with fruit.

Therefore, it is important to ask ourselves: just how have the nations treated their gift from God? The Lord has declared: *"I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).*

*"I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land" (Joel 3:2). "For thus says the Lord of hosts: He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye" (Zechariah 2:8).*

Israel's calling to be a blessing to the nations is irrevocable and without repentance.<sup>vi</sup> Even at her present fallen condition, God continues to bless and reveal His love for the nations through the Jewish people. I have heard it said: God loves the world so much that He created an entire nation just to bless you. And we know that one day, the Lord will fulfill his promises to Israel, that she would become both a covenant and light to the nations, for God's word will not return to Him void.<sup>vii</sup>

In the Abrahamic covenant, God promised the land of Canaan as an eternal inheritance for the Jewish people. The Lord said it is a good and large land, one that flows with milk and honey—one that flows with His blessings.<sup>viii</sup>

As His bride, the Lord desired that Israel would not labor herself, but rather be sustained by Him so that she could remain close to his heart. Thus, Israel was created for intimacy with God, for it is written, *“For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5).*

Israel was to receive God’s blessings and love, and not to covet these things selfishly, but to open her heart to the nations, so that God’s blessings would flow to the ends of the earth.

In the book of Romans, Chapter 11, the Apostle Paul illustratively uses a cultivated Olive Tree to describe the relationship between Israel and the nations. The trunk is Christ. He is the one who is connected to and holds *all* the branches.

The natural branches are (believing) Israel which is *one* with Yeshua for there was to be no distinction either genetically or spiritually between God and Israel, and the wild Olive trees, the nations which were to become one with Yeshua *and* Israel through the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham.<sup>ix</sup> The Lord made this promise to him when He said: *“I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation [Israel] and a company of [Gentile] nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body” (Genesis 35:11).*

Paul made reference to this verse when he said: *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed’” (Galatians 3:8).*

While the New Covenant that God made with Israel is unconditional and remains as an unbreakable marriage between Him and the Jewish people, the flow of His blessings to the nations required Israel to come into alignment with His will and purpose for them. Namely that they would open their heart to their Messiah and allow God to make them as a light to the nations. In turn, the Gentiles were to join themselves to Israel as *one* people of God and “one new man” in Christ.

The joining of the nations to Israel in the *covenant* relationship would effectively establish and build the church, which in Greek is called the *ecclesia* and in Hebrew called the *kahal*—the great assembly. The church is not a denomination or an ethnic group,

but *one* people of God redeemed out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation on the face of the earth.<sup>x</sup>

The church does not replace Israel. No, those of the nations who join themselves to the God of Israel and His people come under the bond of His New and Everlasting Covenant and receive His covenant blessings and promises to become part of the commonwealth of Israel—the great nation and the company of nations promised to Abraham.<sup>xi</sup>

And regarding their joining to Israel, the Lord said: *“The foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, To be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the sabbath And holds fast My covenant; Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered” (Isaiah 56:6-8).*

If Israel’s calling was to become a kingdom of priests and reconcile the nations to God through her, but she divorced her calling, then God for this season has Himself reached out to the Gentiles and grafted them contrary to nature into His cultivated Olive Tree.<sup>xii</sup> Thus it is written, *“And if some of the [natural] branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Romans 11:17-18).*

In other words, Paul is saying that where there were once dead (or faithless) branches, that now life from the dead has sprung forth through the Gentiles. The nations have been brought out of darkness into God’s marvelous light, which is the love of His truth.<sup>xiii</sup>

And now the Gentiles have been entrusted with carrying God’s light, His message of salvation to the ends of the earth, including to the nation of Israel; as it is written, *“But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles” (Romans 11:11).*

If only the nations understood the sacrifice that God made on their behalf, cutting away natural branches and grafting wild one’s into a house that was not inherently for them?<sup>xiv</sup> Yeshua said, *“And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the*

*kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:11-12).*

And, if the nations also recognized their anointing and calling to provoke Israel to jealousy and bring God’s salvation to the Jewish people? Paul said, *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed [separated] from Christ for my brethren, my [a]countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites...” (Romans 9:3-4).* That is how much he loved the Jewish people and desired their salvation.

And could it be that the fullness of the Gentiles requires the salvation of Israel?<sup>xv</sup> Paul said, *“For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15).* There is an unfulfilled promise to the church regarding Israel’s salvation. Oh, the joy this will bring to the Kingdom of God!

God’s order and purposes will not change, for He said, *“He will give glory, honor and peace to every man who works good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 2:10).* And so we know there is yet to be a fulfillment of Israel’s destiny. First, to receive her material and spiritual blessings including all the land of Israel. Then to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, pouring her heart out to the Lord so that God would reconcile all nations to Himself through her.

It is written, *“For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:2-3).* Yes, this verse speaks to Christ, but it also reflects His Kingdom of Israel.

And, *“Thus says the Lord [regarding the restoration of Israel]: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You [Israel] as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages; That You may say to the prisoners, Go forth, to those who are in darkness, Show yourselves’” (Isaiah 49:8-9).* Israel is called to be a covenant to the people and a light to the nations.

And so, we now see that God has entrusted the salvation of the nations to Israel. And for this season, because of her rebellion, God has entrusted the salvation of Israel to the nations; as it is written, *“Let the priests [who I believe is a reference to the church], who minister to the LORD, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, Spare Your people [Israel], O LORD, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them... Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And pity His people”*

(Joel 2:17-18). God will save Israel through His church, which for the moment, is predominantly comprised of the Gentiles.

Therefore, brothers and sister in Christ, let us walk in obedience to fulfill our destiny in the Lord as one new man, Jew, and Gentile together, provoking Israel and all the nations to jealousy, bringing God's message of salvation to the ends of the earth. Let us complete the great commission together and see the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel and God's fulfilling promises to give her as a covenant to the people and a light to the nations.

**Amen!**

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<sup>i</sup> Isaiah 11:1, 11:10, 40:10.

<sup>ii</sup> Genesis 12:12.

<sup>iii</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

<sup>iv</sup> John 4:22.

<sup>v</sup> Samuel, Gabriella. *The Kabbalah Handbook*. Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., New York. 2007.

<sup>vi</sup> Romans 11:29.

<sup>vii</sup> Isaiah 55:11.

<sup>viii</sup> Exodus 3:8.

<sup>ix</sup> Genesis 22:18.

<sup>x</sup> Revelation 5:9.

<sup>xi</sup> Ephesians 2:12.

<sup>xii</sup> Romans 11:24.

<sup>xiii</sup> 1 Peter 2:9.

<sup>xiv</sup> Romans 11:12.

<sup>xv</sup> Romans 11:25.