

## Should the Church Support Israel?

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For many years of my life I believed the Church had taken the symbolic place of Israel, and God had finished his work and abandoned The Chosen people in 70AD. Therefore, there was not reason to give them any special support or concern. Slowly over time I learned that I was wrong. I was wrong because the scriptures speak clearly the importance of Israel and the Jewish people in his plans. Scriptures teach by examples and clear commandments. It speaks from the scriptures, from Paul, from Jesus and from God. The message is that we should not only be concerned, but we also have an obligation.

To begin we read of examples found in Acts 11:28, 1Cor. 16:1, and Rom. 15:26. All these Gentile churches (Antioch, Galatia, Macedonia & Achaia) are sending financial support to Judea and Jerusalem. Sometimes it amazes me how quickly we abandon an idea as unworthy of consideration, because we have already put God in our little box and we resist any idea that disturbs our comfortable positions. For almost 1900 years there was no Israel and not even a Jewish (Messianic) Church in Palestine. So there was little debate, but that all changed in 1948 when the rebirth of the State of Israel demanded that we look again at God's prophesies.

So why follow this example...because, we Gentiles have an obligation. Rom. 15:27 commands that it is the Gentiles "duty" to support the Jewish people. Yes, Paul was a minister to the Gentiles and like most Gentile congregations; they had a special calling that was not necessarily Jewish. But, Paul had more to say about this. Rom. 11:13 he says, *"I glorify my ministry to the Gentiles if somehow I may provoke to jealousy my Jewish brothers and save some of them."* Should gentile congregations wish to glorify their ministry to gentiles after the example of Paul? Should Gentile congregations wish to glorify their various ministries and world mission efforts? The answer is obvious.

In a deeper study we would discover since 1948 success in world mission is already on the rise. We have every reason to expect it will continue grow as more people are being saved every day. Most Messianic scholars agree that as more Jewish people come to know their Messiah the more God will "glorify" world missions in preparation for the end times. The application is clear. If a congregation really wants to enhance their world mission they should find a Messianic ministry in Israel to support, financially and prayerfully. Size of this support is not an issue, but my opinion is that every congregation should tithe (10%) of their missions budget to Israel. This follows well known Biblical principals.

Why again...Rom. 11:25 *"I tell you a mystery, hardness in part has come upon the Jewish people until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."* We are in the end times. The fullness of the Church is growing and the hardness of the Jews is turning softer every day in Israel. It is measurable in the changing attitudes and ever growing number of believers. In 1948 there were only a hand full of Jewish believers in the land but today there is over 15,000. As this growth is compounding with time...it will not be long until the world takes notice. Last May a Messianic youth festival attracted over 1,200 "not yet believing" Jewish youth. We are witnessing the birth of a great Messianic youth movement. The fields are ripe unto harvest. Praise God!

The Church has a vital role to play in God's plan. Yes, we have an obligation as stated in Rom. 11:31, *"the Jews have disobeyed now so that they also (like us Gentiles) may obtain mercy by your mercy."* Who's mercy? It is the mercy of the Gentile Church. It is a Church who must step up and take her place in this great movement as a commission from God. God's plan is to unit the Church, Jew & Gentile believers. It is going to happen. As Mordecai told Queen Ester, *Est 4:13-14 "And Mordecai commanded them to answer Esther, Do not think within yourself that you shall escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if you are completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance shall arise to the Jews from another place..."*

Of course there is that little statement by God himself. Gen 12:3 *"I will bless them that bless you and expose (Hebrew: "shine the light on") one who is despising you."* Also, *Psa 122:6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; those who love you shall be blessed.* Which side should we be on? If we say we wish them well, but have more important work to do...are we despising God's command and with it missing the blessings promised?

Jesus made it most clear... very clear. Over and over he said, "...to the Jew first." We should listen and act to direct a portion of his blessings to that which "He" says is "first"...over and over. It is very simple unless we wish to argue with God, then it gets very complicated. But, to understand we must overcome envy and jealousy. Every person of God has a calling...some are big ministries, some are small, some are very rich, some are very poor, some are famous and some are unknown, but some things are not our business. I do not have to understand everything God is doing. I am not asked to

pass judgment on God and his other servants. My business is to be responsibility to God's calling for me. We can learn much from a study of Biblical "first born" children, and learn much from Biblical lessons on pride. "The Prodigal Son" parable is excellent. Who do you think the first born & second born represent in this analogy? Could it be the second born represents the Jewish people who have squandered their inheritance and the first born represents a resentful Gentile Church? Congregations are not different than individuals. They likewise, have a collective calling and a collective obligation (e.g. Acts 11, 2 Cor 16, Rom 15, etc.)

When I say support Israel, I am not saying we support a secular government without conditions. I am saying we need to support the Messianic congregations and evangelistic ministries in Israel. They may not look like your favorite Gentile denomination because they are Messianic. There are several varieties of Messianic congregations just like there are many varieties of Christian churches, but that is not the main question. Culturally they are Jewish and spiritually they are believers in the Messiah (their own Jewish Messiah), Yeshua HaMassiach (Jesus our savior). By supporting these Believers and their work we are supporting Israel in the most important ways. Also, be cautious of some "Christian/Jewish" foundations that raise money for Israel, because some of these non-profit foundations also support "anti-messianic" Jewish Orthodox groups. Be good stewards. Another thing to consider are support methods that put us in personal contact with "not yet believing" (NYB) Jewish people for the building of relationships. We are talking about a serious real friendship. It is not dependant upon their acceptance of Yeshua. If they know us they will know we love them and they will want what we have...they will be "jealous for Yeshua". God will open the doors in time and opportunity.

We believe that more and more Christians are finding good Messianic ministries and are supporting them with both their personal and congregational prayers and gifts. If possible, we should go to The Land and build friendships. We do not always have to complete a work, but we can plant wonderful seeds and God will water to his glory.

*Isa 62:6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who will not always be silent all the day nor all the night; you who remember Jehovah, do not be silent. Isa 62:7 And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

Jerusalem is awakening; the silence is ending. Do we "watchmen" remember or care about Jehovah? It is not an option. Jerusalem has been miraculously re-ESTABLISHED, praise God, but it is in not YET a praise in all the earth, but the day IS coming!

May God bless you and provide for your ministry(s) and those of your congregation.