

ISRAEL

3. Prayer for Israel



Introduction

The Bible says that God does not wish any man to perish. That includes Jews and Gentiles! He longs for all to repent and come to him. For almost 1900 years many Christians thought that God had cast the Jewish people aside. That is contrary to God's nature. In the previous study we learnt that God allowed this time of 'blindness', but the Apostle Paul assures us that there will be a time when the Jewish people will 'see'. That time has come, although we have not seen a complete fulfilment of this prophecy.

God works together with his people, and he wants us to have a part in seeing the prophecies and promises in his Word come to pass. One way to do that is by praying.

1. Praying according to God's timing

First of all, we need to understand God's timing. There is a time to press through in prayer. We see this in the life of Daniel, when he realised the time had come for the fulfilment of prophecies spoken by the prophet Jeremiah.

- ✧ How did Daniel know that the 'desolation of Israel', or the captivity, would last 70 years? Daniel 9:2
(From the Scriptures, the prophecies given by Jeremiah.)
- ✧ What did Daniel do when he realised how near the time was? Daniel 9:3
(He began to fast and pray.)
- ✧ There were thousands of Jews in Babylon at the time of Daniel, yet we only read of Daniel praying. What can we learn from this about the kind of person God uses?
(No doubt the majority of the Jewish people were comfortable living in Babylon, and were not so concerned about their homeland or the purposes of God. The kind of person God uses is someone like Daniel, who searches the scriptures and has a heart to see God's purposes fulfilled.)

This happened thousands of years ago, but we are now living in a time when many other prophecies are coming to pass. Some already have, and others will soon. How can we be a part of this?

2. Praying according to God's prophetic word

- ✧ What is prophesied in Isaiah 66:8 and how has this been fulfilled?
(It was prophesied that Zion would become a nation in one day. This was fulfilled on 14th May 1948 when Israel was declared a nation.)
- ✧ What else is mentioned following this prophecy that is very significant? Isaiah 66:10, 13
(It mentions Jerusalem. In 1967 following a 6 day war, when the army of Israel miraculously defeated the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, Jerusalem came back into Jewish hands after 1900 years.)

- ✧ Another prophecy that is being fulfilled is found in Isaiah 11:10-12 and Ezekiel 37:21. How is this coming to pass?
(Since Israel has become a nation millions of people of Jewish descent have migrated to Israel from the north and the south, from the islands of the sea and from among the nations of the world.)
- ✧ Let's look at one other prophecy. What else is coming to pass that is prophesied in Hosea 3:4-5?
(We are told that Israel will return to the Lord. When it refers to David their King, it isn't speaking of David, as this was after his time. This refers to Jesus.)

After 1900 years, since the time of the early church, we are seeing Jews coming to know their Messiah, Jesus. In 1967 there were few Jewish believers, but today there are many. As we see these things taking place, it indicates that we are closer to the time when Jesus will return.

- ✧ What do we learn about the time of his coming from Matthew 24:32-35?
(As we see the fulfilment of these prophecies we know the time is near.)
- ✧ We are living in a time when prophecies are being fulfilled! What can we learn from the life of Daniel?
Daniel 9:3-6, 19-20. Share what you have learnt from this study.

Conclusion

Just like the Jewish people in the time of Daniel, we may be comfortable in our 'Babylon', or the world we live in. We are happy the way things are! However, let's learn from Daniel's example, and study the Scriptures to understand what God's purposes are. Ask the Holy Spirit to give us a longing to see his purposes come to pass. Also let's pray for the Jewish people to have a revelation of who Jesus is – that he is their Messiah. The more we see this happening, the closer we will be to the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.