

God had not, nor will not, give up on His people the Jews. It is not without purpose that the Truth is called the Hope of Israel. That actual physical nation is the bedrock and foundation of His plans with the earth. He has created the world for a purpose he did not do so in vain, He has a grand purpose, and that purpose involves the provision of a real substantial place for the benefit of His created children. He has selected a city, Jerusalem, and it will be the capital of the coming world Empire, a city of Truth in contrast to the city of lies!

This selected place will not just be a haven and home for the resurrected immortal saints, now returned through the defeat of death itself to newness of life, but it will also be the place where the mortal nation of Israel will inhabit. Both *“old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem for very age”*; and also *“the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof”*. Children and elderly folk are both elements of a mortal population not an eternal unageing one!

This will happen to Zion not because of the loving obedience that His people have bestowed upon Him in return for all that He has done for them but despite that lack of devotion on their part. A sad verdict on the failure of mankind to respond in kind to God’s kindness towards them. With great fury of emotion God was not pleased with the nation of Israel because *“all day long He had held out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people”*. Mount Zion should have been spiritually raised above the mundane failed neighbours which surrounded the Jews and attacked them often mercilessly. Instead, they actually wanted to be like other nations, dead in trespasses and sins!

The appeal of God’s righteousness was insufficient to motivate them to be different to be more God-like in their character and behaviour and this wore heavily upon the Eternal Father. However, this did not prevent Him to promise the future re-establishment of the nation in their ancient capital, not just in a transitory way as those Jews who had returned with Zechariah had done in the return from Babylonish exile, but in a fuller and more complete way. This prophecy for the far future was *“marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days”* because they struggled to believe it was possible and that it would actually come to pass. But it would not be marvellous in God’s eyes to Him if it had already happened, as He is not bound by space and time as we are

but transcends the normal dimensions, He speaks, and it has already happened. He can see it with the eyes of the omnipotent and omniscient Creator.

God promised to be the instrument through which this will be accomplished. He thereby staked His Word and existence upon the realisation of this prophecy. It was not a dream but an assured hope, the Hope of Israel. A Kingdom restored to Israel, not just Judah but the whole nation, restored to the house of David, as he will later remind them and this despite the unwillingness of the surrounding nations to assist, *“Behold I will save my people from the east country and from the West country”*. At that time, it would not be a return in partial service and limited by the continuation of Sin but Yahweh would be their God, Elohim mighty ones, in Truth and righteousness.

Great changes would be needed to effect this coming reality, nothing could stay the same, there was to be a new world order, God would change His approach. *“But now I will not beas in the former days”*. Why would God change His approach? God is not a man that He would repent! He does not make mistakes and restart the cycle over again because of failure on His part! *“For as I thought to punish you when your fathers provoked me to wrath saith the LORD and I repented not”* verse 14. The reason for this dramatic change has not yet been revealed in context, but it is evident that God behaves differently towards Israel for this to happen. Has God said that the old methods of stern rebuke and punishment must be abandoned for a new ignoring of trespasses and sins? Not at all is this what He is saying here.

There is an appeal to strength of character and purpose *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts Let your hands be strong ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets”* Those able to become motivated by the Word of God which through his agents, the prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit placed before the people these inspirational visions of future glory, it is to these people and these people alone that God was really speaking, although the words are recorded and read by anyone who is free to do so. *“Fear not but let your hands be strong”* is the repeated appeal of the Eternal! Do not give up striving to become strong, mighty ones those empowered by the Spirit Word to transform themselves into God’s immortal Children. And again *“fear ye not!”*

This will not come about by natural processes and the calculation of humanity, but rather, despite an economic collapse then evident *“there was no hire for man nor hire for beast neither any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction”*. As God had achieved the partial return in Zechariah’s own day against all odds, so too in the future a much more wonderful fulfilment was coming which would eclipse all the dreams of men in actual substance. Better than airy fairy thoughts of the bliss of Elysium or the popular views of strumming harps on clouds in heaven, this mountain-based city would be a functioning metropolis not full of disgusting behaviour and the worst aspects of man’s corruption, but a veritable city of Gold filled with Truth and righteousness, what a transformation God will bring about!

No longer split between Israel and Judah, two rival divisions within His people, they were to be not a curse amongst the heathen and the gentiles but a blessing, the tables turned about 180 degrees!

After the granting of this vision of hope and the grand inspirational motivation of what will be gifted to them God is clear about those who will be included in this paradise, “Just believe” the sermons from a multitude of platforms tell us, no, do not listen to them. Listen instead to God! *“These are the things that ye shall **DO!**”*

“Speak every man truth with his neighbour

Execute the judgment of Truth and peace in your gates

Let none imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour

Love no false oath

For all these are the things that I hate.”

If God takes the time to emphasise what He hates perhaps we do well to listen to Him. Hatred is not something that we should ignore where God is concerned. As He hates something so should we. Our characters and behaviours need to reflect the Father who begat us when we were born again by water and the word. Do we draw back from and hate lies? Do we seek to execute righteous judgment which is within our power to perform or do we just moan from the side-lines about all the things that surround us that are wrong and corrupt? Is our imagination stirred by better, higher, more noble considerations (like the Temple of the future Age) or do we imagine ourselves living in a big house in London or

Nairobi now when God allows us to be rich with mammon? What commitment and oaths do we give? To serve the nation of our birth or do we serve the King who has adopted us into his citizenship? To whom do we or have we sworn our allegiance? What also about the covenant of marriage will we lightly abandon it when even an apparent serious issue arises, or will we be true to that oath we took “‘til death do we part”.

This change will alter even the sombre fasts which Israel now kept. No longer a memorial of suffering in the Kingdom age, the calendar will be filled with positivity and brightness in celebration of God’s merciful redemption now realised! *“Joy and gladness and cheerful feasts!”* what an era to be able to experience! We shall be blessed indeed to participate in such festivities.

Will this golden age be limited to one people the Jews? No not at all, many people strong nations, the inhabitants of many cities will also benefit at this time. However, they will only benefit from acceptance of the central role of the seed of Abraham in such matters, Genesis 12.

“In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you”. The nations do not believe this now today, they have never acted in accordance with such doctrines and teachings. Who in the future will inform all the languages of the nations of these things if it is not the glorified immortal saints who now have striven to be strong and to fear not, but instead to DO after the commandments of the Eternal!

To the future temple everyone will come, the House of prayer for all nations. What a hope this is!

A Voice from the Altar

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