Jeremiah and Zechariah

Commentary for March 1, 2008 — Gentiles and Israel

The "March 2008 Newsletter" introducing the article for this month "Gentile Nations and Israel" is now on the ASK website. This presentation by Dr. Martin was compiled from an August 1994 audiotape. It provides important information on the interplay of Jeremiah's chronological prophecy in the Book of Zechariah, with his other writings in the Old Testament.

The relationship between Gentiles (both as nations and as individuals) and Israel is shown by Dr. Martin as being complex. This is indeed Israel's two-fold purpose of God's separating them from the nations: to teach the Gentiles about God as a priestly people, and to preserve His word among themselves. Israel has failed at the first task, and many have wondered about the quality of their preservation. On both these points God will reveal much in the future, as this article shows.

Gentiles, particularly in and around Jerusalem, will come to desire to know about God and to know God Himself. Israel will be the means whereby the nations will be educated. I know that seems a far cry from the situation at present. Israel is held in disdain by Gentiles nations and individuals. Israel feels threatened by Gentiles. Only God could bring about such a reconciliation. Only God could change the hearts of man for Gentiles to accept Israelites and for Israelites to accept and teach Gentiles. Once they begin to do so they shall understand a completion in their lives they never dreamed of before. They will be living the life God separated them for in the first place.

In Jerusalem

When I have been in Jerusalem, each trip I make it a point to go to the Wailing Wall (in reality the remains of Fort Antonia and not the Temple). At that place one observes Jews in prayer at the wall. The men pray at the wall separated from the women who pray a bit farther south. Someone is praying there at all times, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.[1] It is crowded there on Sabbath and the holy days.

It is my custom to ask Jewish men coming or going, why do they pray there? Why do they wear the clothes that they do? Why do they bob their heads in rhythm when they pray? What are they reading from when they pray? What is their purpose, satisfaction, and their obligation to do what they do? They are certainly enthusiastic and fervent about what they are doing.

I do not challenge them but I do question them, and give them an opportunity to teach me (I identify myself as a Gentile) from their perspective their understanding of God and what they believe are His requirements for them as Israelites.

Of course, many hesitate to talk to me whether it is because they are involved in the occasion of their prayer at the "special" (but mistaken) location, or whether they are in a hurry, or whether they simply do not want to talk to me, each reason is equally valid.

Eventually someone speaks with me when they understand I am serious (and I am). The answers to my questions vary, of course, and I learn about their traditions which vary whether they are orthodox, conservative, reformed, or have no such association. They eventually link their beliefs back to the Bible, but always through the prism of their traditions.

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1. There is even an internet webcam that continually shows people at the wall.

The person who speaks with me understands by my questions that it is an opportunity for him as an Israelite to fulfill Zechariah 8:23. How do I know that? It is because I identify myself as a Gentile seeking to learn about God from him, a Jew. Sometimes I refer to Zechariah 8:23. I see them smile as they explain what and why they do what they do. They are doing God's will insofar as God has given them their understanding. I know that.

The Future

In the future, however, it is prophesied that 10 Gentiles shall approach an Israelite seeking to learn about God as Zechariah 8:23 says.[2] The sense of that passage is that what that verse describes is not an isolated event. Incidents such as that will occur often. God's chosen people will be sought after by Gentiles to teach them about God. Israel will have correct knowledge to give to the Gentiles. This will occur immediately prior to the fulfillment of that verse. A substantial number of the people of Israel shall heed God's call, begin learning and studying about God, and finally begin to teach the Gentiles, which is what what He originally called them to do as a people separated out from the nations.

At present many Jews in Israel have a zeal for God. However, many of those that do love God are zealous for the wrong reasons, exactly as the apostle Paul tells us in his epistle to the Roman *ekklesia:*

> **"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."**
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> ***• Romans 10:2–3***

They shall — finally — submit **"themselves unto the righteousness of God."** It will begin with events begun in the Book of Jeremiah and continuing in the Book of Zechariah. In the future great numbers of them will submit to God's righteousness and to God Himself. God's righteousness is this, as Paul noted earlier in Romans:

> **"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by** [through] **faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."**
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> ***• Romans 3:21–22***

Israel will come to accept and believe that Jesus died and was resurrected, and is their Messiah and Savior. They shall have faith in Christ (which is actually Christ's faith, the gift of God, Ephesians 2:8).

The submission of Israel to God's righteousness will begin in Jerusalem (probably relating to some event regarding the true site of the Temple above and west of the Gihon Springs) and then expand outward to educate, embrace, and empower the entire world with the knowledge of God. Israel will finally begin to fulfill God's purpose of separation from the Gentiles. That purpose was to prepare them to do God's will.

We should strive to do likewise.

Enjoy the Newsletter and the Article for March 2008. It was a joy working on it and presenting it to you.

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2. The common experience of Jews throughout history has been that when 10 Gentiles approach, bad things usually happen.