

# PFI AT FORTY - THE SPIRITURAL SIGNIFICANCE

It is interesting that 40 years ago both Prayer for Israel and Intercessors for Britain was established. It is significant because I believe Christians have a responsibility to pray for their own country - God has set them as witnesses within it - and for Israel. Many believers, of course, will see no obligation

to pray for Israel since, they maintain, God has finished with Israel when they rejected Jesus. All the promises concerning Israel have now been transferred to the Church as the New Israel, so they believe.

I find that an incredible position. Was God caught unawares that Israel would reject Messiah, so He had to change His promises to Israel and apply them instead to the Church? It is certainly not what my Bible teaches. God states that He has declared the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). He revealed that One would come and be rejected by men, but would be “wounded for

our transgressions”. Peter stated that Jesus was “delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” and that “this Man”, the Jews had “nailed to the cross...” (Acts 2:23) Why should God change His mind regarding Israel when He already knew what they would do when He wrote of their final redemption and glorification? Paul, another Jew, understood that it was only for a time that a partial hardness had come over their hearts, but eventually “all Israel would be saved.” (Romans 11:26) It is amazing how blind we Christians can be sometimes!

What is significant over these last 40 years is how many Jews have become believers in Jesus the Messiah. When I first visited Israel as a young pastor in 1979, I don't think there were any assemblies of indigenous believers. They basically consisted and were led by ex-Pats. There were some Jews who were Messianic believers but they were relatively few. Now there are scores of Messianic Assemblies and the Church in Israel is one of the fastest growing in the world.

Any work of God will always be tested and attacked by the Adversary. The Church of the New Testament was far from being perfect with practically every letter being written against a background of deception or error. Therefore, it is not surprising that in Israel today, there are all the battles associated with the battle for the truth. The Church in Israel is no different from the Church in Britain. It is resisted by the same foe. It is affected by false teachers just as the rest of the Church, so the battle is not only for men and women to be saved, but to be kept in 'the way'.

It is significant that when Paul talks about wrestling with principalities and powers, and

having on the armour for the battle that, before he talks about praying for the gospel to be made known, he writes: “..pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints..” (Ephesians 6:18) He sees the battle against the powers of darkness being as much for the saints to be preserved as he does for strongholds of the enemy to be broken. Paul warns that the Spirit has specifically revealed that in later times there will be deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons causing some to fall away from the faith. (1 Timothy 4:1) It is right, therefore, that PFI prays especially for the Messianic assemblies and not just that Jews may come to know their Messiah. World-wide, there is a colossal battle going on for the truth with all manner of deceptions leading the elect astray. The Church in Israel is not exempt from this battle.

Yet in the midst of all that is going on, we stand as witnesses to a great work of God in restoring Israel as a sovereign state even as Jesus foretold. What is more, when the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile, they were still under the domination of Persia, then Greece and Rome. They were a weak nation dominated by others. Now, little Israel, is a dominant independent country in the Middle East. It has never experienced such a position since the time of David, and we look forward to seeing David's greater Son ruling over that nation. World events are all shaping up for the return of our Lord, but there are battles which lie ahead, including the battle over Jerusalem as prophesied in Zechariah 12 which will lead to Israel's salvation, if we understand Scripture correctly. Tzipi Livni was prepared to divide Jerusalem for the sake of a peace deal, therefore we even need to pray for the

right government to be formed, especially as Israel faces an election in the New Year.

In the end, God is still looking for those who will be watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem and will give Him no rest until He “makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Isaiah

62:7) We have His divine permission to give Him no rest on the matter. We do not know how many more years it will be necessary to continue with PFI, but like remembering the Lord’s Supper, we continue in prayer for Israel “until He comes”!

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