



Ari Sorko-Ram To The Jew First

TO THE JEW FIRST

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To the Jew First

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CHAPTER ONE: ORDER

God will do what He promised

Israel is ready for revival. Living in Israel since 1976, we can testify that we have started seeing the beginning signs of this revival in the past few years. I know what is evident today is no way near what God has promised for this generation – not only in Israel, but throughout the world; He has promised a worldwide outpouring of His Spirit on all flesh. So, what's holding back this mighty move of God's spirit?

Most of us know the general outline of God's plan to bring salvation to as many people as will accept Him. We can read in the Bible numerous times that when the people of Israel truly call on the Name of the Lord, it will propel a worldwide

revival. However, not all of us know that the nations, according to God's plan, must play a major role in Israel's salvation.

While the world is waiting on Israel to accept her Messiah, God is waiting for the nations to fulfill their critically important commission in order to bring His promises to pass in Israel.

Principle of God's order

We must never forget that anything and everything that is happening on the face of this earth is about God. He has His plan and unchangeable will for His creation. He focuses on fulfilling His will which is revealed in the Bible, and it cannot be changed.

Therefore, as His servants and His family, it is important for us to know His heart. We have to be familiar with His Master Plan, and there is only one plan. There never was and never will be "Plan B." Therefore we need to focus on Plan A – God's original plan to redeem the human

race conceived before creation.

One of the foundational truths of our faith is that without faith it is impossible to please God. Therefore we have faith in Him and in His promises and in His plan.

All that God intended to happen will happen, and as for me and my house, we just want to go where God is going and be a part of what God is doing. If I am a farmer and I know that God is focusing on blessing potatoes this season, I am not going to plant cotton, hoping God will change His mind.

The Bible teaches us that God is not a respecter of persons. Nevertheless, He does honor what we do when it lines up with what He is doing.

Everything we do is documented in heaven, and is examined in light of whether we have been obedient to His will. Yes, He could redeem the world without us, but He wants us to work jointly with Him as co-heirs of His Kingdom—just because He loves us and loves doing things with us!

There really is nothing we can do for God except love Him, draw close to Him and be obedient to His Word. And when we act according to His Word – we please Him, regardless of who or what we are – whether man or woman, Jew or Gentile, one race or another.

And God treats the nations the same way. He does not love one nation more than another – He loves all nations equally.

But, He does have different purposes and direction for different nations. It's the same for a husband and wife – God doesn't prefer one over the other. But there are different things the husband can do that the wife can't do, and vice versa. This is the way God created us – each for a unique purpose in His Master Plan.

Now, in God's specific plan and purpose for you there are some things you have to do first—in order for you to fulfill your part in His plan. There is an order.

What I am ultimately talking about is God's

order and Israel's position with the nations. If we want the purposes of God fulfilled in our nations, our cities and our families and lives, we have to understand God's order. Again, I am not saying that Israel is better than any other nation. I am saying that Israel has a purpose and position unlike any other nation in God's plan for salvation and establishing His Kingdom.

Importance of following God's order

We need to understand that it is of utmost importance that we follow God's assigned order. If we don't follow it—things will not line up. If a family is out of the God-designed order, the anointing and blessings cannot flow as God intends. If the authority structure is out of order, the anointing and blessings will not flow as God intends.

The example I like to use is an electric circuit. If the lights are turning on and off as they are supposed to, it means that the person who arranged the circuitry did it correctly. But if you put just one little wire in a wrong place, the

lights will not function – no matter how much power is flowing up to the grid of the house. No electricity will flow because something is out of order. So, you face two choices. You can either decide that you don't need the electricity and use candles instead. Or you can find out what is out of order, correct that one wire (put it in order), and you will have all the light you need. Order is a law of science and a law of the Spirit.

Years ago I played football. As does every other game, football has rules and order. The first thing that takes place is the center hikes the ball. The ball goes to the quarterback - except when the ball is punted. Now, if the quarterback decides to walk away from the field before the ball is hiked to him – the play will be dead. If the ball is not going to the quarterback, the game cannot continue. So, the quarterback has to get the ball first. I was a wide-receiver. I could run the entire field, but if the center did not hike the ball, I would be running for nothing. The linemen could block, and everyone else could do what they were supposed to do in the game,

but if the quarterback did not get the ball first – there would be no play.

It is the same way in baseball. The umpire says, “Play ball,” but if the pitcher doesn’t step up to the mound, there will be no game. He has to pitch the ball.

Certain things have to happen first. Otherwise nothing happens.

CHAPTER TWO: FIRST FRUITS

The Omer

During the Biblical year we encounter a very unique season called the “Counting of the Omer.” This season falls between the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost).

The Lord commanded the children of Israel to count the Omer for fifty days starting from Passover. On the fiftieth day they were to celebrate the Feast of Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost).

An Omer is a sheave. Counting the Omer is a very important principle and commandment in the Biblical calendar. Counting the Omer required

fifty days of obedience. For fifty days the children of Israel were commanded by the Lord to do something. They were to do it every year. Obeying this law requires the longest continuous observance of any commandment in the Bible so we should take note of it. As I see it – if the Lord reminds us to do something every year for fifty days, there is surely something in this commandment very important for us to learn and experience.

It's the season

The yearly counting of the Omer starts at Passover. The Passover is celebrated in the month of Nissan (March-April), the beginning of all months – the first Biblical month of the spring of the year. You might wonder why it is the first month – unlike January of the Gregorian calendar and September of the Orthodox Jewish calendar. The Bible calls Nisan the first month because it signifies the beginning of life as a free people. It was the month Israel gained her freedom and salvation out of Egypt physically.

Passover, when instituted, also foreshadowed the day when the Messiah would give His life on the cross and sacrifice Himself as the Passover Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. For the New Covenant believer, Nisan is the month when deliverance from spiritual Egypt was offered to” whosoever will”.

Becoming a free person is the beginning of everything. Until we are free, we aren’t able to fulfill our destiny. So, every year the Lord reminds us through His Word of this important day when we’re to begin counting fifty days. At the end of this period we celebrate Shavuot, also known as Pentecost (meaning fifty) or the Feast of Weeks. It is at this time when we begin to prepare for the harvest, having brought forth the first fruits and having dedicated them to the Lord.

It’s about Counting

So what do we do during these fifty days of Omer? The Lord commands us to count. The

Omer is a measure of wheat or barley, and according to tradition the farmers would go out into the field on the first day after Passover and tag the visible buds – the first fruit of the field. It is important to know that I’m not talking about ten percent of the buds – what we call a tithe, but rather every single bud they spotted that first day after Passover in their fields.

Then for the next fifty days they counted. And it didn’t just mean one, two, three, four, five... It meant going out to the field every day, watering these first buds, pulling the weeds around them, tending them carefully, making sure that in fifty days these buds would grow into ripe fruit or grains– the first fruits. Then the farmers would gather all of these marked buds and bring them to the Temple of the Lord – to present them as an offering unto the Lord at the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot). God promised that if we brought these first fruits to Him as He said – He would then bless us with a bountiful harvest.

You may wonder where I am going with all this.

Let's look at some Scriptures so that we can begin to understand the whole picture.

Leviticus 23:15-16

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.

Exodus 23:19

The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. *(This is talking about those same buds that were carefully identified and tended.)* You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

This commandment is written three times in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible)—twice

relating how to celebrate the Feast of Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) and once declaring this as an unholy practice.

The English language is not as clear as the Hebrew in this Scripture. The actual word in this Scripture is not “chalav” the Hebrew word for milk, but “chalev” – that is, the fat that surrounds the vital organs. If you read some of the studies of the sacrificial system in the book of Leviticus, you will find out that this fat belongs to the Lord. (Leviticus 3: 16, 17; Exodus 29:13) It is to be burned on the altar.

At the time when the Lord gave the Law to the children of Israel, pagans in the land would actually take a young kid goat and boil it in the fat that was around the vital organs of its mother. They would then eat it, believing that they would be more fertile and multiply as a result. No need to say – it was a pagan idolatrous practice.

So God commanded us not to keep these pagan practices. Instead we're commanded to bring our first fruits to Him. In other words, we are to

invest our efforts into what God has given us. We are to safeguard His gifts, making sure they produce fruit which we then dedicate to Him and present them before Him. Then He will multiply them and bring forth a harvest.

Where am I as an individual in this process?

Let's bring this down to a personal level. I think that if we can understand it personally, we can then understand it corporately and nationally. Every physical example has a spiritual and personal significance for our lives – how we plant, how we sow and how we harvest.

Psalm 139, verses 13-14 are some of the most encouraging verses in the entire Bible, because they tell me that I am not a mistake. None of us or any other human being on earth throughout history was born by accident. As humans we, of course, make mistakes in relationships not always walking in Godly order, Sometimes children were not planned, but your birth was

never a mistake.

In verses 13 and 14 King David is speaking to the Lord about this truth:

**For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And that my soul knows very well.**

Let me paraphrase it in today's language. What David basically says is,

“Lord, you met me in my mother's womb, and you did an awesome job! You didn't make a “jalopy,” you made a “Mercedes Benz,” a capable creation. So now I have great confidence that I have a purpose and a destiny. But you didn't stop there. You have imparted to me all the gifts that I need to fulfill my destiny. Furthermore, no one can take these gifts from me nor keep me from fulfilling my destiny that You gave to me, except me.

In verse 15 David continues,

**My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of
the earth.**

What it says is – your birth is between you and the Lord. This is monumental! God the Father has met each one of us personally in our mother’s womb. What God essentially says is, “I’m dealing with you personally and secretly. It is between you and Me.”

Still, more is to come in verse 16:

**Your eyes saw my substance, being yet
unformed.
And in Your book they all were written...**

God recorded it all in a book so that heaven and earth would not forget, and that the Devil would also know. Every detail about you is recorded in this book – His book. All of your giftings, your talent - everything you have going for you. It is there, before you had problems and failures,

before there were mistakes, before you were sick or whatever has happened to you. Your destiny has already been prepared and set before you by God Himself and you can attain it. So be encouraged!

The second part of verse 16 says,

**...The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them.**

Here is the dynamic situation. The Lord says, “I did this before you were born. I’ve already given you all the first fruit that you need – every talent.”

And then, from the day you were born God gives us a reminder every year, saying, “In the first month, on Passover, I want you to remember something – the great salvation I have given you.” And immediately after we remember our salvation and celebrate it, the very first day after Passover, God says, “Start counting your Omer. Tag every bud.”

What is a bud on a personal level? It is a gift that God has given you that has not yet developed. All the gifts that you receive from God are like

the little buds. You have to take care of every gift and you have to nurture them to maturity. These gifts are like seeds that the Lord has planted in you, but it is your responsibility to tend to them, develop them, water them and pull weeds around them so they can grow.

It's about character

What are the weeds in our life? Nothing will hinder the gifts God has given us more than a bad character or a bad attitude. Every year the Lord gives us fifty days to focus and work on these things. Of course, we want to be growing every day of our lives, but God puts an emphasis on developing our lives these fifty days a year. One of the ways to pull out the weeds of our character is to develop integrity in the smallest details of our lives and to study and focus on the fruit of the Spirit. If you will spend fifty days in the beginning of the Biblical year to renew development of your character, you will probably do well the rest of the year and see a harvest.

Jack Hayford, a well known Pastor, when

teaching on leadership, says, “When I look for somebody to work with or for me, I look for three things. The first thing is integrity. The second thing is integrity, and the third thing is integrity.”

We need to develop integrity as there are so many areas in our lives that require integrity so that the plans and purposes of God can work in our life. Then we need to water this virtue with prayer and develop it in practice with every test and opportunity that God allows to come our way.

Lord of the harvest

Taking care of the buds is just the first step. The Lord says that after the fifty days we are to collect all these gifts together with the effort we have put into them and dedicate them to Him. In return, if we do this every year, God promises us a harvest. All we have to do is what He tells us to do and invest what He has already given to us and we will be fruitful.

Our God, the Lord, is the Lord of the harvest. But who is the lord of the first fruits? You are!

What you do with your first fruits will determine what God does with the harvest in your life. If you ignore your first fruit, God will ignore your harvest. You and I can influence God's harvest in our lives. God will not meet our needs merely according to our needs. He will meet our needs according to His Word.

Bring something!

Remember the principle: the Lord is the Lord of the harvest, but you are lord of your first fruits. The Lord is the Lord of the harvest, but you determine what God will do with the harvest.

Deuteronomy 16:16

Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread [Passover], at the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost], and at the Feast of Tabernacles [Succoth]; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.

The Lord specifically says that we need to have something in our hands to present before the Lord in order for His purposes to take root and blossom in our lives.

Verse 17 continues:

Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

Where did the Lord give you this blessing? In the womb. God is not asking you to bring something you don't have. You don't have to give what somebody else has. It is not even about how much you give. It is about what you give, relative to what God has given you.

Grateful heart and more

What can I possibly give to God that He would want? First and foremost I offer Him gratitude for my salvation. A heart of gratefulness and thanksgiving is my first offering of sacrifice.

Every time I come to the House of the Lord to worship I experience my own “Passover” all over again. And what I bring before the Lord is the awe I feel when I think about how great my God is! How unfathomable is His love. Before I even knew Him, He dealt with my sin.

But this is not all. At least once a year I need to come before the Lord with the first fruits in my life.

The Lord gives me a period of fifty days during which I am to concentrate on what He has given me in order to realize His purpose for my life. I am to develop His gifts and dedicate them to Him. Until I dedicate what I have to God, He can’t do much with them. But as soon as I give Him my gifts and talents, the harvest begins. It’s not by power, nor by might, but by the Lord’s Spirit.

Then, when the last holiday of the yearly cycle – Succoth – the Feast of Tabernacles arrives in the fall, I will celebrate the harvest. But how can I have a harvest if I don’t bring my first fruits to the Lord? And obviously I can’t properly

develop my first fruits if I am not walking in God’s free gift of salvation.

So, if you are walking in salvation, if you are grateful, if you invest your labor in your first fruits and if you dedicate them to the Lord, you will have a harvest.

You don’t have to be a theologian to be a good evangelist. You don’t have to be an agricultural genius to be a good farmer. To harvest souls – just as a farmer harvests his crops – you need a basic understanding of the principles of the Kingdom, one of which is – if you do what God asks, He will do what He promised. We give him our first fruits as a sign of our obedience—a gift that surely pleases the heart of our Heavenly Father. So on the first day after Passover, let’s start counting our own special and unique sheaves—our talents, gifts and skills—and watch the harvest come!

CHAPTER THREE: THE BIGGER PICTURE

The Order: To the Jew First

Let's go a step further now and see the principle of first fruits in the national scope. The Lord says in the book of Exodus, "You are my first born Israel. You are the first fruit."

Exodus 4:22b

Israel is My son, My firstborn...

It is important for the Body of Messiah today to recognize Israel's position in the body as the first fruits.

Remember, what we do with the first fruit determines what God will do with the harvest.

Today many people look at Israel and say, "I love Israel, but God will save Israel during the Great Tribulation, or at the end of the age. God Himself will do something." They even quote the Scriptures, saying, "They [Israel] will look upon Me, whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son." And on this one Scripture they base an entire theology, believing sometime in the end of times Israel shall be saved.

As is true of many prophetic Scriptures, there are successive fulfillments of this Scripture. In John's Gospel, chapter 19, verse 37, he proclaims that this verse was fulfilled on the cross. At the end of this age, there will be a further fulfillment. But that in no way voids the many other Scriptures that promise a last day revival in Israel which then parallels world revival. And it certainly doesn't free the nations from their obligation to pray and work for Israel's salvation.

Whoever bases their doctrine of Israel's redemption on this one Scripture, simply does not understand the whole Gospel in its fullness.

In fact, the Bible says the Gospel is "to the Jew first;" that is God's order. Not that Jews are better than any other people, but God planned it that way and, again, He does not have a "Plan B."

The Scripture in its entirety support the statement "to the Jew first," and never contradicts it. Let's examine some of these verses.

Zechariah 3:2

The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem...

Isaiah 44:1

Israel whom I have chosen... [For a cause and a purpose].

Isaiah 41:8-9

But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosenYou are My servant, I have

chosen you and have not cast you away.

Jeremiah 31:9b

For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.

God chose Israel to be first in His plan, and He is not going to change His mind.

Israel's failure to walk righteously before God in the past does not change God's plan for Israel today and in the future.

Jeremiah 31: 35-37

**Thus says the Lord,
Who gives the sun for a light by day,
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for
a light by night,
Who disturbs the sea,
And its waves roar
(The Lord of hosts is His name):
"If those ordinances depart from before Me,
says the Lord,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease**

**From being a nation before Me forever.”
Thus says the Lord:
“If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched
out beneath,
I will cast off the seed of Israel
For all that they have done,” says the Lord.**

It’s not about Israel being worthy; it’s about God being faithful.

Numbers 23:19

**God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Has He said, and will He not do?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**

Nothing God says in one place in His Word contradicts another part of His Word. And if God said something is going to happen in His Word – it will happen.

You might say, “Well, you’re just quoting the Old Testament.” Let’s look at some of the New Covenant Scriptures – the one infallible

commentary on the rest of the Bible! In the ninth chapter of the book of Romans we clearly see that Paul understood the principle I’m writing about.

Paul was a rabbi who studied under the great Rabbi Gamliel himself. He also sat in the Sanhedrin – the Jewish Supreme Court. He persecuted believers. He knew the Law. From years of studying the Scriptures, he knew the plan and purposes of God for Israel. They were clear to him. The only thing Paul did not understand (until his encounter with Messiah) is how everything was going to happen.

Paul received a call to the Gentiles. He was called to the nations and was always proud of this calling. But listen to what he says in Romans 9:1-5:

“I am speaking the truth – as one who belongs to the Messiah, I do not lie; and also bearing witness is my conscience, governed by the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit): my grief is so great, the pain in my heart so constant, that I could wish myself actually under God’s

curse and separated from the Messiah, if it would help my brothers, my own flesh and blood, the people of Israel! They were made God's children, the Sh'khinah Shekinah(The Glory) has been with them, the covenants are theirs, likewise the giving of the Torah (The Law), the Temple service and the promises; the Patriarchs are theirs; and from them, as far as his physical descent is concerned, came the Messiah, who is over all. Praised be Adonai (The Lord) for ever!"

What Paul is saying is that even though he's called to the Gentiles, he would give up his own salvation so that Israel would come back to God and into God's order. Paul not only loved his people, but also understood that until Israel was in right Biblical order before God, and in a right covenant relationship, his ministry to the Gentiles would be limited. (Romans 11:12) He understood that if Israel – the first fruits – is not presented properly before God, His plan for the entire harvest would be affected. So Paul says, "I would give up my salvation to see Israel regain her position with God."

Why Paul?

Why was Paul the one who was called to the Gentiles? In my opinion he was called because of his deep understanding of the Scripture – because he was a rabbi. Why wasn't Peter or others like him called to the Gentiles? Peter was a fisherman, not a learned rabbi. He did not have the same upbringing and background in the Scriptures and did not have the same understanding of Israel's place in God's overall plan. Possibly, had Peter been called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, he might not have seen the continued importance of the Jewish people in God's redemptive plan.

Paul, on the other hand, knew God's plan from his knowledge of Moses and the prophets. Paul would not forget God's plan, nor would he lose sight of His vision and God's purposes for Israel. Paul had an understanding of God's order.

While Paul brought the Gospel to the nations, he did not abandon or lose sight of God's order in the bigger picture.

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Israel was chosen to be first – not because it was better or bigger than others, but because God had a plan.

Paul had a deep understanding of this, and therefore he wrote what he did to the Romans:

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God’s powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, [in Him]... (CJB)

Do we still believe this Scripture today even though it was written 2,000 years ago? Is this still true today? Of course we do. Now let’s continue to the end of the verse:

...to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile. (CJB)

The apostle Paul understood the principle of “to the Jew first”. No matter where he went in

the world to share the gospel – he would go to the Jewish synagogues first:

Acts 13:5

And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.

Acts 13:14

But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.

Acts 14:1

Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.

Acts 17:10

Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. (NKJV)

Acts 18:19

And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

Acts 19:8

And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

Paul was even willing to give up his own salvation to see his Jewish brethren saved.

Romans 9:3

...that I could wish myself actually under God's curse and separated from the Messiah, if it would help my brothers, my own flesh and blood, the people of Israel! (CJB)

Just as it was 2,000 years ago, it is still true today – to the Jew first. Regardless of whether we follow this principle or not, it has always been to the Jew first. This does not mean instead of the Gentile –

just to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

So, people who today keep saying, “It’s not time to witness to the Jewish people” and “God will deal with Israel separately,” are very wrong! It is always a good and acceptable time for Israel to hear the Gospel! It has always been the time to witness to the Gentiles – why is it not a good time to witness to the Jews? We cannot pick and choose who to minister to – Yeshua commanded us to go from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria and to the whole world from there – but Jerusalem first. It is time to witness to both – until the ends of the earth - but always to the Jew first.

You see, strategy is important and when you understand the strategy, you can accomplish the task. The enemy will always attempt to spoil God's strategy - separate Jew and Gentile and take Israel out of the picture.

Much of the world is against Israel. When we listen to the reports of many news networks, such as CNN and BBC, we are incredulous at their extreme bias against Israel. To them Israel is always

fundamentally wrong. The Jewish people – so rationalize the media – are occupying a land that does not belong to them. While nations are killing a hundred thousand here and a hundred thousand there (look at the multiple genocides in various nations in Africa, for example), the media often ignores it. But as soon as Israel retaliates against terrorist attacks, and in defending herself civilians are accidentally killed – they say that just proves Israel is an evil aggressor. Events are portrayed without perspective and blown out of proportion.

I believe all this is happening because the devil understands that as soon as Israel gets in right Biblical order, world harvest will take place, Messiah will return, and for him it will all be over.

God's Plan of Salvation

Romans 11:11 [speaking of Israel]

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Why did salvation come to Israel? Not just for Israel's sake but for the nations' sake! Why did the Messiah come through Israel? Not just for Israel, but for the salvation of whosoever will!

God promised in Genesis 3:15 that through the seed of the woman will come the One who will crush the head of the serpent, thereby making salvation available to those who seek it. Also, in Genesis 12:3 God promises Abraham that in him all the families of the earth will be blessed.

God fulfilled His promise of salvation to Israel so that the nations of the world would be blessed through it. So, salvation came to Israel for the nations' sake, but in turn it came to the nations for Israel's sake. The nations – or the Gentiles [the same Hebrew word “goyim” is translated either as “nations” or as “Gentiles”] received the gift of salvation so they would bring that message to Israel, and bring Israel back into its right order. When this happens, Jew and Gentile together can get the Word out for world evangelism so that the harvest can take place as God intended.

Romans 11:12

Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

If Israel, who brought the Gospel to the nations, and then fell away as a nation, has been such a blessing to the world, what is going to happen when the whole nation of Israel comes back to their faith? Israel's destiny is to be a nation of evangelists, a light to the nations – to teach the Word of God and proclaim the One True God and His Messiah Yeshua.

Israel's Advantage

God has gifted Israel with gifts and skills that will enable her to fulfill her purpose of evangelizing the world.

The primary challenge to the people who are called to serve in foreign lands today is language. For the most part, people who work with ministries in other countries must spend

long years to learn the foreign language of the nation where they wish to serve. Workers in many outreach ministries don't really speak the languages of the nations where they serve.

Israel, however, is the only nation where a great number of languages in the world are a native tongue to many of Israel's citizens. An average Israeli family speaks at least two languages. Many speak three or more different languages.

Why is Israel able to maintain a top secret service all over the world? Israelis can speak their languages like natives!

But that is not all. Every student in school studies about his or her nation and forefathers. In Israel children learn about the father of their nation – Abraham. High school graduates in Israel have to have an elementary knowledge of the Bible. They are not required to believe the Bible, but they have to know it. In order to graduate a child has to study the order in which the kings of Israel reigned, who were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, where they lived, and what

happened to them. Once Israel comes into the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31) and receives a new heart and a new spirit, then the Holy Spirit will use this Jewish educational background to quicken and anoint for evangelism. Again, remember how the Spirit of God used Paul's upbringing to reach the Gentiles.

Imagine when Israel accepts her Messiah! Suddenly there will be hundreds of thousands of people who know the Bible, can speak almost any major language on earth, and are ready to bring the Gospel to the nations!

Israel, as a nation, is waiting to be born again, and its citizens will be natural evangelists. They have the language. They have the culture. They have the knowledge... and all they need now is to be born again and quickened by the Holy Spirit.

Israel didn't ask for this. Israel didn't do anything to be chosen, but this is what God planned all along! This is Plan A! God has engineered this plan and when salvation comes to Israel, the nations will see the depth of the

riches and the richness of the olive tree – the foundations of the eternal truth.

The New Covenant

Let's look at additional Scriptures which discuss God's plan to save Israel and guide her into her intended calling. You see, God knew all along what Israel would do – that she would fail miserably to become righteous through righteous deeds – but He still chose this nation to fulfill His plan. This is why the Old Testament speaks so much about the New Covenant of God with Israel. God is sovereign and He sticks to what He planned regardless of what we, His creation do.

Ezekiel 37 speaks about the establishment of the State of Israel physically and spiritually – breathing life into the dry bones.

Ezekiel 37: 5-6

**Thus says the Lord God to these [dry] bones:
“Surely I will cause breath to enter into you,
and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and**

bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.”

Many people interpret this only as the physical restoration. But notice, after restoring the physical body representing physical Israel, He breathed His spirit into the lifeless body, signifying the spiritual restoration of Israel. This is further strengthened in verses 12-14:

Therefore prophesy and say to them [bones], ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.’

It is worth noting that even though Israel as

a nation was conquered and lead away captive to Babylon, and Israel continued to reject the multiple pleas of the Lord to return to Him, He still calls them His people. This passage in Ezekiel corresponds with the much earlier promise in Deuteronomy 30, that believing Jews would one day be coming back to the Land of Israel:

Deuteronomy 30:1, 2, 5-6

Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you... ..and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice... ..Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Again, God knew all along what would happen to Israel, His chosen nation, and He even revealed it in His Word, assuring His people that though

they would reject Him, He would take them back when they called on His Name.

In the 36th chapter of Ezekiel the Lord clearly states the reason for keeping His covenant:

Ezekiel 36: 22-23

‘Thus says the Lord God: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake... ..And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,” says the Lord God, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.”

The nations will know who God is because of His faithfulness to Israel to return them to their land! God then continues with a promise of spiritual renewal for Israel:

Ezekiel 36:26-28

I will give you [Israel] a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart

of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

What I’m wanting to convey is that God has already said what He will do – His plan is not hidden from us. In this plan He promises Israel that when she is obedient to His Word and Covenant, she will become a nation of priests.

Exodus 19:5-6

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Most of God’s covenants are conditional – if we do what God says, He will do what He promised.

Now, to understand this Scripture, we first need to realize that under the Mosaic Covenant

[given to Israel through Moses], only one tribe of Israel – the Levites – were authorized for priesthood. So then, the intent of this Scripture is not to say that if Israel would have kept the Torah perfectly (in the framework of the Mosaic Covenant) they would have immediately become a nation of priests. Only the New Covenant authorizes a national priesthood, and Israel is the only physical nation prophesied to be a nation of priests. (Of course, the worldwide Body of believers who have been grafted into the Jewish olive tree also receives this promise of being of a holy priesthood).

Messiah is Coming Back

I believe that we are very close to Messiah's return. The signs of the times are obvious, and Yeshua told His disciples not to be ignorant about these signs. One of the most significant and clear signs concerns the spiritual rebirth of Israel.

Hosea 5:15

I will return again to My place

**Till they [Israel] acknowledge their offense.
Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.**
[Emphasis mine]

Messiah is not coming back to New York City, Tokyo, or London. He is coming back to His royal city, Jerusalem, to His Jewish people who say, "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!" Not just one or two stragglers, but an entire nation of priests will welcome Him, a nation who has been waiting for Him.

Hebrews 9:28

...so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to deliver those who are eagerly waiting for him. (CJB)

Since Israel is an integral part of the big picture, we have to deal with this reality. It is like tithing: if you want God's blessing on your life, you need to return to Him what belongs to Him – ten percent (Malachi 3:10). We do this and in

return He blesses us, helping us to be effective and fruitful stewards.

Always in the Picture

So, we need to be aware of how to relate to Israel, especially in these last days. We cannot ignore her. However, understand that our relationship with Israel is not to replace our own individual and specific calling, nor does our calling replace our relationship with Israel.

You might be called to another nation – Africa, China, India, America – these are all magnificent callings that God uses to help fulfill his Master Plan. But these callings do not mean you can ignore Israel. And I believe if you maintain your relationship with Israel, your calling to other nations will be blessed far beyond your imagination.

A man I highly respect, Reinhardt Bonke, is a German evangelist who was called to Africa many years ago and has done an awesome work for the Lord there.

A few years ago we were together at a campaign in Mombassa, Kenya. One morning at breakfast he told me this story:

I was praying one morning and the Lord spoke to me: “Reinhardt,” and I responded, “Yes, Lord.” The Lord said, “Pray for Israel!” So I thought – “I’m going to Israel!” The Lord responded, “No.” So I said, “Lord, if I am not going to Israel, why pray for Israel?” The Lord said, “Reinhardt, pray for Israel.” And I said, “But Lord, I am not going to Israel...” and I got really quiet for a moment and heard the Lord again saying, “Reinhardt, pray for Israel.” Again I said, “Lord, if I am not going to Israel, why pray for Israel?” Finally the Lord responded saying, “Reinhardt, if you pray for Israel, I will give you Africa!”

Reinhardt says this greatly influenced his life in regard to Israel, because he then understood God’s heart for Israel. Reinhardt Bonke is not called to Israel. Nevertheless, he is called to stand for Israel and with Israel, to do whatever

he can do. God did not replace his call to Africa, but rather revealed to Reinhardt that Israel is a key to Africa! Israel is always a part of God's plan. It does not replace your calling, but it is part of your calling. If we have a heart for the nations, we must have a heart for Israel because Israel is in the heart of God.

CHAPTER FOUR: ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

Provoking Jealousy

My son, Ayal, and my daughter, Shani, are now both adults. But when Ayal and Shani were small – he was five and she was three, one day I said to Ayal, “Ayal, would you like to go to the store with Abba?” (Abba means daddy in Hebrew.) Ayal was in a bad mood that day and he said, “I don’t want to go!” I said, “Okay.”

So I went to my daughter and said, “Shani, would you like to go to the store with Abba?” She said, “Yes, Abba!” I knew Ayal was within

hearing and so I said, “By the way, it’s an ice cream store.” But Ayal was now caught up in his pride and said, “I don’t care. I don’t want to go!”

But Shani loved her brother. She said, “But Ayal, you love ice cream.” He responded, “I don’t care. Leave me alone!” Shani didn’t let up, “But it is going to be reeeal gooood, Ayal!” Ayal, still caught up in his pride said, “I don’t want to go. Leave me alone!” But Shani loved her brother, so she went up to him and said, “Ayaaal, I bet if you tell Abba you’re sorry, he will let you go!”

About two minutes later I felt a little tug on my pants and I looked down and there he was. “Abba,” he said with a tear in his eye, “I am sorry. Can I go?” “Sure, son,” I said, I forgive you, son.”

So we all went and had a great time together. You see, I went to Ayal and he said, “No!” So I went to Shani and she said, “Yes!” But Shani loved Ayal. And she went back and provoked him to jealousy.

Romans 11: 11

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Salvation has come to the Gentiles because of Israel's fall. But God clearly tells the nations that they are to provoke Israel to jealousy and bring them back into their rightful position.

You see, both of my children and I enjoyed ice cream as a complete family. Sure, I would have enjoyed the trip with just Shani. But I enjoyed it more with both of them.

And this is exactly what the Lord says – He enjoys fellowship with all believers. But He is going to enjoy our fellowship more with Israel and the nations together.

I will pour out My Spirit

Let's look at the book of Joel and put this verse in its Biblical context.

Joel 2:28

**And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.**

Many of us pray this Scripture often, but there is something very significant we often miss.

The verse opens with “It shall come to pass AFTERWARD.” What does it mean? After what? The answer is, when the prophecies in the previous chapters and verses have come to pass. So when will all these wonderful things be fulfilled?

We know that the Spirit has been poured out in various times and places - here in Israel on the Day of Pentecost, and in different places around the world, such as Brownsville, Azusa Street, Africa, South America, China and multitudes of other nations. It has happened a little here and a little there, but not yet on all flesh, as the Scripture promises.

To find out when the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, let's back up just a few verses in the book of Joel.

Joel 2:23

**Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the Lord your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,
And He will cause the rain to come down for you – The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first month.**

Now if you recall, Passover, the time of deliverance from Egypt, happens in the month of Nisan, the first month of the Biblical calendar. But the day is coming when Passover will also signify the time that Israel is delivered from spiritual Egypt – because Joel's prophecy came long after the physical exodus. This is the feast on which Yeshua was crucified to deliver the human race out of the bondage of sin. Therefore, when Israel comes into her spiritual Passover (the first month) – her exodus from spiritual Egypt – at that time God will pour out on cities and villages

of Israel the former rain and the latter rain.

God gave the “former” or the “early” rain to Israel when her prophets and holy men and women of God were sowing the Gospel into the world. This time he is going to give both the early and the latter rain!

In Israel there are different rainy seasons. One is for sowing, and one is for the harvest. So, essentially, what God is saying to Israel is “I am going to give you rain to sow and rain to harvest, the anointing to sow and the anointing to harvest – when you come into your Passover.” And what follows this promise is the key:

Joel 2:24-26

**The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine
and oil.**

**So I will restore to you the years that the
swarming locust has eaten,
The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,**

**My great army which I sent among you.
You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
And praise the Name of the Lord your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you;
And My people shall never be put to shame.**

God will saturate Israel with not just wine, but with a NEW wine, new anointing. He will restore all the centuries and the times of judgment and curses that Israel has had... and then Israel will praise the Lord! Sounds like a Spiritual Revival to me!

Joel 2:27

**Then you shall know that I am in the midst
of Israel;
I am the Lord your God
And there is no other
My people shall never be put to shame.**

Israel has been put to shame throughout history. Europe deported and cursed Jewry over and over again – the Inquisition, the Crusades, and the Holocaust. Many nations have tried to

destroy Israel more than once. Multiple political scandals in the past few years have destroyed much of Israel's reputation. The Jewish people have been put to shame over and over again.

But God promises that there will come a day when Israel will never be put to shame again. He promises that it will become a nation of priests and walk in a New Covenant. Only then, the Scripture says, **“And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour My Spirit upon all flesh.”**

Do you see the big picture? Before the revival you and I are praying for, Israel has to be brought back to its rightful place, because Israel is the first fruit! And the only way it will get back is when the nations start provoking Israel to jealousy through their love and passion to turn her back to her God.

If we reject and neglect the first fruit, we will hinder the Lord from bringing the harvest to the nations!

This principle is so important to understand –

the entire harvest depends on it!

Only after the promises in Joel 2:23-27 are accomplished, can we expect the fulfillment of verse 28. First, Israel needs to get into her rightful position with her Creator, and then the Lord will bring the harvest and pour out His Spirit as He promised.

What we do with our first fruits will determine what the Lord does with the harvest.

A Word for the Nations

The reason I am bringing this message is not to tell you to ignore or do less in your individual calling. I only suggest that you always keep the big picture in mind. If you have a call to something or somewhere, you of course must never sacrifice the call. But make Israel a part of your life so that your opportunities and successes will be according to God's standards and intentions.

The Kingdom of God is not about doing less. It's about doing more of what God wants us to do!

When I was praying a few years ago, I asked the Lord to give me a word of encouragement to the nations concerning Israel. I was earnestly seeking God with fasting and prayer, and finally the Lord gave me this Scripture.

Isaiah 49:22-23

Thus says the Lord God:

“Behold, I will lift up My hand in an oath to the nations,

**And set up My standard for the peoples;
They shall bring your sons [Israel] in their arms,**

And your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders;

Kings [mature believers in the nations] shall be your foster fathers,

**And their queens your nursing mothers;
They [the nations] shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth,**

And lick up the dust of your feet.

Then you [Israel] will know that I am the Lord,

For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.”

I was somewhat embarrassed to bring these Scriptures to believers among the nations as a Jew. So I said, “Lord, give me another Scripture!” In my eyes this was not a nice thing to say to my fellow brothers and sisters among the nations. So I prayed and fasted more, “Oh God, give me another Scripture!” But this was the only Scripture He gave me. As I continued to pray I was troubled and said, “I am not going to the nations to give this word.” But I realized that the Lord was trying to tell me something that I was not yet grasping.

Then the Lord reminded me of an incident that happened with my son, Ayal, when he was about six months old. We were about to go to a meeting one Shabbat morning. I was dressed up for the service, wearing a nice shirt and tie. My wife Shira was not yet ready, and asked me if I could change the baby’s diaper while she was finishing up. I said, “Sure, sweetheart,” and put Ayal on the bed to change him.

Ayal was lying there, just looking up at me, smiling, and I was smiling down at him saying, “That’s my boy!” I was just so proud of him – my boy was already six months old. So I took the diaper off, washed him and powdered him, and as I got ready to put the clean diaper on, he tinkled all over my tie. And all the while he was just smiling up at me and I was still smiling down at him. I wasn’t offended. I was just glad everything was working! I took my tie off, and I washed him and powdered him again, and when I was finished I kissed Ayal on his toe.

I realized that what I was doing all this time was bowing down with my face to the ground – because that’s how you minister to a baby. You don’t minister to an infant while standing up proudly. No, you humble yourself before your child. You bow down with your face to the ground because the child can’t get up. It doesn’t matter if you are the queen or the king of a nation, you will bow down with you face to the ground when you minister to a baby.

And why did I kiss Ayal’s toe? I kissed his

toe because he couldn't come up any higher by himself. If he could have stood up, I would have kissed him on his forehead. But I kissed him on his toe. I did it because I love him – that's my baby, that's my boy! I was proud of him. I wasn't ashamed to meet his needs. It was the time for me to serve him.

Now Ayal is 6'6" tall. He can pick me up in his arms. My hug is underneath his arm now! He wants to minister to me and bless me because I ministered to him when he was a child. So Israel has now been rebirthed as a nation but is still a spiritual child with all that includes.

This is God's plan and way. This is why he said, "The nations will lift up your sons in their arms. They will carry your daughters upon their shoulders." The kings and queens are the people who know who they are in God and are not ashamed to humble themselves and minister to a child.

You are kings and queens of the Kingdom! You are the mighty ones in God! Only those

who have real authority and power in God can show mercy to those who are in need of mercy.

The Lord continues to say the kings will be as foster fathers and queens as nursing mothers to Israel. What do foster fathers do? They are there to help the children find their way, their destiny. The nursing mothers give the nourishment that babies need, bowing down with their faces to the ground. They change diapers. They kiss babies on their toes.

What is the result of this service? **"Then you will know that I am the Lord."**

When kings and queens do this, Israel will know why they do it - because the nations are not ashamed to wait for the Lord. The nations know that God has a plan – Plan A. They know that God has a purpose for Israel as a nation, and joyfully obey as kings and queens in God's service. They take the authority they have been given. They take the inheritance they received and invest in Israel, lifting it up to return it to its place in God's plan.

SUMMARY

God has an order, and it is “to the Jew first.” Not just for the Jewish people’s sake, but for the nations’ sake.

Salvation came to the Jews for the nations’ sake. Salvation came to the nations to bring Israel back into order so that the purposes and plans of God can be fulfilled.

This is the heart of God – Israel and the nations, together. This is what the Lord wants in our hearts.

God calls Israel His firstborn. She is the first fruits. What we do with the first fruits will determine what God will do with our harvest in our nation and in the world.

Pray for Israel. Support missions that labor to bring the Gospel to Israel - today! When we all do our part – God will fulfill His promises!

Please join me in this prayer:

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, thank you that you are our God who can be trusted. Thank you that Your ways never change. We seek Your wisdom and knowledge so we can know Your ways and walk in them. Our desire is to please You. Lord, we want to be faithful lords of the first fruits. We want to do all we can so that we may present them to You and You will make the difference. You will bring the increase. You will bring the harvest.

Lord, on that great and mighty day, we want to hear You say, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” On that great and mighty day we want to stand with our hands full of fruit. Help us stand with wise strategy in this battle for eternity, so we can make an impact for eternity. We thank You, Father, in the Name of Your precious Son, Yeshua. Amen.

About the author--Ari Sorko-Ram

A man of varied backgrounds, Ari was a professional rugby player in France and played for the French National Rugby team and then signed as a professional football player in the NFL for the St. Louis Cardinals. He went to undergraduate and graduate school at the University of Southern California, studying psychology. He worked in the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department until he became a film actor. He has appeared in over 100 films and TV shows in Israel and the United States, such as Hawaii 5-0, Entebbe, The Finest Hour, and was a lead actor in TV series such as Chips and Sweating Bullets. He left Hollywood to return to Israel, the land of his forefathers, and become an Israeli citizen in 1976.

Ari and Shira married in 1977, and have been ministering together since that time. Shira is the daughter of the late Gordon Lindsay, who, with his wife, Freda, founded the Voice of Healing in 1948, and Christ for the Nations Institute in 1970.

Ari and Shira write a monthly newsletter, MAOZ ISRAEL REPORT, giving the prophetic, political, and spiritual perspective of current events in Israel.

As Messianic Jews, Ari and Shira direct the Maoz Israel Ministry. They have been pioneers of the Messianic Jewish movement in Israel, and currently lead a Messianic Jewish congregation in the Tel Aviv area. They have sponsored many national conferences for the Israeli leaders and believers.

Their main thrust now is leadership development and evangelism--the full message of the Gospel--spiritual, emotional, and physical salvation through Yeshua, the Messiah.

They also encourage and sponsor born-again Jews returning to the land of Israel. They have helped Israeli believers set up small businesses, helped Messianic Jewish immigrants, and aggressively help both Arab and Jewish believers to improve their status in the land through

sponsoring vocational and language training.

They are translating and publishing a number of discipleship and gospel books in Hebrew for the growth of the body in Israel—books by Rick Warren, Jack Hayford, Joyce Meyer, Joy Dawson, Tommy Tenney, Oswald Chambers, Josh McDowell, James Dobson, John Maxwell, and numerous others.

In 2002, they established a benevolent outreach for widows, orphans, and economically depressed believers in the land, as well as terror victims... istandwithisrael.com, which has distributed over \$2,000,000 in the last five years.

Evangelism is a strong emphasis. They have staged drama presentations of the Gospel in the streets of Tel Aviv and Haifa, where they saw hundreds show interest in knowing more about Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah.

Maoz's ministry headquarters are in Tel Aviv, Israel. Their USA administrative office is located in Grand Prairie, Texas. They also have offices

in Canada, Germany, England and Brazil. They are endorsed as a Jewish Ministry to Israel by the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, the Messianic Jewish Alliance, and many churches and organizations around the world. They are members of ECFA.

Ari and Shira reside in Ramat Hasharon, Israel. They have two sabra (born in Israel) children, and two granddaughters.

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